

## **International Seminar**

# **Culture, Labor and Politics in Southern Africa**

UNICAMP, IFCH, May 11-14, 2015

Scholars have long ago pointed out that Africa is not a homogenous continent. Even so, references to the “History of Africa” continue, often drawing upon a selective highlighting of colonial policies and experiences that effectively separates Africa into English, Portuguese, French, German (etc.) spheres of colonization. “Culture, Politics and Labor in Southern Africa” is an international seminar that proposes a shift in this approach. On the one hand, it seeks to emphasize the perspectives of Africans – not just an “African perspective,” but the points of view of peoples who saw, dealt with and resisted the presence of Europeans (including during the periods that the established historiography calls pre or post colonial). As a result, it proposes on the other hand an analysis of Southern Africa: an extensive area in which Bantu peoples predominated (and still do). Thus, what we seek to discuss is how various political organizations, with a common cultural substratum, faced the presence of the Portuguese, Dutch, German, and English over time. Such a perspective does not necessarily denote a comparative approach. Rather, the objective is to investigate specific contexts so that, from them, we can discuss the political and theoretical dimensions that are imposed on the historian who focuses on the “History of Africa” from an “African” point of view. Representing more than an analytical approach, we expect that the participation of Angolan and Mozambican historians in this international seminar can highlight the roles of Africans in the production of historical knowledge about themselves.

This international seminar also seeks to deepen the academic ties between the Department of History/Harriet Tubman Institute at York University and the Centro de Pesquisa em História Social da Cultura of the Universidade Estadual de Campinas (UNICAMP). Over the past five years professors and graduate students from UNICAMP have been hosted by York University in internships and scientific meetings. Following the beginning of this relationship, the two universities signed a cooperation agreement in 2012. This international seminar, jointly organized by a team of junior, mid-career, and senior scholars from each university, deepens these institutional exchanges and expands contacts with researchers from universities and research centers around the Atlantic world with which both teams have been working systematically. We are particularly interested in fostering dialogue between researchers working on topics related to the history of Southern Africa, thereby creating conditions for debate and confrontation of ideas and interpretations that can effectively contribute to the development of research in progress at UNICAMP, York, and beyond.

Last, but not least, this international seminar further provides an opportunity to discuss the conditions of the production of research in Brazil related to Southern Africa. As such, we are also interested in presentations that focus on sources available for research and/or concentrate on methodological questions that enable us to use them. Acknowledging the importance of African institutions in this debate, we wish to bring forth the point of view of those responsible for safeholding, preserving, and managing access to large bodies of extant primary sources.