African Diaspora Newsletter No. 14

Nadine Hunt, Alia Paroo, and Stacey Sommerdyk, Editors

December 2005

Conferences and Workshops
- Furthering the Globalization Debate: Cross Regional Comparisons, CAAS Conference, Montreal, 28 April – 1 May 2005
- Monsoons & Migrations; Unleashing dhow synergies, Zanzibar, 5-7 July 2005
- Memory and Methodology: Workshop on the African Diaspora, York University, 4-22 July 2005
- Caribbean Migrations: Negotiating Borders, Ryerson University, 18-22 July 2005

Research Reports
- Memory of Slavery in Porto Novo, Ouidah, and Abomey
  - Alia Paroo

Forthcoming Conferences and Workshops
- Cahuita Symposium on Slavery, Culture, and Religion, Costa Rica, 11-14 February 2006

Interested in attending upcoming conferences and workshops? For complete details look at our website www.yorku.ca/nhp

Publications
This conference was entitled “Furthering the Globalization Debate: Cross regional Comparisons,” and was organized by the Canadian Council of Areas of Studies Learned Societies (CCASLS) in cooperation with its four local associations: Canadian Association of African Studies, Canadian Asian Studies Societies, Canadian Association for Latin American and Caribbean Studies, and Canadian Committee of the Middle East Association Studies. It took place between April 28th, 2005 and May 1st, 2005 in Montreal. This conference was designed to bring scholars and graduate students together to discuss research topics and areas of study, and to offer opportunities for academic exchange.

During this conference, we attended a series of panels dealing with topics such as the history of health in Africa and Latin America, the political repression and human rights, the cleavages and cohesions of the nation state, and the South-South cooperation in a globalizing world. Panel 11, “Popular Struggles: Minority Rights and Democracy,” included the presentations of Richard Saunders and Ahmed Aminu Yusef that focused on labour and student struggles during the 1980s Zimbabwe and Nigeria, respectively. Their papers analyzed the impact of neoliberalism in state policies, in places where governments refuse to attend social demands, affecting the lives of workers and students.

On the following day, panel 24 focused on HIV/AIDS and brought together scholars from Canada and the United States. They discussed HIV/AIDS policies in three different contexts. Erika Burger, from Dalhaousie University, analyzed the cultural context, the political system, the legal framework, and the different stages of epidemics in the Caribbean and Southern Africa. Emily Frank, from Indiana University, went a step further and analyzed a specific case in Zambia, focusing on local aspects such as polygamy and retroviral drugs. Guy-Joffroy Lord, from the Université de Québec at Montreal dealt with the success of the Brazilian HIV campaign.

Panel 30, “Biography and History: Possibilities and Limits” was chaired by Denis Cordell from Southern Methodist University. Cordell’s presented on the ‘second diaspora’ of Malian immigrant community in France, which he described as the wave of young Africans who migrated after the “trentes glorieuses”. Through some biographical trajectories, he examined the double struggle of these immigrants: the challenges of life in Paris and the problems of development in Africa. José Curto’s paper, “Encounters with Enslavement: José Manuel and Nbena in Benguela during the later 1810s,” was presented in absentia by Mariana Candido. Curto focused on the case of two individuals who were seized and sold into slavery by trusted persons in the early 19th century in Angola. His paper dealt with the effects of the transatlantic slave trade, such as insecurity and social turmoil. José Manuel and Nbena’s lives were changed permanently by their experiences and they struggled to survive enslavement. Issiaka Mandé, from the Université de Paris, focused on the life of Taillebourg who started in the colonial troops only to finish as a decorated inspector of administrative affairs.
Another panel that we attended focused on Constructing African Modernity in Historical Perspectives. The three panellists, Miriam Grant (University of Calgary), Jane Parpart (Dalhousie University), and Guy Thompson (University of Alberta), dealt with a single national case: Zimbabwe. Grant focused on family housing and the formation of community in Bulawayo; Parpart analyzed the rise of nationalism and the rewriting of Zimbabwean history to fit the state’s perception of patriotism; and Thompson examined how peasants constructed a popular memory that does not necessarily fit into the national history, emphasizing their social dislocation.

The panel “Creating a Common Space in the Post Area-Studies Era: Promises and Challenges,” reunited scholars linked with the University of Alberta. Michael Frishkopf analyzed the effects of globalization on area studies. Data, charts, and tables in hand, he presented the way students and scholars define their areas of interest, and how they get funding for their research. He argued that while studying some countries is perceived as “profitable” resulting in grants and attention, others areas of research remain in obscurity. Amal Ghazal analysed Islam and nationalism in the Arab World during the inter-war period. From the frontier line in Zanzibar, Ghazal noted that global Islamism, pan-Islamism, and local Islamism attack nationalism using a globally informed ideology which is locally grounded. She argued that nationalists fail to grasp this in their analysis of the way Islam operates. Ann McDougall problematized the whole idea of the “area” concept, focusing on the Saharan case. According to her analysis, the area studies ended up excluding certain geographical spaces. The case of the Sahara desert is excluded from African history, not only by scholars but also by states’ agencies and NGO’s. The Sahara is perceived as an empty land, with invisible inhabitants and marginal history. In Louise Rolingher’s paper “Household Slavery in the Atlantic and Indian Ocean Worlds: the Promise and the Peril of Cross-Regional Comparative History,” she urged historians to read the historical registers as allegories.

Three graduate students associated with the Harriet Tubman Resource Centre sat on panel 67, entitled “Slavery/Esclavage.” Yacine Daddi Addoun presented his paper on discourses of slavery and abolition in the Arab Muslim World, between fundamentalists and nationalists. He examined discourses in published Arabic sources dealing with the subject. Ana Lúcia Araújo, from Université de Laval, presented her paper “Réconciliation, pardon et réparation: les Agoudas et le projet la route de l’esclave,” where she focused on the role of UNESCO in the reconstruction of memory in Benin and Brazil. Araújo’s contribution raised questions on the roles of memory, government, and institutions in shaping history and developing reparation policies. The last panellist, Mariana P. Candido, presented her paper on the lives of those enslaved Africans who were not deported to the Americas, but who remained in Africa. Candido examined how slaves remaining in Africa suffered hardships similar to those went to the Americas, emphasising the existence of an African Diaspora within the continent.

The last panel we attended was the 2nd panel sponsored by the Saharan Studies Association. David Gutelius, Jourde Cédric, and Jeremy Keenan presented different sides of ‘America’s war on Terror’ in the Sahara Desert. Their presentation focused on disputes between international powers, secret services manipulating state agents, and Islamic networks extending throughout the desert from the Gulf to the Atlantic. This panel provided interesting analyses, dynamic interventions, and highly informed presentations. We could not, however, find better illustration of McDougall’s frustration about the invisibility of the Saharans in African history.
Ann Stoler, from New School University, offered the keynote speech of the conference. In her presentation, “Vernacular Comparisons: Critical Area Studies and their emergent forms,” she focused on the role of academics and the public of academic work. The keynote address was followed by a dinner, which offered a great opportunity for social interaction among scholars. Overall, the conference offered a number of panels on a large variety of topics, although the tight schedule did not allow interested scholars to take full advantage of all of the opportunities offered.
Monsoons & Migrations: Unleashing dhow synergies  
Zanzibar, Tanzania  
5-7 July 2005

Alia Paroo

Established in 1998, this year’s Zanzibar International Film Festival (ZIFF), included a conference entitled, “Monsoons and Migrations”. Organized by Abdul Sheriff, the conference focused on the dhow culture of the Indian Ocean and its cross-cultural interactions. The conference brought together Indian Ocean specialists from a wide variety of fields to discuss issues such as the nature of dhow culture, various migrations across the Indian Ocean, and cultural diversity and change in Zanzibar. The conference location was significant due to Zanzibar’s unique and strategic position within the Indian Ocean’s dhow culture.

The Conference was divided into seven categories, entitled:
1. Migrations
2. The Economics of Migrations
3. The Slave Trade and the Diaspora
4. The Diaspora in the Persian Gulf and the Mascarenes
5. Cultural Diversity and Change in Zanzibar
6. Memory and Identity in Zanzibar
7. The Dhow Culture and the African Cinema

A key theme of the conference was the forced migration of African peoples throughout the Indian Ocean’s slave trade network to locations including Madagascar, Mascarenes, Iran, Sri Lanka, Mauritius, and India. In his paper entitled “Indian Ocean Middle Passages: The Slave Trade from Eastern Africa and Madagascar”, Edward Alpers investigated the conditions aboard dhows engaged in the slave trade during the last half of the nineteenth century. In addition, Behnaz Mirzai’s presentation explained how she utilizes Persian sources to uncover the complexities of the slave trade in Iran, an area that has been largely ignored prior to her contribution to the field.

1 For a complete list of presenters, please refer to “The African Diaspora Newsletter, No. 13.” Photos courtesy of Alia Paroo.
Presentations also touched upon the conditions of slavery throughout the Indian Ocean. For example, Abdul Sheriff, in his article, “the Twilight of Slavery in the Persian Gulf” discussed how the intensification of the pearl industry led to an increase in kidnappings of Africans not only from East Africa, but also from the free African population in Arabia and the Muslim region of Baluchis, a trend that radically altered the nature of the slave population in the Gulf. Complementarily, Heloise Finch’s presentation focused on the different types of maroonage in Reunion. Helen Basu broached the topic of memory in her examination of a book written in Gujarati by a Sidi, an Indian of African descent who journeyed to Africa in an attempt to uncover the history of his community. Throughout the conference, issues of identity and cross-cultural influences were addressed, with specific references being made to currency, religion, crime, architecture, food, as well as the impact cultural diversity has had on modern cinema in the “Dhow countries”.

The conference was held in the historical House of Wonders building, which overlooked the Indian Ocean with dhows floating in the horizon. In his article “House of Wonders – Celebrating Dhow Culture”, Abdul Sheriff states “In an unsettled world torn by rivalries and wars, we could take a good lesson from the history of Zanzibar… to shape a new world based on dialogue, cooperation and tolerance”. The conference was successful in heightening our awareness of the movements across the Indian Ocean, laying the foundation for achieving Sheriff’s goal.
Memory and Methodology:
Workshop on the African Diaspora
4-22 July 2005

Nadine Hunt

This three-week workshop hosted by the Harriet Tubman Resource Centre on the African diaspora at York University, addressed a number of themes relating to Memory and the African Diaspora, as well as the methodologies currently being developed to collect and analyse data. The Workshop facilitated the cross-fertilization of ideas among senior scholars and advanced Ph.D. students in a forum characterized by open discussion and interaction about specific issues of methodology and conceptualisation.

Research topics explored diverse dimensions of the African diaspora, primarily focusing on the eras of slavery and emancipation in the Americas. Scholars covered specific areas, including the Underground Railroad to Canada; ethnicity in Africa and the diaspora; geographical areas in the circum-Caribbean region, both the mainland and islands; the Amerindian/Atlantic divide and intersection; Western Africa in the Atlantic world; Brazil and Africa; and finally the Maghreb and Islamic heartlands. Sessions were documented and recorded; and a copy of these recordings is archived at the Tubman Centre. The Master of Ceremony, Nadine Hunt opened the Workshop, welcoming and introducing participants to the morning’s speakers, including the Dean of the Faculty of Arts, Robert Drummond; the Director of the Tubman Centre and Canada Research Chair in African Diaspora History, Paul E. Lovejoy; the Associate Director of the Tubman Centre and Fellow of Founders College, David Trotman; and the Workshop’s keynote speaker, Bogumil Jewsiewicki.

Jewsiewicki addressed Workshop participants on the intellectual dichotomies of uncovering the historical past by using history and memory. For Jewsiewicki, history is the ambition to establish some truth, whereas memory is selective, basing itself mainly on relevance and does not have to involve history, but is a means to appropriate the past. However, Jewsiewicki argued that memory is not oral history, and instead involves matters pertaining to identity, people’s indignity, and a political agenda. Jewsiewicki reasoned that there is no universal way to understand memory, but referred to the historical memory frameworks developed by Pierre Nora and Maurice Halbwachs. According to Jewsiewicki, there are three types of memories to be considered when studying the African diaspora. They are historical, performative, and physical memory. Jewsiewicki applied these three concepts in his address that examined popular Congolese paintings of Lumbasa in the first half of the twentieth century.

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2 The workshop was organized by Paul E. Lovejoy, David V. Trotman, José C. Curto, Nadine Hunt, Thor Burnham, and Marsha Barrow. This workshop was achieved with the financial support of the Chair of the Department of History, the Dean of the Faculty of Arts, the Vice-President of Research and Innovation, the Vice-President of Academic Services, the Master of Founders College, and the Associate Vice-President of York International.

3 “Memory in the Study of Slavery and the African Diaspora”
Participants of the Workshop included:

### Professors

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<td>José C. Curto</td>
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<td>Juanita De Barros</td>
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<td>Toyin Falola</td>
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<td>Mary Lou Forward</td>
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<td>Bogumil Koss</td>
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<td>Martin Klein</td>
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<td>Clarion University</td>
<td>Sudan and Egypt</td>
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<td>Jane Landers</td>
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### Graduate Students (Ph.D. Candidates)

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<td>Francois Richard</td>
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<tr>
<td>Louise Steensgaard Sebro</td>
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Caribbean Migrations: Negotiating Borders
Ryerson University, Canada
18-22 July 2005

Nadine Hunt

The conference, “Caribbean Migrations: Negotiating Borders,” explored the changing face of the Caribbean in the wake of migrations and the formation of diasporas. Special attention was given to the construction of hybrid identities in host centres; the impact of race, class, language and sexuality on the formation of new identities; the consequences of negotiating between “here” (new home spaces) and “there” (places of origin); the various understandings of borders—geographic, linguistic, cultural, racial; and the implications of living between borders. The event led to a scholarly exchange that focused on promoting and discussing literary imaginations of Caribbean migrations, migrant communities, and Diasporas.

This four-day Conference had twenty-nine panels, a round table, and concluded with a film screening session. Morning and afternoon sessions began with a plenary speaker, which included Kamau Brathwaite, Stewart Brown, Elaine Savory, Carole Boyce Davies, Frank Birbalsingh, Victor Ramraj. Speakers discussed a number of themes ranging from “Middle Passages,” “Portable Identities: Inside and Out the Caribbean,” and “Migration in Caribbean-Canadian Literature.” Moreover, the Conference coincided with annual Caribana celebrations, and appropriately had a panel that explored Caribbean Carnival celebrations in Canada.

The Intra-Caribbean Migrations panel was chaired by Rhonda Frederick, who also presented her paper entitled “Gone a Colón: Lyrical Narratives of Panama Canal Migrations.” The paper examined popular songs of Afro-Caribbean labourers from Jamaica, Barbados, and Curaçao. Frederick analysed several musical lyrics, arguing that they are “hidden transcripts” that reveal Afro-Caribbean life in the Canal. La Verne Seales-Saley’s paper entitled “Two Authors of West Indian Descent Explore Panama,” focused on the works of Carlos Guillermo Wison and Melva Gooding. Seales-Saley examined the portrayal of the daily lives of “Chombos” in Panama, arguing that Wison’s and Gooding’s works challenge the myth that the Panama Canal was only an European achievement. In “The Chavez Effect: Contemporary Venezuelan Emigration to Trinidad”, Michele Reis explored the recent wave of Venezuelan emigrants to Trinidad and Tobago. In her paper, Reis made an assessment of the cultural impact of Venezuelans on Trinidadian society. The final presenter, Nadine Hunt discussed the forced migration of West Africans to colonial Spanish America via Jamaica in the era of the Atlantic slave trade.

For more information about Conference proceedings, visit www.ryerson.ca/CaribbeanMigrations.

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4 Conference Organizer, Dr. Hyacinth Smith, Department of English, Ryerson University.
Memory of Slavery in Porto Novo, Ouidah, and Abomey

Ana Lucia Araújo

Last summer, I had the opportunity to pursue field research in Benin over a two month period. My objective was to study how memories of slavery, public monuments, and family memories are interconnected in Benin. I also wanted to understand how Afro-Brazilian families, as descendants of slaves and/or slave merchants, known as “Aguda”, perceive and remember their slavery past. I also wanted to examine how public monuments translated and reconstructed their experiences with slavery, especially in relation to the UNESCO’s Slave Route Project and Ouidah 92, monuments built in 1990s in the city of Ouidah. In an attempt to answer these questions, I interviewed Afro-Brazilian families; I collected newspaper articles at the National Archives; and I took pictures and filmed monuments in Ouidah, Abomey, and Porto Novo.

During the first weeks, I stayed mainly in Porto Novo, where I interviewed members of the Afro-Brazilian community including Francisca de Medeiros Patterson and Karin Urbain da Silva. In Cotonou, I met descendants of the Brazilian slave merchant Francisco Félix de Souza. In Ouidah, I met Honoré Félicien de Souza, who had been elected Chacha by the family council and ascended to the “throne” in 1995. The new generation is quite comfortable discussing their involvement in the Atlantic slave trade, as well as their ancestors and religion, and with Abomey’s royal family. Recently, the de Souza family has been actively reconstructing the memory of their ancestor Francisco Felix de Souza. A new “palace” was recently built on the foundations of Chacha I’s former “palace” in Singbomey. Consequently, Singbomey has become an attraction to tourists from Brazil and the United States. During my visit, I participated in a meeting of the de Souza family and several Afro-American teachers. The meeting was organized by professors Abena Busia and Allen Howard of Rutgers University, and it explored how descendants of slave merchants and slaves deal with issues relating to the memory of slavery.

It was a pleasure to work in the National Archives in Porto Novo. In Porto Novo, I attended a seminar with Professor Paulin Hontoundji of the Centre Africain des Hautes Études. I was able to converse with his students and to learn Hontoundji’s perspective on events surrounding the launching of UNESCO’s Slave Route Project. Later, I was able to discuss my work with Professor Elisée Soumonni. Together, we visited Ganvié, a lake village near Abomey-Calavi known for its resistance to slavery. Then I travelled to Cotonou where I met Felix Iroko. We discussed issues of reconciliation and reparation addressed in his latest book La Côte des Esclaves et la traite atlantique.

Travelling in Benin was an unforgettable experience, and I hope to return soon. Benin is a beautiful country that is both inexpensive and secure. People can discuss politics everywhere, and visitors and researchers are very well received, especially at École du Patrimoine Africain.

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5 The École du Patrimoine Africain in Porto Novo graciously acted as my host.
6 In 1992, Hontoundji was minister of Culture in Benin.
The De Souza family house at Singbomey, Ouidah (Benin): Photo Courtesy of Ana Lucia Araújo.

Slave route monument (by Cyprien Tokoudagba), Ouidah (Benin): Photo Courtesy of Ana Lucia Araújo.
Dar es Salaam Archives, Tanzania

Alia Paroo

This summer, I had the pleasure of commencing my fieldwork in the Dar es Salaam National Archives. After obtaining research clearance from the Tanzanian government, I was permitted to undergo research in the mainland. However, Researchers who are interested in entering the Archives in Zanzibar would have to undergo a separate process to obtain clearance specifically for this island.

In the archives, Researchers are prohibited from making digital images of documents, and are limited to the use of a pencil when working with files. Photocopies can be made of portions of each file for a minimal fee. Furthermore, Researchers are allowed to request a maximum of five files per day.

The material I was able to collect lends itself valuably to my dissertation entitled, “The Migration of the Shia Ismaili Muslims to Tanzania, 1919-1960”. Many of the files I requested were British documents, typed in English. I consulted the following collections, Ismailia Council, Land Allocations, Death Certificates, and Wills. These sources reflected much of the development of this Muslim community in the period under investigation, especially while this region was under British rule.

The relationships I developed with the archivists, researchers, and other graduate students in Dar es Salaam added to my academic and personal experiences in Tanzania. The warmth, compassion and sincerity of the locals, who identified themselves as belonging to a variety of ethnicities, made this visit truly remarkable.

7 This research would not have been possible without the financial assistance of the Faculty of Graduate Studies, York University.
8 For more information on obtaining research clearance, please refer to www.costech.or.tz
Cahuita Symposium on Slavery, Culture, and Religion

Photo Courtesy of Creos (Toronto)

Sponsors:
Harriet Tubman Resource Centre on the African Diaspora, York University
Instituto de Investigaciones Sociales, Universidad de Costa Rica
UNESCO “Slave Route” Project, Secteur de la Culture

February 11-14th 2006
Cahuita (Límon), Costa Rica
Venue: La Diosa

The symposium to be held on the beautiful shores of the Caribbean in Cahuita, Costa Rica, will have as a theme, “Slavery, Culture and Religion,” with a focus on the visual and documentary representations of religion and culture and the use of these materials in the reconstruction of the social history of slavery. The geographical areas include the Caribbean and Central America, that is the Atlantic world, and beyond, to the Pacific. The South Atlantic, with the link between Brazil and Africa, and the Anglo-Atlantic are recognized as coherent systems, which engaged Atlantic Africa and indeed southwestern Africa across the Atlantic. The Indian Ocean extension of slavery and the Islamic world are part of this complex history. The thematic scope of the symposium encompasses the cultural manifestations of slavery in all these geographical regions, with the intention of exploring and comparing the symbolism and forms of expression that were used to transfer and transform artistic and cultural modes across the Atlantic, and indeed the Sahara and Indian Ocean. The symposium intends to discuss issues informed by knowledge of Islam, Christianity, the orisa, and the religious traditions that focus on the dead.

The model of the symposium is the Avignon style, developed by Professor Gywn Campbell, McGill University. All papers will be available to registered participants in advance. Papers will not formally be presented; instead designated discussants will consider the submitted papers and lead a general discussion around specific themes. It is assumed that participants will read the papers before the symposium.

For more information contact: Paul E. Lovejoy (plovejoy@yorku.ca)
Gendering Transformations: Gender, Globalization, and State Transformation in Africa and the African Diaspora

Second International Conference of the Trans-Atlantic Research Group

In association with The Echeruo Centre for Public Policy, Owerri, Imo State, Nigeria

July 28-30, 2006

Venue: Alvan Ikoku College of Education, Owerri, Nigeria

The Second TARG conference aims to bring together scholars and policy makers interested in exploring historical, policy, and development phenomena and their intersection with gender using the methods of the social sciences. Individual papers or panels are invited from academics, independent scholars, and postgraduate students. We encourage submissions on a wide range of themes relating gender to globalization, democratization, and state transformation in Africa and the African diaspora. Papers should have some historical context and content. Proposals are welcome but not limited to the following areas:

- Gender and Social Transformation
- Transformation of Gender Roles
- Gender and Language in Africa
- Gender & Economic Transformation
- Gender, Crime, Law, and Justice
- Gender, War and Peace-making
- Trans-Atlantic Encounters & Transformation
- Migration/Displacement Experience
- Children and Migration Experience
- Globalization of Poverty
- Trans-Atlantic Relations
- Policy Implications of Gender and Globalization

For more information contact:

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Dr. Femi Kolapo, History Department, University of Guelph, Guelph, On. Canada, N1G 2W1. kolapof@uoguelph.ca
From Local to Global in Latin America and the Caribbean: Where Have We Come from and Where Are We Headed?

The Canadian Association of Latin American and Caribbean Studies (CALACS) will hold its next annual meeting at the University of Calgary, September 28-30, 2006.

As part of a special initiative to increase participation by Caribbeanists, this year CALACS will offer some travel support for conference participants presenting papers on the Anglophone or Francophone Caribbean. Because funds are limited, priority will be given to graduate students and Caribbean based scholars.

PROPOSAL DEADLINE: 1 February 2006

The conference organizers especially encourage paper and panel proposals that focus on the Caribbean. Suggested themes include, but are not limited, to the following:
1) Caribbean Diasporas: Identity & Redefinition
2) Regional Integration in a Global World
3) Caribbean Migrations
4) "Race", Ethnicity & Nationalism
5) Gender, Labour & the Caribbean Family
6) Caribbean & the Global Economy of Crime
7) Global Dimensions of Caribbean Arts (Music, Festivals, Literature)

Paper and panel proposals on Caribbean topics should be sent to

Juanita De Barros (debarr@mcmaster.ca) or Audra Diptee (Audra_Diptee@carleton.ca)

For more information about the conference and paper and panel proposal forms, visit: http://www.larc.ucalgary.ca/ calacs06@ucalgary.ca

Deadline for proposals: 1 February 2006

Du particularisme local à la mondialisation en Amérique latine et dans les Caraïbes. D'où venons-nous et où allons-nous?


Conférenciers spéciaux: Dante Caputo et Jesús Martín Barbero
Pour de plus amples informations, l'appel de communication, ainsi que les formulaires de propositions de communication et de panel, prière de s'adresser à: http://www.larc.ucalgary.ca/ calacs06@ucalgary.ca
Date limite: Le 1 février 2006