



The Department of
POLITICS and
**INTERNATIONAL
RELATIONS**

Mine Watch Zambia Conference: Politics, economy, society, ecology and investment in Zambia

Friday 19 and Saturday 20 September, 2008

Department of Politics and International Relations, Manor Road Building
University of Oxford, UK

Speakers already confirmed include

Professor Oliver Saasa, International Economic Relations, University of Zambia
Professor John Lungu, Economics and Management, Copperbelt University, Zambia
Professor Jeremy Gould, Development Studies, University of Helsinki
Dr Nicholas Cheeseman, Politics and African Studies, Oxford University
Dr Jan-Bart Gewald, History, University of Leiden
Dr Marja Hinfelaar, National Archives of Zambia
Dr Miles Larmer, History, Sheffield University
Elva Bora, PhD candidate, Economics, SOAS
Andrew Brooks, PhD candidate, Royal Holloway
Namukale Chintu, MSc student, SAID Business School, Oxford University
Alastair Fraser, PhD candidate, International Relations, Oxford University
Tomas Friederikson, PhD candidate, History, Manchester University
Dan Haglund, PhD candidate, Economics and Management, Bath University
Rohit Negi, PhD candidate, Geography, Ohio State University
Frida Wallin, MSc candidate, Economics, Uppsala University
Janie Whitlock, MSc student, African Studies, Oxford University

Objectives

This inter-disciplinary conference aims to bring together senior Zambianist scholars, a group of young researchers currently engaged in primary research in Zambia and all those interested in the country.

Contemporary Zambian political economy has been largely ignored by the academy for a decade. The excitement of the 'dual transition' to democracy and free market economics in 1991 led to a flurry of articles and books on the political economy of reform. Once the economy continued its long-running decline and popular political forces retreated, Zambia appeared to lose its appeal. For the last decade the country attracted contemporary social science research almost exclusively on aid, the impacts of HIV-AIDS and occasional elections. Historical researchers have continued their work, and have remained well-networked, through newsletters and email circulars organised by Network for Historical Research in Zambia, as well a series of conferences in Zambia and Europe.

However, economic and political developments in the country over the last five years have sparked a new wave of contemporary research, much of it being carried out by young scholars early in their academic careers. This research is particularly focused on:

- The privatisation of Zambia's copper mines, through the negotiation of secret 'Development Agreements' between the Government and mine multinationals.
- The role of international financial institutions and aid donors in the privatisation process and subsequent reforms of the regulatory and tax frameworks.
- Increases in investment, productivity and profit since privatisation and the roles of privatisation and a boom in global commodity prices in these developments.
- The impacts of Zambia's new boom on the wider national economy, government revenue, urban social conditions, labour relations and the environment.
- The increasing involvement of non-traditional (largely Indian and Chinese) investors, creditors and donors in mining and other commercial and industrial sectors.
- Company approaches to labour relations and laws, popular and regulatory pressure for corporate social responsibility and the 'empowerment' agenda.
- The unilateral revision of tax structures by the state in 2008. Reactions of the companies and investors to these changes.
- Reactions of the Zambian population, trade unions, NGOs, Churches and politicians to social and political change on the Copperbelt and the country more widely.

Background

One of the first publications reviewing the impact of privatisation of the copper mines (*For Whom the Windfalls?*, Fraser and Lungu, 2007), the linked publication of previously secret 'Development Agreements' between the Government and mining companies, and a 'blog' www.minewatchzambia.com sparked a number of the presenters at the workshop to contact the conference organiser. An informal network developed into an email list, as young and experienced scholars shared with each other their research objectives and provided practical advice on research and life in Zambia. This workshop will be the first physical meeting of many of those involved and presents an exciting opportunity to create new relationships, research connections and debates. The existing participants in this new network are excited about the possibility of meeting others, thus far unknown to them, working on linked research. If the workshop is successful, Fraser and Larmer propose to prepare an edited volume for publication based initially on the papers presented.

Publicity and Registration

This notice will be circulated on a range of email list-serves and websites. You are invited to forward this information as widely as possible.

Those interested in presenting papers at the conference are asked to email alastair.fraser@politics.ox.ac.uk with a title and abstract.

Deadline: July 18 2008.

Participation in the conference will be limited by the space available. Those interested in participating without presenting a paper are also invited to register at:

<http://www.politics.ox.ac.uk/research/conferences/>