

CONFERENCE ANNOUNCEMENT

ETHNICITY, IDENTITY AND NATIONALISM IN SOUTH AFRICA: COMPARATIVE PERSPECTIVES

Rhodes University, Grahamstown, 20-24 April 1993

A major international conference will be held in Grahamstown during 20-24 April 1993, focusing on identity and ethnicity in South Africa in terms of their past and current manifestations, but with a particular emphasis on possible future roles and forms. The conference will be organised jointly by the Institute of Social and Economic Research, Rhodes University, and the Centre for Social and Development Studies, University of Natal.

The Steering Committee writes:

Questions of group identity and ethnicity loom large in South Africa's history. Political strife is often conceived of in ethnic terms, and political ideologies are usually prefaced on a presumed 'identity' of some kind. Yet our understanding of these issues is not yet well developed. Given that South Africa is currently in the throes of major social and political transitions, the time seems ripe to re-examine our understanding of identity and ethnicity. We need also to look at the recent changes that have taken place in this respect, and at what the implications of this are for the future.

A comparative perspective is essential if the conference is to be successful. Ethnicity and nationalism are world-wide phenomena, and there is an obvious need to draw on the lessons and experience of other countries. The general call for papers will thus be augmented by invitations to speakers of high academic standing from other parts of Africa and from abroad, to contribute towards the aims of the conference.

The conference will be both academic and practical in character. There is a variety of academic perspectives on ethnicity, in such fields as political studies, sociology, anthropology and history, and the aim of the conference will be to deepen our academic understanding of ethnicity and its various manifestations. But such understanding of ethnicity also has important practical consequences, particularly for South Africans, and the conference will attract attention from politically active organisations and individuals grappling with everyday issues.

A list of the kinds of issues likely to be addressed at the conference is:
Historical and Theoretical Perspectives; Recent Developments; Ethnic Experience; The Rhetoric of Identity; Mobilization and Power; Identity and Conflict; Ethnicity and the Land; Accommodating Ethnic Identity; Future of Ethnicity and Ethnic Identity; Role of Social Sciences.

For further information, please contact the Ethnicity Conference Secretary, Institute of Social and Economic Research, Rhodes University, PO Box 94, Grahamstown 6140, South Africa.