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To Friends and Relatives:

Dear Valued Ones,

A Triple Heritage: The Finale

Here is the Mazrui Newsletter once again. It's been a year of pain and pilgrimages, of fame and infamy! I will tell you all about it, but let me first wish you and your loved ones all the very best of the festive season. Relax for a change! As for 1987, may it be a successful and rewarding experience for you all. Amen.

Did you know that my first job in the Western world was as a bus-conductor on a trolley bus in Huddersfield, Yorkshire? That was thirty years ago almost to the month! The BBC wanted to use that 1956 event for public relations in 1986. So we all went to Huddersfield, posed in front of an antiquated bus, and had a lot of photographs taken for local newspapers in the North of England.

That side of the event was artificial - a mere exercise in television promotion. On the other hand, the event was a genuine pilgrimage for me - because Huddersfield symbolized more than my first job in the Western world. Huddersfield was also the place of my academic re-vindication in secondary education after doing poorly in high school in Mombasa. At Huddersfield College I had my second chance - a turning point in my academic career!

But above all it was in Huddersfield that I met Molly - the woman who became my wife and the mother of my three sons. Huddersfield was therefore a turning point in my private life as well. It was therefore fitting that during my 1986 visit to Huddersfield I should meet Molly's mother in the street! Nostalgia was complete! It was wonderful to see Ethel so unexpectedly!

In spite of the visit to Huddersfield, the promotion of "The Africans" as a TV series in Britain was - compared to what later took place in the U.S. - relatively limited. Again as compared with Americans, the British under-reacted to the TV series. The danger in the United States was, if anything, over-reaction. But we shall return to that later.

On the other hand, I lost my privacy in the streets of London more decisively than in American streets. In the summer in London I got stopped so many times by enthusiastic viewers that (believe it or not) I resorted to wearing dark glasses to minimize recognition! For a brief nine weeks I knew

what film stars felt like! Black people sometimes embraced me, or even stopped their cars if they spotted me through the window. British whites were more restrained in their encounters! All these street encounters boosted my morale even when I was wearing dark glasses!

I was honoured this year by Cornell University when it appointed me Andrew D. White Professor-at-Large. The appointment is for six years. (Andrew D. White was founder and first president of Cornell.) But what is a "Professor-at-Large"? Basically, it is a non-residential professorship. I have become one of Cornell's resources - available from time to time as public lecturer, seminar leader, adviser to students, and general academic consultant. The recommendation to the Trustees from the Andrew D. White Committee for my appointment was a unanimous nomination. I feel greatly privileged. I look forward especially to working with the Africana Studies and Research Center and with political scientists at Cornell. Locksley Edmondson was a vital force in the whole scheme. I am much indebted.

Jamal, our oldest boy, graduated from Princeton - and we turned up in strength at the ceremony to cheer. I flew in from London for the occasion - Maureen and Brenda Kiberu also joined the Mazruis in Princeton for the festivities. It was a proud moment for us all. Jamal then won a Kennedy scholarship to do graduate work at the John F. Kennedy School of Government - and has chosen to focus especially on public policy aspects of technology at Harvard University.

Kim Abubakar (our youngest) celebrated his eighteenth birthday in the middle of his first year as a pre-law student at The University of Michigan (his Dad's workplace!). Al'Amin also decided to transfer from Western Michigan University in Kalamazoo to the University of Michigan here in Ann Arbor. Al'Amin may specialize in Psychology. Fortunately neither young man has as yet decided to register in one of Dad's classes. Should I refuse to have them in my class? How does the law of nepotism apply here? Maybe the boys have had enough lectures at home from Dad over the years! Maybe they think enough is enough! In which case I will be spared the dilemmas of nepotism in class!!

Brenda went home to Uganda for the summer holiday. And in the autumn, Brenda started her programme for a Master's degree in Business Administration at Wayne State University in Detroit. The commuting by car is one hour each way - particularly demanding when it snows in the evenings! But Brenda is bearing up well - "hanging in there"! She also spends many hours in the library! Fortunately her sister Maureen has been able to help in looking after me!! (Looking after "Mzee".) Maureen's skills in the kitchen have dramatically improved since her arrival from Uganda last year. She was spoilt a little by her mother in Kampala - doing almost no cooking. Nowadays in Michigan she can even attempt Swahili dishes and Indian Ocean cuisine - including chapatis and mchuzi! Can you imagine?

But all cooking and no studies is bad in the modern age. Fortunately Maureen is getting some excellent grades from Cleary College near here, studying for a Bachelor's in Business Administration.

Our little East African community at the University of Jos seems to be shrinking. When Vianney Bukyana (from Rwanda) was granted asylum in Canada, and left us, his brother, Berthas Gasana, moved in with me in my house. He turned out to be as good as Sam Sebina in looking after my welfare. Gasana shopped for me, sent telegrams, cooked, xeroxed documents, dealt with the library and entertained distinguished visitors from abroad. I was extremely lucky. He did all these things and still managed to attend to his homework as an undergraduate in science at the University of Jos.

The Okeniyi family (Zeke and Liz) were the second leg of my Jos domestic support. The third leg was Gorette Mugambwa, a Ugandan, always eager to come to the rescue. Pauline Uti helped with her superb hot pepper soup!

Zeke and Gorette also helped me in administrative matters at the University - but the central pillar of my entire stay at Jos remained Jonah Isawa Elaigwu and his family. Through him I was also in touch with the rest of the power structure at Jos and indeed in the land.

My last big event of the year at the University of Jos in Nigeria was the Pan-African conference on "Human Rights and Africa's Triple Heritage: Indigenous, Islamic and Western Perspectives." Two factors gave the conference a striking political relevance. One was the full participation of General, now also Doctor, Yakubu Gowon, Nigeria's leader during the Civil War of 1967 to 1970 and onwards until 1975. Accompanied by Mrs. Gowon, he was with us at almost every session of the conference as a full academic participant.

Gowon's participation assumed additional significance from the fact that Nigeria's current Head of State, President Ibrahim B. Babangida, graciously came to Jos to open our conference. Two honours were conferred on Gowon. The Head of State addressed him as "General Gowon" - thus restoring the rank he had lost when Gowon was in disgrace in the mid-1970s. Secondly, the University of Jos appointed Gowon a Research Professor in the Sciences of Government. I was greatly privileged to have been involved in all those fascinating events.

Another happy surprise for me at the conference was the arrival of Abu Mayanja, Minister of Information and Broadcasting in President Museveni's government in Uganda. We had invited him to the Jos meeting when he was in exile in Kenya as a private attorney. When Museveni captured power, and included Abu Mayanja in his government, we thought Abu would not have time to come to Jos. You can imagine my astonishment when - as I was about to sit down to breakfast at my house in Jos - Abu knocked and entered! We embraced in breathless excitement.

Other East Africans at the conference included Nuruddin Farah, the Somali novelist, to whom Jos had once been home. He was among old friends. Like a true Somali, Nuruddin remains an incorrigible nomad. After Jos he went to the Gambia. His latest Pan-African watering hole is Khartoum in the Sudan. We do miss him at Jos.

Other old friends who managed to join us at Jos for the Human Rights

meeting included George Kanyeihamba, Lemuel Johnson, Davidson Nicol, Nike Adebisi, as well as Omari H. Kokole. The central agenda was to examine how the three legacies of Africa, Islam and the West approached the whole idea of human rights. We also addressed the issue of how Africa could monitor its own performance in human rights. We certainly had some lively moments.

And yet my most explosive moment of the year at Jos occurred when I gave a lecture in April on Ibrahim Babangida's decision to make Nigeria a full member of the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC). Nigeria is probably half Muslim and 35% Christian. Before 1986 Nigeria was just an observer of the Islamic Conference. My lecture at Jos was interpreted by a predominantly Christian audience as unduly sympathetic to Babangida's move about the OIC. Without realizing it, one Christian lecturer reaffirmed my even-handedness by claiming that a Muslim conference in Sokoto had earlier burnt another paper of mine in protest against my views!! The Sokoto paper had apparently been a little too favourable to Karl Marx for the liking of Hausa-Fulani Islamic fundamentalists! According to the Jos Christian lecturer, my paper was consigned to the flames of a bonfire as a heretical exercise!! I know which paper he was referring to. But I have not yet got confirmation of the alleged Sokoto ceremony of consigning my "Marxist" paper to the bonfire. I certainly was not present when the incident supposedly happened. I am skeptical about the story, but I am intrigued by the fact that it was circulating even if entirely false!

In America charges about my alleged "Marxism" came from "radically" different sources. My television series, The Africans: A Triple Heritage, was interpreted by some American right-wingers as "Marxist" or "neo-Marxist." Some of my critics called themselves "Citizens for Reagan." Others identified themselves with "Accuracy in the Media." In reality both trends were inclined to attribute to my television series a basic Marxist-inclination. I am sure that genuine African Marxists would be amused by this absurd rightwing equation!!

On the other hand, the television series in America seemed to be bringing me closer to American Muslims than anything else I had ever done before. I travelled from city to city nation-wide promoting the TV series. What surprised me was how often at the end of each lecture, Muslim members of the audience would come to the front to introduce themselves. Most of these were Black American Muslim families, complete with Muslim names and often belonging to mainstream denominations of Islam. I was often deeply moved when I encountered Africa's Triple Heritage in Black America.

Some of the Black American Muslims made a special gesture in my honour - ranging from presenting me with a golden plaque of tribute to giving me special religious books for my library.

The positive side of the American response to my TV series went beyond sectarian considerations. I was greatly privileged that the State of Michigan decided to treat me as a son. Both Houses of the Michigan Legislature paid a special tribute to me and to The Africans. And the City of Detroit (Michigan's largest city) saluted me and the TV series at a special reception in Detroit.

In Chicago Mayor Harold Washington declared October 6, 1986, "the day of the Africans." He saluted me at a special celebration of the TV series in Chicago. He also provided me with a special police escort to accompany me to O'Hare Airport. I was greatly honoured, not least because Chicago was my first base as a professor in America (I was a Visiting Professor at the University of Chicago in 1965).

Senator Kerry of Massachusetts drew the attention of the U.S. Senate in Washington to the TV series. Mr. Kerry said inter alia to the Senate: "While I cannot endorse all of the conclusions made by the participants in the film, its showing has provided a revealing look into the history of the continent of Africa, and has provided the American people with an all-too-rare look at Africa from an African's perspective."

The rest of my own tour for the television series ranged from Honolulu in Hawaii to the Virgin Islands. Mainland stops included New York, Washington, Los Angeles, Denver, Houston, Atlanta, Chicago, Cleveland, Columbus, Detroit, Philadelphia, Flint, Providence, and Portland, Oregon. It was a tremendous opportunity to meet such a diversity of viewers and audiences. At every place I delivered a lecture on Africa's triple heritage and gave interviews to radio, television and newspapers. It has been exhilarating - but also utterly exhausting.

Soon after the showing of the last episode of "The Africans," Reverend Jesse Jackson, the Afroamerican leader, phoned me at home. "Ali, you did it, man! Great program! You did it, Buddy!" He was calling from Washington and was leaving for Japan not long afterwards. I was flattered by his enthusiasm - and by the fact that he found time to call in the midst of preparing for a long trip! Bon voyage!

My three universities of Michigan, Jos, and Cornell were very tolerant about all this excitement and mobility. It was agreed with Cornell that my first visit to the campus would be postponed until 1987. The University of Michigan hosted a small conference on the theme of "Ali Mazrui's Africa" with scholars invited from outside. President Harold Shapiro of Michigan also held a major reception in my honour and The Africans. The Vice-Chancellor of Jos, Professor O.C. Onazi, continued to be supportive and helpful even from afar.

My teaching units at Michigan and Jos were very cooperative as I traversed the world. The Heads of Political Science in Ann Arbor and Jos and the successive Directors of the Center for Afroamerican and African Studies at Michigan were all exceptionally supportive - as were my Deans in Nigeria and the United States. The secretarial staff also contributed their share to The Africans. The founder president of my country, Mzee Jomo Kenyatta, once gave us a national motto. He proclaimed Harambee, which means "let us pull together!" Believe me, there were a lot of Harambee heroes and heroines behind those scenes of The Africans! My gratitude to them all.

Joe Nye and I rediscovered each other when he invited me to go to the Kennedy School at Harvard to make a presentation on "Superpower Ethics: A Third World Perspective." Our television project seriously considered the

possibility of filming me at that seminar at Harvard. But in the end we decided it would be more authentic if I was filmed teaching at either Jos or Ann Arbor instead. I was filmed both in the library at Jos and in class at Michigan.

There was a strange reaction to the TV series among some "Professional Mazrui-Bashers" (PMBs) in London. They thought the British Broadcasting Corporation had commissioned me to do "The Africans" as a right-wing response to Basil Davidson's series called "Africa" transmitted on Channel 4 the previous year! Can you imagine? In fact, the idea of my doing a TV series for the BBC was first raised when I was doing the BBC Reith Lectures (Radio) way back in 1979. Two years later David Harrison and John Reynolds wrote to me more directly about a proposed BBC TV series on Africa with myself as the story teller. The two of them subsequently came to the U.S.A. to discuss the matter further. The true stimulus of my TV series was therefore not Basil Davidson's "Africa." It was my own BBC Reith Lectures (The African Condition). Indeed, some of my television programmes in the series bear exactly the same titles as some of the Reith Lectures ("A Garden of Eden in Decay," "A Clash of Cultures").

As for the suggestion that my TV series is a right-wing response to Basil's, that is probably the most preposterous charge of them all. How any alert viewer who has watched my series could arrive at such a conclusion boggles the mind. Did the Professional Mazrui-Bashers (PMBs) just switch off the volume on their TV sets and refused to listen to what I was saying?

Lynne Cheney, Chairman of the National Endowment for the Humanities in the USA, reacted in the opposite extreme. She hit the roof when she previewed the series and denounced it as "anti-Western diatribe" and "pro-Qaddafi." Although the Endowment had contributed more than \$600,000 towards production, Mrs. Cheney (a Reagan appointee and wife of one of President Reagan's friends in the Congress) insisted that the Endowment's name be removed from the credits of the series. The American Right Wing as a whole was aroused to new levels of indignation against Public Broadcasting (non-commercial) in the U.S.A. "The Africans" became Exhibit A in the Rightwing's case against the Public Broadcasting Service (as "too liberal" and "unpatriotic").

Molly decided to sell the family house in Ann Arbor at 1517 Wells Street. For all of us it marked the end of an era. We bought the house in Burns Park when we first settled here in 1974. The divorce settlement in 1982 handed over the house to Molly since she also had custody of our three sons. This year the last of the boys moved out - and Molly decided to move to a smaller place. We shall all miss 1517 Wells - once a nest for all our children, once a habitat for a family in its last years together.

Saul Mendlovitz, the World Order Models Project and I have rediscovered each other. I addressed the team at Princeton on "World Order and the Leisure Revolution." Does the expansion of leisure hours help or hinder prospects for a viable world order? What do you think?

A lot of Makerere friends have resurfaced as a result of my TV series. We have rediscovered each other. Particularly remarkable is the resurfacing

of an old dear partner at Makerere, Gwen McIntosh. She and Bill were friends of ours for years. Gwen also worked for me as a superb secretary until the stork arrived with a baby one day. Providence gave the McIntoshes children. Gwen decided to be a full time mother after that - and I lost an important professional pillar.

If Gwen McIntosh was the first personal American secretary I had in my career, Judy Baughn has been the latest. I have been fortunate in the secretarial quality I have enjoyed over the years - high standards indeed. Unfortunately there is a scramble for excellent secretaries! Judy has received an offer she cannot refuse - not from a stork (she already has children) but in terms of promotion within the university structure. We wish her continuing success. We shall miss not only her sterling secretarial skills - but also her enormous reserves of good will and good humour. When her new employer phoned me for a confidential report on Judy, I knew that the truth would hurt me! The truth concerned Judy's impressive secretarial and organizational power. I knew I was doing myself out of a partner by praising Judy! I lost out to the rivals!

Michael Tidy and Omari Kokole gave me considerable research help with my latest book The Africans: A Triple Heritage. Michael was particularly crucial in the final critical phase of the book. The book was quite a success in Britain. It was on the best-seller's list of the Sunday Times for many weeks. I was shocked to learn that it was the first book by an African to have made the best-seller's list! Can you imagine?

The book has now been released to the U.S. market as well. At the time of writing this seasonal letter I have no idea how well the book is doing in America. However I do know that the publishers have already run out of copies for retail distributors. But I hope a lot of people send it out as a Christmas gift!

Omari and I are collaborating on another piece of writing right now - a chapter about the rise and fall of democracy in Uganda and prospects for the future. The chapter is for a project based at Stanford University. The target is a book about democracy in developing countries, edited by Larry Diamond and Seymour Martin Lipset. The African section will include Uganda's experience, written by Kokole and Mazrui.

Zimbabwe decided to show The Africans TV series during the period of the summit meeting of the nonaligned countries in Harare in August 1986. The Ministry of Information of Zimbabwe had informed me about this plan well in advance, but I did not get a confirmation until I was on a plane with Jesse Jackson and his entourage after their Southern African tour. I joined the flight in Lagos, bound for New York. It was from Jesse Jackson's colleagues that I learnt that "The Africans" was being shown in Zimbabwe when they themselves were there.

As far as I know, the only other African country to have actually shown the series so far is Nigeria, which had itself been of assistance with the production. The series would have been shown in more countries by now but for some legal problems that the BBC has to sort out and finalize before further

distributing the film. I understand that among the countries which are negotiating for the series is Angola, in spite of the language barrier. Their interest is most encouraging.

One of my deepest regrets of 1986 is that I did not call on Cheikh Anta Diop, the great Senegalese thinker, when I was in Senegal earlier in the year. I was in Dakar attending a meeting of the UNESCO Project on the Scientific and Cultural History of Mankind. Cheikh Anta did not himself attend the meeting, but he sent me a personal message of greetings. I sent a warm reciprocal message back. If I had known he would be dead a few weeks later, I would have made it a point to call on Cheikh Anta personally to pay my respects. Alas, a missed opportunity to say farewell to a great man!

However, I must still be grateful for the fact that Cheikh Anta Diop and I met either in Africa or in France almost every year in the last ten years of his life. He was a great Renaissance figure - philosopher, historian, physicist and general man of letters. His death leaves a major void in the world of scholarship. It also creates a void in Africa's sensibilities. Cheikh Anta had an enormous capacity to make us proud of our past. On one occasion, after a lecture at the University in Kinshasa, the students in the audience were so ecstatic in proud enthusiasm that they carried Cheikh Anta (a big man) shoulder high!! Sheer exhilaration!

"Ali in a wheel chair!" Yes, that is one of my more painful memories of 1986! I had travelled all over Africa, climbing hills, crossing rivers, scrambling on rocks. I had a tumble or two in "wildest" Africa! But it was at Columbus Airport, Columbus, Ohio, that I had my worst accident - a "mini-disaster" on an escalator! The pain was so great on my foot and ankle that I was convinced the damage was truly serious. Fortunately the damage, though confining me to a wheelchair for a while, permitted me to meet most of the major speaking engagements across the country. Airlines and hotels had to be alerted about my wheelchair needs. And friends in a number of cities discovered they had to be fit enough to carry my huge weight physically up steps! I discovered how helpless a human being can be. But I also discovered what friends are truly for. God bless all our friends. I am now on my feet again - and I no longer need to give lectures from a wheel chair!

One of the saddest things about the end of a project is the dispersal. Members go their different ways. On the British side I am already nostalgic for the company of David Harrison, Peter Bate, Tim Copestake, Jenny Cathcart and Judy Andrews (as a researcher she was the "Judy-o-Christian" authority). There was of course also the effervescent Caroline Wolfe, the youngest member of our team. Destiny brought us together for a number of years on a single project - and we became dear friends while the project lasted. Many of the camera, sound and editing members of the team are now also genuinely missed.

Colleagues in the American team I worked longest with were Charles Hobson and Diana Frank on location and Ellen Casey and Toby Levine in Washington. Christopher (Kit) Roberts at Michigan was a member of the team in a different sense. In the final promotion of the series I was especially supported by Ramona Hanna and Jan DuPlain. I remain truly and deeply indebted to them all.



Ward Chamberlin, President of WETA, was a tower of strength in the face of the Rightwing onslaught in the U.S.A. He stood up to be counted - at some risk to his channel. I was full of admiration. Elliott Skinner at Columbia University was also most supportive.

The Nigerian Television Authority (NTA) was deeply involved in the production. We all got particularly close to Alhaji Adegboyega Arulogun - a great Nigerian television expert. Very lively too! Bless him! On location we were also helped by Soji Oyinsem, also an NTA producer.

Partly as a gesture to the BBC and partly in support of "The Africans," Bassem Abdullah permitted me to live for several months in his flat in London. It was an arrangement negotiated between him and the BBC. His mother kept a friendly supervisory eye. The family is partly Egyptian and partly Lebanese. Bassem's library was most useful for our Triple Heritage theme in the TV series. The beautiful flat made an enormous difference to my morale in London at a time when our hours of work were very long and very arduous.

But in the midst of all these exertions, my responsibilities to the UNESCO General History of Africa have suffered. I am way behind in my editorial duties. I am acutely embarrassed - and must make speedy amends. Apologies to all concerned.

If you are still reading this "post-mortem" on a Mazrui year, let me congratulate you on your resilience. It is an encouraging sign. I am sure you have a resplendent year ahead of you - God willing. Best wishes to you and your loved ones.

Yours warmly,

Ali A. Mazrui

AAM/jeb