

Webinar Programme



International Webinar on "UoN@50: History of Scholarship Trajectories a Half Century on "

4th
November 2020
2 - 5 pm (EAT)

Preamble

The institution that would become the University of Nairobi (UoN), the Royal Technical College (RTC), was a product of the 1950s collaboration between the Kenyan colonial Government and the Gandhi Smarak Society (Gandhi Memorial Society), a local Indian organization, raising funds to build a commercial college in Nairobi in honour of Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi, the Indian nationalist leader. In a sense, RTC was a case of divergent goals – an official attempt to avail technical training to Africans, on one the hand, and the Indian aspiration for a commercial institution, on the other, - which found congruency in the need to pool public-private resources.

In its nascent years, RTC emerged in the contemporary context of declining race and colonial hegemony as the waning imperial forces in Kenya had recognized the ascendancy of militant African nationalism and the urgent need for a multi-racial approach to education and training. Consequently, it become the first multi-racial college in the region but post-dated Makerere College, Uganda, which had already stamped its imprint on the development of tertiary education for the then rising African elite.

In tandem with the nationalist aspirations abound in the region in the early 1960s, the RTC, in quick succession, became part of the University of East Africa (with three campus – Nairobi, Dar es Salam and Makerere). Then, it became the constituent college of the University of London and, finally, in 1970, the UoN. Away from the ideals of pan-Africanism, East African regionalism and nationalism tightly embedded in its origins, the UoN at the apogee of its scholarly excellence from the 1970s through the 90s became conspicuous through the prism of the extant Marxist and non-Marxist thinking which had become dominant in the institution, particularly in the humanities and social sciences.

Webinar Programme



As part of the events to celebrate the UoN's Silver Jubilee, the Department of History and Archaeology, in its ongoing Departmental Seminar Series, will hold a Webinar to reflect on the history of scholarship in the University over in a number of disciplines. We argue that the historical trajectory of UoN's scholarship, in its different facets, phases and agency, went beyond the simple binary of Marxists and non-Marxist conceptions alluded to above. It presented a much more complex and contradictory picture of met and unmet expectations; careers built and careers decimated; regional connectedness and nationalist backlash; and, at times, fierce intra-institutional debates and intra-institutional docility. In the current Webinar, we have put together a multidisciplinary team of academics, as presenters and discussants, to reflect on the contradictions that have constituted the scholarship in UoN in the last half century as we look forward to the history of the future in the next half century

Webinar Programme

- 1400 hrs** **Prof. Ephraim Wahome, Dean** Faculty of Arts, University of Nairobi, Preliminaries.
Prof. Julius Ogeng'o, Deputy Vice Chancellor, Academic Affairs, University of Nairobi, Opening & Welcome Remarks.
- 1430 hrs** **Dr. Alex Wanjala, University of Nairobi**, "Trends & Developments in the Study of Literature at UoN: A Critical Overview."
- 1445 hrs** **Ms. Anna Adima, University of York, UK**, "Student Writing & Mobility: University of East Africa & Regional Identity in the 1960s."
- 1500 hrs.** **Dr. Jenniffer Muchiri, University of Nairobi**, Discussant.
- 1530 hrs.** **Prof. Musambayi Katumanga, University of Nairobi**, "Where Karl Marx once Lived: Developments in the Study of Politics at UoN."
- 1545 hrs.** **Dr. Kathleen Anangwe, University of Nairobi**, "Is the crowd still cheering: Trends in sociological studies at UoN."
- 1600 hrs** **Dr. Solomon Owouche, University of Nairobi**, Discussant.
- 1630 hrs** **Dr. Kenneth Ombongi, University of Nairobi**, "The History of History: Reflections on the historiographical trends in historical study at UoN."
- 1645 hrs** **Dr. Margaret W. Gachihi, University of Nairobi**, Discussant.
- 1700 hrs** **Dr. George Gona, University of Nairobi**, Conclusion & Vote of Thanks.

N/B: Presenters and discussants will have 15 minutes each. The discussants will lead a question and answer session for their sections for about 15 minutes after their contribution.

Moderator & Convenor of the Webinar

Dr. George Gona, University of Nairobi,

***Registration is Free**

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