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Eve of 1991

MAZRUI NEWSLETTER

"A PROFESSORIAL SILVER JUBILEE"

Another Special Edition

For friends, relatives and colleagues

It was in 1965 that I first became a full professor. Privately, I regarded the whole of 1990 as my own Professorial Silver Jubilee - a piece of personal vanity!

In reality the year did re-capture some important points in my career. It also opened up new professional experiences. The most important moment of nostalgia was a visit to Makerere University in Uganda - which was where I first became a professor twenty five years earlier. My newest experience of 1990 was the drama of a visit to the Republic of South Africa - a visit with its own moments of excitement and anxiety! I shall return to the emotions of Uganda and South Africa shortly.

Spain in 1990 was a different kind of pilgrimage. Returning to Spain recently was a celebration of something even older than my professorial career. I first went to Spain in my pre-undergraduate days in the 1950s - when I had just begun courting Molly (or was she courting me?)!! Molly and I had a memorable time in Spain as part of a group of student-tourists from Huddersfield Technical College where Molly and I were preparing for university entrance in Britain. As an African student in Valencia I was such an unusual sight in those days that the local press got interested - and arranged to have me interviewed! Perhaps that was the beginning of my flirtation with the Western press!

When Molly and I walked on the beaches of northern Spain in the 1950s (young black male, young white female) there was no hostility - but there was a lot of unabashed and open curiosity. Children followed us in wonderment! They were far less threatening than the children in Tennessee Williams' play Suddenly Last Summer! Molly and I had fun chatting with the racially curious Spanish children on the beaches.

My visit to Spain in 1990 had of course an academic side also. I was attending the World Congress of Sociology sponsored by the

International Sociological Association, and held at the University of Madrid and opened by His Majesty King Carlos. There were some four thousand sociologists from around the world. I chaired one session on "Comparative Ethnicity" and presented a paper on another panel on "Religion and Politics". Although I was supposed to be co-convener of the panel on ethnicity, in reality most of the work before the Congress had been done by Professor Marshall Murphree of the University of Zimbabwe. All I had to do at the Congress itself was to make some last-minute decisions about panelists - and then preside at the session. My deepest gratitude to Professor Murphee. At the Congress itself I was elected to the Research Committee on Religion and Politics.

A face in Madrid from the early days of my Makerere years was that of T.V. Sathyamurthy, now at the University of York in England. We had a delightful dinner together in Spain - and reminisced about the old Africa days!

Origins East Africa

In 1965, when Makerere made me a full professor, I was 32 years old. I was being promoted in a meteoric rise after less than two years as a lecturer. To the present day I have never been a Senior Lecturer, or a Reader, or an Associate Professor. That portion of my career which was below the rank of a full professor has remained less than two years long in all.

Makerere expressed its supreme trust in me in 1965 - and the United States confirmed Makerere's judgement in the 1970s with offers of tenured appointments from varied universities. In 1990 the Makerere community turned up in multitudes to help me celebrate 25 years of continuous professorial activism. What an exhilarating moment! What a humbling experience!

What took me to Uganda in 1990 in the first instance was a conference in Kampala on "Academic Freedom and Social Responsibility in Africa", sponsored by a Pan-African organization called CODESRIA based in Dakar, Senegal, and by Makerere University and the Center for Basic Research in Uganda. The conference was opened by President Yoweri Museveni of Uganda. In his speech the President quoted my definition of an intellectual which I had first used in a debate in the Town Hall in Kampala with Mr. Akena Adoko, who was then the Head of Intelligence under the first administration of Milton Obote. I had defined an intellectual in 1969 as "a person who has the capacity to be fascinated by ideas and has acquired the skill to handle some of them effectively".

In November 1990, President Yoweri Museveni got the first part of my definition correct - that an intellectual was "a person who has the capacity to be fascinated by ideas". The President then added and "one who can juggle ideas". In the discussion which followed I promptly corrected President Museveni! I also asked him

whether he permitted only ideas expressed verbally (i.e. in words) - or whether he would permit opinions experienced behaviorally, like burning the flag or a student's boycott of classes. President Museveni (like President Bush) advised against burning the flag! What was particularly impressive about Museveni was his readiness to make himself available for such a prolonged and frank discussion with academics after his speech opening the conference. The entire debate about academic freedom in 1990 was a worthy celebration of my own humble Silver Jubilee. Afterall, my confrontation with Akena Adoko in the Town Hall in 1969, chaired by the Mayor of the City of Kampala, and televised at the time, had indeed been on the related subject of "The Role of the African Intellectual in the African Revolution". The question of intellectual freedom had also been central in the 1960s.

Nuruddin Farah seemed properly integrated at last into the Makerere community in 1990. The dinner at his flat was not to mark my Professorial Silver Jubilee - but it did remind me strongly of the party he held on my 50th birthday seven years earlier in Jos, Nigeria. The Makerere dinner in 1990 included among the guests Minister of State Tarsis Kabwegyere and his dear wife. It was wonderful to find a relaxed social moment with the Kabwegyeres. It was almost like ancient days when we all still lived in Uganda. Other old friends at Nuruddin's dinner included Mahmood Mamdani (Uganda), Achie Mafeje (South Africa), David Rubadiri (Malawi) - a truly Pan-African event, held in a Somali's home!

One ironical aspect of my Silver Jubilee year was the dis-Ugandanization of my domestic life. Almost continuously since my first son was born, my household had always included a Uganda-born member. Until my marriage came to an end, the Uganda-born members of my family were my own sons (Kenyans by nationality but Ugandans "by birth").

And then my marriage broke up, and Molly had custody of the children. After a brief gap my household had Uganda-born members once again - but this time Ugandans themselves. The Kiberu sisters filled the Uganda gap in my Michigan life; and Sam Sebina and later Gasana Berthas looked after me on the campus of the University of Jos. Of course my Ugandan wards did not replace my Uganda-born sons in life. This wider Ugandan connection enriched my entire existence.

And then came 1990. Brenda Kiberu got married in Minneapolis, Minnesota. And her sister Maureen, left to attend the wedding - and stayed put in Minneapolis. Christine, another sister, also left for Minnesota. For the first time in many years my home was truly de-Ugandanized. There was a new emptiness, sad and bewildering, at home - precisely when, professionally, I was celebrating my Silver Jubilee as a professor. I shall always remember my Kiberu years, with love and poignant gratitude. Will they return?

Mind you, I still am in constant telephone contact with the Kiberu sisters and in correspondence with them. I have even visited them in Minnesota, and had a wonder dinner with their mother Nalongo in Kampala in November. But I no longer live with any of the Kiberus - and that's the difference!

Before going to dinner at Nalongo's in Kampala I gave my Silver Jubilee Lecture at Makerere University in Kampala. The turnout for the lecture was truly enormous. There was no lecture hall at the university large enough to accommodate the crowd. The Main Hall was dangerously packed and overflowing. In the end the event took place in the open air, almost like a political rally. My topic was "The Gulf Crisis: Some African and Islamic Perspectives". Among the dignitaries who attended was Deputy Prime Minister Abu Mayanja, a very old friend of mine, who held a dinner in my honour the next day.

As part of the celebration of my Professorial Silver Jubilee at Makerere I presented to Vice-Chancellor (President) Senteza Kajubi a copy of my latest book Cultural Forces in World Politics. In reality, that was the launching of the book in East Africa. I was deeply moved when the crowd burst into a thunderous applause.

It would have been nice to celebrate my Silver Jubilee not only at Makerere but also at a university in my country of birth, Kenya. But in reality I have not lectured at a Kenyan university since the mid-1970s! Can you imagine? But private sponsorship of my lectures in Kenya has been forthcoming from time to time. In 1990 it was the Muslims of Mombasa who sponsored my lecture on "The Gulf Crisis". The Mombasa branch of the ruling party, the Kenya African National Union (KANU), originally agreed to let the lecture take place in KANU Hall, Mombasa, which had recently been opened by President Daniel arap Moi. But at the last minute KANU changed its mind about my giving a lecture on the Gulf Crisis in their own Hall. So we switched venue to the Mombasa Islamic Center. Nevertheless, the men's section of the auditorium at the Islamic Center was filled. It was the women's section which was - unfortunately - sparsely attended.

Kenya television has still not shown my BBC/PBS series The Africans: A Triple Heritage - almost the only English-speaking country in Africa yet to do so. On the other hand, I was puzzled to learn that there were two different Arabic versions of The Africans - one in standard Arabic and the other in Algerian Arabic. If the two versions helps the television series to reach a wider and more popular public , alhamdu li Llah (praise the Lord!).

It is quite possible that Kenya television is waiting for a Swahili version of the TV series before airing it. If so, the prospects are promising. Ohio State University at Columbus is seriously considering such a Swahili translation. Why Ohio State? Their Swahili credentials are impressive. Their courses on

Kiswahili in 1990 attracted more than 300 students. Al'Amin M. Mazrui, a professor at Ohio State, is likely to take a leading role in the Swahili translation of The Africans: A Triple Heritage. (I wonder how he would translate into Kiswahili my sub-title "A Triple Heritage"? How would Al'Amin say that in Kiswahili?)

Destination South Africa

My most memorable Kenyan event in 1990 concerned the issue of whether I would be permitted to go to South Africa. I had already checked in my luggage for Johannesburg on a Swiss Air flight. When the emigration officer asked me my destination, and I gave Johannesburg, he figuratively heard alarm bells - inspite of the fact that South Africa's Foreign Minister, Pik Bhota, was on that very day in Nairobi talking with President Moi. The emigration officer at Nairobi airport referred my case to his superior officer at the airport. I was then taken to meet the commanding officer. He regretted to say that I could not leave for South Africa without permission from the President's office - which was closed until the following Monday. When I explained that I was expected in Johannesburg on Sunday night - and I showed the officer Archbishop Tutu's own letter to me on the subject, Officer Peter Gichuru tried to reach by phone higher authorities in town to see if they would authorize my departure. But it was Saturday afternoon - and the emigration officer had no luck.

In the end, the Swiss Air flight had to leave without me (but with my suitcase on board, bound for Johannesburg). I returned to downtown Nairobi, and with the help of Ambassador Umar Fekih (an old friend) we managed to contact higher authorities in Nairobi. Instructions were given to airport officials to let me go on the next flight out to South Africa. I did manage to leave on a Royal Swazi flight the next day - and arrived in Johannesburg within two or three hours of the scheduled time for my lecture.

Archbishop Desmond Tutu was there to welcome me - and he greeted me warmly. The Lecture Hall was packed. My Desmond Tutu Peace Lecture was to be the keynote address of an inter-faith conference sponsored by the World Council on Religion and Peace. The topic of my Desmond Tutu lecture was "The Pro-Democracy Movement in Africa: Indigenous, Islamic and Christian Tendencies". When I finished the address there was a spontaneous and instantaneous standing ovation - and a warm embrace for me from Archbishop Tutu. I was deeply moved.

I had waited for so long to come to South Africa. When I received invitations from the Republic in my old Makerere days, I used to stipulate three minimum conditions to my prospective South African hosts - that I had to address racially mixed audiences, I had to be able to say what I wanted, and had to have the option of taking my English wife with me to South Africa. I added the last

condition to test the system at its most absurd. My prospective hosts would write back to say that they could guarantee racially mixed audiences, and were prepared to take the risk with whatever I wanted to say. But coming to South Africa with my English wife would make us liable to their so-called Immorality Laws and Mixed Marriages Act - imperil Mrs. Mazrui and me. So I never went to South Africa.

On one occasion I was giving a lecture on "Academic Freedom: The Dual Tyranny" at the Royal Commonwealth Society in London. I made the point that academic freedom can sometimes be curtailed because of the absence of other freedoms - including freedom to mate across the racial divide. The freedom of the University of Cape Town to make academic appointments was restricted because South Africa at the time had laws against mixed marriages.

When my lecture on academic freedom was published, I heard from the private secretary of Prime Minister John Vorster. The Prime Minister wanted me to know that the laws against mixed marriages (and mixed mating) did not apply to me. I later discovered that the Prime Minister also reprimanded the Vice-Chancellor of the University of Cape Town for "misleading a foreign scholar". It seemed that the unjust laws were only intended against local mixed marriages - and not against foreign visitors ready to break the sanctions against the Republic. I therefore continued to boycott South Africa.

Then came 1990. The African National Congress was unbanned. This gave me a new authoritative body which could confirm whether nor not any visit of mine to South Africa would violate sanctions or compromise the struggle against apartheid. There was also the de-facto democratic authority of Archbishop Desmond Tutu. Both the A.N.C. and Bishop Tutu gave me the green light for the visit in December 1990.

There was one major regret in December. Because the Nairobi airport authorities had delayed my departure for South Africa by some twenty-four hours, I missed the opportunity to meet Nelson Mandela. South Africa being what it is, we were supposed to meet at the funeral of the first Black man to be buried at a previously white cemetery. Both Nelson and Winnie Mandela attended the burial of David Tshoga, the Black man killed in a demonstration and now destined for a white graveyard. Mandela gave a moving speech at the funeral. But thanks to the Nairobi airport authorities, I arrived in Johannesburg too late for this particular integrative event. The racial integration of the graveyard in South Africa was almost as significant as the racial integration of matrimony.

The ANC official I met at Headquarters was the Secretary-General, Alfred Nzo, with whom I had a fascinating discussion about the ominous policies of some of the new Eastern European governments towards the Pretoria regime. The President of the ANC, Oliver

Tambo, was expected back in South Africa later in December after 30 years in exile. (I was privileged to have met Mr. Tambo abroad in the past.)

The coordinator of my visit to Durban was my old dear friend of Michigan days, Leonard Suransky, who was now Senior Lecturer at the University of Durban-Westville. He and his wife Carolina hosted a major biryani dinner in my honour. My lecture at the University did not go down very well with the local left. I discovered that South African campuses are among the last surviving beehives of pro-Soviet Marxism left on the African continent. My lecture was too critical of Soviet communism.

In Durban I was pressured to give a talk to a huge congregation at Friday prayers in what was described as the "largest mosque in the the Southern hemisphere". No, mine was not a sermon. It was a report to South African Muslims about Islam elsewhere in Africa and Islam in the United States. The congregation seemed fascinated by the news. They had been so isolated from the rest of Africa. Then the Imam gave the khutba proper, the sermon.

That night I was also the guest speaker of the Muslim Doctors Association of Durban at their fund raising dinner. There were about a thousand diners, at least 75 rand a plate! My topic was "Islam and the Politics of the Gulf Crisis". Unlike my lecture at the University of Durban-Westville, the Banquet address was very well received. Earlier in the day officers of the Association had driven me to one of their charitable clinics and one of their charitable schools.

My third lecture in Durban was a repeat performance of my Desmond Tutu Peace Lecture. The audience was very disappointing in size - a far cry form the Johannesburg original! But it was delightful to have Mahatma Gandhi's grand daughter in the audience. It was afterall in South Africa at the beginning of the century that the Mahatma first experimented with his technique of civil disobedience. With the ANC leaders in Natal I had discussed with anguish the inter-Black violence - such a sad departure from Gandhi's satyagraha (soul force).

The Cape gave me different memories. Ecologically I shall always remember the car drive to Cape Point where the Indian Ocean meets and intermingles with the Atlantic. The route to Cape Point was a continuous "spectacular" of mountains and water. In fact the actual intermingling of the two oceans was an anti-climax as compared with the superior spectacles on the way.

Not long after Makerere made me professor in the 1960s the University of Cape Town invited me to South Africa. It was the first South African institution to do so. It was not until 1990 that I was at last able to visit the campus briefly as a guest of the Department of Anthropology. In the course of my coffee hour

with the academic staff at Cape Town someone referred to a report about my Desmond Tutu lecture which had appeared in an Afrikaans newspaper. The newspaper had referred to what I had said about gender relations in Africa. That simple reference during the coffee hour provoked a serious debate about whether African culture was more or less liberating for women than Western culture was. The multi-racial group at the coffee hour in my honour was split down the middle on that issue.

My last evening in Cape Town was a dinner with some ANC activists. Again the subject of gender dominated the discussions. The subject had also erupted when I visited the home of an ANC official earlier in the day near a squatter's camp. In many ways there was more disagreement about gender within the ANC than about race. Not altogether surprising, perhaps.

My public lecture in Cape Town was on the topic "Is There a New World Order?". At the end of the lecture I was astonished when a member of the audience brought for me to autograph two copies of my latest book, Cultural Forces in World Politics. I had launched it in London only the previous month. I did not expect to see it so soon. But actually it was indeed available already in a local Cape Town bookstore. I checked that out personally - and bought myself a copy from the shop as a memento. It was a mark of the changed situation in censorship that my book was available so promptly in South Africa. In the old days the Censorship Department would presumably have taken months to decide whether or not the book should be banned! The book that accompanied my BBC Reith Lectures, The African Condition, was banned in South Africa when it first came out.

My new book, Cultural Forces in World Politics, has even stronger things to say against the government in Pretoria. But the game of censorship is no longer predictable in South Africa. Anti-apartheid books are freely available - whereas Salman Rushdie's novel, The Satanic Verses, remains banned.

While I was in South Africa the BBC World Service discussed my latest book in their arts programme, Maridian. The BBC described me as a "Ugandan writer". In the year of my Professorial Silver Jubilee, I was delighted by this description. Although legally I am indeed a Kenyan national, there is a sense in which Uganda is as much my country as Kenya. The BBC had therefore not really made a mistake afterall by describing me as "a Ugandan writer" when reviewing Cultural Forces in World Politics. I belong to both countries.

What were my final impressions of South Africa? At least at a casual level the races seemed to mix a little more than I had expected. I attended multi-racial drinks parties, stayed at multi-racial hotels and ate at multi-racial restaurants. But at other levels the races still seemed fundamentally segregated. The Group

Areas Act took its toll - separating people's homes by huge distances. Even more fundamental was the apartheid of power - the difference between powerful whites and still basically powerless Blacks.

Am I optimistic about South Africa's immediate future? The answer is NO. I do not believe the worst is over yet for that unhappy country. What is more, I met so many South Africans of all races who agreed with me - though the scenarios of what was coming differed markedly. Some expected a social revolution of young Blacks; some expected a general moral breakdown as the violence of Natal spread elsewhere; and still others simply expected the ANC to be forced to resume armed struggle. Almost all ANC activists I spoke to thought the Government was dragging its feet even on such minimal issues as the release of political prisoners and amnesty for those in exile to enable them to return. Never was a country so incredibly beautiful faced with such ugly scenarios about its future!

Between Qalam and Kaduna

In Washington D.C. before I left for South Africa there had been a conference on the subject of "Muslims Against Apartheid". sponsored by the American Muslim Council. I gave the keynote address at their Banquet. The Washington conference had included Muslims who had come especially from South Africa - including Fatima and Ismail Meir and Farid Eysack. Indeed, Maulana Farid was filmed for my TV series and features in Programme 3 of The Africans: A Triple Heritage. But I was meeting him for the first time in Washington D.C. in the autumn of 1990. It was a delightful "re-union".

Apart from the Inter-Faith conference in Johannesburg, my most ecumenical event of 1990 was the Calamus Distinguished Lecture I gave in London, sponsored by the Calamus Foundation. The word calamus is Greek for pen. How many of you Arabists recognize the link with the Arabic word Qalam (also meaning "pen" of course)? The name of the Calamus Foundation was chosen deliberately to emphasize the ecumenical link.

The annual Calamus Lecture itself is intended to emphasize the links between the Abrahamic religions - Judaism, Christianity and Islam (ahl el kitab, people of the Book). My own Calamus lecture in November 1990 had three official discussants - a Jew, a Christian and a Muslim. My topic was "The Resurgence of Islam and the Decline of Communism: Are They Causally Connected?" I was later given the Annual Calamus Award for Distinguished Scholarship in Ecumenical Studies. As if sensitized to my Professorial Silver Jubilee, the Annual Calamus Award plaque was indeed made in beautiful silver!

The African Students' Association of Harvard University also gave me a plaque for Distinguished Service and attracted an impressive Harvard audience to come to the ceremony. My lecture for the occasion was on "Africa's Contributions to World Civilization". The lecture and the award were preceded by a large and memorable dinner in my honour.

After the Cambridge event I proceeded directly to a Dartmouth sponsored workshop on Uganda. The workshop was the brainchild of Nelson Kasfir of the Department of Government at Dartmouth. Participants included scholars who had come especially from Uganda. We examined the politics of Yoweri Museveni and his movement in power against the background of momentous global changes. Once again I was re-united in 1990 with faces from my Makerere past of the 1960s.

Like Uganda, Nigeria has had a special meaning in my life. My silver Jubilee would have been incomplete without a Nigerian component. My Albert Schweitzer Research Unit at SUNY-Binghamton was graced by the involvement of colleague Jonah Isawa Elaigwu from the University of Jos, Nigeria. As a visiting member of my team he worked on a book on Nigerian politics and was editing another book on Human Rights and Africa's Moral Order. Jonah Elaigwu kept abreast of constitutional developments in Ibrahim Babangida's Nigeria.

In March I went to Nigeria myself. There was a chance of my seeing President Babangida again. A tentative appointment had in fact been explored in advance, but I was squeezed out of the President's schedule partly by the sudden visit to Lagos of Eduard Shevardnadze, then Foreign Minister of the Soviet Union. However, it was good to be back in Nigeria and to see other old friends. I was also honoured to give the keynote opening address at a World Conference on Comparative Slavery held in Kaduna, sponsored by Ahmadu Bello University and Arewa House, Kaduna. Thanks partly to The Africans I was a celebrity in Kaduna. A newspaper called The Democrat made me an even bigger celebrity with sustained coverage of Mazruiana in the weeks with followed.

Pauline Uti, an old friend of mine from my days at the University of Jos (UNIJOS) came to visit me in Kaduna. I took the opportunity to invite her to come and visit me here in Binghamton. She said she would consider it after finishing her Bachelor's degree at UNIJOS. Well, believe it or not, she has indeed come to visit me in Binghamton. This is truly an additional celebration of my Silver Jubilee. Welcome to North America, Pauline!

On my way out of Kaduna airport the plane was overbooked - and there was a lot of pushing and shoving round the plane on the tarmac. I would not have got onto the plane but for the intervention of an army officer whom I once taught at the University of Jos. He made the airline take me on. I was so grateful. A

month later my benefactor at Kaduna airport was a fugitive after an unsuccessful military coup against Babangida's government. He was accused of having been implicated in the attempted coup. His picture was all over the Nigerian media. Africa insists on its surprises - whether or not Ali Mazrui has a Silver Jubilee!

Between Michigan and Binghamton

If 1965 was the year when I first became full professor, it was also the year when Albert Schweitzer, the medical philanthropist, died. In 1990 I completed my first year as Albert Schweitzer Professor in the Humanities, State University of New York (SUNY) at Binghamton. What a fitting celebration of my Silver Jubilee as full professor!

It was a very active year at SUNY-Binghamton. The President who had negotiated my coming to SUNY - President Clifford Clark - promptly resigned upon my arrival on his campus! What is more, he then appointed me on to the Search Committee for his own successor! The process of evaluating candidates to head a university was fascinating. An even more absorbing experience was interviewing the short list. In the end it was a privilege to have played a part in the appointment of Professor Lois DeFleur as the new President of Suny-Binghamton, the first woman-president in the history of the university.

Our Albert Schweitzer team included Professor A. Adu Boahen who came to us immediately after launching a pro-democracy movement in his native Ghana. There were widespread rumours before he left that he was about to be detained by Jerry Rawlings. The rumours were unjust to Rawlings - Boahen was even given an exit visa to come to SUNY-Binghamton to finalize for the publishers Volume VIII of the UNESCO General History of Africa. A great Silver Jubilee scholarly assignment.

Cornell University gave Adu a joint appointment. Fortunately Cornell is less than one hour away by car from Binghamton. And so Adu could live in Binghamton and commute to Cornell once a week. Getting Boahen to America had been a successful joint project between Africana Studies at Cornell and the Schweitzer Unit at SUNY.

On my recommendation SUNY-Binghamton appointed Dr. Diana Frank as a consultant to help me formulate a future television project. Diana and I had worked together before - when she was one of the producers of The Africans: A Triple Heritage. What will my next TV project be about? It could be about Islam in World Affairs, or about changing gender-relations world-wide, or about the African Diaspora. But can funds be raised for such ambitious projects? The economic situation does not seem propitious at the moment. But at least Diana and I have worked out a couple of potential projects in readiness for a more responsive television market. If you have any

funding advice to give us, please drop me a line. I am serious.

My continuing relations with the University of Michigan (U of M) took a variety of forms during my Silver Jubilee professorial year. Perhaps the most appropriate was the invitation I received not from the Department of Political Science, not from the Center for Afroamerican and African Studies but from the Department of Classics at the U of M! Why was classics particularly appropriate? Because my Inaugural lecture as full Professor at Makerere in Uganda in the 1960s had been on the subject of "Ancient Greece in African Political Thought" (republished as a chapter in my book Political Values and the Educated Class in Africa). The classicists at Michigan had read my Inaugural Lecture and invited me to speak on a related topic to mark the birthday of Martin Luther King Jr. in 1990. My topic at Michigan was "Ancient Greece and the Black Experience: In Search of the Universal". It was a fitting celebration of my Makerere Inaugural lecture a quarter of a century earlier.

To my suprise the lecture at Michigan attracted a large audience inspite of the fact that there were many other competing events on campus to mark King's birthday. What was even more unexpected was the explosive discussion which followed my lecture, with feelings running high between members of the audience themselves shouting at each other. Who would have thought that a lecture on ancient Greece would generate such heat? The Chair of Classics at SUNY-Binghamton, upon hearing about my Ann Arbor lecture, asked for a copy. It was available at the time only on audio-tape, as recorded at the presentation.

My first conference at Villa Serbelloni, Bellagio Italy, was just before the time of my appointment as professor at Makerere in the 1960s. In 1990 Omari Kokole and I worked with Population Studies at U of M in connection with their February conference. Guess where? At Villa Serbelloni, Bellagio, Italy, on "The Politics of Induced Fertility Change". Omari's paper was on population and political culture in Africa. My paper was on Islamic doctrine and population policy. It was good to be back at this spectacular and elegant Rockefeller Foundation conference center in Italy. Some traditions of the center were unchanged since my first conference there in the mid-1960s. But the warden in 1990 was new - younger and Italian (the first one had been American and elderly). However, I was shocked to learn later in 1990 that the new Italian warden had died suddenly. He was only about 50 years old.

Comparative Civilization

When I was first appointed at Makerere, the syllabus was truly "Eurocentric". Makerere in Uganda was still basically an extension of the University of London. I prepared my students in class for a degree of the University of London. "Eurocentrism" indeed!

In my Silver Jubilee Year in the United States I was appointed by the State of New York to a special State Committee. The agenda of the committee was to investigate whether the syllabus for elementary and secondary education within the state was indeed "Eurocentric", and whether this bias could be avoided. There had been widespread feeling among minority groups in the United States as a whole that American schools underplayed the contributions of non-whites to building the nation. The schools also "neglected or undervalued" civilizations and cultures other than those of the West. Our task on the New York Committee was to scrutinize the syllabuses for social studies and history in elementary and secondary schools in the State of New York, estimate the degree of Eurocentric bias and make recommendations to the government of the State. Our whole assignment was highly controversial within the State. And whatever findings emerged from our committee in 1991 were bound to be hotly debated state-wide if not nation-wide. Indeed, the committee itself was far from like-minded.

A vitriolic chapter by Lord Bauer, the British economist, attacking me viciously was distributed to members of the Committee by a conservative educator at Teachers College, Columbia University, New York. Was the distribution of this document a deliberate attempt to discredit me? Was Lord Bauer's attack on me being distributed more widely than the committee? I wrote to the scholar at Columbia to seek clarification. At first she denied having anything to do with the distribution of Lord Bauer's attack. But when I provided proof that the document was being distributed with the Columbia professor's own printed name-card and in envelopes of Teacher's College, Columbia, the educator wrote back to say that her secretary had distributed Lord Bauer's attack on me by mistake. She apologized. It's a strange world, isn't it?

My first visit to Toronto in Canada was in 1966 - the year after my appointment as professor. I was one of the speakers in a major public rally on "Revolution and Response". Other speakers included Cheddi Jagan, the distinguished Marxist opposition leader from Guyana and Zbigniew Brzezinski, who later became President Jimmy Carter's National Security Advisor. The mid-1960s were years of big debates about politics and cosmic issues about the future - and that Toronto rally was one of my most memorable illustrations.

My assignment in Toronto in 1990 was not about re-designing the future. It was about re-interpreting the past. The Royal Ontario Museum in Toronto invited me to give a special public lecture on "Africa's Contributions to World Civilization". It was part of a programme surrounding a controversial exhibition on Africa at the museum. Although the Museum charged a hefty admission fee to my lecture, there was clearly enough Canadian interest in Africa's contribution to civilization that the lecture hall was filled.

Not to be outdone by the Museum, the East Africans of Toronto got me to give a separate lecture for them. The topic we agreed on

was "Migration, Asylum and Exile" - a condition affecting most of us at the meeting. Vianney Bukyana (of Rwanda and Uganda) and Muhammad Tamim (of Kenya) were the main organizers of the East African re-union. Also present were Africans from other parts of the continent, as well as Canadian friends of Africa.

Toronto was a kind of family re-union in a more literal sense as well. I met for the first time in North America my sister's son Shariff Muhammad Tamim and my brother's son, Zeid Harith Mazrui. Goretti Mugambwa and her little daughter, Maria, were "family" in a different sense. It was wonderful to see them too. Goretti and Maria reciprocated by visiting Binghamton later in the year to welcome Pauline Uti to North America.

Remember Cheddi Jagan, the Guyanese revolutionary co-speaker at the Toronto rally in 1966? Well, in 1990 I was privileged to be in fairly regular correspondence with him about world affairs. We have remained in touch since we met again in Georgetown, Guyana, in 1988.

The Mazrui Sons

My two younger sons (Al'Amin and Kim) helped me celebrate my academic Silver Jubilee by doing very well themselves in their final year at the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, in 1990. Kim did so brilliantly in his Bachelor's degree that he was offered scholarships by distinguished law schools which included Harvard, Yale, Stanford as well as Michigan. Kim decided to accept the very generous offer of the Law School of the University of Michigan, effective from the autumn of 1990. Kim was of course born in the country which first made me professor, Uganda.

Jamal, my oldest son, helped me celebrate my Silver Jubilee by getting a job as an administrator at a distinguished center of learning - Harvard University (the Kennedy School of Government). Jamal also got a mention in the New York Times in a news report about braille and the computer. I telephoned Jamal upon seeing the report in the Times. "Who is this new celebrity in the Mazrui clan?" I enquired with a sense of competitive insecurity! We both laughed! Jamal was also born in Uganda - less than two years before my professorship.

Upon getting his Bachelor's degree Al'Amin, my middle son, decided to accept a marketing job with the biggest telephone company in the land, A.T. and T. He started work on the basis of a commission - a challenging experience for him. Until then Al'Amin had a prehistoric motor-car, which coughed along on Ann Arbor roads. Al'Amin decided that his marketing credibility would suffer enormously if he arrived at a prospective customer's shop driving his old jalopy! So Al'Amin invested in a new car. He did not know it, but he was celebrating not my first professorship but my last driving lesson in Uganda in 1965 - before I left to go on Sabbatical

leave in the U.S.A., never to resume driving lessons for the rest of my stay at Makerere! Incidentally, Uganda, the cradle of my professorial career, was also Al'Amin's birthplace. All my sons were born at Mulago Hospital in Kampala.

One of the most important Mazrui family events of 1990 was the wedding of my son, Kim Abubakar, to Kay Forde. Although he is my youngest, Kim became the first of my children to tie the knot! Representatives of the Mombasa side of the family at the wedding included Nabila Mazrui and her husband Abdul Nabhan, and Al'Amin M. Mazrui and his wife Elizabeth. Unusual features of the wedding programme included a song sung by the bride. The actual formalities of the wedding ceremony were both Islamic and Western - a dual heritage. (Kay is an American, brought up as a Christian.)

During the Christmas Holidays in 1990 Kim suggested that I should visit Ann Arbor again instead of he and his brothers visiting Binghamton. For one thing, one round-trip airfare for me was cheaper than three or five round-trip airfares for my sons and possibly for Kay and Will (Will is Kay's adopted child and now also Kim's). I accepted Kim's recommendation and went to Ann Arbor to celebrate the end of 1990 with my three sons. Kim, the youngest of the four of us, decided to foot the bill for our first dinner together at our favorite Chinese restaurant in Ann Arbor. Al'Amin extended hospitality after dinner at his apartment.

From Soyinka to Rushdie

What made my Professorial Silver Jubilee more complete was the decision at last to resurrect Transition magazine, under the dazzling editorial troika of Wole Soyinka, Henry Gates and Kwame Anthony Appiah. As many of you know, the magazine was started in Uganda by Rajat Neogy at about the time of Uganda's independence in the early 1960s. Transition rapidly developed into the most scintillating and successful intellectual magazine in post-colonial Africa. When the editor was detained by President A. Milton Obote and then stripped of his Ugandan citizenship, Transition was briefly in limbo. Obote tried to persuade me to run the magazine - but I refused to do so while its owner and editor was in detention.

On being released Neogy moved to Accra, Ghana, and started the magazine again. He later handed Transition over to Wole Soyinka, who was himself in exile in Ghana. The magazine died when Soyinka changed its name to a pseudo-African one (Cindaba)!!

It was great news in 1990 to learn that Gates, Appiah and Soyinka were reviving the magazine after a lapse of some 15 years or so. I was flattered to be invited to resume regular contributions of articles to the magazine. I have agreed to do so - provided that one of my first articles in Transition is allowed to be a vigorous rebuttal of Wole Soyinka's attack on my television series, The

Africans: A Triple Heritage. Soyinka had accused me of being an apologist for Islamic fanaticism. He has also accused the TV series of being contemptuous of African indigenous culture. Both charges are so palpably false that I would like to answer Wole Soyinka in his own magazine. Vigorous debate was the spirit of the old Transition at its best, when it was based in Kampala. It would be appropriate for Wole and I to thrash out our differences in the new Transition. (The new Transition is partly based at Duke University in North Carolina, USA.)

There is no doubt that 1990 witnessed the continuing expansion of my Muslim constituency. I received more and more invitations to be the keynote speaker at Islamic conferences. I have now received an invitation to a conference on the Gulf crisis to be held in Teheran, Iran. Exiles from Kashmir have also been educating me about the problem of Kashmir in the hope that I would begin to speak up against Indian repression there. On the other hand, I have received a letter from Rajiv Gandhi, former Prime Minister of India, inviting me to a special conference in New Delhi about problems of the 21st century. Where does my Muslim-ness end and my universalism begin?

In 1989 and 1990 I was approached to join a delegation to Teheran to appeal against the death sentence on Salman Rushdie for his novel, The Satanic Verses. I had given a lecture at Cornell University the year before attacking, on one side, The Satanic Verses, and disagreeing, on the other side, with capital punishment itself for any offence in the 20th century. My qualifications for the Peace Delegation to Teheran hinged on this apparent contradiction. Unfortunately both Teheran and Rushdie were rather intransigent in the earlier part of 1990. Rushdie became much more conciliatory by December 1990. Unfortunately for him, the authorities in Teheran remained uncompromising. The Ayatollahs retorted "What is done cannot be undone by saying 'I am sorry'"! The Ayatollahs insisted that "To forgive is divine" - only God could forgive Rushdie (after Rushdie's death)! But if "to forgive is divine", isn't "to err still human"? Perhaps the Ayatollahs should reconsider their judgement.

On the other hand, is there no hope of persuading Rushdie to surrender the millions he has made out of the Satanic Verses for some worthy cause like an endowment to promote ecumenical and inter-faith understanding in human affairs? Perhaps Rushdie should re-count his earnings, and repent financially (belated Zakat).

Food as History and Myth

When we were filming for my TV series I was keen on including a sequence about "the First Supper" - the first time human beings converted the satisfaction of a biological need (i.e. eating) into a social occasion (a time-specific meal). In Tanzania we did film

pre-historic stone remains which could have provided pictures for my story of "the First Supper" - but in the end we did not use those pictures or tell that story in the TV series.

What is clear is that meals have become occasions for more and more social business in human affairs. Working lunches are common in the twentieth century - and Americans are leading the world in business breakfasts!

My most memorable breakfast in 1990 was an occasion called the Harpur Forum at SUNY-Binghamton. (The original nucleus of the University was Harpur College, Binghamton.) The institution of a breakfast forum was formed by influential friends of Harper College within the Binghamton community. Instead of a dinner-club they formed a breakfast club. At each of their breakfasts a major speaker is invited. I am told that speakers of the past included Henry Kissinger - clearly adding "shuttle breakfasts" to "shuttle diplomacy"!

The Harper breakfast I addressed in December 1990 was attended by 260 influential members of the Binghamton community - a record attendance. They were welcomed by the new President of SUNY-Binghamton. I was then introduced by the President of Harper Forum. My topic was "The United States and Three Contradictions of the Gulf Crisis: Religion, Royalty and Gender". Harper Forum then presented me with a SUNY-Binghamton sweat-shirt and a SUNY-Binghamton necktie! Guess where the necktie was made! It said boldly "HUDDERSFIELD" - which is where I finished high school in England and where I met Molly, who later became my wife and the mother of my three sons. Long live Harper Forum - and their breakfast institution! A recording of my Harpur Forum lecture has since been broadcast on the radio here.

My worst professional meal of the year was perhaps the fund raising dinner which the West Africa Health and Educational Research Project in Minneapolis, Minnesota, hosted with me as the magnet. They charged a big amount per plate. Nobody came to the dinner! Was Ali Mazrui not enough of a magnet? Was Africa not compelling enough as a fund raising cause? Was it because the organization was inefficient in advertising the dinner? Or was it because the organization was ill-advised in separating Ali Mazrui's lecture (given earlier in the day for only $5 admission) from the Ali Mazrui fund raising banquet (at six times that amount per plate)?

However, my hosts did their utmost to cover the dinner fiasco with moving tributes to me and my contributions to African scholarship. The biggest surprise of all was when Maureen Kiberu got up to give a speech at this "banquet". I was deeply touched when she thanked the West Africa Health and Educational Research Projects for their aspirations and for honouring me - even if the "banquet" was a disaster! Bless her! She had guts.

My most memorable luncheon of 1990 took place at the United States' Congress on Capitol Hill - Washington, D.C.. I was addressing TransAfrica Forum's Ninth Annual Foreign Policy Conference under Randall Robinson's chairmanship. The audience was also diverse - including scholars, diplomats, members of the U.S. Congress, business people and others. My topic was a startling one - "African Origins of Eastern European Revolutions?: A Study in Interdependence". My lecture has since been published in TransAfrica Journal, Vol. 7 No. 2 Summer 1990. When delivered at the luncheon on Capitol Hill, my TransAfrica address received an instantaneous standing ovation.

My most memorable dessert of 1990 was an unusual theatrical experience with the Provost of SUNY-Binghamton, Peter Wagner and his dear wife, Caryl. They graciously invited me to join them for an evening at The Cider Mill Playhouse, Endicott. The theatre was presenting Charles Dickens' A Christmas Carol. At the theatre people booked tables (with four seats per table) rather than individual seats. You could then order cider, or wine, or soft drinks with cheese and biscuits while you watched the play. As a species we have come a long way from "the First Supper"! - (though alas the human race is still full of Scrooges!).

After the dessert at the theatre Peter and Caryl Wagner took me to their pleasant home for post-dessert refreshments. We compared notes on Christmas legends. Did you know that Dickens wrote A Christmas Carol in the same year that J.C. Horsely designed the first Christmas card? The year was 1843. The first edition of the Christmas card was one thousand copies and the design was that of a Christmas family party. Perhaps this constituted a true meeting point between "the first supper" as a prehistoric myth and "the Last Supper" as a Christian legend.

CONCLUSION

I have not included all my professional activities in this Newsletter. There is a separate Report of the Albert Schweitzer Unit, SUNY-Binghamton, which is even more detailed. It is available to other institutions upon request - but alas we cannot afford to send it to individuals on request. What I have attempted to do in this Newsletter is to recapture a little of the flavour of my career as I have celebrated the career's Silver Jubilee in 1990.

I have omitted many things in this Newsletter - such as my work for the World Bank, my involvement with UNESCO, my commitment to the International African Institute, my role with the United Nations' Commission on Transnational Corporations, my Vice-Presidency of the International Congress of African Studies, my Vice-Presidency of the Royal African Society. I have omitted dozens of lectures which I have given and many conferences that I have attended. But it is worth mentioning the annual meeting of the African Studies

Association of the United States where I debated Anatoly Gromyko, Head of the Soveit Institute of African Studies and son the late Soviet president.

For the first time on my visit to Uganda, the response of my former educational wards was minimal. I knew that Sam Sebina had got married, but was suprised he did not get in touch with me at all. On the other hand, John Ken-Lukyamuzi was as active as ever. He acted as my liaison officer with the Ugandan Press. Neither Muhammad Ddungu nor Roscoe Minge got in touch with me in Uganda. But Headmaster Idd Mukalazi did call on me at my hotel before my departure from Kampala. I suspect Bonnie Ntagozera did not know that I was in town at all. Indeed, it was probably my fault that I did not alert the whole team in advance that I was about to descend on Kampala. I took it for granted that my conference would be adequately publicized in Kampala. However, it was good to see Isa Lukwago and Suleyman Kiggundu, who were my Central Bank hosts in 1988.

My former Jos contacts did find out about my coming to Kampala one way or another. John Munene of the Department of Psychology at Jos was now at Makerere. Florence left me messages of greetings in Kampala - echoes from Jos. I saw a lot of Nuruddin. We looked for a Jos reunion in Kampala.

My domestic and family life in the U.S.A. was also rich. At the beginning of 1990 my sons visited Binghamton for the first time. In both love and anguish on one long night of debate we even reduced each other to tears! At the end of the year it was my turn to travel to Michigan in quest of their companionship. We reduced each other to laughter, in merriment and joy. These fluctuations are what love is all about.

My few days in Mombasa in November 1990 were simply packed with both events and feeling. My sister Salma and her children, my sister Nafisa and her offspring and my brother Harith went all out to bid me "Welcome Home!". The children of my late sister, Aisha, were also close at hand - dedicated and, as always, loving. My fourth sister, Aliya, is the only one who is younger than me. No, I did not bully her as "Junior"!! I only let her kiss my hand deferentially as always! She was as beautiful as ever. I am only sorry I was not able to go and see her mother. (Aliya's mother was my father's second wife in his last days. The mother is not only still alive but my own children will testify that my father's second wife looks younger than their own father, Ali Mazrui! Bad for my morale, but good for the morale of my second mother!)

You all know that very little of my professional life would have taken place without a stable domestic life in the United States and a stable office life. For most of 1990 my domestic life in the United States depended on Maureen Kiberu and Christine Kiberu JJuko, who looked after me in Binghamton with gusto and youthful

exuberance. From September 1990 Pauline Uti took over after Maureen and Christine left Binghamton to join their sister Brenda, in Minneapolis, Minnesota. When Goretti came visiting us in December 1990 she re-organized half the apartment at Binghamton. Goretti has an incorrigible sense of order. I had to keep her from my study at the point of "the gun" - otherwise she would have thrown out half my conference papers with impunity, in a tidying-up spree!!

Other special family visitors to Binghamton were my nephew Al'Amin Mazrui and his wife Elizabeth. It was touch and go if we would have a bed for them - considering that at the time my apartment accommodated not only Pauline Uti from Nigeria but also Goretti Mugambwa and Maria from Toronto, in separate rooms.

Jonah Elaigwu, my Visiting Professor from the University of Jos, decided at the last minute before his departure to bequeath his own personal bed, to me personally. He also decided to bequeath his TV set to my office at SUNY-Binghamton. The bed was a godsend for Al'Amin Mazrui and his wife, Elizabeth. We had to buy more sheets and a comforter before our guests arrived.

My office pillars at SUNY-Binghamton were Gloria Hopkins and Nancy Levis. There would have been absolute chaos in my career without them. Gloria was my administrative assistant theoretically - but also she was my travel agent, conference negotiator, lecture-organizer, as well as rapporteur to unit-meetings and (most important of all) accountant and book-keeper.

Nancy was my secretary during the year - but always ready to go beyond the call of duty, even dealing with my creditors!! Can you imagine?

Mary Breijak in Michigan dealt with more than my mail. She also rose to the occasion on issues which ranged from I.R.S. stipulations to enquiries about my condominium in Ann Arbor. In some of these issues she was helped by Judy Baughn, especially earlier in 1990. Where would I have been in 1990 without these women? Allah bless them all, for more than my Silber Jubilee!!

My graduate assistants at Binghamton were <u>crucial</u> for tasks which ranged from research to grading, from proofreading to advising students. These younger pillars of my career included Chakarin Komolsiri (from Thailand), Thomas Uthup (India), Andrey Ponomarev (USSR), Festus Ngaruka (from Namibia) and our undergraduate assistant Angela Washington (USA).

How do you view your own 1991? May you realize the rest of year aspirations for 1991. Best wishes to your own future Jubilees as well! Amen!

THE STAR 3/12/90
(JOHANNESBURG)
DECEMBER 3, 1990

Professor Ali Mazrui is welcomed by Archbishop Desmond Tutu in Johannesburg last night before the Desmond Tutu Peace Lecture. Picture by Sean Woods

African quest for democracy 'rooted in religious heritage'

By Carina le Grange

South Africa has telescoped two liberation struggles into one: the first being that for collective political self-determination and the second for a new independence towards individual rights, Kenyan professor Ali Mazrui said in Johannesburg last night.

Professor Mazrui, considered the doyen of African academics, but now a lecturer in the US, delivered the annual Desmond Tutu Peace Lecture at the opening session of the National Interfaith Conference (NIC) held by the World Conference on Religion and Peace (WCRP).

He said the quest for democratisation in Africa could be found in the religious heritage, which was one of tolerance.

"There were no religious wars in Africa until creeds from outside were introduced into the continent.

"Only in Africa could we have found a Muslim country — Senegal — who accepted a Christian head of state for two decades. The ecumenical spirit is alive and well.

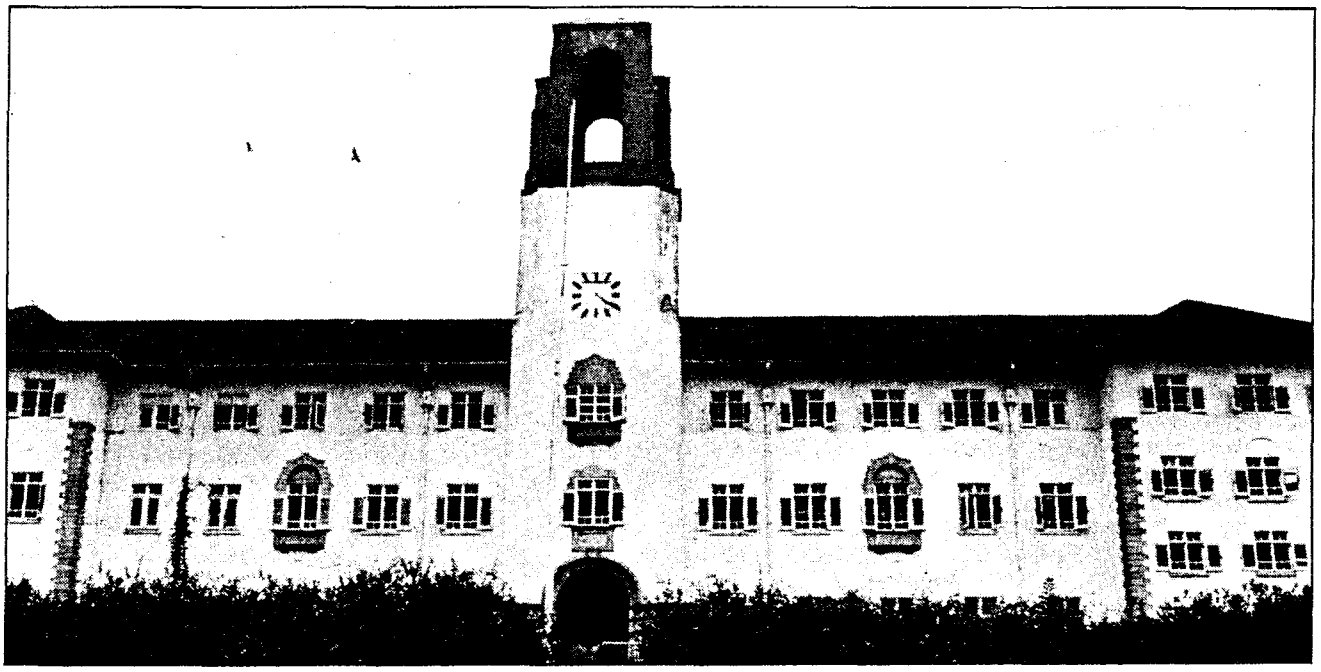
"Only in Africa — also in Senegal — could we find a Muslim president who has as his first lady a Roman Catholic."

He said there was in Africa a link between religion and democracy. It was only in Africa that the first Nobel prizes had been won for the most fundamental of all the values of survival — that of peace (won by Albert Luthuli and Archbishop Tutu).

"Religion is the probable midwife to the new African democracy," said Professor Mazrui.

The lecture was attended by a capacity crowd at Johannesburg's Selborne Hall, with the audience representing faiths across the spectrum including Islam, Hinduism, Judaism, Christianity as well as a Rastafarian representative.

The opening words were spoken by WCRP-SA president Dr Gerrie Lubbe, the master of ceremonies was Muhammad Dangor and the vote of thanks was given by Dr Franz Auerbach. The closing prayers were led by Chief Rabbi Cyril Harris.



The Makerere Conspiracy A View From Within

by *Professor Ali Mazrui*

Makerere University College in Uganda in the 1960s was at once a great African institution and a great internal crossroad. There was a constant traffic of scholars from all parts of the world. But the 1960s were also a decade of optimism in Africa. Afterall, more than fifteen African countries had become independent in 1960 alone. Tanganyika and Uganda had followed suit in 1961 and 1962 respectively. Kenya was approaching freedom in 1963. There were inevitable reverberations of Africa's euphoria along the corridors of learning at Makerere.

I entered those reverberate academic corridors in 1963 – a young lecturer newly returned from post-graduate work at Oxford. Four men were to play a decisive role in shaping my career at Makerere. One was a British radical (neo-Marxist), Colin Leys, who was the first professor and head of Political Science at Makerere at the time. The second was an American liberal, James S Coleman, who was then Director of African Studies at the University of California, Los Angeles. The third figure who influenced my life was an African conservative, Yusuf K Lule, who was at the time an influential public figure in Buganda. The fourth was a soldier, Idi Amin, later destined to become President of Uganda and "outstanding expert in demolishing institutions."

This article is about one of the meeting points between personal biography and institution-building. How are great institutions like Universities built? Are they built in response to inexorable historical forces – or through the intervention of outstanding individuals?

A British radical (Colin Leys), an American liberal (James Coleman), an African conservative (Y K Lule), and an African soldier (Idi Amin) all played a part in one such dialectic which transformed my life.

A Liberal Worldview

I first met James S Coleman in Nigeria. The year was 1964. To me, as a newly appointed lecturer in political science at Makerere University College in Uganda, Coleman as a political scientist seemed larger than life already even as long ago as that. Afterall some of his ideas had featured prominently in my graduate training at Columbia University in New York a few years previously, and later in my doctoral work at Oxford University in England. He was already an outstanding Africanist and political scientist. When I was introduced to him at Ibadan in 1964 there was an element of hero-worship in my response. His book, *Nigeria: Background to Nationalism*, was already a classic. What I did not realise at the time was the special role he was indeed destined to play in my own career in Africa. What he did not know was the special role I was to play in some of his social and political theories.

It turned out that as a social scientist Coleman was torn between belief in individuals and belief in social forces. His *micro*-theories about the state and political development tended to emphasise the importance of social forces and the relative marginality of the personality factor in social process. On the other hand, his *micro*-theories about university-development tended to zoom on potentially creative personalities.

Coleman was quite sure that the history of states was not really made by emperors, kings and presidents. It was made by social and political processes with a deep ancestry of their own. On the other hand, Coleman was inclined to believe that the history of great schools was made by great headmasters and great teachers. Distinguished universities were the product of gifted scholars and inspired academic administrators. Coleman's *micro*-theories of the nation were basically democratic; his *micro*-theories of education were basically elitist. When he joined the Rockefeller Foundation his ideas about what he called "centers of excellence" were predicated on existing talent and outstanding individuals in educational institutions.

In time I was to be caught up in this special dialectic of Coleman's worldview – the tension between institutions as products of social forces and institutions as products of gifted individuals. Partly through the Rockefeller Foundation and partly through scholarship, Coleman was interested in helping newly independent Africa construct viable institutions which would be relevant for what he thought of as "political development." Should Coleman continue to study the basic social forces in Africa – and then participate in responding with relevant institution? Or should Coleman seek to identify potentially creative personalities – and serve Africa through *them*? As an academic himself, he was tempted to accord universities a special role as institutions – whether or not that was the real message spelt out by the wider social forces. And once he focussed on universities the personality bias of his micro-theories tended to gain the upper hand.

It is against this background that we should understand Coleman's readiness to cooperate with Colin Leys, the distinguished British academic, in subordinating the sanctity of academic tradition to the promise of individual performance. Academic tradition demands that the rank of full professor be a recognition of extensive experience in research and teaching, a deep contribution to the wider world of knowledge, and clear evidence of scholarly originality and intellectual integrity. On the other hand, the "promise of individual performance" could be no more than youthful brilliance and intellectual dazzle.

Colin Leys had himself been a brilliant and dazzling young British academic. In his own initial years he did not become a professor in Britain – but he did become a fellow or don of Balliol College, Oxford, one of the more coveted positions in British academic life.

And then – to the astonishment of British academia – Colin Leys resigned his Oxford Donship to take up a position in a Trade Union College (Kivukoni) in newly independent Tanganyika. In due course he was persuaded to resume university life by becoming Makerere's first professor of political science. That virtually coincided with Uganda's independence.

Colin Leys was later to write a book on underdevelopment and neo-colonialism in Kenya. This Englishman's belief in the power of social forces turned out to have something in common with Jim Coleman's worldview. They both had a weakness for what they regarded as "outstanding personalities"provided the criteria were rational and intellectual. Both of them tended to distrust "exceptional personalities" in politics – but, at least within the Third World, they tended to have a soft spot for "outstanding personalities" in scholarship. The stage was set for a conspiracy which helped to transform my own life.

One day Colin Leys invited me to go for a walk with him along the elegant pathways of the campus of Makerere University College in Kampala. The year was indeed 1964 – not long after my encounter with Jim Coleman at Ibadan. Leys came straight to the point. He wanted me to succeed him as professor of political science at Makerere as rapidly as possible, preferably in 1965. He was a professor conspiring to end his own career. I was supposed to be the means for its termination. Jim Coleman could help for a year.

I said it was absurd. I had been appointed a mere lecturer in political science only the previous year. Surely, it was impossible for me to rise from lecturer to full professor without ever becoming Senior Lecturer or Reader. In any case I still did not have my doctorate in philosophy from Oxford. How could I possibly replace Colin Leys as professor at Makerere the following year in 1965?

Colin Leys kept on referring to Jim Coleman's cooperation – although at first I was not sure how that would help resolve the apparently insurmountable problems of succession.

Then Coleman himself visited Makerere from California, fully briefed by Leys. Here were two Western individuals deeply committed ideologically to the paramountcy of social forces as against individuals. And yet both social analysts here engaged in the process of not only identifying a particular individual (as it happens called 'Mazrui') but also in promoting

him against all tradition and previously institutionalised rules. Leys and Coleman wanted me promoted to full professor from mere lectureship – without ever experiencing the status of Senior Lecturer, Reader (or Associate Professor). Leys and Coleman were clearly subordinating traditional institutional procedures, to the promise of individual 'excellence'. Given their macro-ideologies they were contradicting themselves. Indeed, Colin Leys was on his way to becoming a Marxist. Jim Coleman was a liberal.

But what role was Jim Coleman supposed to play in the conspiracy? The incredible scenario was that I was to be appointed full professor *before* getting my PhD. But I was then to be given leave of absence for a year to complete my doctorate – while Jim Coleman was Acting Head of the Department of Political Science at Makerere in Uganda. Coleman was to be the one-year interval between the era of Colin Leys at Makerere and the era of Ali Mazrui. These believers in social forces seemed to be "selling out" to the premises of sheer and undiluted individualism. Were Colin Leys and Jim Coleman "hypocrites" or merely inconsistent?

Leys vs Lule

By a strange coincidence the whole conspiracy was nearly sabotaged. Suddenly the competition for the principalship of Makerere as a whole was between Colin Leys (an expatriate) and Yusufu Lule (a Ugandan). We were no longer discussing a professorship in political science or a headship of a single department. We were now discussing a choice about who should head the university college as a whole, and not merely who was the leading political scientist. The former British principal of Makerere had retired – and the battle for succession was between Leys and Lule (the same Lule who was indeed destined to become President of Uganda when Idi Amin was overthrown in 1979).

Initially, the Uganda Government under Obote in the mid-1960s was inclined to favour Colin Leys, an expatriate. On the other hand, almost every expatriate at Makerere favoured Y K Lule, who was deemed by expatriates as a safe black conservative. Obote regarded Leys as an innovator; local expatriates regarded

Amin: rustic warrior

Lule: 'conservative academic'

Leys as a threat. But in the end Obote chose Lule as Ugandan to head Makerere – the triumph of nationality over innovativeness.

But where did this leave Leys–Coleman effort to get Makerere to change its own rules and promote a lecturer to full professorship? Was the new Head of Makerere – Y K Lule – going to support a protege of his rival, Colin Leys? Would it not be more natural for conservative Lule to thwart the unprecedented innovation that Leys was plotting – the conspiracy to install me into his own professional chair in opposition to all precedent? Indeed, the Registrar and Secretary to Makerere Council at the time made it a point to pronounce that Makerere was not in the habit of requesting departing professors to nominate their own successors: Would social forces then win out against the conspiracy of 'exceptionalism'? Would Makerere's traditions prevail over daring innovation?

Professor James Coleman went to see the new conservative and traditionalist Principal of Makerere University college, Y K Lule. Their precise conversation is now buried with them – but Coleman later saw me and encouraged me to apply for the Chair of Political Science at Makerere. If I was appointed, I would be given leave to go to Coleman's university in California (University of California, Los Angeles) or to any other American university to complete the writing of my doctoral thesis and then fly to Oxford to submit and defend it. In my year's leave abroad, Coleman would probably serve as Acting Head of Political Science at Makerere. None of this was certain at that stage, since the applications for the Chair had not yet been processed and the appointments committee had not yet been assembled. But in Coleman's estimation, Principal Lule was going to be open-minded about my candidacy and was going to consider it entirely on its merits as an innovative proposal. The fact that the whole idea had been the brainchild of his rival for the Principalship of Makerere – Colin Leys – would apparently not enter into Lule's consideration.

Academic Prococity?

Why had Coleman fallen in with Colin Leys' plans? Why was he apparently mesmerized by an innovation based on "individual promise" rather than solid social analysis? Coleman did not even know me then the way Colin Leys did.

Part of the explanation for Coleman's conversion went back to a particular day in 1963. Coleman opened his copy of *The American Political Science Review* (APSR). The competition by professors to be published in that journal was immense. Hundreds of distinguished professors over the years had had their manuscripts rejected by APSR. Coleman himself had indeed succeeded in publishing in APSR, but he knew of many colleagues who had not made it.

On this occasion in 1963 there was an article on Africa by somebody else – "On the Concept of 'We are all Africans'." This was the title of the article. It is possible that APSR had

sent the article (without the name of the author) to Coleman to evaluate. Coleman probably noticed that the spelling was British – but otherwise the style of the writing and analysis was entirely unfamiliar. Coleman presumably sent in his evaluation to the journal.

Now, in the spring of 1963, he was looking at the name of the author on the printed page of APSR for the first time. It was not a familiar name – "Ali A Mazrui, Nuffield College, Oxford". Was the author a Don at Oxford? With Coleman's usual thoroughness, it did not take him long to discover I was a mere post-graduate student – publishing in the most competitive political science journal in the world. He also discovered that I had already published in the most competitive political science journal in the Commonwealth at the time – *Political Studies*, the journal of the Political Studies Association of the United Kingdom. Coleman's interest in the emerging intellectual elite of Africa had already been kindled by his research into the growth of nationalism in Nigeria a few years previously. Now he was taking an interest in emerging intellectuals elsewhere on the African continent. The basic dilemma of his theories was at work in his mind – Was history made by social forces or by exceptional individuals? Cultivating an intellectual elite could be one of the meeting points of the two ideas – a fusion of social development with "exceptional individual performance."

By the time Colin Leys wrote to Coleman about what Leys claimed were "Mazrui's intellectual powers", Coleman was ready to move to these new areas of commitment – helping Africa to develop what he hoped would be a progressive intellectual vanguard. I was simply one of his earliest case studies, one of his earliest experiments. (Perhaps by mistake some of the correspondence between Coleman and Leys was left behind on the files in the Department of Political Science at Makerere. I saw part of the correspondence when I became Head of the Department)

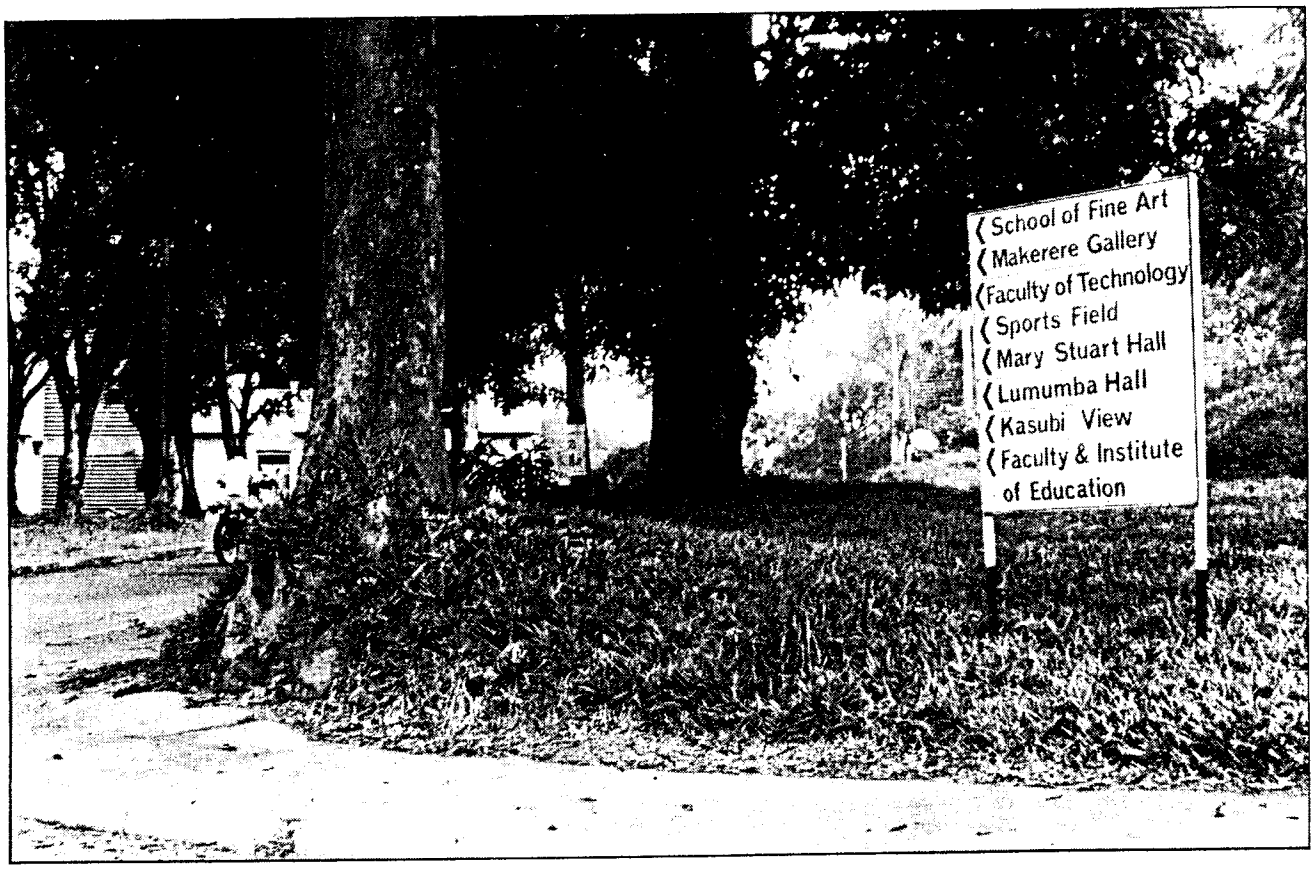
The immediate purpose of the Leys–Coleman conspiracy worked. The Appointments Committee at Makerere met. All the academic members of the Committee, including the external assessor, voted in favour of the Lecturer's promotion to full professorship right away – without waiting for his PhD. (The external assessor was Professor David Kimble, then of the University of Dar es Salaam).

The only negative vote was cast by the representative of the Government of Uganda. But since in those years the government had only a vote and not a veto in Professorial appointments, the appointment was confirmed early in 1965 – less than two years from when I was first appointed as lecturer. The Leys–Coleman conspiracy had "triumphed" – against all tradition, against all precedent. Makerere had never permitted such a meteoric promotion before and was not likely ever to do it again.

But had the conspiracy really worked on second thoughts? In retrospect did it serve the purpose it was supposed to serve? It is to the contradictions of this question that we must now turn.

In Idi Amin's Shadow

The immediate phases of the Leys–Coleman strategy went according to plan. Soon after being appointed professor, I left for the



United States – first to the University of Chicago as a visiting scholar and then to Coleman's home University, the University of California, Los Angeles, to write up my doctoral dissertation or thesis. I completed the dissertation in a matter of weeks over the summer of 1965. I still had the rest of the 1965–6 academic year as leave from Makerere. I spent it at the Center for International Affairs at Harvard University – knowing that the Department of Political Science at Makerere was in Coleman's good hands.

When I returned to Makerere in 1966 I had already defended the doctoral thesis at Oxford. Colin Leys had left for the University of Sussex in England. Coleman was already a major presence on the campus of Makerere University. After a few months I inherited the Chair of Political Science from Jim Coleman – and assumed also the Deanship of Social Sciences at Makerere. The Leys–Coleman King-making seemed to have succeeded at a remarkable speed. But was it destined to vindicate their apparent faith in "exceptional individuals" – in defiance of their own theories about the potency of wider social forces?

One of the cruel jokes that Africa had in store for Coleman's dilemma was that it was at the *macro*-level of the state that a single individual at the top appeared to make considerable difference – while at the *micro*-level of the University the wider social forces held an institution captive. Coleman's theories, as we have noted, had put the emphasis in the reverse direction – exceptional individuals making a difference in building a University but being relatively marginal in state-building or political development.

Three African countries which Coleman had tried to serve (Uganda, Kenya and Zaire) told that same story in their own different ways. But here we shall focus on Uganda. Uganda had of course produced Idi Amin, a single individual who turned out to be adept at demolishing one major institution after another. Uganda remains one of the most striking illustrations of the proposition that in Africa it makes a difference how "bad" the top man is. Idi Amin was indeed an "exceptional individual" – and not entirely in the negative sense either. He fascinated millions of people all over the world because of his rustic charisma and his skills in acting out Shakespeare's proposition that "all the world's a stage." He brought theatre and humour to international politics.

However, Idi Amin was also a brutal and merciless man who – directly or indirectly – caused the death of many thousands of his compatriots. On the one hand, Idi Amin was indeed a product of the social interplay of Uganda's history. On the other hand, almost single-handedly Idi Amin seemed to unleash new social forces which were to bedevil the politics of Uganda for years to come. Uganda under Idi Amin experienced both tyranny (centralised violence from the top) and anarchy (decentralised violence at the grass roots). Tyranny is too much government; anarchy is too little. Thousands of people died both because of orchestrated brutalities by those in authority and because neighbour was turning against neighbour as the wider moral order of the society was collapsing. A single individual at the top – Idi Amin Dada – had apparently served as the decisive initial "germ" for the moral and social decay of a whole society.

Among those who watched helplessly were the "exceptional individuals" at the country's sole University – Makerere. Far from being able to save even their own institution, they saw themselves being inexorably drawn into the political disorder that Id Amin had helped to unleash.

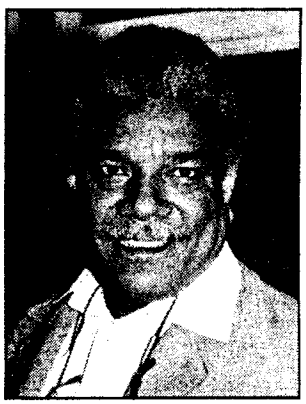
One day the soldiers came to fetch the Vice-Chancellor Frank Kalimuzo, from his home. He was Lule's successor at Makerere. They caught him in front of his terrified wife and took him away. She was never to see him again, nor was his body ever recovered. There is little doubt that Kalimuzo was killed on the direct orders of the Head of State, Idi Amin. In other words, Kalimuzo had fallen mortally wounded to the new forces of *tyranny* in Uganda.

Next to the Vice-Chancellor (or head) of Makerere at that time, the most politically-visible figure on campus was the Leys–Coleman protege of yester-years, Ali Mazrui. Idi Amin had initially patronised me partly because I had a public reputation as a major intellectual critic of the man Amin had overthrown, Milton Obote.

Curiously enough – and inspite of contrary evidence – Idi Amin shared for a while the Leys–Coleman belief that I was an "exceptional individual". So Amin considered sending me to the Republic of South Africa as Exhibit 'A' to the proposition that "Black Africans can think". I was unwilling to be used as an exhibit to convert racists to the obvious. I managed to persuade Idi Amin to pursue alternative strategies and challenges towards the racists of South Africa.

But in any case the evidence was accummulating that the exceptional individual was not the academic at a head of a department at Makerere but the new rustic at the head of the state in Uganda. Coleman's dilemma was indeed entering a new theoretical crisis. It was not at the *micro*-level of the University that outstanding personalities made a dramatic difference; it was apparently at the *macro*-level of the state. The professor at Makerere was more obviously a captive of the wider societal trends in Uganda than was the big man at State House who had helped to unleash those trends. Bowed and humbled by someone physically and historically larger than himself, the Leys-Coleman protege joined the exodus of intellectuals out of Uganda. Three intellectuals had attempted to shape my academic life – a British radical called Leys, an American liberal called Coleman, and an African conservative called Y K Lule. But it was a rustic African warrior called Idi Amin who had had the last word.

A dilemma was still unresolved – an enigma unclarified. Deep in the mists of social history lies a secret yet to be opened by social scientists – the mysterious relationship between special individuals and wider evolutionary forces, between human exceptions and the universals of history. ●



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