

ALI AND MOLLY MAZRUI

1517 Wells Street
Ann Arbor, Michigan 48104
U.S.A.

Last week of 1979

Dear Friends and Relatives,

We wish you a delightful and happy 1980. Indeed, we hope the decade as a whole will be kind to you.

On balance 1979 was somewhat cruel to us. One child (Kim) lost central vision and is now legally blind, and another child (Jamal) is now one-eyed. But they are both wonderful children, full of courage and vitality and good humour. Ali is always reminded of the day he came downstairs to find Kim with a lip severely torn and bleeding profusely after a fall. Ali was so shocked that he felt faint. The injured child came to the rescue - and carefully guided his father to a settee where he could sit down and recover from the shock!

In his new and more serious affliction eleven year old Kim has shown similar courage - which has helped his parents enormously. Jamal is more philosophical, but equally tough. Even in times of such distress, the parents in turn discover that there is always something to be grateful for.

1979 was a busy year in other ways also for Molly and Ali. Ali was busy with the B.B.C. Reith Lectures, which involved a lot of travelling to both Africa and Europe, sometimes accompanied by his B.B.C. producer, Michael Green. The lectures (entitled The African Condition) were broadcast on both the domestic and the World Services of the British Broadcasting Corporation. Early in 1980 the lectures will appear as a book under the same title, published jointly by Heinemann Educational Books and Cambridge University Press. (Cambridge has the American rights).

For Molly 1979 was exceptionally busy because of her work at the English Language Institute of the University of Michigan where she has been training as a teacher of English as a foreign language. She has been both a graduate student and more recently a teaching assistant. In the latter capacity she taught two classes of foreign students every day of the week. She is about to complete her M.A. in Linguistics.

It was a godsend to both Molly and Ali that the year was so busy. The family crisis would have been harder to handle otherwise.

Jamal still plays tennis. He remains a great tennis enthusiast. There is also a chance that this sixteen year old young man will be a licensed car driver before very long. That is a skill that has eluded his father to the present day. We do fervently hope that the family will at long last have two drivers when Jamal takes his tests.

The visit of Molly's parents to Ann Arbor in the summer was an unqualified success. It was the Vickerman's first trip outside the British Isles. The children greatly enjoyed their grandparents. And we of course enjoyed them all.

Al'Amin is making good progress with his Spanish. There may be another linguist in the Mazrui family, with a bit of luck. Kim is learning typing, as well as braille.

Ali served out his year as president of the African Studies Association of the U.S.A.. It was a hectic year - with a crisis or two! He was also actively involved in the UNESCO General History of Africa - a project which took him to Ougadougou as well as Paris. Thirdly there was Ali's usual involvement in the World Order Models Project. In 1979 he crossed the Atlantic at least once every month!

Molly had hoped that Ali's appointment as Director of the Center for Afro-american and African Studies at the University of Michigan would reduce his travelling. It did not work in 1979. But is there hope in 1980? Let us wait and see!

The news of Uganda's liberation from Amin's misrule was exhilarating. We celebrated that event, though the country's recovery from the tyranny and its aftermath may take a while.

In June Ali spent about ten hours with Milton Obote, the former president of Uganda. This was at Dr. Obote's residence in Dar es Salaam. It was good to see him, his wife and the children again. Mr. Akena Adoko, Obote's former Chief of Intelligence, was also very helpful to Ali during the same trip. Akena now practices law in Dar es Salaam. Other highlights of 1979 for Ali were his interview of President Leopold Senghor of Senegal and President Kenneth Kaunda of Zambia. The two presidents were both very gracious.

Kim is still a swimming enthusiast. He goes swimming regularly and is now a "porpoise". Al'Amin has joined Jamal in tennis. The fact that we are in the midst of winter does not seem to make any difference to them!

When you receive this the Mazruis may be on a family holiday in the Caribbean. Molly is a fanatic about rounding us all up once every year for a relaxed week or two somewhere in the world. She usually has her way! What's more it works - everybody has fun!

We do hope you are having fun too. We wish you and your loved ones every happiness in the 1980's.

Yours warmly

Ali and Molly

My dear Sam -
 You do not know how much
 I miss you! It is a long
 time since I saw you. I am
 glad to hear that you are
 happy and well. I hope you
 have had a very different year
 from the last. I hope you
 have a happy New Year by
 the way. I also sent you
 some money from London
 in December. I also sent
 some gifts to you. I hope
 you like them.