

Spring 2007

MAZRUI NEWSLETTER No. 31

General Theme: Comparative Anniversaries: **Positive, Negative and Neutral**



*President Thabo Mbeki of South Africa (right) bestowed on Ali Mazrui the honorific status of Grand Companion of Oliver Tambo (April 2007). The South African President is holding Mazrui's latest book, *A Tale of Two Africas*.*

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Spring 2007

ANNUAL MAZRUI NEWSLETTER NO. 31

by

Ali A. Mazrui

General Theme: Comparative Anniversaries: Positive, Negative and Neutral

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Attached to this Newsletter is an Appendix:

APPENDIX I: Acknowledgments

This Newsletter is partly a product of the Albert Schweitzer Chair of the Humanities, Binghamton University, Binghamton, New York. The Newsletter is intended for colleagues, friends and family of the Schweitzer Professor, Ali A. Mazrui.

In March 2007 Ghana celebrated the 50th Anniversary of her independence. She had been the first sub-Saharan African country to win independence from colonial rule. My own contribution to the Golden Jubilee took a variety of forms. I had written a Foreword to the official biography of the current Head of State of Ghana, President John Agyekum Kufour. By a happy coincidence, the book was launched by Wole Soyinka, the Nobel Laureate, in Accra, Ghana. My second contribution was a gift to Ghana of my nine-part video series, *The Africans: A Triple Heritage* (BBC/PBS, 1986). I presented the gift to the Library of the W.E.B. DuBois Pan-African Center in Accra under its new Director, Anne Adams, my former colleague at Cornell.



Ali Mazrui wrote the Foreword to the official biography of John Agyekum Kufuor, President of Ghana (right), on Ghana's 50th anniversary of independence

On my own Binghamton campus in New York State, I also participated in celebrating Ghana's Golden Jubilee. I was also one of the keynote speakers at a major conference to mark the occasion held at Howard University in Washington, D.C. Sulayman Nyang and Mbye Cham were superb hosts. My presentation at Howard University revived my notorious conclusion of 1966 that "Nkrumah was a great African but not a great Ghanaian." I also spoke in Sacramento, California; as a guest of a Pan-Ghanaian organization in California. My son Al'Amin and my old friend Mutombo Mpanya made a special effort to join me at the Sacramento celebration.

In April 2007 I gave the Keynote Address at the International Symposium on "Imaging Ethiopia: Monarchy and Modernity", sponsored by the Africana Studies and Research Center at Cornell, and co-sponsored by the Institute of Ethiopian Studies, Addis Ababa University in Ethiopia. My own rather controversial theme was "Images of Ethiopians in Religion, Politics and Culture: From the Muezzin Bilal to the Opera 'Aida'." This Cornell conference marked a quarter of a century since the concluding years of the reign of Emperor Haile Selassie I.



Ali Mazrui welcoming Emperor Haile Selassie I of Ethiopia to the International Congress of African Studies, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, in 1973. The Ethiopian revolution overthrew the Emperor the next year.

I was privileged to meet the Emperor one more time in Addis Ababa in 1973 on the eve of the Ethiopian revolution which led to his downfall. I welcomed him to the meeting of the International Congress of African Studies which he was officially opening on that day. Of course, none of us realized that a dynasty which was thousands of years old was about to come to an end the following year.

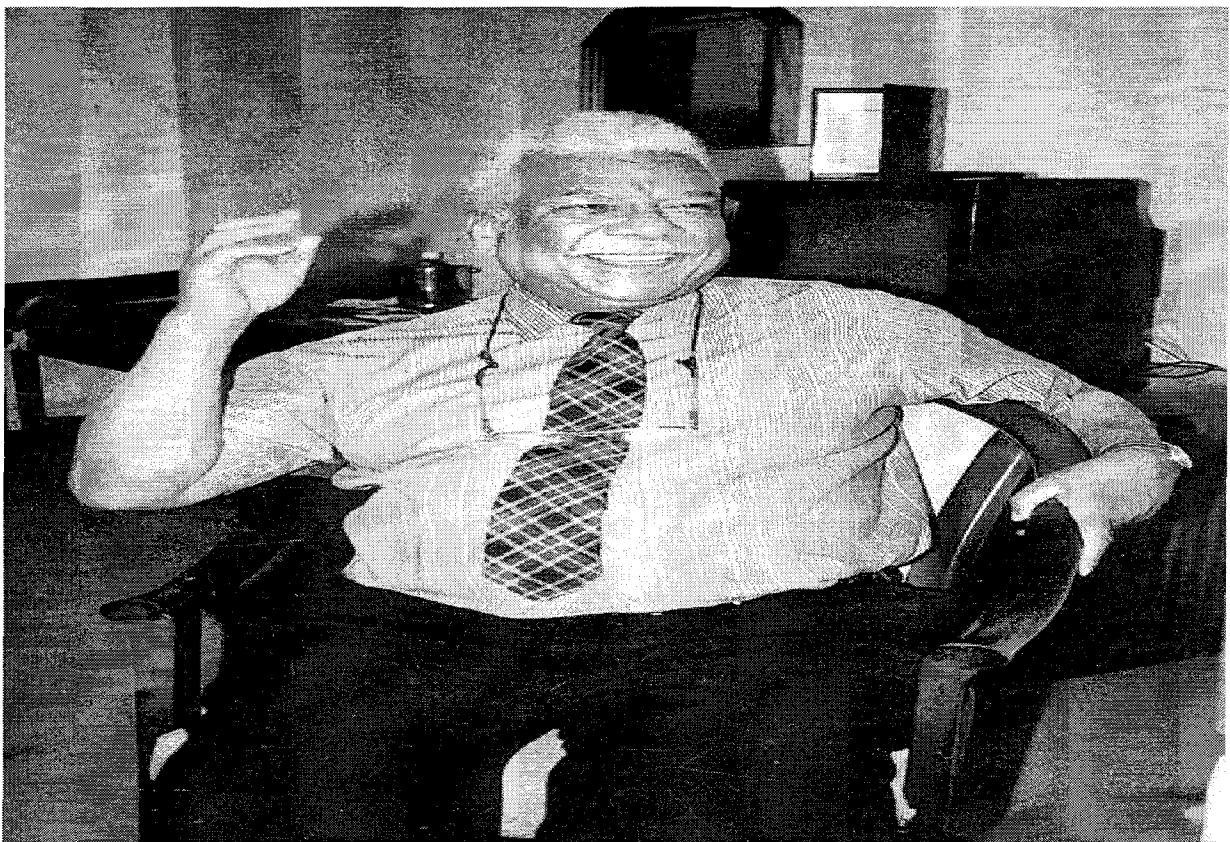
Historic Names as Anniversaries

It was the eve of my receiving another honorary doctorate in South Africa when I was elated by even bigger news. At long last I had a grand-daughter – my first female progeny! Until then God had indeed blessed me with five sons and two grandsons. But I was beginning to wonder whether my immediate line would ever produce a female descendant. And then, lo and behold, Jamal and Susan awarded me little Nicole. It was a gender breakthrough.

On the day after I heard that great news, I was at the University of Venda to receive my new honorary doctorate, under the presiding Chancellorship of Cyril Ramaphosa (widely regarded as a potential future President of the Republic of South Africa). In my address to the graduating class, I mentioned the arrival of my first grand-daughter, born in far-away America. There was a thunderous applause from the thousands in the audience (students, parents and university staff).

Unknown to me in the course of the remaining proceedings, Chancellor Rhamaphosa was canvassing for a suitable Venda name for my grand-daughter. When

the Chancellor delivered his own Chancellor's Address, he announced the favoured Venda name for my grand-daughter. She was to be called Vele, a reference to a blossom as a transition from seed to final fruit.



Ali Mazrui ecstatic about the birth of his first grand-daughter, Nicole Molly Mazrui

My new granddaughter is a young lady whose other names had been chosen with great circumspection. Jamal and Susan (the parents) solicited the votes of the rest of the family about the preferred names for their daughter. The parents computed the order of preferences from each member of the family. When the name Nicole seemed triumphant, the parents wanted to be sure that its abbreviation [Nick] did not mean something negative in some African language. I assured the parents that the female name "Nike" [pronounced literally] was a respectable Yoruba name in Nigeria.

Nicole's second name is Molly to commemorate Jamal's mother. I do hope Nicole's third name will be the African name of Vele, since I had dedicated my Venda doctorate to Nicole, and since the Chancellor at Venda had given her that South African name.

I realize that Africa is only one of Nicole's diversified ancestries. She is a convergence of African, Caucasian, Arab and Japanese ancestry (Susan's mother was Japanese and father was Euro-American). Whatever happens, Nicole should include the Venda name of Vele as part of her identity in the years ahead.

For once in May 2007, I visited Kenya without going to Mombasa! I chatted with the Mombasa extended family over the phone. The main reason why I decided to omit Mombasa in May was because I was returning to Kenya in July to preside over the annual graduation of Jomo Kenyatta University. I would go to Mombasa then.

Talking of the name Kenyatta, I was waiting for my plane in the British Airways lounge in Nairobi on a Saturday when I noticed the legs of a man standing over me. Then I heard a voice saying, “Habari gain, profesa?” I looked up to see Jomo Kenyatta’s son, Uhuru Kenyatta – who was once again running for President in Kenya this year. [He had lost the previous election].

What I am going to say next has great relevance especially for my first son Jamal. Because Jamal’s day of birth (December 14, 1963) was so close to Kenya’s attainment of independence (December 12, 1963), I agonized over what name to give him, if Molly had no objection. I did consider calling Jamal “Jomo” after the symbol of Kenya’s independence (Jomo Kenyatta). But I concluded that calling my first son “Jomo” would offend my mother since she was hoping I would call the boy “Al’Amin” after my own Dad. But for Kenya’s independence, I would indeed have called my first son, “Al’Amin”.

On the other hand, I felt sure that if I gave my first son another Muslim name, my mother would only be disappointed rather than offended. However, what Muslim name sounded closest to “Jomo”? You have guessed it! Molly and I agreed on “Jamal”! I decided that it was also a bonus that “Jamal” echoed the first name of my Egyptian hero at the time, Gamal [with a G] Abdul Nasser, the President of Egypt! I suppose I could have called “Jamal” JUMA (a Swahili name). Unfortunately, that would have implied he was born on a Friday.

If you are wondering why naming my first born was such a politicized issue, please remember the euphoria of Kenya’s independence. I was located across the border in Kampala. Yet I could not go to Nairobi for the event of the century because my wife was on the verge of giving birth to my first child. I thought I could combine the two momentous celebrations (Jamal’s birth and Kenya’s independence) by looking for a suitable name for my first son to mark the occasion. The two events were “beautiful”! This was additional justification for the choice of “Jamal” (which is Arabic for “beauty” in both the male and the female).

A joint salute to Jomo Kenyatta and Gamal Abdul Nasser in a single name was the beginning of my future concept of “AFRABIA” – synthesizing the legacies of Africa and Arabia in the bloodline of the Mazruis. Molly was very tolerant towards my politicized euphoria.

Much later came May 26, 2007, in the British Airways lounge at Jomo Kenyatta International Airport in Nairobi. I was facing the son of the man after whom I had semi named my own son. Because of Kenya’s independence, Jomo Kenyatta had named his son “Uhuru”. Also because of Kenya’s independence, I almost called my son “Jomo” – and settled for “Jamal” as a salute to both Kenyatta and Nasser, and as a submission to the feelings of my mother.

It is almost certain that Uhuru Kenyatta stands a chance of becoming President of Kenya one day, though not necessarily soon. He is young enough. He and I later traveled together, first class, on British Airways to London. He was accompanied by one of his own sons – probably five years old. I later wondered whether the little boy was

called "Jomo"! When I had asked the boy his name, he had been too shy to answer me! Perhaps the little boy is indeed the next "Jomo Kenyatta" -- almost like a search for the next Dalai Lama from child to child! Who knows? I would like to believe that both the Senior Jomo Kenyatta and I have produced progenies of destiny, Amen.

My mother did partially have her wish when I named my second son "Al'Amin". Wherever she is in Heaven, my mother will be pleased that Al'Amin did not take any chances but named his own first-born son after his own Dad. And so it came to pass that I now have a grandson who bears exactly my own name – Ali Al'Amin Mazrui!!

Ugandan Anniversaries: Toil, Tears and Triumph

The years 1966 and 1967 have carved out a number of anniversaries for me – echoing important events in my own life and in Africa's experience. When the Bank of Uganda invited me in 2006 to go to Kampala and be Keynote Speaker at the Celebration of their 40th Anniversary as Uganda's Central Bank, I was excited for more than one reason. Makerere University joined the Bank in co-hosting my 2006 visit to the country, and Makerere will always be full of positive memories for me. Indeed, all my first three sons were born at the University Hospital of Mulago in the 1960s.

If 2006 was the 40th Anniversary of the founding of the Bank of Uganda, it was also the 40th anniversary of my election as the first African Dean of Social Sciences in Anglophone East Africa. During my ten years at Makerere, the Deanship was the only promotion which triggered off resentment among Ugandans that the position had gone to a Kenyan rather than a Ugandan.

My Ugandan colleagues were congratulatory in 1965 when I was promoted to full Professor, without passing through the ranks of Senior Lecturer, Reader or Associate Professor. Indeed, the accelerated promotion would not have occurred but for the agreement of the newly appointed Ugandan Principal of Makerere University College, Y.K. Lule (who subsequently became Uganda's Head of State. My being a Kenyan was not an issue in my professorial promotion).

Secondly, my Ugandan colleagues did not resent my being appointed University Orator with the responsibility of drafting citations for honorary doctorates awarded to distinguished dignitaries. It was only when Makerere was about to award an honorary doctorate to the Head of State, Milton Obote, that Makerere disqualified me from honoring Obote. I was disqualified as University Orator because of my complicated political relationship with the President. It had nothing to do with my not being a Ugandan.

Thirdly, my Ugandan colleagues did not seem to resent me when I rapidly became the most famous African University Professor in the country, if not in the sub-region of Eastern Africa. God bless them, they cheered me on.

Ugandan colleagues cracked jokes about me concerning my multiple books and my dozens of articles. They thought I was too prolific by half, but they were not jealous.

I packed the Main Hall at Makerere every time I gave a speech there. I was the only campus speaker who enjoyed such popularity. Neither Uganda students nor Ugandan faculty resented that. On the contrary, they all turned up in their hundreds to listen to me.

Off campus, I was known to debate the Head of State and Head of the Intelligence Services in Uganda – I was rapidly becoming a national figure. Ideologically, I was classified as a liberal rather than a socialist.

Some left wing Ugandan intellectuals resented me for being a “liberal”, not for being a Kenyan. (In reality, I regarded myself as socialism-friendly but not a socialist – just as I regard myself as Buddhism-friendly but not a Buddhist.) From an ideological point of view, my nationality as a Kenyan was not an issue.

Then why did it become an issue on my being elected Dean of Social Sciences? I served as Dean for two years, and was running for a second term when three Ugandan colleagues (one in economics and two in my own Department of Political Science) led the anti-Mazrui pack for the Deanship. When I realized the strength of emotions, I withdrew from the Deanship race. I did not want to be caught up in a debate about “who was preventing Ugandans from being promoted.”

I think I helped my standing among Ugandans by not pushing too hard. It had in any case been a privilege to have served as Dean from 1966 to 1968. 2006 was, therefore, a positive anniversary for me personally, as indeed it was for the Central Bank, its governor and its staff.

In 2006, I gave one lecture on campus at Makerere and another lecture under the auspices of the Bank of Uganda. But 2006 was also the 20th year since Yoweri Museveni captured power in Uganda in 1986 and became Head of State. I personally believe Museveni’s capture of power in 1986 was worthy of being celebrated as a positive anniversary in 2006. However, his continuation in power twenty years later may now verge on being a negative anniversary.

Nevertheless, it was a privilege to have had a prolonged conversation with President Yoweri Museveni in 2006 at the State House. The Head of State and I ranged over a variety of topics.



President Yoweri Museveni of Uganda received Mazrui at State House in Kampala in 2006

Our agenda included the 20-year war in Northern Uganda, the pursuit of regional integration in East Africa under his leadership, and issues of language policy in African countries. It was very gracious of the President to have given me about an hour in his busy schedule. I was accompanied to the State House in Kampala by Michael Hindzano

Ngonyo, my Protocol Officer from Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture and Technology.

One aspect about my lecture at Makerere in 2006 appeared very odd to me. Attendance at my campus lecture was by invitation only. I was told that this was because the population of the students had quadrupled since my years as a Professor there. Considering that Makerere did not have a large enough lecture hall, admission to my lecture by special invitation seemed strange but understandable. The hall was nevertheless full.

When I was at Makerere in 2006, I asked Prime Minister Apollo Nsibambi to consider abolishing any compulsory retirement age for university careers. I told him that in the United States, it was illegal to force a tenured elderly professor to retire for as long as he or she could teach classes and grade examinations.

I was delighted to learn later that Prime Minister Nsibambi ran with the idea of a change in the regulations and laws concerning retirement. He pushed for a change both as Prime Minister and in his capacity as Chancellor of Makerere University. The compromise was reportedly to raise the retirement age for academics from sixty years of age to seventy years. I was flattered to learn that Prime Minister Nsibambi cited the example of "Ali Mazrui" (Exhibit A) who still taught, wrote books and articles, traveled across the world and is still honoured in his seventies!! Mazrui was also involved with the media as a public intellectual and a writer!

While in Kampala, I paid a condolence visit to my old colleague Senteza Kajubi. We knew each other when he was Professor of Education at Makerere and later when he was Dean of Education. After I left Makerere, I knew Senteza was Vice-Chancellor of one of the private universities of post-colonial Uganda. Indeed, his new university did me the honour of awarding me an honorary doctorate.

Well, Senteza lost his life-long companion and wife in 2006. She was a wonderful and creative person. She will be truly missed.

When Senteza and I were both at Makerere, he served as the Chair of the Makerere Housing Committee. In those years every member of the academic staff was entitled to subsidized housing on campus. But the decision of who got which house was based on a points system (size of family, rank of the applicant, duration of service at Makerere, etc.)

My wife at the time, Molly, and myself were dissatisfied with the house we had been allocated. So every time a better house fell vacant, we applied to the Housing Committee, and every time we were turned down. One day I decided that enough was enough. So I approached the Chair of the Housing Committee, Senteza Kajubi, and asked him what I could possibly do to have enough points for a house we wanted.

Senteza offered to give me what he described as his "twining formula". It turned out that Senteza's wife had given him three sets of twins, one set after another. This is for real! Since my wife Molly was giving me only one child at a time in the maternity ward, I should learn the Kajubi formula of multiplying if I wanted a better house than the one awarded to me! We both laughed over his recommendation. Molly had given me three children, but only one at a time! We had failed miserably as twin-makers, but eventually Senteza Kajubi felt sorry for us – and allocated us a much better house.

My 2006 visit to Makerere also included a delightful afternoon with Dent Ocaya-Lakidi. He and his dear wife held a tea-party in my honour, Mahmood Mamdani was

also among the guests, along with his famous wife (producer of Mississippi Masala, starring Denzel Washington). Also present was former colleague, Tony Ginyera-Pinyewa of Makerere fame.

Unfortunately Dent Ocaya-Lakidi is now paralyzed from the waist down. He woke up one day to find he could not walk. A major tragedy, but I was encouraged by his cheerfulness, sense of humour, and continuing intellectual alertness. I am still not sure if his condition can be cured. The blindness of two of my own older sons (Jamal and Kim) seems beyond cure. Fortunately, my boys (as well as Dent Ocaya-Lakidi) are strong individuals with the will to overcome adversity.

For most Ugandans the negative anniversary of 2006 was that it marked the 40th Anniversary of the Battle of the Lubiri. In 1966 the forces of the central government of Uganda, led by Idi Amin Dada, attacked the palace of the King of the Baganda (the palace was the Lubiri). Kabaka Mutesa II was forced to go into exile in Great Britain, where he died three years later. Milton Obote, the head of the central government of Uganda, kept the Baganda under a state of emergency until they were liberated by Idi Amin after Amin's military coup of 1971.



Young Ali Mazrui in a white suit in the company of President Milton Obote (center) at a reception in Kampala, Uganda, in the 1960s

Was liberation by Idi Amin an oxymoron? The Amin years in Uganda (1971-1979) prepared the ground for deadlier anniversaries of the future.

Saluting Living Legends

In February 2007, I was honoured as a “Living Legend” by the African Communications Agency and the Economic Commission of West African States [ECOWAS]. The Living Legends Awards were bestowed in Abuja, Nigeria, at the 2007 Africa’s Media Summit [AIMS, 2007]. Previous Living Legend honorees included Nelson Mandela, Kofi Annan, Dudley Thompson and Wole Soyinka.

Unfortunately the dates of the awards clashed with my wife's own 50th birthday (her Golden Jubilee). My hosts in Abuja settled for either a satellite transmission of my acceptance speech or a DVD/VIDEO recording. I was later told that my acceptance speech was regarded as both hilarious (in the sense of provoking laughter) and insightful. Let me reproduce my "Living Legend" award acceptance speech in full for the record: *I am truly both honoured and humbled to be recognized as a Living Legend at this AIMS Summit, under the auspices of the Economic Organization of West African States (ECOWAS) and the African Communications Agency.*

When one is honoured in this way, there are three factors which make the occasion special to the honoree. One factor is who is making the presentation. In my case, I ask the question: Who today is saluting my contributions to this world of ours? The second factor important to the honoree is: For what am I being recognized today? The third factor significant to the honoree is: Who else is being honoured alongside me? What is the company I am keeping? To what galaxy do I belong?

Before I answer those questions, let me share an anecdote. A few years ago a South African university invited me to receive an honorary doctorate at the same ceremony which was also conferring such a degree on Nelson Mandela. I was, of course, impressed by the university which was honouring me. I was flattered by the tribute to my scholarship, the recognition of my services to Africa. And I felt really good that I was going to be honoured at the same ceremony as Nelson Mandela.

But did I really belong to the same galaxy as Nelson Mandela? I was soon disabused of that fantasy. Nelson Mandela indicated that he would only be able to accept the doctorate if the ceremony was conducted in his village in South Africa. And so instead of the apocryphal Muhammad going to the mountain, the mountain went to Muhammad! The university in question packed its bags, gowns, microphones, hundreds of chairs and dozens of tables – and packed its buses with students, professors and administrators to go to Nelson Mandela's village. The ceremony was held on the grounds of Mandela's village residence.



Former President Nelson Mandela is a galaxy of his own as a "Living Legend"

My own graduation was held the following day on the campus of that university. Although Ngugi wa Thion'go, the novelist, and I were deeply flattered by the honorary doctorates we received that day, we both also recognized that we were not in the same league as Nelson Mandela. We did not belong to the same galaxy as him. By no stretch of the imagination could we have summoned the apocryphal mountain of the occasion to follow Muhammad to our village.

At the time of recording this acceptance of the Living Legends Award, which is to be conferred on me in Abuja on February 13, 2007, I do not have the list of the other honorees. But I do know that the legendary boxer, sportsman and humanitarian, Muhammad Ali, will be among those being saluted.

As it happens, he is the only sportsman whose autographed and framed photograph hangs in my sitting room in Binghamton, New York. Of course, I do not belong to Muhammad Ali's galaxy either, but at least my own children regard me as the second most famous Black Ali after Muhammad Ali! I am a mere Ali Mazrui.

What is Muhammad Ali's photograph doing in my sitting room? Because he and I once joined forces to raise money for Somalia which was then suffering from famine. At a fundraising banquet in Philadelphia, I was the main speaker and Muhammad Ali was the great presence. That evening and the next day the boxer and I spent many hours together.

On one occasion, when we stood together near Philadelphia's railway station, passers-by recognized Muhammad Ali instantly. But since I was standing by Ali's side, the pedestrians assumed that I was either Muhammad Ali's secretary or his aging body-guard! So those passers-by who wanted Ali's autograph or wanted to shake his hand first came to me for permission. Muhammad Ali authorized me to be the go-between! Autograph-hunters surrounded me – not asking for my own signature, but seeking Muhammad Ali's. It was a moment of power for this lesser Black Ali!

Tonight in Abuja I am once again empowered by the company that I am keeping. The company includes Muhammad Ali and other luminaries. I am deeply moved.

The value of the occasion also arises from those who have organized it and have extended the recognition. The African Communications Agency is one of Africa's vanguard institutions in this era of the Information Superhighway. And ECOWAS is the most ambitious experiment in regional integration ever attempted by African peoples anywhere in the world. These two sponsors of the Living Legends Awards Ceremony have added immensely to the importance of this occasion.

It is also very important that Africa recognizes and salutes those who have served it while we are still around. I have been privileged to have lived and served in several African countries, lectured in dozens and written and broadcast about the whole of Africa and its Diaspora.

Of course, my motivation was to serve Africa and serve the world of scholarship, rather than to seek recognition and awards. But when such recognition does come from my peers or my African compatriots or my colleagues in the academy and in the wider world of scholarship, it is always a humbling experience, deeply gratifying.

It was in 1957 that I entered the University of Manchester in England to start studying for my bachelor's degree. This year 2007 is the 50th anniversary of that start of my academic education as an undergraduate.

You are, therefore, honouring me on my Golden Jubilee from the year when I first entered a university as a student. 1957 was also the year when my future Nigerian wife was born. I was entering a university; Pauline was entering the world! On the wider stage of history was independent Ghana. Ghana also entered the world stage in 1957.

2007 is, therefore, a fitting celebration! I am very grateful to ECOWAS, to the African Communications Agency and to this International Media Summit of our beloved continent for honouring me in this manner.

God bless Africa and God bless us all. Amen.

Threats to Life and Limb

This newsflash has more to do with the older Alamin in my life (my nephew) than with the younger Al'Amin (my son). Earlier in May, Alamin senior stopped at a restaurant in Nairobi, to use the toilet. While he was getting ready to use the urinal, he suddenly saw a gun pointing at his temple. A voice commanded, in Kiswahili, "Mzee, complete your business, while we complete ours!" They started emptying his pockets. He had just withdrawn the equivalent of several hundred dollars from a Nairobi ATM. When Alamin protested about being robbed, they roughed him up a bit. They gave him some bruises, and then left him alone. He was lucky.

Alamin's brother, Munir, later told me that Alamin's life was saved because he had money on him. Armed robbers in Kenya become more deadly when they are frustrated by drawing a blank!! Alamin himself was convinced that the robbers followed him from the ATM machine – and saw their chance when he entered a toilet.

We later also heard from our family friend, Jonah Isawa Elaigwu, in Nigeria. He was traveling in a car, between Abuja and Jos in Nigeria in May, when they were stopped by armed robbers in broad daylight. Jonah's car was bullet-riddled but he and his driver survived the event. The driver of one of the other cars was killed, and several passengers were hospitalized.

Unfortunately the crime-news in the United States is only marginally better. You have probably heard that the rate of violent crimes in the United States is once again going up and up! What on earth is happening to the human race? Indeed, school-crimes in the United States are escalating!

But threats to life and limb come not only from guns but also from germs; and not just from violence but also from virus. My youngest son, Harith, was hospitalized with pneumonia on the eve of my departure to South Africa to be honoured by President Thabo Mbeki. I nearly cancelled the trip, but was encouraged to proceed by the family. Pauline delayed her own trip to South Africa to be with Harith. But by the time Pauline got to South Africa, she was too late for the presidential honours. More about that later.

Many of you know by now I was hospitalized at the Wilson Memorial Hospital in Binghamton for a couple of days in early June 2007. I woke up on a Saturday morning with a swollen left leg which was extremely painful, red and tender. Pauline phoned my doctor, and I was then rushed to the Emergency at the hospital. At first we at home (and the doctors') were worried it was a blood clot which could have precipitated a stroke or a heart attack.

At the emergency center, I was subjected to a variety of tests. The doctors concluded that it was not a blood-clot. The doctors decided to keep me at the hospital for a night or two for further observation.

It has now been concluded that my left leg had succumbed to cellulitis. For a healthy person, cellulites would not be too big a threat. But for a diabetic like myself, cellulitis could be dangerous to the extent of threatening the viability of a limb. I am told that cellulitis in a diabetic has sometimes resulted in amputation (Heavens forbid)!

But we seem to have caught the attack promptly. I was put on a regimen of antibiotic, and was finally released from the hospital. The pain went down considerably, but the swelling lasted a while longer. I cancelled my international trips for a while.

The member of the Binghamton family who spent the longest in the hospital was my mother-in-law, Mama Alice Uti (Pauline's mother). She was admitted to Binghamton General Hospital for a knee replacement. We thought she would be released in less than a week – but complications kept her in the hospital for several weeks. The complications included a temporary blood clot. However, Mama Alice is now back in our home – and as busy as ever with self-imposed domestic chores. She is a work-a-holic! God bless her!

Among the Companions of Oliver Tambo

Most countries have annual national honours and medals for their own heroic citizens, but only a few countries have annual honours and medals for heroic performance by non-citizens. Post-apartheid South Africa is among the latter. That is why I qualified for possible elevation to the Order of the Grand Companions of Oliver Tambo. In 2007 the new Oliver Tambo Companions included the former Secretary-General of the [British] Commonwealth of Nations, Sir Shirdath Surrendranath Ramphal. It was great for me to share the stage with Sonny Ramphal as we were decorated by President Thabo Mbeki, South Africa's Head of State. I had known Sonny Ramphal for many years.

Another innovation South Africa has enacted for its national honours is posthumous awards. Among the earliest to qualify as a Supreme Companion of Oliver Tambo is the most famous Indian of the twentieth century, Mahatma Mohandas Gandhi. Post apartheid South Africa honoured him as one of the earliest fighters against racism in South Africa. Gandhi had lived in the Union of South Africa over 20 years, from 1893 to 1914.



Oliver Tambo, longest serving President of the African National Congress of South Africa

On our own day of being honoured in Pretoria in April 2007, we also attended a big celebratory luncheon hosted by President Thabo Mbeki.

I took advantage of the presidential luncheon to present to Thabo Mbeki my latest book, **A Tale of Two Africas: Nigeria and South Africa as Contrasting Visions**, (London: Adonis Abbey, 2006). President Mbeki and I held the book ostentatiously for the photographers to mark the occasion.

Subsequently, I enjoyed some forty-five minutes with the Head of State in his office, one-to-one. Our conversation particularly focused not only on civil rights but also on cultural rights in post-apartheid South Africa. I was particularly intrigued by South Africa's new language policy of eleven official languages. More about that later.



Ali Mazrui receiving the necklace of Grand Companion of Oliver Tambo from the Head of State of South Africa

In many of these events, I was greatly helped by my dear friend James N. Kariuki, assisted by Esther Githinji. These are Kenyans living in South Africa, serving as my absolute pillars of strength every time I go to South Africa.



Ali Mazrui being congratulated by President Thabo Mbeki and applauded by Master of Ceremony

This time they had additional responsibilities when Pauline, my wife, joined me (but too late for the Presidential events). James and Esther were terrific. They were joined by my Protocol Officer from Kenya, Michael Hindzano Ngonyo, who also facilitated my diverse engagements in spite of the relative unfamiliarity of South Africa for Michael.

James Kariuki also negotiated my main public lecture in South Africa on this April trip, 2007. I lectured at the University of the Witwatersrand (Wits). It was my first lecture as Grand Companion of Oliver Tambo. The audience was large and very receptive. I was subsequently the guest of honour at a dinner hosted by both the Chancellor and the Vice-Chancellor of Wits.

My lecture at Wits included my historical relations with liberal South African Universities (formerly white) and with the changing national authorities of Africa. Let me quote those autobiographical parts of my Wits lecture of April 2007:

Let me begin with an apology and a celebration in my own relationship with the University of the Witwatersrand (Wits). In some deep seated sense, I have felt mildly estranged from this particular seat of learning in South Africa.

On the positive side I have always known that Wits and the University of Cape Town were the two most liberal white institutions during the dark years of apartheid. The University of Cape Town invited me to lecture there as far back as the late 1960s. Cape Town indicated that if I came to South Africa, I would also have the option of lecturing at Wits.

I calmly gave the University of Cape Town three conditions about my coming to apartheid South Africa – that I should be able to say what I wanted, that I should be able to address racially mixed audiences, and that I should be able to come with my wife (my first wife was English).

Cape Town answered that they could risk the condition of my being able to say what I wanted. They could guarantee my addressing racially mixed audiences. However, my coming with my wife would make me liable to prosecution under the Immorality and Mixed Marriages laws. So I never came to either Cape Town or Wits during the dark years of apartheid. When I finally came to South Africa in the more optimistic years of 1990s, what could possibly have happened to estrange me from Wits?

That I should lecture at Wits on issues of African leadership is an act of exorcism. I have a dark memory of Wits on the specific issue of access to African leadership.

I happened to be in South Africa as a guest of this University in the early 1990s when Nelson Mandela was visiting this campus for the first time since he was released from prison. Since both Mandela and myself were guests of Wits, I asked the white man who had been assigned to me the following question:

“Is there any chance of my being introduced to Nelson Mandela if I attended the Wits reception in his honour?”

My white host replied bluntly,

“Not the slightest chance! You are welcome to come to the reception but you will not be introduced to him.”

I was of course offended as well as puzzled. It was clear that Wits was trying to build bridges with the emerging Black power in South Africa as symbolized by Nelson Mandela. Wits did not have the remotest idea of how to relate to Black people from other walks of life – such as the international world of Black scholars.

Even as far back as the early 1990s, I was probably the most senior non-south African scholar in the country at the time. It was the chance of a lifetime for the most senior Black political leader, Nelson Mandela, to meet the most senior African scholar to visit South Africa since Mandela’s own liberation. But the encounter was denied.

I was faced by the following options. I could feel so insulted that I would catch the first flight out of South Africa back to my more receptive students and fellow scholars in the United States.

Alternatively, I could keep my remaining engagements in South Africa and simply boycott the Wits reception in honour of Nelson Mandela.

*Or I could attend the Mandela reception, swallow my pride, and wait to complain another day. I was **not** introduced to Mr. Mandela.*

What Wits and I did not know at the time was what Nelson Mandela himself told me eighteen months later when we met in Senegal at a Summit meeting of the Organization of African Unity. When in the introduction in Dakar in 1992, the name Mazrui was mentioned to Mandela, Mandela exclaimed: “Oh yes, Professor! I read some of your works in prison.”

I later lived to enjoy the very great privilege and singular honour not only of meeting Mandela one more time, but also of awarding him his literary prize when his prison book was recognized among the 100 great African books of the twentieth century. With great humility, I awarded Mandela the prize in Cape Town at the ceremony of the 100 Great African books of the last one hundred years.

I hope one day a Wits graduate student would do his or her research for the term paper on the topic, “When Wits decided that Ali Mazrui should not meet Nelson Mandela.”

The student may decide to conclude with the decision by Thabo Mbeki to elevate Mazrui to the Order of Grand Companions of Oliver Tambo a few years later.

But there are mitigating factors in sympathy with Wits' behavior in the early 1990s. Black liberation was too new, and the Wits white elite, while established, were not yet confident about how to handle that liberation.

Nelson Mandela was a figure larger than life, and the Wits white establishment did not want to presume introducing Mandela to a visiting African scholar, about whom Wits might not have known enough. After all, Mazrui's BBC/PBS television series, THE AFRICANS: A TRIPLE HERITAGE, had been banned in apartheid South Africa, though it had been shown in Baputswana and Zimbabwe.

But the greatest defense for the white establishment of Wits in the early 1990s was that it had been ahead of most other whites in apartheid South Africa in seeking accommodation with Black people. They just did not know yet how to respect non-South African Blacks. The University has made great progress since then.

The Wider Context of Southern Africa

In Southern Africa, we have seen Nelson Mandela as a major cause of Pan Africanism in others, but not himself a first-rank pan Africanist. On the other hand, while Nelson Mandela is Southern Africa's first political globalist, Thabo Mbeki is Southern Africa's first global Pan Africanist. More than other Southern African leaders, Thabo Mbeki has identified not just with fellow Africans on the African continent, but also with people of African ancestry scattered from Haiti to Harlem and onwards to Hararé. Thabo Mbeki is GLOBAL AFRICA INCARNATE.

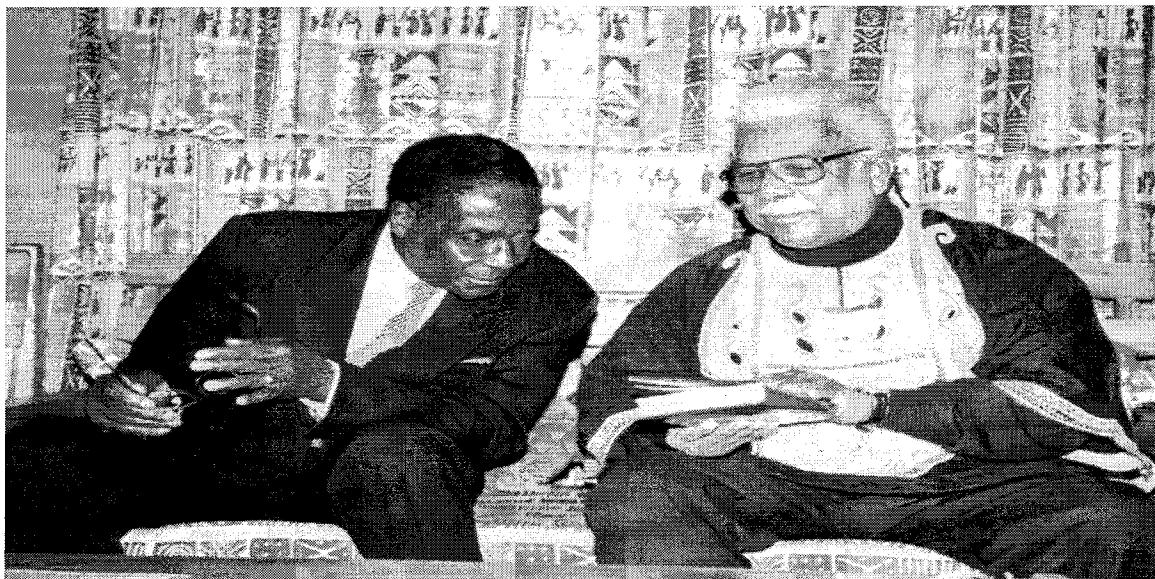
But there is another paradox about Thabo Mbeki which is more widely accepted among his critics in South Africa. Is Thabo Mbeki a man of the world but not necessarily a man of the people? The argument is that, firstly, Mr. Mbeki is too much of a technocrat to qualify as a man of the people. Secondly, although Mbeki is not as much of a globalist in ideological orientation as Nelson Mandela, Mbeki is even more worldly-wise than Mandela. While Mandela in prison was reflecting on the human condition, Thabo Mbeki in exile was learning the ropes of world affairs. It is arguable that Thabo Mbeki knows more about the world than does the average President of the United States. Does this make Mbeki in touch with the world but not necessarily in touch with the people? The debate continues.

With regard to Muammar Qaddafi, his paradox is that he is probably the first Arab leader who has evolved into more of a Pan-Africanist than Pan Arabist. He has often been disenchanted with his Arab brothers, and has sought fulfillment in Africa instead. I have spent hours with Muammar Qaddafi. He would recommend as a fundamental educational policy that each African be at least tri-lingual – competence in an African indigenous language, combined with competence in Arabic and in a European language.



Ali Mazrui and his friend, Abdalla Bujra (right) were received by the Libyan Leader Muammar Ghadafi at State House, Tripoli, Libya

As for Robert Mugabe of Zimbabwe, he was brilliant for the political liberation of his country, but a disastrous fighter for economic liberation. If he had handled land distribution well, he would have been celebrated by history as both a political liberator and an economic emancipator. But it was not to be.



Ali Mazrui about to present a book [*The Mazruiana Collection*] to President Robert Mugabe of Zimbabwe

I have watched Mugabe's transition from my 1982 interview of him to our conversation in his new economic defiance. Two years after Zimbabwe's independence, I complained to Prime Minister Robert Mugabe (as his title then was) that I had seen more racism in one week in Harare (then Salisbury) than I normally witnessed in a year in the United States, or than I had witnessed in Kenya in the preceding decade. I had witnessed the racism in how whites treated blacks in restaurants, hotels, in offices and in the streets. I asked Prime Minister Mugabe: "Why do you permit such racism in post-colonial Zimbabwe?"

Mugabe answered that there were three ways of reforming people. One was by persuasion; second, was by setting them a positive example; and only in the last resort were coercion and threats to be used.

When I met him in this new millennium, I asked him if he had tried persuasion and setting a good example before resorting to coercion and threats regarding the white farmers of Zimbabwe.

Of course, Mr. Mugabe was now President rather than Prime Minister. He accused me of taking it too much for granted that the initiative to invade white farms was taken by him. He emphasized that the initiative was taken by veterans of the liberation struggle who had concluded that political liberation without fundamental land-reform in a country like Zimbabwe was a contradiction in terms. In the face of the veteran's invasion of white farms, Mugabe was faced with an agonizing choice. He could send the police to protect the white farms. The police would have been humiliated in the confrontation. He could send the army of Zimbabwe. The army could have mutinied and defied the Head of State on such orders. Or the army could have obeyed the Head of State – and the confrontation resulted in a blood bath. President Mugabe decided to support the goals of the liberation veterans [and reform] even if Mugabe disagreed with their unorthodox methods [invading the white farms].

I still believed the Zimbabwe Head of State had other options, including a combination of carrots as well as sticks in his confrontations with both the liberation veterans and the white farmers. President Mugabe and I agreed to disagree.

What should South Africa do today in the face of even further deterioration of the situation in Zimbabwe? Of course, a military attempt at "regime change" is totally unacceptable. Iraq has taught us what unforeseen consequences can occur in a militarily induced regime change.

But South Africa has less belligerent options of inducing change in Zimbabwe – including economic sanctions of trade and investment, sanctions of strict visa requirements for the Zimbabwe elite into South Africa, and sanctions of bank accounts and capital flow between Zimbabwe and South Africa.

But I would also recommend special carrots for President Mugabe himself. Mugabe is in his eighties and should be pressured not only with sanctions but also with offers of carrots if he agreed to retire soon. The carrots could include being honoured as a Pan-African elder statesman after retirement. A beautiful beach home for Robert Mugabe in retirement in Cape Town might also be considered by all concerned.

Above all, we should remember that although the crisis in Zimbabwe is among the most widely publicized of all of Africa's calamities, Zimbabwe's problems are relatively benign as compared with the crisis in the Democratic Republic of the Congo even after elections, or the crisis of Darfur, or the crisis in Northern Uganda. Quite frankly, the Zimbabwe crisis is also benign as currently compared with Nigeria, let alone Somalia.

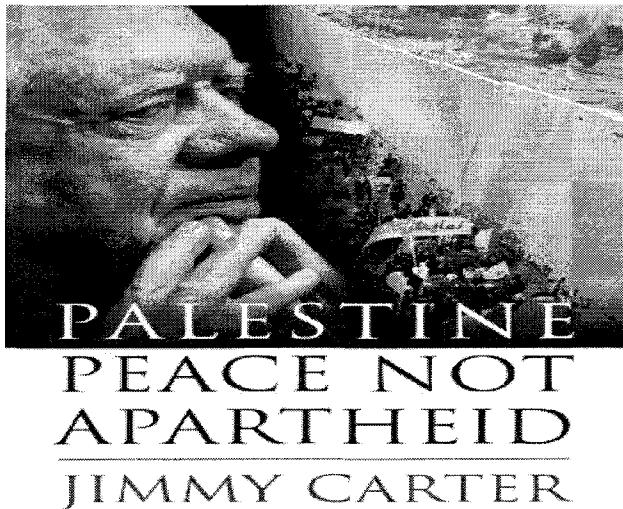
In Zimbabwe there is no large-scale blood-letting as in Somalia, Darfur or Ethiopia. Nor is there in Zimbabwe large-scale detentions without trials as there is in Guantanamo Bay under the United States Gulag.

However, while in places like Somalia, Nigeria and the Congo, the crises are caused by immense sociological and structural forces, in Zimbabwe and the United States the crisis is one of leadership. A change in the policies of the current leadership, or a change in the actual regime in Zimbabwe or the United States, could transform the prospects for peace and reconciliation.

The Other Apartheid System

While South Africa has been dismantling its structures of discrimination and oppression since the middle of the 1990s, the world's attention has been increasingly though belatedly drawn towards that other monumental example of ethnic cleansing and oppression – Israel's occupation of the Palestinians. The comparison between South Africa's apartheid system while it lasted, and Israel's treatment of Palestinians today, has begun to enter the mainstream of international discourse.

Particularly dramatic is Jimmy Carter's recent book, Palestine Peace Not Apartheid. The former President of the United States is not suggesting that the Jewish state itself is internally comparable to the highly institutionalized racial order of apartheid South Africa. It was Israel's ruthless treatment of the Palestinians in the occupied lands which can bear more than metaphorical comparison with South Africa as it was before the 1990s. Indeed, there are aspects of Israeli treatment of Palestinians which are worse than anything perpetrated by white South Africans when they were in the full glare of global scrutiny.



I wonder how often white South Africans could lock up ten thousand Blacks without a murmur from the international community? Israel has locked up those kinds of numbers of Arabs year in, year out, without a mention in the world press. Jimmy Carter's book draws attention to Israel's equivalent of "Group Areas Act". These are ethnically segregated areas in the occupied territories, complete with separate roads and pathways which are reserved only for Jews in the West Bank and the old Gaza.

Jimmy Carter also discusses the conspiracy of silence in the United States under which no mainstream political figures ever criticize Israel. At U.S. universities faculty criticism of Israel could mean tenure termination (loss of long term confirmation of appointment) or academic ostracism.

In this strange country called the United States it is much, much safer to criticize the President of the United States than to fault almost any Prime Minister of Israel. Denouncing Uncle Sam is fair game, but denouncing the state of Israel can be the equivalent of playing the Russian roulette. I have known academic colleagues who have paid heavily in their careers for daring to be sympathetic towards the Palestinians.

In my own case, I have paid in less disastrous though nevertheless costly ways. I became less eligible for invitations to some of America's most prestigious schools. My openly anti-Zionist views have closed some attractive doors in the American academy, though fortunately not all attractive opportunities.

I first went fully public with my anti-Zionist views when I wrote a paper entitled, "Israel and Idi Amin's Uganda as Racially Purist States." The paper was for presentation at a world conference of the International Political Science Association (IPSA) in the 1970s, when the memory of Idi Amin's expulsion of South Asian Ugandans from Uganda was still very fresh.

I caused consternation within the Executive Committee of the International Political Science Association. How could they stop me delivering the paper? For one thing, I was a Vice President of the International Political Science Association. For another, I had been invited by the Association itself to organize a panel on a political theme of my own choice linked to Africa's experience. So the leaders of the Association tried to persuade me to withdraw my paper voluntarily. When I declined, they re-located my panel to one of the least accessible rooms at the conference. The relocation succeeded in cutting down the audience drastically – although one Member of the Israeli

Knesset made it a point to attend the session, and to challenge my paper. Unfortunately, I do not remember today who that member of the Israeli Parliament was.

In retrospect, I now realize how particularly appropriate my comparison was between Idi Amin's Uganda in 1972 and ethnic cleansing in Palestine in 1947-48. Idi Amin threw out of Uganda an estimated 120 thousand South Asians in 1972. Israelis under the direct instigation of their leader Ben Gurion, and his immediate associates, succeeded in expelling three quarters of a million Palestinians, especially in 1948. The Israelis torched and deliberately burnt whole Palestinian villages – creating much more terror among these poor Arab farmers than anything to which the South Asians were subjected by Idi Amin in 1972. When you get a chance, consult the reports of such liberal Jews as Noam Chomsky. On ethnic cleansing and the founding of Israel, consult especially Ilan Pappe's book, *The Ethnic Cleansing of Palestine*.

Over time my ideas about Israel evolved into a full-blown comparison with apartheid South Africa. In my 1990 book, *Cultural Forces in World Politics*, I included a Chapter on "Zionism and Apartheid". I compared them as ideologies of territorial separation and segregation of communities. An American publisher accepted my book, *Cultural Forces in World Politics*, provided I dropped the Chapter on "Zionism and Apartheid" and another chapter which compared the first Palestinian Intifadah with the Chinese Youth revolt in Tiananmen Square in 1989.

In exasperation I was on the verge of capitulating to this censorship when I decided to publish the book in Britain instead. James Currey Publishers in Oxford opened its doors and rescued me from capitulation to pro-Zionist censorship. Heinemann Educational Publishers in New Hampshire subsequently bought out the American edition. *Cultural Forces in World Politics* is still in print, and is widely used in classes in the United States.

Harvard Professor Samuel Huntington cites my book prominently in his own book, *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order*, 1996.

Huntington acknowledged my sensitivity to the political relevance of cultural forces, but he did not necessarily share my perspectives on the Arab-Israeli conflict. On the other hand, Jimmy Carter's wider view of the world may be more different from mine, but his views on the Middle East have now converged with mine.

I was never happy with Jimmy Carter's achievement at Camp David in reconciling with Anwar Al Sadat and Menachem Begin in 1978. The Camp David Accords constituted bribing Egypt out of any future military confrontation with Israel. With Egypt out of the military equation, the Arab side in the Arab-Israeli conflict was disastrously enfeebled. Israel's sense of impunity escalated from then on. The Israelis could do anything to the Palestinians without risking a major inter-state war with the neighboring Arab states.

The one criticism I have about Jimmy Carter's book on Palestine is that it does not adequately acknowledge Jimmy Carter's own inadvertent role in creating apartheid-like conditions in the West Bank and the Gaza strip. Carter won the Nobel Prize for Peace mainly because of the Camp David Accords. But it was precisely those accords which over time gave Israelis a disproportionate sense of impunity to bully, abuse and oppress Palestinians without risking any large-scale war. Jimmy Carter effectively neutralized Egypt – and thereby disproportionately empowered Israel as an occupying colonial force.

One mitigating factor for Carter is that the Israeli Prime Minister Menachem Begin did not keep his side of the bargain within the umbrella of the Camp David Accords. Contrary to the agreements, Begin made no special effort to stop any new settlements in the West Bank, let alone dismantle older settlements.

On balance I still think Jimmy Carter's book, *Palestine Peace Not Apartheid*, is a truly major contribution towards breaking the conspiracy of silence in the United States about Israeli atrocities. Carter's book does not quite make up for the damage done by the Camp David Accords to the Arab cause, but Carter's book is a partial mitigation. I therefore felt comfortable to send Jimmy Carter the following letter of congratulations dated January 16, 2007:

Dear President Carter:

I serve on the Board of the Delta Prize for Global Understanding at the University of Georgia. A few years ago we were delighted to award you, Mrs. Carter and the Carter Center the Delta Prize.

Your new book, PALESTINE: PEACE NOT APARTHEID, has made me doubly proud that we awarded the Carters and the Center that distinguished prize. We have always known that you were a man of peace. We are now doubly sure that you are also a man of enormous political courage, if I may say so.

We are indeed proud of your contributions to global understanding, of which your latest book is a particularly remarkable component.

Yours sincerely,

*Ali A. Mazrui, D.Phil. (Oxon), C.B.S.
Director
Institute of Global Cultural Studies*

*AAM/h
Enclosure*

A Chancellor in Circulation

When President Mwai Kibaki appointed me Chancellor of Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture and Technology (Thika and Nairobi), I had no idea how many of my old dreams would be reawakened in me. One dream was the establishment of a university at the Coast of Kenya – and preferably in my home town of Mombasa. I started raising the issue again with the Kenya Government and in the public media, as a University Chancellor! Until 2006 Kenya had six public universities – and not a single one was based at the Coast.

A related dream was the elevation of the Mombasa Polytechnic to university status. This institution was once called the Mombasa Institute of Muslim Education – providing technical education for students from Kenya, Tanganyika, Zanzibar, Uganda and British Somaliland. All the students were at the time intended to be Muslim. On the other hand, all the instructors were Europeans, often hired directly from Britain.

The technical institute was funded by the colonial authorities in those five East African countries, by the Colonial Office in London, by this Highness the Aga Khan, and by local Muslim communities.

When Kenya became independent the technical institution ceased to be denominational and became totally secular for any qualified Kenyans. It was renamed the Mombasa Polytechnic. But it still fell short of university status. It was not until 2006 that the Kenya Government finally took the step of turning the Mombasa Polytechnic into a degree-granting institution in the making. To my utter delight the Mombasa Polytechnic became a constituent part of the Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture and Technology, of which I continue to be Chancellor.

What has made this dream-fulfillment particularly gratifying for me is that I was present as a junior clerk when the Mombasa Institute of Muslim Education [MIOME] opened for the first time ever in 1950. MIOME also happened to be my first regular job. From junior clerk I was later promoted to the job of boarding supervisor in charge of Halls of Residence. In 1955 I was awarded a Kenya government scholarship to enable me to study in Great Britain. MIOME gave me a great send off.

More than fifty years later, to my utter surprise, I find myself Chancellor of a technological university of which the Mombasa Polytechnic (formerly MIOME) is a constituent part. The Lord does indeed operate in mysterious ways. Let us praise him. Amen!

Another long standing dream of mine from the mid-1970s to 2002 was to be able to give public lectures in Kenya, or be interviewed by both the electronic and print media about political issues in the country, without interference by either the local or national authorities. I have re-acquired these freedoms since Mwai Kibaki came to power in 2002 and created a more transparent Kenya.

Even my television series, *The Africans: A Triple Heritage*, (BBC/PBS), which had effectively been banned on Kenya television since it was first broadcast in Britain, the United States, Nigeria and Zimbabwe in 1986, was at last shown to Kenyan television audiences under the new political dispensation of Mwai Kibaki.

My fourth dream was in terms of family. To the credit of the previous regime of President Daniel arap Moi, they never interfered with my access to my family in Mombasa – inspite of the regime’s political disapproval of me. My Kenya passport was renewed routinely, often speedily. I was only very rarely harassed when visiting Kenya – and very mildly at that.

But since I had no official or professional appointment in Kenya, my visits to the family were approximately once every other year. What has happened since I became a University Chancellor in Kenya has been at least two visits to Kenya every year on official business, with time to visit members of my family in Mombasa and Nairobi, as well as being accessible to the Kenya public.

A more recent dream was to help Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture and Technology [JKUAT] be better known around the world. It is after all a young university still trying to establish itself in the wider world of scholarship. In our very different ways Vice-Chancellor, Professor Nick Wanjohi, and I have been engaged in raising the international profile of JKUAT. Professor Wanjohi has been cultivating relations between JKUAT and other institutions of technology and agriculture. One of Dr.

Wanjohi's most recent efforts has been to cultivate even my own State University of New York at Binghamton.

The Vice-Chancellor visited Binghamton in the Spring of 2007, met with the Provost and with relevant Deans of Engineering. He also had sessions with Kenyan students at Binghamton who were pursuing degrees of relevance for JKUAT. My wife Pauline and I were delighted to host a kind of Kenya evening for Vice-Chancellor Wanjohi for him to meet with at least part of the Kenyan community in Binghamton.



Chancellor Mazrui with his Vice Chancellor Professor Nick Wanjohi of Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture and Technology at a graduation ceremony

It just so happens that my few years as Chancellor JKUAT have coincided with some of my own high profile awards and honours at which it was repeatedly noted that I was Chancellor of JKUAT, as well as an international scholar. Since I have been JKUAT Chancellor, I have received several honorary doctorates at other universities in Africa and elsewhere. President Mwai Kibaki in Kenya has elevated me to the National Order of the Burning Spear. President Thabo Mbeki of South Africa has elevated me to the International Order of the Grand Companions of Oliver Tambo. The Economic Commission of West African States [ECOWAS] and the Pan-African Communication Agency conferred upon me the Living Legend Award in Abuja, Nigeria, in February 2007. The Commonwealth Foundation in London, in association with the Commonwealth Secretary-General invited me to give the 2007 Commonwealth Lecture, which I delivered at the London School of Economics, chaired by the Secretary-General on May 15, 2007.

Earlier in 2007 I was a guest of the Royal African Society in London and lectured partly under their auspices at the School of Oriental and African Studies, and at the Royal Institute of International Affairs (Chatham House) London. All these were high profile events which, I hope, contributed to the increasing visibility of Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture and Technology (JKUAT), as well as to my own professional progress.

It is partly because of these reciprocal considerations that Michael Hindzano Ngonyo, my Protocol Officer at Jomo Kenyatta University, has now begun to accompany me on some of these high profile trips as a representative of JKUAT and serving on the trip as this Chancellor's Assistant and Protocol Officer.

But my most important role at JKUAT continues to be the annual award of degrees. In an open field on the main campus of JKUAT every year I confer on many dozens of student's relevant diplomas, bachelors' degrees, masters, doctorates and sometimes honorary doctorates. Assisted by the Vice Chancellor, the Chancellor drafts his annual address to the university community and delivers it. The Chairman of Council congratulates the graduates. And Kenya acquires a few hundred more skilled personnel for the job market.

In addition to being briefed by JKUAT staff, I am also updated about events in Kenya on every trip by my friends William Mayaka and his wife Alice, and by Paul Amina, as well as by my relatives Ghalib Tamim, Munir Mazrui and others. When I am back in Binghamton I am also updated about Eastern Africa as a whole by my colleagues Seifudein Adem and Patrick Dikirr. God bless them all.

In return I publish a regular column in *The Standard*, Kenya's oldest English language newspaper. James Kariuki edits my newspaper articles for both Kenya and South Africa. Michael Ngonyo is also my press attaché in East Africa.

A Family in Transition

Pauline fulfilled her own dream of taking Little Ali (our grandson) to Africa for the first time. Little Ali bears my own full name. Currently six years old, he is the new version of Ali Al'Amin Mazrui! And in 2006 he set foot on the soil of his ancestors in far away Kenya.

Pauline also took with her our own two sons (Farid and Harith). Pauline's family group was joined by two teachers of our children from a Vestal School, Jane and Thilaka. The ladies went to Kenya ahead of me, determined to play real tourists – enjoying the sight of elephants and lions, flamingos and giraffes, the sight of Mt. Kenya and Mt. Kilimanjaro. They also listened to Maasai music and dance rhythms in the Rift Valley and listened to the Mosque maezzin calling believers to prayer in Lamu at the Kenya Coast. Sometimes they joined forces with Ousseina Alidou and Alamin M. Mazrui, who were on research leave in Kenya.

Both before and after my arrival in Kenya, Pauline's group was greatly helped by my nephews Ghalib Tamim, Alamin M. Mazrui and their own extended families in Kenya. Michael Ngonyo and Peter Njiraini of Jomo Kenyatta University were also superb in helping me and my family.



Left to right: Harith (Mazrui's youngest son), Little Ali (Mazrui's grandson) and Farid (Mazrui's fourth son)

But there was one incident on a Mombasa beach which nearly turned catastrophic. Pauline, Harith, Ali, and two American teachers were walking on the beach in Mombasa. The teachers were from little Ali's campus pre-school school.

Almost out of the blue, three huge and snarling dogs ferociously charged for little Ali. The fastest adult was Thilaka, one of Ali's teachers who jumped to intercept the dogs. The beasts went for her instead, tearing at her legs and thighs, and shredding her clothes!! It was a traumatic experience for everybody, all of them screaming their heads off.

Thilaka was hospitalized for at least two nights. She needed some stitches, as well as inoculation against rabies and against other dog transmitted diseases. There is consensus in Mombasa that had she not jumped in time, little Ali would have been mauled, if not killed, by those two beasts. I am not sure if the dogs were wild Alsatians or bull terriers. What was obvious to us was that such dogs could not possibly have been owned by regular Kenyan coastal people – least of all the Swahili people. Extended families with lots of children in Africa cannot risk having ferocious dogs at home. Muslims especially distrust dogs generally. My first wife, Molly had a hard time in Uganda in the 1960s convincing me to accept a dog in my home. But I agreed in exchange for her total renunciation of pork in all its forms!

Ironically, a few hours before those dogs threatened the life of my grandson in 2006, Mama Alice and I in Binghamton were tearfully watching the most dog-friendly movie of all time – *Lassie Come Home*. It was a movie which I had first seen when I was a child in Mombasa. In that original film, Elizabeth Taylor was ten years old – way back in 1943! But the main story was about a friendship between the dog, Lassie, and a little boy. The dog's loyalty to the boy was so unwavering that it brought tears both to my eyes and to Mama Alice's

Of course, the boy in the movie was more like Harith's age than little Ali's. But the irony struck me the next day when I learned of dogs who had threatened the life of my grandson. What a contrast from Lassie!

Of our three boys on the beach, the most traumatized was reportedly Harith, rather than little Ali. Harith lost it completely, screaming and sobbing uncontrollably. Little Ali's reaction calmed down faster. Ali dealt with the trauma by turning it into a story for all who wanted to listen.

We did involve the police in the case, and tried to involve the U.S. Embassy in Nairobi. Thilaika is entitled to damages of some kind. And Thilaika's hosts in Mombasa (i.e., the Mazrui family) are entitled to be refunded for Thilaika's hospitalization bill, which we paid.

The police have now traced the owner of the dogs. He was initially apologetic, but he has now become legally defensive. Should we try to get damages from him? Apparently, he can more than afford a reasonable settlement. [Incidentally, he is neither an Mswahili nor indigenous to the Kenya Coast. At the very minimum, he was careless with his hounds of the Baskervilles! Definitely, he has been irresponsible!]

After Thilaika was released from the hospital, she, Pauline and Jane (the second Vestal teacher) decided that their "tourist show must go on". They went to Lamu, Maasai Mara and lots of alternative beaches in Mombasa!! Poor Thilaika! First visit to Africa and attacked by dogs! I am a 74 year old African who has never been bitten by a dog! Talk of wrong place, wrong time!

In Mombasa in recent times we have particularly missed my niece, Maymuna Mazrui; who had died a few months earlier. She was the oldest of all the children of my siblings – the first grandchild of my parents more than half a century earlier. Although she was my niece, the gap in age between us was narrow enough that we were often playmates when we were children.

After her mother Salma (my oldest sister) died, Maymuna became de facto my principal hostess every time I visited Mombasa. She was aided by her own siblings, children, husband and my cousin Huda. We all loved Maymuna dearly. We shall always miss her.

Fortunately, Maymuna left behind splendid children and grandchildren of her own. Indeed, our own children – Farid and Harith – were essentially hosted in 2006 by Maymuna's grandchildren, with whom they played and swam for hours on end. Maymuna's oldest children Nabila and Muhammed (Badi) left their homes open to my children and to Pauline.

As you know, Goretti Mugambwa returned to Binghamton University to complete her third degree. Her first two degrees were academic; her third degree is a professional one in social work. Once again Goretti graduated impressively.

Ironically, on the day of her graduation in Binghamton, New York, I was addressing hundreds of Rotarians in Goretti's country of birth, Uganda. With much regret I missed Goretti's graduation festivities in Binghamton.

Goretti lived in our home in Binghamton throughout her pursuit of three degrees. But she and her daughter, Maria, were very much more than mere house-guests. They were full members of the family. Indeed, Goretti was a particularly hard-working member of the family. In addition to her studies, and a job to earn money for her school fees, Goretti nevertheless found time to do more than her share of domestic chores. She was also a very caring additional mother to the three Mazrui boys in Binghamton – Farid, Harith and Little Ali. We shall miss Goretti dearly.

Ghalib Yusuf Tamim at long last completed his biography of my father, Sheikh Al-Amin Ali Mazrui. The biography was written in Kiswahili, and was at last launched at one of the popular restaurants in Nairobi. I was keynote speaker on a theme wider than my father's life. Other speakers included Willy Mutunga, a distinguished Kenya lawyer and human rights activist. Relatively small as Ghalib's book is, it is nevertheless the

most comprehensive biography of my father which has so far been published. Western scholars have written more about my father's ideas and religious reforms than about his life as such.

It was wonderful that my third son Kim and his wife Kay decided to have a Kenyan holiday in 2006, focusing especially on the Kenya Coast. Kay is an American who had never been to Africa before. So the 2006 trip was Kay's stupendous introduction to both Africa and to her loving in-laws in Kenya.

Pauline's family has a history of producing twins. Pauline herself is one of twins, but her other twin passed away. Pauline's sister, Jane, has had identical boy-twins. Jane and her husband Garba decided to call the twins Peter and Paul. Peter and Paul spent most of the first half of 2007 with us in Binghamton. Pauline arranged for them to go to school, and they were great companions to Farid and Harith. They left with their Dad, Garba, towards the end of May to return to Jos, Nigeria. Although I was very fond of Paul and Peter, I could never tell them apart right up to the end! I thought they were truly identical, but my sons could distinguish them easily.

Great news about Harith, my youngest son. He has not only completed Middle School at Vestal; he has also heard from President George W. Bush! He has received the President's signed Education Award for Outstanding Academic Excellence, 2007. We are so proud of Harith. Next September Harith will transfer to High School.

Little Ali has graduated from Vestal Pre-School. Next September he will transfer to Vestal Hill Elementary School.

Farid has very successfully completed his first year of High School. The boys are making us proud. God bless!

Towards the Future

The year 2008 will mark my 75th year of life, God willing. My Associate Director at Binghamton has suggested that we should professionally celebrate it by at least matching my own record of three books in a single year which I had set in 1967 – my first year as a writer of books! I have many unpublished papers and lectures. We may be able to edit them and reshape them into at least three volumes. In this process of sorting out, editing and updating Seifudein and I are being assisted with dedication by Patrick Dikirr and Thomas Uthup at Binghamton. Prior research assistance had also come from Abdul S. Bemath, James Kariuki, and Ruzima Sebuharara at Binghamton.

There are parallel projects of Mazrui papers being edited by three women – Etin Anwar (from Indonesia), Lindah Mhando (from Tanzania) and Goretti Mugambwa (from Uganda). The themes being edited by the women range from Mazrui on, "The Gender Divide in North South Relations" and Mazrui on, "Julius K. Nyerere and the Forces of Globalization".

The Mazrui papers being edited by Seifudein Adem and his team will include topics like, "The Politics of War and the Culture of Violence", "Euro-Jews and Afro-Arabs in History", "Relations between Africa and Asia" and multiple papers on Islam and on Pan-Africanism.

The years 2006 and 2007 have been momentous years for me. I had multiple anniversaries – many of them only quietly remembered. It is one of the strange ironies of my life that the year I defended my doctoral thesis at Oxford University was

also the year I became Dean of Social Sciences at Makerere University College in Uganda. The year was 1966.

The only year of my life when I published three books within twelve months was the year 1967. The year 2007 was therefore the fortieth anniversary of my Triple Publishing Crown! In 1967 I also had another chance to name a son after my father. And so my second son Al'Amin was born in Uganda.

But I am saving many of the truly special events of 2006 and 2007 for my Mazrui Newsletter No. 32 next year when I will be celebrating my 75th birthday, God willing. I will have more stories to tell about such favorable African countries of mine as Nigeria, Uganda, South Africa, Ghana, Tanzania as well as ancestral Kenya.



The Third President of Tanzania, Benjamin Mkapa receiving Ali Mazrui in Dar es Salam

Let me share next year my exciting moments as a guest of the Royal Commonwealth Society, the Royal African Society, the Royal Institute of International Affairs, the World Bank before Paul Wolfowitz resigned. I will tell you about thirteen hundred Rotarians assembled in Kampala, and my encounter in Nigeria with some of the leading African broadcasters of this new millennium. I will also reflect once more on my multiple involvements in celebrating Ghana's Golden Jubilee.

If you and I are still around, let us be sure to reserve our own copy each of the Mazrui Newsletter to mark my 75th birthday! May God preserve us all! Amen! And God bless!

APPENDIX I
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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