

From the Editorial Team

Dear Readers and friends of CJAS:

I write this introduction from the University of Kassel where I am spending a semester as the Wangari Maathai Visiting Professor. It is a privilege to hold a position in the name of this stalwart woman who was a fierce advocate for the environment, for African people, and for women, especially rural women. While I don't expect to achieve a fraction of what she did, being invited here under her name signals for me, how much work there is still to do, and how much we can achieve with courage—even under fire. Israel's war in Gaza rages on while academics around the world are being silenced, even gagged, or called antisemitic for reminding us of the long history of occupation, calling Israel out for this onslaught on civilian lives, for the destruction of hospitals and services, and the refusal to permit humanitarian aid. This makes me sad, because the academy should remain a space for analyses, dissenting opinions, and alternative perspectives. The fact that there are multiple stories does not negate the value of any one of them—two or more things can be true at the same time and one's standpoint should not discount or invalidate one's story. I can be horrified at Hamas attacks and be broken hearted at the loss of over 12,000 lives in Gaza and counting. So, I grieve at the muzzling of voices that speak out in support of Palestinian lives, and the attacks on individuals as well as academic freedom more broadly.¹

In a sense, this Special Issue reminds us of the destruction that occupation brings, and the imperative of attending to the “unfinished business of liberation” work. So, on behalf of the editorial team, I am pleased to bring you the second issue of CJAS for 2023 under the theme, “Revisiting The 1958 All-African People's Conference: The Unfinished Business of Liberation and Transformation” edited by our colleagues from the Institute of African Studies, Dzodzi Tsikata², Mjiba Frehiwot and Edem Adotey. In 2018 the Institute of African Studies partnered with Lincoln University, the Socialist Movement of Ghana (Formerly Socialist Forum of Ghana), Third World Network-Africa and the Trade Union Congress (TUC) of Ghana to celebrate the 60th anniversary of the 1958 All-African People's Conference. By turning the searchlight back on

1 The African Studies Association of Africa issued a statement on this in November 24, 2023 <https://as-aa.org/index.php/in-the-news/197-statement-and-call-for-action-by-the-african-studies-association-of-africa-on-the-war-in-palestine-and-the-assault-on-academic-freedom>

2 Currently Distinguished Research Professor, Department of Development Studies, SOAS University of London but Professor at the Institute of African Studies, University of Ghana, at the time of the conference and the first drafts of this issue.

the 1958 calls for emancipatory struggles and assessing how far we had come (in 2018) the editors and authors address some of the key themes of the conference and imperatives for African people today.

In this issue, CJAS offers readers six articles that emerge out of that commemoration, and which the editors tie together in their introduction; they are briefly introduced here. In her paper “Looking Backwards to Run Forward: A critical examination of the 60th Anniversary of the 1958 All-African People’s Conference” As a scholar and Pan-African activist, Mjiba Frehiwot uses her own experiences, conference reports, official memoranda, newspaper articles to bring the two congresses in sharp relief. “Hip-Hop Studies as a Model for Anti-imperialist Research in Africa” by Msia Clarke, well known for her work on this genre of music and the praxis of the artists, argues that Hip-Hop scholarship provides a model for the decolonising agenda in African studies. D. Zizwe Poe’s makes some interesting arguments, offering the case of Ghana as a template for a contemporary decolonial education in his article, “Ghana: A 20th Century Example of a Pan-African Liberated Zone”. In his article, “Transnational Citizenship on the Borderlands: Towards Making (Non)Sense of National Borders in Africa”, Edem Adotey’s examines questions of borders, citizenship and sovereignty to argue for understandings of transnational citizenship and the “decolonizing” of defacto and dejure borders. “Generating Inclusive and Sustainable Growth: Challenging Neoliberal Approaches to Gender Mainstreaming in Regional Economic Integration in Africa” is the title of Adryan Wallace’s article. She focuses on another type of border—trade, and within that, gender borders—in her analyses of The African Continental Free Trade Agreement (AfCFTA). I conclude with the first article in the issue, “Pan-African Epistemologies of Knowledge Production: A Deconstruction-Based Critical Reflection” by James Dzisah and Michael Kpessa-Whyte. If we are to soldier on with the liberatory and transformative work that both congresses have called for then our role as scholars remains to interrogate the politics and practices of knowledge production and insist on emancipatory epistemologies and methodologies that are meaningful for our survival.

Pan Africanism and the work of decolonising knowledge production does not call for an insular approach; rather it calls for respect and equitable partnerships as envisioned in the [Africa Charter for transformative research collaborations](#) launched in 2023. As we consider a call for what the editors refer to as “substantive democracy” we must also question the economic liberalisation and increasing corporatisation of higher education in areas such as research, publishing and university rankings. To this end the November 2023 statement “[Rethinking Quality: UNU-convened Experts Challenge the Harmful Influence of Global University Rankings](#)” by an independent group of experts on

university rankings is important for this conversation. Ultimately, we need to think in terms of solidarity for our common human survival.

As always, on behalf of the entire editorial team, I express our deepest appreciation to the numerous authors who entrust us with their intellectual work, and to the anonymous reviewers for the enormous labour of love they perform. Personally, I would like to thank the CJAS editorial team for their commitment. Thank you as well the Institute of African Studies and the University of Ghana journals office for their support.

Akosua Adomako Ampofo

Editor-in-Chief, CJAS.

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