

Eve of 1995

ANNUAL MAZRUI NEWSLETTER NO. 19

General Theme:

BETWEEN CLASH OF CIVILIZATIONS AND
KNOWLEDGE ACROSS CULTURES

* * * *

Subthemes:

Between Campus and Career

Civilizations in Collision?

Between Peace and Power

Between Ethnicity and Pan-Africanism

Between Africa, Islam and the West

Between Family and Profession

by

Ali A. Mazrui

This newsletter is addressed to friends, colleagues and relatives. As most friends know, the author's home address is as follows:

River House, Apartment #3E
38 Front Street
Binghamton, New York, 13905, USA

I have titled this newsletter after two major themes which affected me in the course of 1994 - one was the debate about whether the world was heading for a clash of civilizations and the other was the perennial process of knowledge across cultures. The debate about "a clash of civilizations" was precipitated the previous year by Professor Samuel P. Huntington of Harvard University in an article published in the American policy journal, Foreign Affairs (Summer 1993). The theme of "knowledge across cultures" was symbolized in a project which took me to Yuelu Academy, Hunan University in China, one of the oldest centers of learning in the world. Most of my professional activities during the year did in reality touch upon either civilizational conflict or cross-cultural knowledge in one sense or another.

But more about those matters shortly. Let me first join you in celebrating the mid-1990s in the hope that the remaining five years of the 20th century would be an improvement on what has gone on before. Amen. We wish you and your loved ones success and happiness in these new times.

Between Campus and Career

Was my Institute of Global Cultural Studies (IGCS) at Binghamton University going to be a vanguard of "knowledge across cultures"? Or was it going to be an arena of "a clash of civilizations"? Was this the contradiction hanging over the Institute?

The Institute has begun as a convergence of the activities of three units - the Albert Schweitzer Chair in the Humanities, the activities of the Society for the Study of Islamic Philosophy and Science (SSIPS) and the activities of the Society for Global Africa (SGA). The Schweitzer Chair programme consists mainly of the myriad areas of involvement of the incumbent - i.e. Ali Mazrui. The SSIPS activities include an annual meeting on "Philosophy and Multicultural Paradigms" with an agenda which ranges from Plato and Aristotle to the politics of Afrocentrism. The SSIPS agenda also includes translating works in Islamic philosophy and theology from Arabic and Persian into English. The Institute also hosts the Journal of Neoplatonic Studies.

The activities of the Society for Global Africa concern those issues which touch Africa and the Black world as a whole. Negussay Ayele organized a conference in February 1994 on "Africa after the Cold War: The Tensions of Left, Right and Center". As it was in the midst of winter with a bad snow storm, attendance was devastated. Some unused tickets were never refunded by the airlines since the cause was "an act of nature"! But two friends braved the elements and difficult re-routings to be with us - Timothy M. Shaw all the way from Nova Scotia in Canada and

Hussein M. Adam, from deceptively near Massachusetts. Hussein also had to traverse long re-routings to get to Binghamton. Hussein and Tim meant a lot to us that dismal winter get-together. On the other hand, some participants from as near as New York City never made it. Other "Global African" activities included our research and publications. Negussay himself was hoping to get a book out of the conference on "Africa after the Cold War". He is also working on a book-length enterprise about the violence of culture and the culture of violence. I may be a co-author.

Omari Kokole at our Institute has been working on the concept of time in African languages and within African experience. He has already published on that subject and is hoping to publish more. I have also been drawn into the discourse about time in the African experience. I made a presentation at the African Studies convention in Toronto in November on "Time and Africa's Triple Heritage".

Maria Grosz-Ngaté at our Institute has been working on gender-related issues in Mali, West Africa. She has also embarked on a wider project of editing studies on the issue of gender in the Black experience in a socio-economic context. Since Maria is ethnically German, she is part of the German leit motif in my own 1994 experience. More about that later.

Our Institute's linguistic studies have been partly in collaboration with the Department of Black Studies at The Ohio State University in Columbus. Ali A. Mazrui of Binghamton and Alamin M. Mazrui of Ohio State have collaborated on a number of articles on language and society which have been published in Britain, the United States and Canada. The two Mazruis are also about to publish a jointly-authored book entitled Swahili, Society and the State, which is scheduled to be released in Nairobi and London in 1995.

The Ohio State University has played host to me in other ways over the years - when I have been a visiting professor, or given an ad hoc lecture or participated in a conference. A central bridge between me and The Ohio State University has been Professor Isaac Mowoe, a genuine believer in "knowledge across cultures". He has consistently sought to tap my expertise in pursuit of that goal. He and I have become close and mutually respectful friends as a result. We hope that a historic partnership in the service of scholarship has been forged.

The Institute of Global Cultural Studies does not plan to limit itself to being an arena of convergence between the activities of the Schweitzer Chair, SSIPS and SGA. At the moment the most globalist element is the Schweitzer Chair (the breadth of geography), the most far-reaching into the past is SSIPS (the depth of history), while the activities of the Society for Global

Africa try to combine the depth of history with the focus of geography (the Africana world).

What about the wider composition of our team at our Institute of Global Cultural Studies? Are we ourselves multi-cultural enough? Among graduate students working for the Institute, Samuel Quainoo (from Ghana) has served mainly the Schweitzer Chair; Ruzima Sebuharara (from Zaire) has served mainly the activities which are jointly sponsored with the Society for Global Africa; and Darwin Davis (from the USA) and Fouad Kalouche (from Lebanon) have served mainly the activities jointly sponsored by the Society for the Study of Islamic Philosophy and Science (SIPPS). Thomas Uthup (from India) on the other hand, has served global cultural studies more generally, traversing the frontiers of all the subfields.

Nancy Levis (Italian-American) remains the secretarial pillar of both the Schweitzer Chair (i.e. Mazrui) and of the Institute as a whole. Gloria Hopkins (African American) is the administrative pillar of the Schweitzer Chair and the Institute. So you see how multicultural in national origins our Institute of Global Cultural Studies really is. Our faculty included people who were born in Iran, Ethiopia, Germany, Uganda as well as Kenya!

Our undergraduate assistants during the year included Joy Barrett (Jamaica) and Lauren Berk (European/American). Are we a microcosm of the world? Well, perhaps not yet!!

The Golden Key National Honor Society elected me as a faculty honorary member. I was installed accordingly on October 30, 1994, at the Golden Key assembly at Binghamton. The Golden Key National Honor Society is a nation-wide students' alliance committed to both service and scholarship. It was a students' vote of confidence in me. I was delighted.

The Association of Muslim Social Scientists held its annual meeting at our campus at Binghamton this year jointly with the meeting of the Association of Muslim Scientists and Engineers. I was a member of the local organizing committee but most of the real work locally was done by my colleagues in the Programme of Middle Eastern and North African Studies. At the conference itself I chaired a plenary session on the theme "Law and Society: Problems and Prospects of the American Muslim Community". I also gave a short presentation from the Chair on "Islam and Crime in the United States".

The sister academic unit at Binghamton which comes closest to being also concerned with issues of civilizations in world history is perhaps the Fernand Braudel Center for the Study of Economies, Historical Systems, and Civilizations under the leadership of Immanuel Wallerstein. The Braudel Center and our

Institute of Global Cultural Studies have continued our joint colloquium on "Culture and the World System".

Our Institute has also had close relations with the Department of Africana Studies and with the Department of Political Science. We hope to cultivate areas of cooperation with other units of the university as well.

My continuing appointment as a Senior Scholar at the Africana Studies and Research Center at Cornell University in Ithaca has provided me with an inter-university linkage, which was deepened in 1994 when Parviz Morewedge at our Institute also held a joint Cornell appointment. Cornell is within driving distance of Binghamton. Since I am still not licensed to drive, Parviz was my driving benefactor throughout! We held lively debates and discussions between Binghamton and Ithaca.

My professorship-at-large at the University of Jos in Nigeria has suffered recently partly because my visits to Nigeria have been quite brief and partly because Nigerian universities have continued to be affected by the wider instability in the country. Many of the institutions (including Jos) have been closed down repeatedly. Let us hope the situation improves significantly in 1995.

Africana Studies and Research Center at Cornell has begun to celebrate the 25th anniversary of its lively existence, and we all are joining in the salutation in one way or another. Africa Report, which is widely regarded as the United States' leading news-magazine about Africa, celebrated its fortieth anniversary and invited me to write the lead article on political changes in Africa in the last forty years. I was delighted to write for them "The Independence Era: A Griot's Tale".

Save the Children Fund in London celebrated its 75th anniversary. It was a very pleasant surprise to be asked to be the keynote speaker for Save the Children on such an occasion. More about that later in this Newsletter.

Islam in South Africa celebrated its 300th anniversary. I was invited to a number of events in South Africa in the course of the year marking the anniversary. I was only able to go to the conference at the University of South Africa on the theme "Islam and Civil Society in South Africa". More about my visit to South Africa later in the Newsletter.

In Malaysia in December I was once again involved in the Salman Rushdie debate - but this time with a fellow Muslim. It took me back to the first time I went public on Rushdie at Cornell University way back in 1989.

I was Andrew D. White Professor-at-Large at Cornell

University before I became Senior Scholar at the Africana Studies and Research Center at that university. As A.D. White Professor my academic agenda at Cornell was more culturally diverse than as Senior Scholar in Africana Studies. It was in the former capacity that I gave what has become my most famous (or infamous) single lecture of my career - "Is The Satanic Verses a Satanic Novel?: Moral Dilemmas of the Rushdie Affair". The Rushdie affair was indeed a case of a clash of civilizations.

My lecture has been translated into other languages, has been published in three different academic journals, has been included in anthologies of the Rushdie debate, and has been otherwise widely circulated in the world. I have met people who have read it, or listened to it on tape, in countries as diverse as India, Norway, Nigeria, Malaysia, South Africa as well as the United States. Did my lecture contribute to "knowledge across cultures"?

One additional thought. Although my Rushdie lecture was given before I became Senior Scholar at Africana Studies and Research Center at Cornell, the Rushdie lecture was sponsored by the Africana Center, and chaired by the Center. In both my capacities at Cornell (A.D. White Professor-at-Large and as Senior Scholar) the Africana Studies Center colleagues have been my primary sponsors and supporters. Bless them all.

Is Hong Kong a case of synthesis of civilizations rather than a clash? Certainly the capitalist credo has flourished dazzlingly on that astonishing island. But is it really western capitalism? Or is it married to Chinese values?

In 1994 I visited Hong Kong for the second time in my life. It was more overcrowded than ever. It was also much more modernized in the infrastructural sense. Excellent facilities in most of the parts I had time to visit, though I knew there were still areas of squalor and poverty. My main hosts in Hong Kong were the Asia Society for whom I was asked to give a presentation on "How Modernization Affects Development: The Impact on Politics". I also gave a seminar at the University of Hong Kong on the equally sweeping theme "Politics, Religion and Gender: Some Recent Global Trends". By a curious coincidence, the University of Hong Kong was founded by the same Lord Lugard about whom I was to lecture at the University of London later in the same year. More about my Lugard lecture later.

On the social side of my visit to Hong Kong I am deeply indebted to my old and dear friend, Yash Ghai, who was a contemporary of mine when we were both graduate students at Nuffield College, Oxford, more than thirty years ago. Yash is now a distinguished law professor at the University of Hong Kong, and has also served as constitutional advisor to many countries in Africa, Asia and the Pacific. He and one of his closest

colleagues showed me the sights in Hong Kong and helped me in my shopping spree. Among my Hong Kong purchases was a transistor radio - a fundamental instrument for any one wishing to understand either knowledge across cultures or the likelihood of clash of civilizations in the coming decades.

Civilizations in Collision?

To return to the thesis of Samuel Huntington's article, he argues that the end of the Cold War and the collapse of communism in what was once the Warsaw Pact had probably inaugurated a new era in which conflict will be less and less between states and ideological blocs and more between civilizations and cultural alliances. I may have oversimplified the central thesis, but I believe that is the gist of it. (I first got to know Sam Huntington when I was a Research Associate of the Center for International Affairs at Harvard way back in 1965-6. We continued to be in touch for a while after that, but we later lost direct contact except through each other's writings).

Huntington's article unleashed a debate, initially in the journal in which it was first published, Foreign Affairs, and later on campuses and magazines in different parts of the English-speaking world, and probably beyond. In terms of impact his article has often been compared with Francis Fukuyama's article "End of History?" which was published in 1991 and sparked off a comparable international debate.

I began to tackle Huntington's thesis in my own course entitled "Cultural Forces in World Politics", given at Binghamton University, State University of New York, at both undergraduate and graduate levels. I had invented the course myself, and designed it to explore the impact on world affairs of such cultural forces as religion, language, ethnicity, nationalism, race and sexual division of labour. The Huntingtonian debate became one useful tool in teaching that course.

I also addressed the thesis of "clash of civilizations" in a lecture I gave in Malaysia in June 1994. One of Huntington's fears for the future was an alliance between the world of Islam and the countries of the Confucian legacy - an alliance which he regarded as potentially damaging to Western interests. As it happens, the population of Malaysia is partly Malay (and of Muslim faith) and partly Chinese (of Confucian descent at least culturally). In a sense, Malaysia is a microcosm of an alliance between political Islam (with Malays in power) and econo-cultural Confucianism (with the Chinese still controlling much of the economy). Far from being a threat to the West, this particular Islamo-Confucian configuration is for the foreseeable future a friend of the West.

Of course, the population of Malaysia includes smaller groups also who are neither Malay nor Chinese. Among these smaller groups the Indians are perhaps the most noteworthy. However, their numbers and relative power do not affect the above argument. Nor does the fact that many Chinese in Malaysia are both culturally Confucian and religiously Christian. After all, many Chinese in China are culturally Confucian and religiously Buddhist, and many Japanese combine Confucianism, Buddhism and Shintoism.

Huntington's thesis overstates the potentialities of conflict between cultures and civilizations and underestimates the possibilities of cooperation, compromise and cultural synthesis.

In a sense this is where that other theme of "knowledge across cultures" comes into play. Under this theme cultures not only get to know about each other but also permit and facilitate exchange of knowledge across each other's cultural boundaries.

In May 1994 I was in Changsha in the People's Republic of China, visiting one of the oldest centres of learning in the world, the Yuelu Academy in Changsha. I was also participating in an international symposium which had grown out of a Sino-Canadian project precisely by the name of "Knowledge Across Cultures", partly designed by Professor Ruth Hayhoe of Toronto in collaboration with her colleagues in China.

The conference in Changsha in 1994 was bilingual (Chinese and English) and was attended by scholars from different parts of China, as well as those of us who came from abroad. I was delighted to discuss affirmative action with a young Tibetan scholar, and to compare notes about Islam with a woman-scholar from a Muslim part of China. (I believe she and I and a Malaysian scholar were the only ones who were meticulously protected from pork dishes at every meal. Our hosts were careful to point out which dish contained pork.)

There were a number of cross-cultural papers presented at the conference, ranging from language in education to the history of science. My own paper was on portrayals of the Third World in the Western Press, and within mainstream classrooms in the Western world. What was remarkable was that in spite of the fact that the symposium was being held in the People's Republic of China, and in the geographical region of Chairman Mao Tse Tung's own birth, our symposium had almost no papers focussed on socialism as such, or devoted to the role of ideology. A surprising omission indeed. Did it confirm Huntington's thesis that ideology was down - the coming agenda was civilization?

We visited Chairman Mao's birthplace. The commercialization of the Mao complex was also remarkable - Mao T-shirts, Mao-key

rings, other Mao trinkets, with hundreds of tourists milling around. You could even have your photograph taken sitting at Mao's desk. There was little pretence at solemnity. The Mao complex was offered as a tourist attraction rather than as a shrine. Was this a clash of civilizations?

More impressive was the eagerness of Chinese scholars to learn from the outside world and to facilitate this whole process of knowledge across cultures. Since I returned to the United States I have heard from a university in another part of China inviting me there. I need to be educated about this great civilization, and I am in negotiations with the Chinese. My old friend Sam Huntington need not be worried too much about this particular Islamo-Confucian bit of cooperation!

Between Peace and Power

What about "peace across cultures"? I suppose the Desmond Tutu Annual Peace Lecture in South Africa was partly intended to promote peace across cultures. In 1994 Archbishop Desmond Tutu himself was scheduled to give the 10th Desmond Tutu Peace Lecture. So all the previous Tutu Peace lecturers were specially invited to attend this singular occasion - not least because President Nelson Mandela was scheduled to respond to Bishop Tutu's presentation. Since I had been the 1990 Desmond Tutu Peace Lecturer I was also invited, and I was delighted to accept. All the previous peace lecturers were on stage with Archbishop Tutu and President Mandela. I was delighted to meet them both again and to catch up with a little of their news (what I had missed in the Press!). We were certainly all relieved that President Mandela's eye-operation had been so successful.

In the audience of the Tutu lecture were a number of South African friends. But also in the audience was my long-standing Jamaican friend, Locksley Edmondson, whom I had once hired at Makerere University in Uganda as a lecturer and who now is my Cornell "boss" in his capacity as Director of the Africana Studies and Research Center on that Ithaca campus. It was wonderful to see Locksley in Johannesburg. Elsewhere in Johannesburg I visited another old friend - Es'kia (Ezekiel) Mphahlele, bless him.

In Pretoria I was the guest of the University of South Africa and of the conference held there on "Islam and Civil Society in South Africa after Apartheid". This year 1994 was the 300th anniversary of the arrival of Islam in South Africa with Sheikh Yusuf Abidin Tadia of Macassar, the Malay religious figure who had been sent into exile from the Dutch East Indies in 1694. Our 1994 conference in Pretoria was, in part, a recognition of the anniversary. Apart from the Desmond Tutu Lecture, I spent much of my 1994 visit to South Africa with Muslims of different

racess. I was their guest in Pietermaritzburg, Cape Town as well as Pretoria.

However, among South African Muslims, my visit was overshadowed by the visit of Sister Amina Wadud, the distinguished African American Islamic scholar. Professor Wadud definitely stole the limelight. This was not simply because such women-scholars in advanced Islamic studies were rare from Black America. As public figures they were still relatively rare from any part of the Muslim world.

In South Africa Sister Amina became even more exceptional when she gave one of the sermons in a mosque at Cape Town at the Friday congregation. This was absolutely unprecedented. Perhaps never before in any part of Africa or the Middle East had a woman given a lecture or sermon to a Muslim congregation before Friday's prayers. The event sparked off a debate among Muslims in South Africa which continued to the end of 1994. The conservatives were horrified; the liberals were optimistic about the significance of Sister Amina's sermon for the future role of women in Islam more generally. Was she a Black American initiating an Islamic social revolution? Did Sister Amina symbolize knowledge across cultures or a clash of civilizations? Or was she simply acting out God's will in different parts of the Muslim world?

The next time I met Sister Amina Wadud in 1994 was in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, where we were both major speakers at a conference on the theme "Rethinking Human Rights", which was opened by the Prime Minister of Malaysia, Dr. Mahathir Mohamed. The conference concerned the issue of whether human rights had been excessively defined in Western terms in a period of Western global dominance. By coincidence Sister Amina chaired the session at which I made my own presentation entitled "Human Rights between Rwanda and Reparations: Global Power and the Racial Experience". Much of this particular conference was perhaps a case of "clash of civilizations" over the issue of human rights. But was our conference also a case of "knowledge across cultures" waiting to be learnt?

In our short conversation with the Prime Minister of Malaysia I congratulated him on his winning the battle of wills with the Sunday Times newspaper in London. The newspaper had accused the Prime Minister of having accepted a particular bribe. Malaysia decided to move not just against the newspaper but against Britain's economic interests. British companies were denied new contracts and new investment opportunities. The British made a number of conciliatory ministerial visits to Malaysia but the Prime Minister of Malaysia stood firm.

Eyeball to eyeball! In the end the Sunday Times blinked. The editor of the newspaper was removed. His employers

apparently made it worth his while to keep his mouth shut on Malaysia. Was this a bribe? Was this corruption? Was the former editor of the Sunday Times (London) a prey to the corruption he had once himself claimed to be exposing? The Malaysians think that the editor had accepted a "bribe". Is this a clash of civilizations - or knowledge across cultures?

My African agenda during the year also included human rights issues and comparative culture. Maryam, my wife, received a call from Chief Moshood Abiola of Nigeria. The Chief wanted to speak to me. I was away at Lincoln University, Pennsylvania, honouring the first President of Nigeria, Nnamdi Azikiwe. Chief Abiola tracked me down at my hotel near Lincoln University:

ABIOLA: "I am going to Nigeria to become President"
 MAZRUI: "What is going on, Chief?"
 ABIOLA: "I will see you at the Inauguration"

You will remember that most people agreed that Chief M.K.O. Abiola had won the June 1993 presidential election of Nigeria - but the military government of Nigeria refused to confirm or announce the results. At first Chief Abiola had attempted to fight the Nigerian military by seeking support in London and Washington. That crusade was basically a failure. In 1994 Chief Abiola embarked on a Nigeria-focussed strategy, which should have been his option in the first place. In July 1994 he was at last ready to declare himself at a public rally as president of Nigeria. In the end his Nigeria-focussed strategy had resulted in his being charged with treason and being held behind bars. Were the reasons for preventing Abiola from becoming President ethnic? Was the Northern Hausa-Fulani political establishment in Nigeria unwilling to see a Yoruba elected President? Is inter-ethnic conflict a special kind of "clash of civilizations?"

When I visited Nigeria in September 1994 as a guest of the Yakubu Gowon Center for the Promotion of National Unity and International Co-operation, I was granted an audience by the Head of State, General Sani Abacha in Abuja. General Yakubu Gowon, himself a former Head of State of Nigeria, was the one who took me to General Abacha and he introduced me to his fellow General. I expressed concern to the Head of State about the political situation in Nigeria and about the damage it was doing to Africa as a whole. I also asked for the release of Chief Moshood Abiola both on my behalf and on behalf the Group of Eminent Persons appointed by the Organization of African Unity in 1992 to explore the modalities of campaigning for reparations for African enslavement and colonization. Chief Abiola was elected Chairman of that Group of Twelve (of whom I was also a member).

In September 1994 at our Abuja meeting I asked General Abacha to maintain Nigeria's commitment to the crusade for reparations inspite of his differences with Chief Abiola. I also requested the Head of State to "give us our Chairman back". Although General Abacha was not expecting me to raise such sensitive issues, he was very gracious when I did so. It was almost as if he recognized that there could not be knowledge across cultures unless there was honesty within cultures. But in practical terms, the Head of State was non-committal about both the release of Chief Abiola and his Nigerian policies more generally.

The next day General Abacha, General Gowon, and myself were three of the opening speakers at the conference sponsored by the Yakubu Gowon Center on the theme of "Nigeria in the 21st Century". Participants had come from all over Nigeria to attend. One of the driving forces behind the scene was my old friend and former student, Professor Jonah Isawa Elaigwu. His National Council on Intergovernmental Relations (of which he is Director) was as usual most helpful to me, as well as to the conference. I have always had friends at that institution.

The independence of mind of Nigerians continues to be resilient. The very conference which was opened by General Abacha included papers critical of military rulers and urging the recognition of the results of the presidential elections of June 1993 (which had been aborted by the military). Secondly, although General Abacha had closed down a number of newspapers, the remaining newspapers continued to publish articles critical of governmental policies and of military rule as a whole. And when Nobel Laureate Wole Soyinka was stopped at Lagos airport as he was about to board a plane for Sweden, and was then deprived of his passport, he was soon recording a telephone interview with the BBC World Service within hours, and condemning the military regime in very strong terms. Soyinka was at the time still in Nigeria. Wole has since "escaped" to Europe through the forests, probably via the Republic of Benin. I met Wole Soyinka in Caen, France in December 1994 after his escape.

The first of all Nigerian Presidents was Nnamdi Azikiwe (Zik). In 1994 he was ninety years old - and yet strong enough to travel from Nigeria to Lincoln University in Pennsylvania for one of his son's graduation. Since Lincoln was also Zik's alma mater, the University decided to honour him not only with an honorary degree but also with a colloquium about his works and contributions to Nigeria and the world. I was deeply flattered when President Niara Sudarkasa of Lincoln invited me to be the keynote speaker on "Zik of Africa, Zik in History". The old man was in attendance throughout the whole-day colloquium. What is more, he was alert.

When Azikiwe finally spoke at the end of the conference, his

voice was at first frail as befitted his age. And then, out of nowhere, energy flowed into that voice. It got stronger, firmer, younger and more resilient. We were in the presence, truly and magnetically, of "Zik of Africa, Zik in History". I was privileged to have participated in that celebration.

Between Ethnicity and Pan-Africanism

The issue of whether ethnic conflicts were clashes of civilizations in miniature followed me into Kenya in June 1994. I was asked to be the keynote speaker at a conference on the theme of "Democracy in a Multi-Ethnic Society: The Kenyan Case". In my address I suggested that the principle of the unitary state might have failed in Kenya. Indeed, in Africa as a whole, it might have cost us three to four million lives since independence. By treating ethnic loyalty as a kind of political pathology, and constructing unitarist constitutions without adequate relevance to socio-cultural realities, we had created settings of conflict rather than structures of concourse.

In any case, since ethnic loyalty was still powerful, unitary Kenya had enabled strong ethnic groups with leverage at the center to "colonize" weaker ethnic groups in the vulnerable provinces. I designated this phenomenon as "internal colonization". For example, the Coast of Kenya generated millions of dollars from its tourist attractions, but very little of that money went to the people of the Coast. The best hotels and the best beach homes and chalets were owned by non-Coastal Kenyans, sometimes in alliance with foreigners. Again, was this a case of internal colonization?

In the light of these considerations I recommended a possible devolution of power to the provinces of Kenya - a neo-federal system of government known in Kiswahili as majimbo. As a former unitarist myself, I urged that we abandon the unitary state as a god that had already failed.

When I was giving my keynote address, I did not realize that I was in the process of sparking off a national fire-storm. The issue of majimbo was debated not just for weeks but for months on end. The issue divided opinion within political parties, within families, and within the national government itself. When President Daniel arap Moi was pressed to express his own opinion, he simply said: "Let the people debate." And the people continued to do so into the new year.

I had in fact been brought into Kenya in June 1994 to participate in another conference - an international conference sponsored by African Social and Environmental Studies Programme (ASESP). The general theme of this other conference was Social Studies Education. The conference discussions here were, in a

sense, a convergence between concerns about "knowledge across cultures" and concerns about "clash of civilizations". In my own address to this other Nairobi conference I returned to the theme of "Multiculturalism versus Afrocentricity: Are they Rival Paradigms of Education?". I had addressed that before in the United States, but this was the first time I was raising it in such terms at a conference held in Africa. Issues of knowledge across cultures were certainly at stake.

I was in Uganda earlier in the year when the Presidents of Rwanda and Burundi were killed in an air crash at Kigali airport across the border. This was the event which helped to trigger off the appalling massacres, mainly of Tutsis by Hutus, in Rwanda from mid-April onwards. The shadow of Rwanda followed us in one way or another for the rest of the year. That shadow was there when I attended a meeting sponsored by the United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR) and the Organization of African Unity (OAU). The meeting we held in Addis Ababa in September. My own paper and presentation were on "The African State as a Political Refugee: Institutional Collapse and Human Displacement."

The shadow of Rwanda was there when I testified before one of the sub-committees of the U.S. House of Representatives about the African situation more generally. And Rwanda was there when I participated in a symposium sponsored by the U.S. Institute for Peace, Washington D.C..

Rwanda and most other African issues were present at the annual meeting of the African Studies Association (ASA) of the United States which this year was held in Toronto, Canada. (This was only the second time in its history that the ASA has met outside the USA. The last time was in Montreal in 1969.)

As the ASA convention in Toronto Omari Kokole and I had organized and chaired two Round Tables on "Reparations" - Reparations for Africa's Enslavement and Reparations for Africa's colonization. Our Round Tables were star-studded. But U.S. Congressman John Conyers, Jr. of Michigan, who was expected at our Round Table, could not make it in the end because of the pressure of the 1994 election campaign in the United States. But Ambassador Dudley Thompson and Professor Jacob Ajayi travelled all the way from Nigeria specially to participate in our Round Tables. Was reparations an outstanding debt from an earlier clash of civilizations? Or was it compensation for a continuing clash of the races?

Perhaps my most unusual Africanist conference of 1994 was at Central State University in Ohio, USA. The invitation asked only for papers with good news about Africa. "Afropessimism" was virtually "outlawed" at this conference. Was this selectivity defensible in terms of "knowledge across cultures"?

I was one of the keynote speakers. My own topic was entitled "Afrenaissance: Post-Colonial Trends of Hope". I had coined the word "Afrenaissance" partly in the spirit of this conference and partly in continuation of a theme I had developed earlier in 1994 when I was honoured by the New York African Studies Association at their annual meeting at Cornell University. I was honoured at Cornell as the Distinguished Africanist of the Year.

Another "Afro-optimistic" conference I attended in 1994 was the Seventh Pan-African Congress held in Uganda in April 1994. Some colourful and controversial figures were in attendance, including General Muhammad Farah Hassan Aydeed of Somalia, Colonel John Garang of Sudan, Leonard Jeffries of the USA and (briefly), the Foreign Minister of Iran, Ali Akbar Valiyati. We were supposed to be addressed through satellite by Colonel Mu'ammarr Qaddafi of Libya, but there were "technical difficulties". Rumours circulated that the CIA had sabotaged the transmission! True or false? The conference was opened by the President of Uganda, Yoweri K. Museveni.

If this was the seventh Pan-African Congress, when was the sixth? That was held in Dar es Salaam in 1974, basically hosted by President Julius K. Nyerere. The fifth was held in 1945 in Manchester, England, and was attended by such relative nonentities at the time as Kwame Nkrumah of Ghana, Jomo Kenyatta of Kenya, W.E.B. DuBois of the USA and, astonishingly the same Dudley Thompson who attended our Reparations Round Table in Toronto in November 1994, and indeed attended the 7th Pan-African Congress in Kampala with me.

In Kampala in April 1994 it was my turn to be a relative nonentity. The organizers of the conference, in their infinite wisdom, had decided to relegate almost all scholars to relatively obscure workshops, and leave the plenary sessions to foreign ministers, diplomats, and high-visibility warriors like General Farah Hassan Aydeed and Colonel John Garang. Indeed, I saw few scholars from Makerere University at all at the Congress.

What would be the consequences for Pan-Africanism if scholars were either kept out or marginalized? Kwame Nkrumah used to say "Socialism without science is void". What about "Pan-Africanism without science"? Is that equally void? The organizers of the eighth Pan-African Congress (wherever that will be held and whenever) would do well to ponder that question well in advance.

Issues of technology and science touched me and my family in a different way also. I was invited by the Office of Technology Assessment (OTA) of the U.S. Congress to participate in a workshop about the social implications of new advances in the technology of

communication.

One of the issues I raised concerned changes in computer technology and their effect on the needs of the blind. As some of you know, Jamal - my oldest son - is blind, and is at the same time very much involved with computers both personally and in his work at the Kennedy School of Government, Harvard University, Cambridge, Massachusetts. Jamal has argued forcefully, both privately and in print, that while previous computer advances had been blind-user-friendly, some of the most recent computer changes were (from the point of view of the blind) socially retrograde. They were widening the gap between the needs of the sighted and the needs of the blind. The "Windows" model especially demanded sightedness in the computer-user to a large extent. A clash of cultures can sometimes be between the sub-culture of the sighted and the sub-culture of the blind.

I raised this issue with the OTC of the US Congress in the hope that Congress would encourage, if not demand, variations of new computer-models which would once again reduce the gap between the needs of the sighted and the needs of the blind in computer technology. Knowledge across sub-cultures would thus be facilitated. I was assured that the issue would be raised in appropriate Congressional circles. Let us keep our fingers crossed in this new Republican age.

One of the important fringe benefits of my visits to Washington. DC these days is to be able to meet Kim Abubakar, my third son. Sometimes we have a dinner together in the capital; sometimes he comes for breakfast at my hotel before he goes to work. Kim joined a distinguished Washington law firm earlier in 1994, and his wife, Kay, and their son, Will, moved with him to one of Washington's suburbs in the summer. I see more of Kim these days than I have done at any time since I left Ann Arbor, Michigan, in 1989. It's great for Dad, who is in any case still basking in Kim's achievement in Law School at Michigan in graduating in 1993 at the top of his class.

Al'Amin, my second son, may have found his preferred career now. He wants to be a social worker, and is within a short period of achieving his goal. He is due to graduate with a Masters degree in Social Welfare from the University of California, Berkeley, in May 1995. I am planning to go to Berkeley for the occasion. Insha Allah.

Between Africa, Islam and the West

I was in California for another reason in 1994, but not close enough to visit Al'Amin. I was in Orange County in October for another mission concerning "knowledge across cultures". I and a number of other Muslim educators, historians and

pedagogists met with a number of American publishers to discuss ways of presenting Islamic history in school text-books in such a way so as to reduce the risk of bias and inaccuracy. The workshop was sponsored by the California Council on Islamic Education. The issues were discussed in great technical detail, from appropriate periodization of Islamic history to the problem of how best to introduce American high school children to the basics of Islamic doctrine.

In addition to my role within the workshop, I was asked to give the luncheon address which was open to the wider public. I spoke on "Islam and Islamophobia" - a topic to which I returned in my paper for a conference on the other side of the globe two months later on "Islamic Political Economy in a Capitalist World" held at University Sains Malaysia, Pulau Pinang. The most controversial section of my Malaysian paper was a part sub-titled "Islam: The First Protestant Revolution?". The central thesis was that Islam had anticipated Martin Luther and John Calvin as reformers of Christianity by eight to nine hundred years. Why then did not Islamization result in a Protestant ethic and the rise of capitalism? Those were some of the questions debated at my session in Malaysia in December 1994. Were we debating "knowledge across cultures" or a special kind of "clash of civilizations" across nine centuries?

My December trip to Malaysia was through London and Caen, France. In London I was privileged to be the keynote speaker to mark the 75th anniversary of Save the Children Fund (SCF). Did you know that SCF went back to 1919? My anniversary address was originally to have been chaired by the Princess Royal (Princess Anne) who is President of Save the Children. But then she had to go to South Africa on SCF business. Almost in reciprocity, South Africa gave my session its distinguished son, Mr. Donald Woods, to preside at my anniversary lecture. A decade earlier Sir Richard Attenborough had turned Mr. Wood's book Cry Freedom, into a major movie about Mr. Woods and the late Mr. Steve Biko of Soweto. My lecture in London in November 1994 in London included the argument that the "Cry for Freedom" in South Africa should not yet stop - for while political apartheid had been dismantled, economic apartheid (the maldistribution of wealth along racial lines) was still intact. Mr. Woods (who is of course a white liberal) took it all in his stride as a splendid chairman.

My topic to mark the SCF's 75th Anniversary was "Africa between the 20th Century and the Third Millennium: The Political Culture of Transition". (The topic was sometimes publicized more succinctly as "Understanding Africa at the Turn of the Millennium".) The event was jointly sponsored by the Royal Society for the Arts (RSA). My lecture was held at the RSA's fascinating lecture hall, and a version of the text was to be published in the April 1995 issue of the RSA Journal. The lecture was, in a sense, a moral portrait of the twentieth

century - and touched upon issues of comparative civilization and knowledge across cultures.

My other main event in London in the autumn of 1994 was at the School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London. I was giving the 1994 Lugard Lecture, named after the architect of British Indirect Rule in Africa and the unifier of Northern and Southern Nigeria in 1914. Lugard was a practical philosopher about how to avert a clash of civilizations in colonial policy. He was arguably the greatest British administrator in British colonial Africa. My own topic for the Lugard lecture was "Religion and the Ethnic Revival in Africa: Has Lord Lugard Been Vindicated?" The sponsors of the annual lecture were the International African Institute, London. (I believe recent Lugard Lecturers in the series included V. Y. Mudimbe and Kwame Anthony Appiah.)

After London I went to Caen, France, where Wole Soyinka and I were virtually the only major speakers who spoke in the English language at a conference about African problems sponsored by the Les Rencontres Internationales du Mémorial - Prévention des Conflits. On the whole, the conference was mainly a conversation about Africa among French people and Francophone Africans. The rest of us were incidental. Nevertheless as a political observer, I was fascinated by the interactions between the French and the French-speaking African participants in the dialogue. It was radically different from any conference involving Anglophone Africans with scholars from Great Britain. In the latter situations there may be a greater clash of civilizations, but there is definitely also greater equality between Africans and Britons. The conference in Caen was more definitely within a single culture (French culture) and relatively little conflict. On the other hand, the Francophone event was less egalitarian. The white French scholars were definitely the senior partners.

My life in 1994 also had a German leitmotif. I was invited quite early by the Pennsylvania State University to prepare to open a conference later in the year about relations between Germans, Africans and Black people across the centuries - sometimes a case of a clash of civilizations and sometimes a case of knowledge across cultures. The conference included papers about images of the Black in German literature, African impact on German art, German loan words in African languages and so on. My own keynote address was entitled "The German Factor in the Black Experience: From the Berlin Conference to the Berlin Wall".

The Kenya Conference on "Democracy in a Multi-ethnic Society", at which I had given that explosive lecture about majimbo, was funded by a German Foundation - Friedrich Ebert Stiftung. The Germans paid for my airfare from Nairobi back to Binghamton. The outgoing fare from Nairobi to Binghamton was paid by African Social & Environmental Studies Program (ASESP).

The German leitmotif in my life in 1994 continued when I went to Berlin in August to attend the XVI World Congress of the International Political Science Association. It was my first visit to Germany since the fall of the Berlin wall. Like every second tourist I visited the notorious wall, and even acquired a piece of the wall, officially authenticated.

The German lietmotif continued when the BBC television booked me a studio in East Berlin so that I could participate by satellite from Berlin in an international television debate, coordinated from London about the future of the United Nations in a world of multi-ethnic conflicts. That was my first encounter with television specialists from the former German Democratic Republic. The participants in the debate were located in London, New York, Ottawa, and (myself) in Berlin. Satellites have turned the world into a global Oxford Union!

The German leitmotif followed me to a conference in Addis Ababa when I discovered that the Acting Ambassador of Germany had been a former graduate student of mine in Uganda in the 1960s. The Chargé d' Affaires graciously took me out for old times' sake.

The German leitmotif continued in my life in 1994 when a German magazine Focus translated into German and published my syndicated article for the Los Angeles Times on the theme "The African Crisis: Is Recolonization the Answer?". Such translations are almost always aspects of knowledge across cultures.

The German leitmotif was more ambivalent in Geneva in November when I addressed a meeting of Europeans with economic interests and concerns in Africa. Many of them were in fact German, though the working languages at the conference were English and French. The Geneva conference was sponsored by Centre de Recherches Entreprises et Societies (CRES).

One delightful interlude in Geneva was dinner with my old friend Dharam Ghai, whom I have known since we were both graduate students in the United States in the early 1960s, and who is now the Director, United Nations Research Institute for Social Development. Earlier in the year Dharam had involved me as one of the speakers at his conference held at the United Nations in New York on the theme: "Ethnic Diversity and Public Policy". My own topic at the New York conference was on "Ethnicity in Chains, Ethnicity Unbound". Was I dealing once again with a clash of civilizations in miniature?

Also at the United Nations in 1994 had been a conference on "African Futures 2025" sponsored by the United Nations Development Programme with special reference to its Abidjan-based Project on African Futures. We grappled with three scenarios for

Africa for the next 30 years - the Afro-pessimistic (expecting major upheavals), the Afro-optimistic (expecting rapid solutions to African problems) and Afro-realistic (arguing that all is not lost if there is the will and the wherewithal). I have oversimplified the themes of the conference in my own vocabulary, but that was the gist of our discourse. This workshop then tried to work out strategies for the success of the Afro-realistic scenario.

It was not just the United Nations which had a claim on my time. It was also the Organization of African Unity (OAU). I have referred to my role as a member of the Group of Eminent Persons for African Reparations, appointed by the OAU. I have also referred to my role at the conference on refugees which was held in Addis Ababa and was sponsored by UNHCR and the OAU. Indeed, the conference was in part to commemorate the 25th anniversary of the OAU's enunciation of principles governing the treatment of refugees. Our Addis Ababa conference was opened by both the Secretary-General of the OAU and the UN High Commissioner for Refugees. Our audience consisted of ambassadors, technocrats, policy-makers and representatives of humanitarian organizations. A figure from my earlier days in East Africa who turned up in Addis Ababa was Canon Burgess Carr, the Liberian scholar, humanitarian and religious leader who once headed the All-Africa Conference of Churches in Nairobi. It was wonderful to see him again.

My other OAU role was earlier in Cairo. It was at a conference jointly sponsored by the OAU, the International Peace Academy and the Egyptian Government. Our task was to evaluate the nature and implications of the OAU Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution which had at last been approved by the OAU Meeting of Heads of State which was also held in Cairo the preceding June 1993. My old friend and former student, President Olara Otunnu of the International Peace Academy, was central to the organization of this conference. I was given almost unlimited time in my presentation to address the painful topic of "The Failed State and Political Collapse in Africa". Olara Otunnu and I were later extensively interviewed by the leading Egyptian newspaper, Al-Gamouhouria which published our remarks in a two-page spread with pictures. (The interviews were of course translated into Arabic.) Knowledge across cultures was at work.

If translation is a bridge between cultures, then another newspaper which translated my words was a major Turkish newspaper in Ankara. This was on entirely separate issues and topics. The Cumhuriyet was publishing a series of specially commissioned international articles about major trends in the world as the 20th century was coming to an end. I was among those they commissioned to write. I discovered that I was in very good company. Other people who wrote for the series included

Elizabeth Taylor, the actress; Baroness Barbara Castle of the old British Labour Party; Jane Goodall who has taught humans so much about their cousins in the animal world; the Dalai Lama of Tibet; Boutros Boutros-Ghali, Secretary-General of the United Nations; and Federico Mayor Director-General of UNESCO. A surprisingly mixed group each reflecting on "The Coming Third Millennium"!

My work on the issue of reparations for Africa and the Black world continued during the year in other fora. I gave television and radio interviews on the subject. I gave a lecture at New York University on the topic of "Black Reparations as a Philosophical and Moral Issue". My lecture was in a series sponsored by the University on "Black Thought in Progress". At Ohio State University, Columbus, I gave a lecture on "Between Rwanda and Reparations: Moral Dilemmas in the African Experience". The issue of reparations also arose in the discussions which followed my lecture at the City College of the City University of New York (CUNY). My topic was "Africa in the United States and the United States in Africa". I was a keynote speaker at a conference on "African Nationals in the United States". The issue of reparations was among several which were thrashed out. The questions persisted as to whether reparations were indeed a debt incurred by the Western world towards the Black world after a massive clash of civilizations involving enslavement, colonization and exploitation.

What about the Arab world? Should it pay reparations for the Arab slave trade? I personally think the Arabs should. But the nature of the Arab slave trade was so different from the scale of the trans-Atlantic commerce that the demands on the Arabs should be postponed until we reach a settlement with the West one day.

Was there a clash of civilizations within the United States between Islam and Western culture? There were indeed many enemies of Islam who did not want Muslims to be recognized as a legitimate and peaceful minority within the United States. Among such enemies of Islam in the 1990s was a man called Steve Emerson who among things did a television documentary in 1994 entitled Jihad in America. The documentary alleged that much of the terrorism in the Middle East, and in the West, including the bombing of the World Trade Center, was financed by Muslims in the United States. The documentary was shown on the Public Broadcasting Service (PBS) TV in November 1994.

Many Muslim organizations in the United States were outraged. They were also alarmed about the possible impact of the TV documentary on the attitudes of non-Muslim Americans towards their Muslim neighbours. The American Muslim council was in the forefront of trying to rebut this kind of negative propaganda against Islam.

Where do I come in? I have been involved in the work of the American Muslim Council for a number of years now. And at a special retreat organized by the Council to discuss how Muslims should adjust to living in America, and make America adjust to the Muslim presence in its midst, I was called upon to be one of the main speakers. This is becoming an important part of my annual agenda.

In the spring of 1994 I lectured at Clark Atlanta University (where W.E.B. DuBois once taught). I was also honoured by the Africanists of Georgia at a special ceremony in Atlanta. I was also welcomed to the University of New Orleans, Louisiana where I gave a provocative lecture on "Culture Change and Sexual Habits in Africa: From Circumcision to Sexual Preference". Although the topic of the lecture had been chosen months in advance in consultation with the hosts, the subject acquired additional topicality when a Yoruba woman who was about to be deported, applied to a US court for asylum in the United States on the grounds that her two young daughters would be forcibly circumcized if they were sent back to Nigeria. She won her case, and was granted what was in effect "cultural asylum". Assuming the Yoruba woman's allegations about forceful circumcision were correct, was this a peculiar case of clash of civilizations? I discussed "female circumcision" and the Yoruba woman's allegations in my lecture in New Orleans, leading on to a lively debate. Was knowledge across cultures facilitated that evening?

Finally, a word about my partial return to the World Order Model's Project (WOMP). I first joined WOMP in the late 1960s when I was still a professor at Makerere University in Uganda. The project sought to identify major trends in world affairs, evaluate which trends were healthy and which ones were detrimental, and then work out strategies for facilitating the healthy trends and arresting the detrimental ones. I am of course oversimplifying the WOMP agenda, but our efforts did nevertheless result in major volumes about global reform. My own WOMP volume was entitled A World Federation of Cultures: An African Perspective. This was published by the Free Press (Macmillan) in New York in 1976 - long before Huntington's article in Foreign Affairs about "Clash of Civilizations"! It just goes to show how long I have been in this business of global cultural studies!

I remained with the World Order Models Project for about a decade and a half - and then my relationship with WOMP quietly fizzled out, although WOMP itself was still alive and well. I suppose my old friend, Saul Mendlovitz, the Director of WOMP, wanted to experiment with other people as new members of WOMP. I became a distant but friendly resource person.

But in 1994 WOMP has sought me out again and involved me in a WOMP project about the United Nations. In fundamental values

WOMP and I still seem to be in step. But in culture are we still compatible? Is there a WOMP culture which has changed since I left it? Is the World Order Models Project yet another arena of a clash of civilizations? Let us wait and see.

Between Family and Profession

Some of my friends have been asking whether I have stopped publishing books and resumed producing babies? They argue that the last Mazrui book was in 1990 (Cultural Forces in World Politics), and yet there was a Mazrui baby in 1992 (Farid Chinedu) and another baby in 1993 (Harith Ekenechukwu). Had I put the pen aside and resumed family-creating activities?!

Such earthy and intimate jokes came more often from my African male friends than from my other friends!! Fair enough as bantering between intimate males.

In reality I have written some sixty journal articles and conference papers on culture, politics and civilizations since 1990. If I had wanted to turn them into at least two books (as I used to do in the past) I could easily have done so. But I spent part of the time since 1990 co-editing and co-authoring Volume VIII of the UNESCO General History of Africa, which has at last been published under the title of Africa Since 1935 (London: Heinemann and Los Angeles and Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995). It is an immense volume of 30 chapters, six of which have me as either author or co-author. I now have to write the abridged edition on my own. This shorter edition will be particularly intended for "knowledge across cultures". It will be translated not only into French, but probably into Arabic and into Kiswahili and Hausa. We hope there will eventually also be editions in Portuguese, Chinese and Japanese. We have our fingers crossed.

As for my beloved babies, Farid and Harith, fathers are always junior co-authors. The main authors are of course the mothers. My wife, Pauline (Maryam) has interrupted her career as a teacher not only to give birth to them but also be the main parental sustainer. Pauline got her Masters' degree from Binghamton University in 1993, and has been especially interested in teaching children with special needs. But she has been delayed in practising her career partly because of the responsibilities as a mother of very young children and partly because of the bureaucracy of visa applications.

During the Christmas holidays of 1994 Pauline was also briefly mother to two of the children of my first marriage - Jamal and Al'Amin, who came to visit us in Binghamton. It was wonderful having four of my five boys around me - the two oldest (one over 30 years old and the other in his late twenties) and

the two youngest (one under 3 years old and the other under 2). The bridge between the two oldest and the two youngest is Kim Abubakar, who is now a lawyer in Washington D.C. and is my third son chronologically. Perhaps at next New Year's celebrations I shall have all of my five sons around me, Insha Allah, along with Pauline, Kay (Kim's wife) and Will (Kim's and Kay's son).

As you know, my wife, Pauline is a Nigerian. When I was in Nigeria in September 1994, I had planned to go to Jos to visit my university and my in-laws. Unfortunately the university was closed down, and my mother-in-law had left Jos to accompany her own mother to their ancestral village. However, Pauline's sister, Jane, and her husband, Edmond (Garba) Egbo, kindly took the trouble to drive down from Jos to meet with me in Abuja. They spent the night in my suite at the Nicon Noga Hilton Hotel (my host, General Yakubu Gowon, had booked for me a huge multi-room suite at the Hilton. So it was wonderful to be able to make good use of the accommodation with my Nigerian relatives, if only briefly).

Jane, Garba and I went to pay our respects to General Gowon in his own suite. It was a very pleasant reunion with part of my Nigerian family.

Jane was pregnant when she came to visit me in September 1994. Soon after Christmas she delivered twin-boys. Wonderful! Twinning seems to run in the family. My wife, Pauline, is one of twins. Pauline's twin brother passed away as a baby.

The Mazrui family in Kenya is more than an extended family. It is a large clan. The younger members in Mombasa are considering setting up a Mazrui Cultural and Welfare Society to promote interest in Mazrui and Swahili history and culture and a sense of solidarity among the Mazrui. Ethno-cultural welfare organizations have a long history in 20th century Africa. I was consulted by my younger ethno-cultural compatriots about the proposed Mazrui association. When I visited Mombasa I addressed the leadership. I said that promoting mutual help among the Mazrui was commendable provided it was not a declaration of hostility towards outsiders, and provided it did not stop the Mazruis from becoming pure philanthropists. I also supported the aims of encouraging greater awareness of the role of the Mazrui in East African history and greater appreciation of Swahili culture as a whole. I urged caution against tribalism in the negative sense.

When I am in Mombasa my two oldest sisters (Salma and Nafisa) are, by tradition, in charge of my stay. They are usually represented by their children who drive me around. The children of my third sister (the late Aisha) have always been equally supportive, bless them. My fourth sister, Alya, is the only one who is younger than me. Can you imagine? As for my

older brother Harith, he is still a gentleman-farmer in Takaungu, less than forty miles from Mombasa. I try to visit him also every year.

I also have an aunt in Mombasa, the last surviving sibling of my mothers'. I suppose she is the nearest thing to a matriarch of our family today. But she is so gentle and caring that she is more maternal than matriarchal, bless Mama-'Ena.

When I was in Toronto, Canada, in November, one of the highlights was meeting at last my nephew Muhammad Tamim's bride from Guyana, Khyrul. Incredible as it may sound the first Guyanese I ever met was Cheddi Jagan, who is now President of the country. I first met him in the same city of Toronto as far back as 1966! We were both major speakers at a symposium on the theme "Revolution and Response".

But while the 1966 event was loud and public, the 1994 event was quiet and private. I was a guest at dinner at the Tamims. Excellent Caribbean cuisine and great company. The Tamims had also invited Zeid Harith Mazrui, my brother's son, to dinner. It was a great reunion.

On the next day I met more East Africans at a Toronto mosque and later at a Halal meat Indian restaurant. The whole experience added immensely to my visit to Canada in 1994.

Are we starting a clan of North American Mazrui? I do believe the process has started. Four of my five sons are already U.S. citizens; and the fifth is a permanent resident (like his Dad)! In Canada I already have one nephew recognized as a landed immigrant; and another nephew hopefully on his way there.

My older nephew, Alamin M. Mazrui, a professor at The Ohio State University in Columbus, is already a permanent resident of the USA, though the niece he is looking after (Lubna Mazrui) still has a mere student's visa.

Yes, a Mazrui clan is indeed in formation in North America. Within the United States does the Mazrui clan stand a chance of overshadowing the Kennedy clan before the end of the 21st century?! Who knows? We may have a more ecumenical America by that time. We may have transcended a clash of civilizations, Insha Allah.