

Spring 2008

MAZRUI NEWSLETTER No. 32

General Theme: From Obote to Obama: Stages Towards a 75th Anniversary



Left to right above: Obama, Annan, Kibaki, Odinga

Left to right below: Lule, Obote, Mazrui, Kennedy, Mboya, (details inside front cover)

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Ali Mazrui in sunglasses disembarking from East African Airways at Entebbe Airport, Uganda, in 1972. Mazrui was arriving via Nairobi, Kenya, after a lecture tour in Australia.

FRONT COVER PHOTO DETAILS: (a) Barack Obama with U.S. flag pin on his lapel; (b) Kofi Annan applauding reconciliation between Mwai Kibaki and Raila Odinga, Nairobi, Kenya; (c) Y.K. Lule, Principal of Makerere College, A. Milton Obote, President of Uganda, and Ali Mazrui, Professor of Political Science at Makerere, Uganda, 1968; (d) John F. Kennedy and Kenya's Tom Mboya in Washington D.C., 1960. [Y.K. Lule later became President of Uganda in his own right after the overthrow of Idi Amin in 1979.]



Ali Mazrui, The Uganda Years (1963-1973)

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ANNUAL MAZRUI NEWSLETTER NO. 32

by
Ali A. Mazrui

**General Theme: From Obote to Obama:
Stages Towards A 75th Anniversary**

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

A CAREER IS BORN ON THE NILE

Because Uganda lies astride that part of Lake Victoria which is the source of the Nile, and because my own professorial career began at Makerere College [later University] in Uganda, I have regarded my academic career as a child of the Nile. Uganda takes pride in being the genesis of the great river, and I, in turn, have reveled in my association with both Uganda and the Nile.

There are ethnic groups in Uganda who are ancestrally more closely associated with the Nile Valley. As a family of “tribes” these groups are called Nilotes. These groups include the Acholi, who were heavily represented in the Ugandan army in the 1960s, and the Langi, whose most illustrious son was Apollo Milton Obote. I arrived at Makerere College in June 1963 when Uganda had recently become independent. Milton Obote became Prime Minister and later became President. Subsequently I developed a complicated relationship with President Obote, combining both mutual admiration and mutual distrust.

The Acholi and the Langi are ethnically closely related to the Luo of Kenya. The Luo constitute the second largest “tribe” of Kenya, after the Kikuyu. The most illustrious Luo family have been the Odingas – both Oginga Odinga (the father) and Raila Odinga (the son), brilliant politicians who aspired to Kenya’s Presidency, but have not quite made it yet.

The Kenyan Luo are mainly confined in Western Kenya, while the Langi and the Acholi are ancestrally in Northern Uganda. All their languages belong to the Chari-Nile branch of the Nilo-Saharan family.

While the Nilotes of Uganda did succeed in producing at least one successful Nilo President (Milton Obote), and the Nilotes of Kenya produced Oginga Odinga and Raila Odinga of presidential caliber, nobody could have predicted in the 1960s that there would one day be a Nilotic candidate for the presidency of the United States. The older Barack Obama left Kenya in 1959 to study in the United States, partly helped by a fellow Kenyan Nilote, Tom Mboya, the brilliant political leader who was at the time helping Kenyan students find their way to the United States to study.

Barack Obama Senior went to the University of Hawaii where he met a woman, a student from Kansas, Ann Dunham, and married her in February 1961. The birth of their baby (Barack Obama Junior) later in 1961 almost coincided with Uganda’s attainment of independence in 1962. Ugandan Nilotes were about to capture state power. Kenya’s Nilotes (including Tom Mboya and Oginga Odinga) were second only to Jomo Kenyatta in domestic political prominence and international renown. The United States’ most historic Nilote was at the time only a baby.

Of these five Nilotes (Mboya, Obote, Oginga Odinga, Raila Odinga, and Obama) the one who had the greatest impact on my life was Milton Obote. Committees for the appointment of full professors at Makerere in the 1960s included a representative of the Government. The Government was at the time headed by Milton Obote. In 1965 Makerere started considering me for a meteoric promotion from the status of



Mazrui lecturing at Makerere College, Uganda



A. Milton Obote

lecturer to the status of full professor without ever passing through the intermediate stages of Senior Lecturer and Associate Professor (known as Reader at the time).

In reality it was a preposterous idea since I had been a lecturer for barely two years. The rational decision should have been that it was too early to make Ali Mazrui a full professor. But only the Government's representative was rational enough to vote against my meteoric promotion. However, in those days, the Government held a vote at the university but not a veto. In spite of the negative vote of Milton Obote's government I became a full professor at the age of 32, in less than two years since being appointed a lecturer, and a year before completing my doctoral degree [D. Phil.] at Oxford University. Such a meteoric promotion had never happened at Makerere University before, and has not happened since then.

Obote's government subsequently changed the system for professorial appointments at Makerere, giving the Government representative a veto, and not merely a vote. But my own professorship was already home and dry.

In subsequent years my relationship with President Milton Obote had its ups and downs. I was sometimes in such good books that I was invited to State House to have tea with the President. On other occasions I had highly publicized policy disagreements with the Head of State. He was constantly under pressure from my critics and adversaries to throw me out of Uganda (since my nationality was Kenyan). But he resisted those pressures except for one occasion when, in a speech in parliament, he expressed the opinion that it was time for me to go and teach elsewhere. But he made it an opinion rather than an order of expulsion.

On the whole, President Obote made my Uganda years the most politically fascinating of my entire life. I would like to believe that I, in turn, made his first term as President (1966-1971) the most intellectually stimulating of his presidential years.

When Idi Amin overthrew him from power in January 1971, and Milton Obote went into exile in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania, he actually wrote me long letters from exile. I was flattered, but also felt threatened. If any of those Obote letters had been intercepted by Idi Amin's regime, it could have been a sentence of death on me.



Mazrui with Vice-Chancellor Frank Kalimuzo whose murder by Idi Amin convinced Mazrui to leave Uganda in 1973



Mazrui on first arrival in Mombasa with his English wife, Molly, in 1963, surrounded by Mazrui's male relatives.

Fortunately, President Idi Amin knew me more as a public critic of Milton Obote when Obote was in power rather than as a private correspondent from exile. Nevertheless, Idi Amin's Uganda became less and less safe for a person like me who tended to be outspoken on policy matters.

Eventually, Uganda as my professional Eden on the Nile was no longer safe for me. Kenya as the land of my birth, would not hire me as a professor because of my reputation as a political risk-taker. Indeed, when I called upon Kenya's President Daniel arap Moi to step down from power in 1992, Oginga Odinga (the father) came personally and publically to my hotel to congratulate me on my courage. Since he was leader of the

opposition, his public embrace of me was a mixed blessing. It was widely believed that President Daniel arap Moi was on the verge of ordering my detention.

Fortunately, I was allowed to proceed to the United States. A Nilotic leader of the opposition had embraced me in Nairobi – at about the time when a much younger Nilotic, Barack Obama, was completing his studies at Harvard Law School, magna cum laude.

The land of Milton Obote, Uganda, had become dangerous for me. The land of Tom Mboya, Oginga Odinga and Raila Odinga was professionally unwelcoming for me. My best hope was the United States – where, another son of Kenyan father, and a fellow son of a Kenyan Muslim, was about to step onto the stage of American history. Barack Obama entered the gates of destiny.

IN THE SHADOW OF BARACK OBAMA

I was being interviewed on a phone-in radio programme in Kenya. An aggressive voice on the phone wanted to know why people like me migrated to the United States in quest of freedom when in fact Americans kept us out of power as effectively as did our own African governments.

It just so happened that the question was being asked at about the time Barack Obama had been elected to the United States Senate. I was therefore able to respond to the question as follows: “Does the questioner realize that the son of a Kenyan father has just been elected to the Senate of the United States? Barack Obama – whose father was a Luo student from Kenya – had just become only the third black Senator of the United States in one hundred years, and only the fifth black Senator of the United States in two hundred years of American history? The United States is paradoxically both a racist society and an open society.”

That was before Barack Obama joined the race to become the Democratic Party’s nominee for the presidency of the United States. In a newspaper interview, after he became a presidential candidate, I raised another compelling question: “Which country would be the first to elect a Luo president – Kenya or the United States?” Raila Odinga was a candidate for the Kenyan presidency, while Barack Obama was competing for the Democratic Party’s nomination in the American presidential campaign. Both Raila and Obama were ethnically Luo.

My question about comparative Luo presidential candidates became widely cited humorously in conversations and in the media. The newspapers which quoted my question ranged from THE STANDARD in Nairobi to THE GUARDIAN in London.

Raila Odinga did nearly beat Barack Obama to the presidency of his respective country. But Kenya was plunged into a contested presidential outcome, and Raila Odinga became Prime Minister instead of President. The question was still open as to whether Barack Obama would become the world’s first Head of State born of a Luo father from Kenya. At the time of my writing this newsletter Obama is still in the race for the White House.

In yet another newspaper interview in Kenya I had described President Mwai Kibaki as an “intellectual” and Raila Odinga as “a brilliant tactician.” Odinga’s supporters thought I was saying Mwai Kibaki was more “intelligent” than Raila Odinga – which was never my intention nor my belief. I was widely criticized for my



*Barack Obama and Raila Odinga
in Kenya, 2006*

comparison of Kibaki with Odinga – while my description of Raila Odinga as a “brilliant tactician” was widely cited in other newspapers elsewhere in Africa.

On the issue of comparing personalities I was eventually hoist with my own petard. While as presidential candidates I had compared Raila Odinga with Barack Obama, and as tacticians I had compared Raila Odinga with Mwai Kibaki, other writers decided to compare and contrast Barack Obama with Ali Mazrui! At a symposium, sponsored by Africana Studies and Research Centre of Cornell University, to mark my 75th birthday, in the spring of 2008, no less than three papers compared Barack Obama with Ali A. Mazrui. The three separate and individually authored papers were by Professor Sulayman Nyang of Howard University, Washington D.C., Professor Amadu Jacky Kaba of Seton Hall University, New Jersey, and Professor Seifudein Adem of State University of New York at Binghamton, in close consultation with Ali Mazrui. The three papers were totally different from each other, but were all striking in the parallels they managed to discover in the lives of Barack Obama and Ali Mazrui.

Two of the papers made use of Ali Mazrui’s concept of “Africa’s triple heritage.” In the words of Adem’s paper, Obama and Ali Mazrui

... are both products of three civilizations (Africanity, Islam and Western culture), that they are both products of at least two ethnicities (Afro-Caucasian Obama and Afro-Arab Mazrui), that they have both been educated in earlier years in Muslim institutions (Madrasas), and in subsequent years in some of the most outstanding educational Centres of the Western world (Columbia and Harvard for Obama and Columbia and Oxford for Mazrui).

The three papers presented at Cornell then traversed North-South differences and similarities in politics, culture and intellectual pursuits, including the two universities shared by Obama and Mazrui (Columbia in New York where they were both students) and the University of Chicago (where they were both briefly professors).

The question was also raised whether Ali Mazrui was his own Pastor Jeremiah Wright, in the opinion of the political Right in the United States. At different times of their lives both Mazrui and Reverend Wright had faced hostile questions at the National Press Club in Washington, D.C. While Jeremiah Wright had been “lynched” on television for his denunciation of American foreign policy, Ali Mazrui had been included among the “101 most dangerous professors in America”. (David Horowitz, The 101 Most Dangerous Academics in America, Washington, DC, Regnery Publishing Inc. 2006).

In the course of the year, the name of Barack Obama continued to come up not only in conversations but also in my classes at Binghamton University and at Cornell. In January 2008, when Obama was still struggling for fuller African American support, I found myself debating an African American woman about Obama’s credentials not for the Presidency, but as an African American. It was at a conference to commemorate the 200th anniversary of the abolition of the slave trade by the U.S. Congress in January 1808. The conference in January 2008 was at the National Archives in Washington, D.C. The African American colleague complained bitterly that she did not want to have to tell her children one day that the first black President of the United States did not have African American parents.

In my response, I referred to white American patriots who regarded themselves as a special elite because they were reportedly descended from passengers on the Mayflower. I said I hoped there were no African Americans who regarded themselves as a special black elite because they were among the earliest survivors of the Middle Passage on the slave ships. While it was true that Barack Obama did not have African American parents, he was himself first generation African American.

Fortunately, Obama's credentials as a bona fide African American were more widely supported by African American voters as the Democratic Party primaries warmed up. Some of the tactics used by



Hillary and Bill Clinton

Hillary Clinton and her husband were interpreted as dangerously close to "playing the race card." As the Clintons became more controversial among African Americans, Barack Obama gained greater legitimacy as an African American. The turn out of African Americans was unprecedented in primary elections. And the percentage of the black vote for Barack Obama in many states was also often record-breaking. My plea at the National Archives in January 2008 that Barack Obama be fully accepted as a first-generation African American had received more support among black Americans than my wildest expectations. It just remained to be seen how America as a whole was going to vote. Would the Democrats put forward an African American for the first time as the

party's candidate for President? And would the American electorate as a whole vote for him? The political world waited with a global sense of suspense.

THREE QUARTERS OF A CENTURY

1967 was the year when I published my first book, *Towards a Pax Africana*. It was also the year when I published my second book, *On Heroes and Uhuru-Worship*. Finally, 1967 was also the year when I published my third book, *The Anglo-African Commonwealth*. In no other period since 1967 had I equaled that record of three books in a single year.

And so I decided to celebrate my 75th year of life by attempting to at least repeat my 1967 record of what an Oxford teacher of mine had called "Ali's triple crown." The repeat performance in 2008 needed planning, and some editorial help. The first offer of help came from Abdul Bemath of South Africa and Seifudein Adem, my Ethiopian colleague at our Institute of Global Cultural Studies at Binghamton. Abdul and Seifudein offered to edit some of my unpublished papers and lectures on the specific issues of violence and war. I helped them in the selection of the papers. The result was a book titled *The Politics of War and the Culture of Violence*, published by Africa World Press in Trenton, New Jersey, in time for my 75th birthday in February 2008.

My second book for 2008 had greater coherence, and put forward a specific thesis to be argued in the book. The volume starts from the premise that Arabs and Jews began as one Abrahamic family of Semites. And then over the centuries they geographically diverged. The Jews moved more and more into the European shores of the Mediterranean, such as Spain, and gradually dispersed into much of the rest of Europe. The Arabs populated the African shores of the Mediterranean, and expanded southwards, spreading Islam and Arab culture into much of sub-Saharan Africa. Over many generations, Jews became more and more Europeanized – and were eventually transformed into the most influential minority group in the history of the Western world.

The Arabs in Africa not only converted more and more Muslims but created more native speakers of the Arabic language, and whole new Arab societies. Indeed, by the twentieth century, there were more Arabs on the African continent than in the rest of the Arab world added together. With the editorial help of Seifudein Adem, a new Mazruiana book was published titled *Euro-Jews and Afro-Arabs: The Great Semitic Divergence in World History*, published by University Press of America, Inc., in Lanham, Maryland, in time for my 75th birthday. For bibliographical guidance and documentation, in most of my new books, I am greatly indebted to Thomas Uthup, who now works for Alliance of Civilizations, a project of the United Nations Organization in New York City.

My third book for 2008 was co-authored and co-edited. Most of the chapters originated as papers presented at a conference we hosted at Binghamton University on the question, “Is globalization a dialogue or a clash of civilizations?” My co-authors in 2008 volume included some major thinkers of the twenty-first century, and the issues addressed ranged from Western hegemony to Islamic radicalism, and from nationalism and the world economy to the emerging forces of global culture. My co-editors were Patrick M. Dikirr, of Binghamton University, and Shalahudin Kafrawi, who has taught philosophy and religion at Moravian College in Pennsylvania.

This third co-authored book is entitled, *Globalization and Civilization: Are They Forces in Conflict?*, published by Global Scholarly Publications in New York. Out of the fifteen chapters in this volume, six were single-authored by me.

However, because this volume as a whole is not by Ali Mazrui on his own, the year 2008 has not yet caught up with 1967 when three books written by Mazrui alone were published in a single year. But there is still a chance that one or even two more Mazruiana books would see the light of day before 2008 comes to a close. There are such projects under preparation. Please wish us luck.

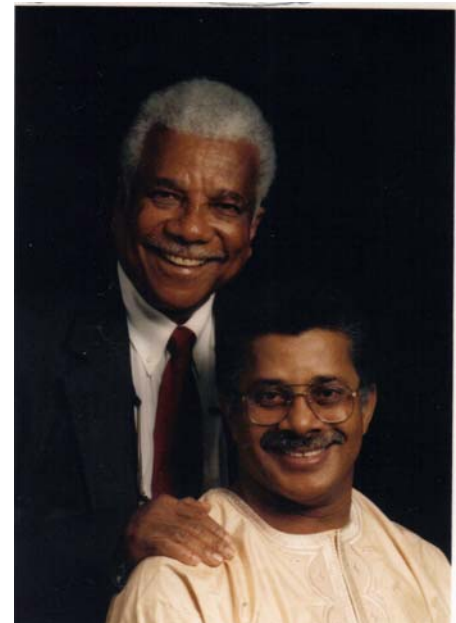
Apart from “the Triple Crown” publication project, my 75th birthday was also celebrated in partnership with the annual meeting of the New York African Studies Association (NYASA) held at Cornell University towards the end of March 2008. As we have indicated elsewhere, this celebratory symposium was hosted by Africana Studies and Research Centre at Cornell, and was co-sponsored by the Association of Muslim Social Scientists of North America (AMSS), the Ford Foundation, and the Dean of Harpur College at Binghamton University. Major academic organizers of the symposium were Mwalimu Abdul Nanji, of Cornell, and Seifudein Adem, of Binghamton University.

One unique touch was that the symposium at Cornell had for its keynote speaker one of my publishers – Kassahun Checole, proprietor and manager-in-chief of Africa World Press in New Jersey. Africa World Press has published nearly ten books either by me or about me. Kassahun Checole turned out to be a brilliant keynote speaker for my 75th birthday symposium.

Other major speakers at the symposium included N’Dri Assie-Lumumba, who discussed my philosophy of education; Mahmood Mamdani, who reminisced about my years at Makerere University in Uganda; Locksley Edmundson, who reflected on our friendship since the 1960s and lamented my “neglect of the Caribbean” in my writings; A.B. and Yvette Assensoh, who explored my approach to Pan-Africanism; Salah Hassan, who reflected on my role at Cornell; and Ayele Bekerie who discussed me as an educator. Mohammed Hassan Ali presided at some of the sessions.

Etin Anwar had been editing a volume of my writings on sex and gender. At the Cornell symposium she presented an interpretation of my views about male-female relations. Linda Mhando was independently editing my writings about the late Julius K. Nyerere and the Tanzania he had attempted to shape and mold. Linda’s presentation at the Cornell symposium addressed my wider views about politics in East Africa. Thomas Uthup at Cornell applied Barack Obama’s concept of the “Audacity of Hope” to my interpretation of the future of Islam. (Incidentally, Obama had borrowed the phrase “audacity of hope” from his controversial pastor, the Reverend Jeremiah Wright.)

Alamin M. Mazrui was scheduled to speak at Cornell about some of my ideas about the role of language and translation across cultures. But in his usual generous manner, Alamin withheld his paper in order to give more time to other panelists at the Cornell symposium. His paper may later be



Ali and Alamin M. Mazrui

published if the proceedings of the Cornell symposium result in a commemorative volume as planned by Seifudein Adem.

A more domestic celebration of my 75th birthday was organized by my wife, Pauline and our friend, Goretti Mugambwa, partly in our home in Vestal, New York, and partly at a local hotel in Binghamton. My three adult sons joined us – Jamal from Silver Springs, Maryland, Al’Amin from Berkeley, California, and Kim from Charlottesville, Virginia. Their mother, Molly Walker (my first wife) also drove in with her new husband, Jim Walker, from Ann Arbor, Michigan.

The banquet at a local hotel was attended by about one hundred and fifty guests, mainly from the state of New York, including my colleagues from the State University of New York at Binghamton and Cornell University in Ithaca. I was overwhelmed by the tributes paid to me in speeches and in poems, some of which were specially composed for the occasion. The poems were both in English and in Kiswahili. Absent poets included Muhammad Yusuf Tamim, who sent in his composition from Toronto, Canada. Mwalimu Abdul Nanji recited the Swahili poetry beautifully at the Binghamton banquet.

Jamal, Al’Amin and Kim spoke movingly, and sometimes hilariously, about their Dad. They had witty anecdotes to share with the banquet audience.

THE MUSE, THE MESSAGE AND THE MEDIA

As part of celebrating Nelson Mandela’s 90th birthday, the Nelson Mandela Foundation in South Africa offered to interview a select number of African intellectuals, and then have the interviews published in South African newspapers. I was among the intellectuals chosen for the long distance telephone interviews for possible use on radio in South Africa as well as in newspapers. The questions I was asked ranged from my evaluation of Nelson Mandela to the future of democracy in Africa in the light of the large-scale post-election violence in Kenya in 2007-2008.

With regard to Robert Mugabe I recommended that South Africa under Thabo Mbeki should use the carrot to tempt Mugabe to retire, and not limit itself merely to the stick, such as economic sanctions. The carrot could include a beautiful villa near the ocean in Cape Town, as part of Mugabe’s retirement package. Unfortunately President Thabo Mbeki did not act fast enough to avert the post-election problems of Zimbabwe early in 2008.

The City Press in Johannesburg published my interview extensively, with a large photograph to go with the report.

Under a different arrangement worked out with my press attaché in South Africa, Dr James Kariuki, *The City Press* has been publishing two Sunday articles of mine every month for a couple of years now.

Acting on my behalf James Kariuki has also worked out an arrangement with the *Sunday Standard* in Kenya to publish an article of mine almost every week – some of those articles jointly authored by Kariuki and myself.

A less regular effort which Kariuki has made on my behalf has been with *The Monitor* in Kampala, Uganda. We publish in the Uganda paper only in fits and starts. Nevertheless, I did manage to publish articles about the Kenya post-election crisis in the Press in South Africa, Uganda as well as Kenya early in 2008.

There were a lot of other requests from the media for me to comment on the Kenyan post-election crisis, including persistent requests from Al-Jazeera television both from the Persian/Arab Gulf headquarters and in their Washington studios. But partly because of scheduling problems some of these requests for interviews could not be fulfilled.

However, Ngugi wa Thiong’o and I were interviewed together on National Public Radio [PBS] about the violence in Kenya. Ngugi and I did not see eye to eye about the Kenya crisis but we did not actually clash on the air. It was a cool and civilized dialogue.

Voice of America has a television program targeted by satellite on Africa. I was interviewed on that program about both Barack Obama in the United States and the elections in Kenya. We discussed not only political violence in Nairobi and the Rift Valley but also the serious threat to Obama's life the closer he got to being elected President of the United States. Was Obama at risk of being assassinated? Apparently half the politically conscious population of the United States are genuinely worried that Barack Obama might be assassinated. The Lord preserve us from such a lunatic fringe!

The Guardian newspaper in London also wanted to interview me about Obama, but in connection with an assassinated Kenyan leader with whom Obama was ethnically linked. The Kenyan leader was Tom Mboya who helped to organize in 1960 an airlift of students from Kenya who had scholarships offered by American colleges, but who had no transportation to take them to the United States to avail themselves of those scholarships. With the help of Senator John F. Kennedy (running to become U.S. President) and other American benefactors, Tom Mboya succeeded in arranging the transportation of multiple Kenyan students. *The Guardian* of London in 2008 believed that among those students whom Mboya and J. F. Kennedy helped was Barack Obama's father. The young Kenyan in 1959 was on his way towards the University of Hawaii where he subsequently met a young woman from Kansas and married her. Their child was destined to become almost half a century later a candidate for President of the United States.



J.F. Kennedy and Tom Mboya

Barack Obama (the son) also believed until 2008 that John F. Kennedy had played a part in facilitating his Dad's travel to the United States to study in Hawaii. But in the course of the primary presidential debates in 2008 this link between Obama's Dad and John F. Kennedy was corrected as false. The older Obama might have been helped by Tom Mboya in 1959, but that was a year before John F. Kennedy got involved in Tom Mboya's project of the student's airlift.

Those of us who were worried about the younger Barack Obama's vulnerability could not but reflect that both John F. Kennedy in 1963 and Tom Mboya in 1969 were assassinated before the end of that decade of the Kenyan airlift. Fortunately the United States had accorded Barack Obama the same level of security protection as former First Lady Hillary Clinton. They were both exceptionally vulnerable and exceptionally protected.

In 2008 the British Broadcasting Corporation (the BBC) decided to do a documentary to mark the 60th anniversary of their distinguished annual radio lectures, the Reith Lectures. From 1948 the BBC started commissioning six lectures every year for broadcasting on both their world service and their domestic program. One of the first Reith Lecturers was Lord Bertrand Russell, the very distinguished British philosopher of the twentieth century. The Lectures themselves were named after Lord Reith, the Founder Director-General of the BBC.

In 1978 the BBC invited me to be their Reith Lecturer for the following year (1979). They gave me that notice of a year, plus a substantial research grant, to prepare myself. With that travel grant I traveled to different parts of Africa, accompanied by my BBC producer. Among the Heads of State I interviewed for the Reith Lectures was President Kenneth Kaunda of Zambia and President Leopold Senghor of Senegal.

My most controversial recommendation in my Reith Lectures concerned nuclear proliferation. Partly because apartheid South Africa was probably already a nuclear power in 1979, I recommended on radio the pursuit of a Black military nuclear capability. I also believed at the time that the acquisition of

nuclear weapons by countries not trusted by the Big Powers (such as a nuclear Nigeria or a nuclear Libya) would cause consternation in capitals of the Big Powers. Such consternation about the dangers of nuclear proliferation could motivate a desperate quest for a universal nuclear disarmament. I argued that a caste-system of nuclear Brahmins endowed with weapons, and nuclear untouchables denied of such weapons was fundamentally unstable, and would one day become dangerously untenable.

In 2008 the BBC tracked me down again to enquire if I would participate in their documentary to mark the 60th anniversary of the Reith Lectures. The BBC seemed particularly anxious to return to my views about nuclear proliferation in this era of the rhetoric of weapons of mass destruction. I agreed to participate when the time came.



Left to right seated: Sonia Gandhi, Kenneth Kaunda and Ali A. Mazrui (New Delhi India)

CELEBRATING EVENTS, HONOURING LEGENDS

Twin historic anniversaries did preoccupy me during 2007 – the 50th anniversary of Ghana's independence and the 200th anniversary of the formal ending of the slave trade following its abolition by the British Parliament in 1807. In Mazrui Newsletter No. 31 last year we did report on some of those celebratory events and my participation in them.

However, not many people realize that while the British Parliament legislated against the slave trade in 1807, the United States Congress did not follow suit until the following year. From an American point of view, the bicentenary of the abolition of the slave trade was therefore not 2007 but 2008.

The National Archives in Washington, D.C. co-sponsored and co-hosted with Howard University the first major celebration of the Congressional Act abolishing the slave trade in 1808. Professor Joseph Harris of Howard was a truly dedicated coordinator of the event at the National Archives.

In my own presentation at the Archives in January 2008 I once again posed the question whether the Abolitionist Movement in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries was in fact an earlier war on terror. Although the word “terrorism” did not yet exist two centuries ago, the actual experience of “terror” was omnipresent in the different stages from the slave-raid in Africa to enslaved life on the plantation somewhere in the Americas. There was the terror of being captured, of being marched for a while overland to Africa's Atlantic shores, the terror of waiting in dungeons in the slave fort of Ghana or Senegal, then the terror of the middle-passage in the form of slave-laden ships across the Atlantic, the terror of being marketed, and the prolonged slave labour on a plantation in perpetuity.

If the entire slave-system was a regiment of terror writ-large, the abolitionist movement was indeed a kind of war against terror, seeking to end such a prolonged victimization of the innocent. Primary abolitionists were Africans themselves within Africa, trying to abort the evil transactions which carried away so many African captives across the seas. These primary African abolitionists included Affonso of Congo who tried to sabotage the slave trade in the eighteenth century. There was also Queen Nzinga Nbande of Matamba in 17th century Angola who tried to mobilize popular African resistance to the trade. King Agaja Trudo of Dahomey was another militant primary abolitionist.

Slave rebellions were not necessarily abolitionist if the primary purpose was just to free the particular captives rather than to end the system as a whole. A slave revolution, on the other hand, can be abolitionist if the aim is to free all slaves and terminate the trade. In that regard, the Haitian revolution of 1804 may therefore be regarded as abolitionist in intention and not merely a rebellion. While Queen Nzinga Nbande and Affonso of Congo were primary abolitionists of the African continent, Toussaint L'Overture of Haiti was a primary abolitionist of the African Diaspora. Also a primary abolitionist of the Diaspora was Frederick Douglass of the United States later in the nineteenth century.

Secondary abolitionists are drawn from the master race. John Brown of the United States and William Wilberforce in Britain were, in that sense, dedicated secondary abolitionists. In the case of Wilberforce, he illustrated how a secondary abolitionist from the master race can have a greater impact than multiple primary abolitionists struggling to resist in Africa.

I took with me the theme of abolitionism as a war on terror from the event in Washington, DC in January 2008 to another celebratory event in Aberdeen, Scotland, in February 2008. In reality the Aberdeen event was a belated salute to the British ban on the slave trade in 1807 rather than a celebration of the American ban the following year. But in the discussions nobody cared much about which of the two legislatures (Westminster or Capitol Hill) outlawed the slave-trade earlier. The Scottish City of Aberdeen supported the celebration at the highest municipal level. The Scottish equivalent of the Lord Mayor and other dignitaries not only attended the symposium but also graced the elegant banquet held on board an anchored boat.

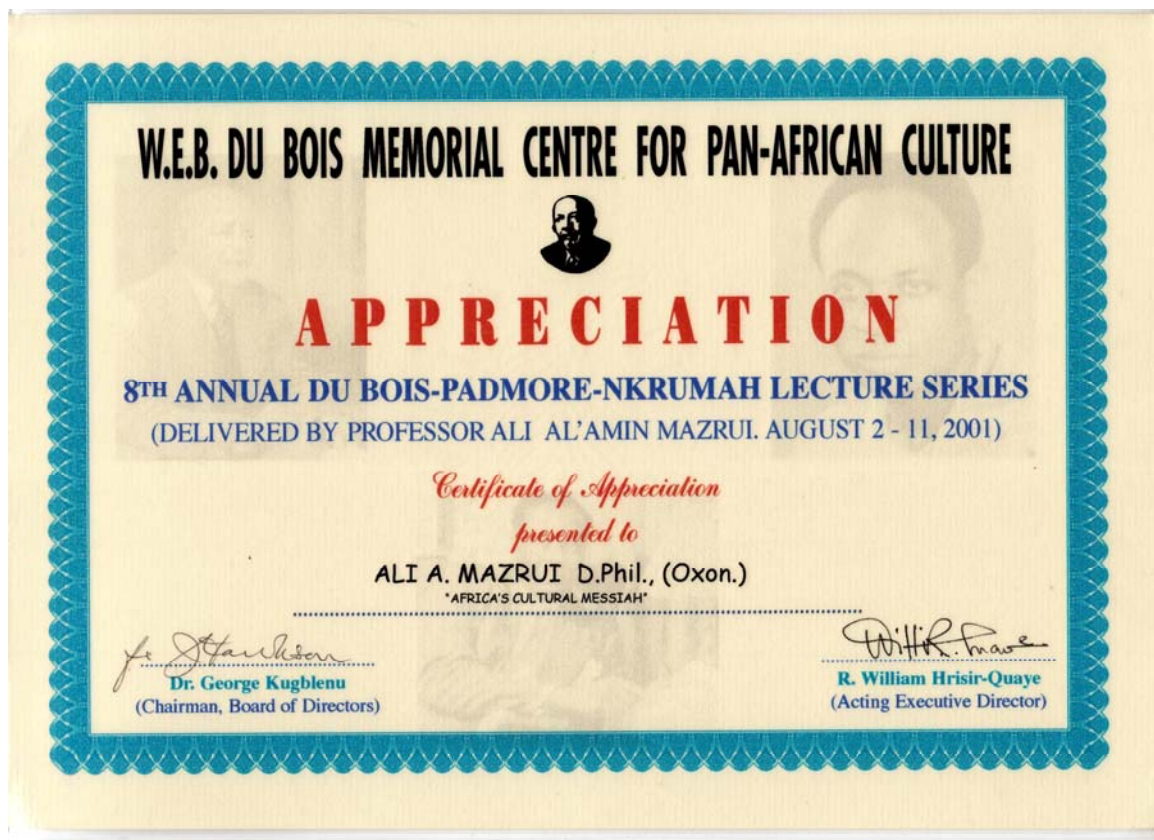
For the first time in my life I visited Ghana twice in a single year. The first trip in 2007 was more directly for the purpose of celebrating the 50th anniversary of Ghana's independence. Throughout the year 2007 Ghanaians had scheduled one major public lecture every month to mark the 50th anniversary. The first lecture was by Kofi Annan, who had recently stepped down as Secretary-General of the United Nations. My own lecture was scheduled for the month of August and was on "*The Brain Drain and the Dual Diaspora: From Post-Enslavement to Post-Coloniality*". The whole event was organized and chaired by Kwame Gyekye, professor of philosophy at the University of Ghana at Legon, Accra.

Most Ghanaian intellectuals seem aware of my notorious article of 1966 titled, "*Nkrumah: The Leninist Czar*". The article had two controversial arguments. Firstly, while Nkrumah was ideologically a Leninist, he was in style of governance a Czar when he was in power. An even more explosive paradox of mine was that Nkrumah was a great African, but not a great Ghanaian. In 2007, as during my earlier visits to Ghana, I was repeatedly questioned about those two assertions. Militant Nkrumahists and members of his old party (the C.P.P.) were outraged by my views and argued back vehemently both at my lectures and during radio phone-in interviews.

At another lecture I gave at the W.E.B. DuBois Pan-African Cultural Centre in Accra the debate about Nkrumah exploded into a walkout by a couple of enraged Nkrumahists.

But we should remember that Ghana continues to be deeply divided about Kwame Nkrumah, their most illustrious post-colonial son and their founder president. There are at least as many Ghanaians who agree with my conclusions about Nkrumah as disagree. The University of Ghana has in the past honoured me with an honorary doctorate in humane letters. And in 2007 I was entertained to lunch by the Vice-President of Ghana at his official residence, and I conversed on the phone with the Head of State, President John Kufuor.

My second visit to Ghana last year was in October, hosted partly by Counterpoint, the Cultural Think-Tank of the British Council, and co-hosted by the W.E.B. DuBois Pan-African Cultural Centre, Accra, whose new Director was my old Cornell colleague, Ann Adams. At the DuBois Centre I delivered the bi-annual distinguished lecture named after DuBois, Padmore and Nkrumah.



I was also ceremonially received by the Pan African Writers Association in Accra headed by my old friend, Professor Atukwei Okai.

There was another old friend who had passed away since I was last in Accra three years earlier. This was Adu Boahen, Ghana's most distinguished historian whom I had known for many years when we were both editors of some of the eight volumes of the UNESCO General History of Africa. When he died in 2005 he was given a state funeral in Accra.

I missed the funeral, but I did visit his widow, Mary, on both my visits to Accra in 2007. She burst into tears when she first saw me. The atmosphere was less somber when she entertained me to a great luncheon party on my second visit in 2007 to Ghana.

Another state funeral in Accra of recent times was the funeral of Nkrumah's Egyptian widow, Madam Fathiyya Nkrumah in 2006. When I was in Accra in 2007 I visited both Nkrumah's tomb and Madam Fathiyya to pay my respects. I also planted a tree in the grounds of the Nkrumah Mausoleum in honour of the Nkrumahs. I was officially received at the Nkrumah Mausoleum and Museum by my old friend, Director William Quay.

But why did Counterpoint, the Think-Tank of the British Council, invite me to Ghana in 2007? Because I was part of their project on *Leadership for Change in Africa*. The project included a symposium in Accra on that subject, and the launching of a multiauthored book entitled *Under the Tree of Talking: Leadership for Change in Africa*, which was launched in Ghana. The authors of the different chapters included Chinua Achebe, Paul Zeleza, Chinweizu, Ali Mazrui and others. I had two distinct chapters in the collection. One of my own favourite Post-colonial African Heads of State was Yakubu Gowon of Nigeria

One additional ceremony in Ghana for me was the actual handover to me of the glass trophy of my award as Living Legend, which had originally been bestowed upon me in Abuja, Nigeria, but in absentia. What happened in Accra in August 2007 was the handover to me in person of the glass trophy to mark my new status as Living Legend. The original award was bestowed by the Economic Organization of West African States [ECOWAS] jointly with the African Communications Agency in February 2007.



General Yakubu Gowon introducing Ali Mazrui to other Nigerians in Abuja in 2004

and located near the W.E.B. DuBois Centre. It was also next to a sister building named after Marcus Garvey.

While in Africa I was so recognized as one of Africa's Living Legends (along with Kofi Annan, Nelson Mandela and the former American boxer Muhammad Ali), in the African Diaspora arrangements were being made to recognize me as a *Living Image* of the African people. This latter award was created by a new organization of mainly younger Africans, calling themselves Friends of Africa International, whose President is a young, energetic and imaginative Nigerian woman called Onyeka Obasi.

I received the Living Image Award at a special ceremony on Africa Day in May 2008 at the Libyan Mission to the United Nations in New York City. Other Africans so honoured as Living Images included Chinua Achebe, Ibrahim Gambari of UN Secretariat, and Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf, President of Liberia and the first female Head of State in modern African history. The President's award was received on her behalf by the Permanent Representative of Liberia to the United Nations. The ceremony was also graced by several other diplomats from Africa and elsewhere.



Africa Day May 2008 at the Libyan Mission to the United Nations in New York City.

Another recent honour I received was another honorary doctorate in humane letters. This latest one was awarded in 2008 by the Ohio Wesleyan University in Delaware City, Ohio. I also delivered a major public lecture on that campus under the title of "The United States as a Universal Nation: Between the Islamic Crescent and the Star-Spangled Banner."

In May 2008 I presented the same paper to a Muslim audience in Herndon, Virginia. The audience included Malcolm X's daughter and the Director of Malcolm X's Foundation (Malik and

Betty Shabaaz Foundation) in New York City. The thesis of the paper was that the United States was a microcosm of the human race in the demographic diversity of the population, but was not a synthesis of the different human cultures which have arrived on its shores.

KENYA'S POST-ELECTION BREAKDOWN AND I

Following Kenya's post-election violence I issued four press releases urging not merely persuasion but also pressure on the two sides of the political divide. Not necessarily in chronological order, the Press releases were the following:

1. *POST-ELECTION KENYA: SHOULD IT BE SUSPENDED FROM THE COMMONWEALTH?*
2. *IS KENYA HEADING FOR A CIVIL WAR?*
3. *THE POST-ELECTION CRISIS IN KENYA: IN SEARCH OF SOLUTIONS*
4. *ARE KENYAN UNIVERSITIES IN DANGER OF BEING TRIBALIZED?*

Kenya should be flattered, rather than insulted, by the amount of international attention it had received after its elections from the African Union, the European Union, the United States, other African Leaders and the indefatigable Archbishop Desmond Tutu. If the crisis in the Democratic Republic of the Congo had received half the attention Kenya had got after the election, two million Congolese lives might have been saved. If the Congo has been the most internationally neglected African crisis of this 21st century, the Kenya crisis following the last week of December 2007 had been the most responded to internationally.

One of the major reasons was that until the last week of December 2007 Kenya had been one of the beacons of hope in sub-Saharan Africa. In 2002 a political party, which had been in power since independence in 1963, was successfully thrown out of office by the electorate. Mwai Kibaki peacefully became the new President of Kenya, in alliance with Raila Odinga as a Minister.

Although interparty relations in Kenya subsequently deteriorated, the Kibaki regime created a more open society. The Press became much freer, both printed and electronic, in spite of periodic harassment by the police. Preventive detention of political opponents became more and more rare, though Muslims were targeted more often. The government encouraged an annual accountability of performance in human rights, including the equivalent of National Ombudsman in Kenya. The Kibaki regime attempted to deal with judicial corruption by sacking certain judges. President Kibaki vetoed parliamentary legislation, which would have forced reporters and journalists to disclose their sources for stories about corruption. This particular veto by President Kibaki put Kenya ahead of the United States in the protection of the sources of journalists and reporters. In the United States in 2005 a high profile New York Times reporter, Judith Miller, went to prison for refusing to disclose her sources. All the evidence before the December elections indicated that the legacy of Mwai Kibaki as President would be a celebration of a more open society in Kenya.

And then came the elections of December 2007. The parliamentary part of the elections would have vindicated a Kibaki legacy of "the open society." One powerful Kenyan after another was voted out of his or her parliamentary seat. Half of the members of Kibaki's Cabinet were angrily thrown out of power by the electorate, including the Vice-President. The stage was set for a probable electoral defeat of the Kibaki regime.

Kenya seemed to be on the verge of a great democratic milestone – the defeat of an incumbent president and his gracious acceptance of the verdict of the electorate. The defeat of an incumbent president had previously happened in Zambia, Malawi, Senegal, Mauritius and elsewhere. A version of it had also happened in Ghana when Jerry Rawling's party was electorally defeated.

But the tables were turned on the Kenya presidential elections in circumstances which cast doubt on the fairness of the outcome. Almost none of the external observers were prepared to confirm President Mwai Kibaki as a fairly and democratically elected president. There were no open

congratulations from even the White House and No. 10 Downing Street. There was a serious risk that the Kibaki legacy would change from the architect of “the Open Society in Kenya” to the architect of “the Broken State”.

A major reason of the international concern was to avert the prospect of Kenya becoming another failed state in a region which already had too many failed states (Somalia, Rwanda, Congo-Kinshasa, Burundi, and the semi-flawed States of Ethiopia, Uganda and Sudan). In the past Kenya was the asylum state for the refugees from Uganda, Somalia, Ethiopia and elsewhere. The Kenya elections of December 2007 had reversed the flow of refugees. There were now thousands of Kenya refugees in Uganda, instead of the other way around.

While international statesmen had come to Nairobi to try to persuade the two sides to compromise, none of the international actors came with the threat of real sanctions if the two sides did not seek reconciliation. If there was to be an ultimatum to Kenyans to end the crisis or be ostracized, the ultimatum had to be specific and unequivocal.

The African Union talks loosely about “PEER REVIEW”. Should the African Union have suspended Kenya’s membership if there was no effort to solve the stalemate? The African Union has tried to deny legitimacy to a government produced by a military coup. Is there such a thing as a civilian coup? If the Kenyan presidency was stolen, should Kenya have lost its seat at the meetings of the African Union until the problem was resolved? The African Union has often been more an apologist for Robert Mugabe than a correction officer. But the Commonwealth has been readier to reprimand and ostracize Zimbabwe.

Pakistan has been suspended from the Commonwealth more than once before!! Its Commonwealth Status was at stake when President Musharraf suspended the Pakistani Constitution even recently in 2007. Pakistan’s membership in the Commonwealth was at stake much earlier in the clash with East Pakistan (today’s Bangladesh).

Are the Luo of Kenya in 2008 the equivalent of the Bengalis of East Pakistan in the early 1970s? The Luos are far less separatist in orientation in 2008 than the Bengalis were in the early 1970s. But the Luo are now leaning towards federalism (majimbo) in Kenya.

If Kenya did not want to be suspended from either the African Union, the Commonwealth, or lose friendship with the wider Western World, we needed to engage those alienated groups into a new global order of democratization. Our reputation internationally was tarnished. Our stability at home was seriously compromised.

WERE WE HEADING FOR A CIVIL WAR?

In response to an e-mail from Mr. David Ohito, Senior Reporter, THE STANDARD Nairobi, Kenya I released the statement **IS KENYA HEADING FOR A CIVIL WAR?** My argument in the Press release was as follows:

I had lived long enough to know how civil wars began in developing countries. I never expected there would be a civil war in Northern Uganda which would last twenty years, and unleash untold suffering and brutality. It has still not fully ended.

When the Sudanese civil war was ending in the South, who would have predicted another civil war in Darfur? Ethiopia has had a variety of civil conflicts, the latest involving ethnic Somalis in the Ogaden. The brutalities of the Sierra Leonean civil war took everybody by surprise.

Could such a bloody breakdown happen in Kenya? By the third week of January 2008 I was beginning to be truly fearful. What was once unthinkable was no longer inconceivable. While north of the Sahara the triggers of conflict are often religious, south of the Sahara they tend to combine ethnicity, power rivalry and economic deprivation.

As soon as casualties of a conflict reach a thousand dead, several thousand injured and at least a hundred thousand displaced, speedy action is needed to contain the explosion. In late January 2008 a

mini-civil war could have been in the making. Kenyans and the international community could not afford to be complacent.

Representatives of the African Union, the European Union, the United States, religious bodies, former African Heads of State, and Kofi Annan had approached the two sides of the Kenya conflict in terms of persuasion and the quest for a compromise. We now needed more pressure and threats from the international community.

Initially, I suggested, the threats should be targeted at the elite, rather than the general population. Withholding economic aid would hurt the wider population, but suspending Kenya's membership of the African Union and the Commonwealth would deprive us of credentials to sit at the summit meetings, or meetings of foreign ministers, of such international organizations. Specific members of both the government and the opposition could be deprived of Visas to the western world if they were identified as extremists against the search for solutions.

Many members of the Kenyan political and commercial elite have also had Bank accounts abroad. The international community could threaten to freeze such bank accounts if there was no effort to solve the Kenya crisis. Since I was myself a member of Kenya's intellectual elite, it was fair to monitor my behavior as well.



Raila Odinga and Kofi Annan

Normally, the international community does not try to intervene in Africa until the problem is truly catastrophic. That has been the situation in Congo-Kinshasa, in Rwanda, Darfur and in Somalia. Kenya was a situation of trying to prevent a crisis from becoming a catastrophe. There was still time – but not a lot of time to avert an explosion.

Kofi Annan was trying his best, but he needed help in the form of massive political pressure on both sides. If mediation was not working, Was it time to threaten specific international sanctions, beginning with elite-focused threats of real consequence?

What was at stake was not just the political stability of Kenya. It was also the economic viability of Eastern Africa as a whole. Kenya's economy had vibrations of region-wide consequences. How could we avert a region-wide catastrophe?

We were still far from a civil war. But our leaders needed to start discussing how to secure our borders against gunrunning and importation of weapons. The border with Somalia especially needed to be secured, but without keeping out Somali refugees. I also urged upon the Kenyan leadership to consider whether or not it was time to seek international help for peacekeeping in the Rift Valley. The situation was grave. Had we neglected to declare a state of emergency in the Rift Valley?

THE SEARCH FOR SOLUTIONS

The Kenya presidential elections of December 2007 were the most damaging episode to national unity since the assassination of Tom Mboya in July 1969. Both the murder of Tom Mboya and the management of the December 2007 presidential elections were widely interpreted as an attempt to ethnically monopolise the presidency of the country. Both Mboya's assassination and the 2007 elections were seen as historic blows to national stability and major setbacks to the process of democratization. Both Mboya's murder and the 2007 elections unleashed widespread rioting and looting and made national institutions significantly more fragile than they were before.

We all appealed to Mwai Kibaki and Raila Odinga to enter into urgent negotiations to find a solution to the painful impasse, and to help the process of national healing. Before Kofi Annan tried his hand at negotiations, other major African leaders (political, diplomatic and religious) tried to mediate and persuade Kenya's adversaries.

The ideal solution would have been to agree to a recounting of votes in the most controversial of the provincial results for the presidency, and for both Kibaki and Odinga to have committed themselves to respect the outcome of the recounting. But had not the ballots already been irreparably compromised?

Another possible solution would have been for the African Union to appoint an independent commission of enquiry into the management of the presidential election, and make recommendations. One possible recommendation would conceivably have been to accept the parliamentary results, which had, by most estimates, been transparent and credible. But there might have been new internationally supervised presidential elections with the three main candidates on the new ballot. This idea soon became more and more remote.

The third option was probably the easiest to accomplish. The new parliament was to be sworn in, and called into session. Its first task was to consider a constitutional amendment creating the post of Prime Minister answerable to Parliament and not to the Chief Executive (the President). If the constitutional amendment was passed, parliament would then vote for the first Prime Minister. Considering the balance of political parties voted into the new parliament, the new Prime Minister was almost bound to be the Honorable Raila Odinga. This proposal triggered a lot of discussion.

Kenya would thereby have become something approximating the Fifth Republic of France with both an executive President accountable to the people, directly, and an executive Prime Minister accountable to the people's legislative representatives, Parliament. As in the case of the French Fifth Republic, the President (Mwai Kibaki) and the Prime Minister (Raila Odinga) would have to find ways of working together in the interest of the people of Kenya.

Who was to appoint the members of the cabinet- the President or the Prime Minister? I gave the following possible scenarios. The Foreign Minister and the Minister of Defense could be the prerogative of the Head of State (Kibaki) to appoint. But the Minister of Internal Security and almost all other ministries could be appointed by the Prime Minister (Raila Odinga).

The precise division of labor and division of powers between the President and the new Prime Minister would have had to be negotiated prior to the constitutional amendment by the new Parliament. In reality these negotiations were partly led by Kofi Annan in fits and starts – slow progression. An amended division of labour between the President and the Prime Minister was painfully worked out.

Later in the session of the new parliament there would be the need to re-examine the whole constitution of Kenya in the light of problems which Kenya has had to face since the last constitutional referendum. Should we have re-examined once again the Maboma Draft constructed by the Ghai Commission? Only the new parliament, in consultation with the new President, could decide whether to have a new constitutional referendum. That idea still hangs in the balance.

THE ACADEMIC CONSEQUENCES OF THE KENYA MELTDOWN

In the middle of the crisis I was also invited by the editors of the Sunday Nation (Nairobi) to address the following question:

ARE KENYAN UNIVERSITIES IN DANGER OF BEING TRIBALIZED?

I responded by arguing that we were generating emotions and tensions in Kenya which before long might require a whole new vocabulary. I raised the question whether we were on the verge of producing a form of inter-ethnic distrust which might be called *KIKUYUPHOBIA*? Had other Kenyans begun to identify a form of prejudice which may be called *LUOPHOBIA*? *Let me re-state the issues.* A Kikuyuphobe is a person who is profoundly distrustful of the Kikuyu — a form of negativism which is partly based on a stereotype. The Kikuyu are seen as manipulative, exploitative and inclined towards ethnic nepotism and tribal favoritism. The Kikuyu are seen as brilliant in commercial aptitude and other economic skills, but often at the expense of other groups. Kenyans should be careful not to reduce whole communities into such negative stereotypes. Such prejudice tends to dehumanize the targeted groups.

Luophobia is a form of distrust and prejudice against the rival ethnic group, the Luo. While supporters of Raila Odinga are often prone to Kikuyophobia, ardent supporters of Mwai Kibaki often manifest forms of Luophobia. I have argued that in both directions Kenyans should distrust their stereotypes, seek to contain their particular versions of “pride and prejudice”, and seek to cultivate instead some kind of “sense and sensibility”. The English novelist, Jane Austen, is assuming a new form of political relevance in the unfolding drama of Kenya after the December elections of 2007.

I can still repeat some of the questions I raised at the time. What is likely to be the impact of both Kikuyophobia and Luophobia on higher education in Kenya? While the Kikuyu as a group have been politically and commercially triumphant almost nation wide, the Luo have been disproportionately triumphant in the academic domain and among public intellectuals. While in creative literature the Kikuyu have led the way with Ngugi wa Thiong’o, Micere Mugo and others, the Luo of Kenya have led the way in the study of history, in the social and natural sciences and in the study of African philosophy. Some have argued that while the Kikuyu are brilliant economic entrepreneurs, the Luo of Kenya have had an edge in academic and intellectual performance. Nevertheless, Kenya’s first Nobel Prize Laureate for Peace has been a Kikuyu – Wangari Maathai.

But what is likely to be the longer-term impact of our post-election crisis on higher education in Kenya? Even before the December election there was already an ethnic presence in classrooms on Kenyan campus. While professional promotions in Kenyan universities were already affected by ethnicity before December 27, 2007, grades for students were still ethnic-neutral on the whole. But the threat of ethicizing exam grades has become real since the beginning of 2008.

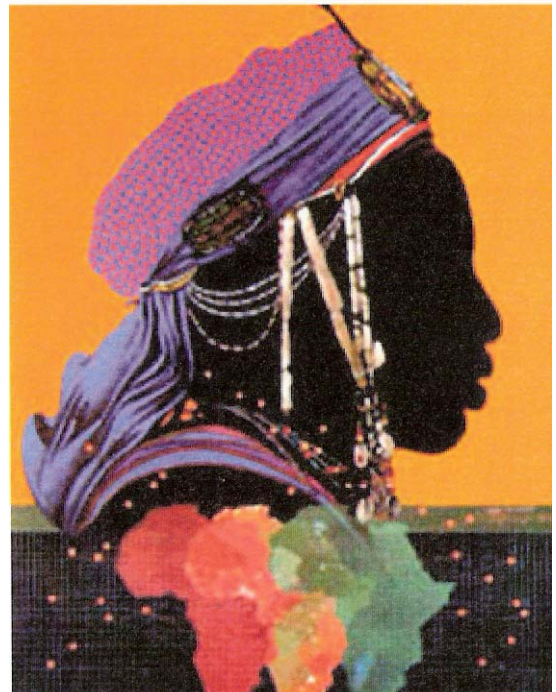
At the University of Dar es Salaam after the Arusha Declaration of 1967 students were very conscious of the ideological orientation of their lecturers but seldom conscious of the racial or ethnic affiliation of their instructors. When Ngugi wa Thiong’o and Micere Mugo were lecturers at the University of Nairobi, students were more conscious of the left-wing ideologies of such instructors than of their ethnic affiliation.

What we now fear on our campus is greater ethnic consciousness of each other rather than greater sensitivity to intellectual nuances. Universities are supposed to be arenas of universal values and intellectual fraternity. It would be a pity if our campuses deteriorated into beehives of tribalism.

The post election violence began to trigger *academic ethnic cleansing*. Members of vulnerable ethnic groups in violence-prone university towns began to look for jobs on ethnically more friendly campuses.

When President Mwai Kibaki made me Chancellor of Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture and Technology, he was making a statement about the universality of knowledge. Firstly, he himself stepped down from the Chancellorship and thereby depoliticized the office. Secondly he chose a Kenyan in the Diaspora to be Chancellor of a university at home thereby emphasizing the links between Kenyans at home and Kenyans abroad. Thirdly, the President honored a Kenyan from a small minority Swahili group at the Coast--- instead of someone from the more powerful communities of Kenya.

Kibaki also opened academic doors for me which had been closed during the era of Daniel arap Moi. Under Kibaki I could give lectures in Kenya after years of being ostracized by Kenyan universities. My television series *The Africans: A Triple Heritage* (BBC/PBS, 1986) could at last be shown on



Postcard of The Triple Heritage

Kenyan television after years of being banned by the Moi regime. I could also freely write for Kenya newspapers regardless of whether my views pleased President Kibaki or not.

The five years of Kibaki's first administration (2002 to 2007) helped to maximize academic and intellectual freedom on Kenya campuses, though not without some degree of tribalism and corruption in some of our activities.

Then came the elections of December 2007. The question arose whether the doors of academic freedom were beginning to close? Were Kenyan universities retreating from universalism? Was the fog of tribalism beginning to descend on our campuses?

It is not too late yet. Just as we sometimes call upon a doctor to heal herself or himself, let us call upon intellectuals and academics to liberate themselves. Let us help our country to lick its wounds, and heal the body politic.

A FAMILY IN TRANSITION

How did the post-election meltdown in Kenya affect members of my family? The majority of the Mazrui clan and relatives live along the Coast of Kenya, especially in Mombasa, Kenya's second city. Although the coast was not totally spared the post-election violence, it was far from being among the worst hit regions of the country. The poorest areas of Mombasa experienced the greatest disturbances. Small shopkeepers were attacked, a few Kikuyu homes were set alight, and there were riots in some areas.

My older sister Nafisa, and her daughters and grandchildren live in the rural outskirts of Mombasa. Their particular rural area is called Kisauni, and was for awhile among the disturbed areas. We were so worried that we tried to persuade Nafisa and our Kisauni family to move to the Centre of



Munira, a nervous bride [left], pausing for a photograph with her mother, Nafisa in Mombasa, Kenya. Nafisa was Ali Mazrui's sister, who died in July 2008. Her obituary will appear in Mazrui Newsletter No. 33

Mombasa which was much safer. They decided that the risks of their leaving their homes empty were far greater than the risks of their staying on in Kisauni. Fortunately "all was well which ended well."

With regard to the political divide between pro-Kibaki Kenyans (pro-government) and pro-Raila Odinga Kenyans (pro-Opposition), my own family was divided, but in a civilized manner. We had debates without acrimony. Instead of my trying to be neutral, I tried to be objective. I did strive to be on the side of what was fair and just, regardless of whether such a position favoured the government or the opposition!! I ended up being criticized by both sides, depending upon the precise issue!!

My fourth son Farid Chinedu hit the age of sixteen. In the USA that is the age of taking driver's lessons. With the help of family friend Patrick Dikirr and Farid's own mother, Pauline, Farid is beginning to feel comfortable behind the wheel of a car. Although Farid is my fourth son, he will be only my second son to qualify for driving a car. My first son (Jamal) and my third son (Kim) are legally blind, and have had to rely on others to drive them around. Also incapable of driving a car is their Dad – but

I have no excuse whatsoever for that incapacity! Nevertheless it has been nice being driven around by the women in my life!

When my third son Kim and his friend Kay Forde decided to get married more than a decade ago, I was against their adopting the joint name of Forde-Mazrui. I argued that a name like "Mazrui"

belonged to a large multicontinental extended family with centuries of recorded history, and did not belong to individual members of that family. I was sure that the Fordes were equally distinguished in their different way, and Kay should not mess around with her name either. She should not name herself “Mrs.” Anybody!

Was I being snobbish?

That was not my intention. I was making a distinction between cultures in which family-names were a collective legacy and cultures which turned family names into individual property. I thought Kim and Kay were being post-modernist Westerners, and were taking liberties with their inherited family identities.

Anyway, I was over-ruled by Kim and Kay. They became the Forde-Mazruis. I refused to legitimize the hyphen between their names except if it was electronically necessary for sending e-mails.

It was not until my 75th year of life that I came to terms with that hyphen between the names Forde and Mazrui. I thought the marriage between Kim and Kay was one of the most successful that I had encountered among young people in the United States. Their best gift to me on my 75th birthday was not only their love for me, but their love for each other. I decided that the measure of my own love for them was my belated acceptance of that hyphen between their family names. The hyphen was indeed a truly legitimate bond between the Fordes and the Mazruis as embodied in Kay and Kim. Amen.

However, since Kim is a lawyer, I hope he will understand when I say that my acceptance of their own hyphen is not intended as a precedent. It is sui generis to Kim and Kay. I hope my remaining offspring will keep the name “Mazrui” without amendment, pass it on to their descendants unaltered, and encourage their spouses to make their own minds about which names to carry.

My visit to Mombasa in 2007 was spoilt by an above average attack of arthritis on my knees. It was necessary for me to use a wheel chair for part of the time – including when I visited my older sister, Nafisa at Kisauni. On most of my previous visits to her, she was the one using a



Farid. Little Ali and Harith



*Entertaining Nigerians: Left to Right:
Wole Soyinka, Niara Sudarkasa, Ali Mazrui,
Pauline Mazrui and Jonah Isawa Elaigwu*

walker or a wheel chair. In 2007 she was actually amused to see our situations reversed. She could walk (however slowly) while I was being wheeled by my nieces in a wheel-chair around their Kisauni home. We all laughed at my predicament.

I was half-afraid that I would not be able to participate in the ceremonial walk in academic gowns at the graduation of Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture and Technology [JKUAT], of which I was Chancellor and at which extravaganza I was scheduled to preside the following week on our campus. Fortunately when I returned to Nairobi after the visit to Mombasa my arthritis was much better. In any case, Michael Ngonyo Hindzano, my official companion and protocol officer, was as usual a real pillar of strength as I limped along with his support. My nephew Ghalib Tamin in Nairobi was also his usual supportive self. He helped me with some of my chores. He and his wife Maryam also entertained us to dinner at their home as usual.

The absence of Mama Alice Uti after she departed for Nigeria left a major gap in our home in Vestal, New York. Mama Alice is Pauline's mother (my mother-in-law). She had been living with us in upstate New York for some four years, and was fully integrated into the routines of our Westernized family. As a work-a-holic Mama Alice did more than her fair share of domestic chores. She insisted on washing dishes, cooking meals, making beds, doing laundry and helping to look after the three children in our Vestal home – Farid, Harith and Little Ali. Since Mama Alice was in her late seventies (a little older than her son-in-law) we protested when she worked so hard, but in vain.

Of course, she had other children in Nigeria and many grandchildren. In the end she began to



Ali Mazrui with Board of Trustees of Oxford Centre for Islamic Studies

miss the Nigerian wing of her family. She has now been back in Nigeria for more than six months. We look forward to her return to Vestal, New York, in the second half of 2008.

More recently it has been Pauline's turn to start missing her ancestral Nigeria. This nostalgia for Nigeria was shared by our two sons, Farid and Harith, who enjoy long trips abroad during their long school holidays. With one or both parents they have spent

several weeks in the past in Kenya and Nigeria. With their mother they have also visited Canada multiple times. On his own – but as part of a school group – Farid has traveled as far as Australia and New Zealand, and Harith has been to Hawaii. Harith has also entertained dreams of joining a school trip to Germany one of these school holidays!! Why Germany? Harith continues to be fascinated by the history of World War II.

For 2008 Pauline plans to spend four to six weeks in Nigeria with our two children. During that time I will have to be away in Kenya as Chancellor of Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture and Technology (JKUAT). I may also have to go to Oxford, England to attend the annual meeting of the Board of Trustees of the Oxford Centre for Islamic Studies.

Goretti Mugambwa continued to live with us in our Vestal home as a full member of the family. Although she has had a full-time job as a social welfare worker, she too has been a work-a-holic in domestic chores – cleaning the house, washing laundry, dish-washing, baby-sitting, shopping etc. She is a fanatic on domestic tidiness and neatness. But since my paperwork is voluminous and untidy, I drive

Goretti up-the-wall! However, she tries hard to be patient and tolerant. Occasionally, she even types letters for me!!

Goretti's daughter is Maria Liverpool. In 2008 she graduated cum laude in the natural sciences from Howard University, Washington DC. Pauline, Kim and Kay Forde-Mazrui, and other friends attended the graduation ceremony itself. Jamal, Susan, my grand-daughter Nicole, my grandson Little Ali and I myself joined them for the post-graduation celebratory banquet at a Chinese restaurant in Maryland.

Not long after graduation Maria Liverpool left for India with multiple fellow students from different colleges and universities. The trip was a combination of scholarly events in India plus tourism to places like the Taj Mahal.

Al'Amin, my second son, started having eye problems late May and early June 2008. One of his eyes deteriorated rapidly. At first we thought it was Lebers' Disease (atrophy of the optic nerve) which is what substantially blinded Jamal (my first born) from the age of sixteen and Kim (my third son), who was afflicted from the age of about twelve.

But Al'Amin is now in his forties. Lebers' disease was supposed to hit at an earlier age. Since the first diagnosis of Al'Amin's vision we have had a second and third opinion. It now seems more likely that Al'Amin's affliction is less catastrophic than the disease which blinded his brothers a quarter of a century ago. Al'Amin's loss of vision in one-eye may even be reversed. We are not sure yet. Remember us in your prayers.

IN PURSUIT OF AN ISLAMIC AGENDA

For a number of years I had resisted running for election to serve on the Board of the Association of Muslim Social Scientists (AMSS) of North America. But in 2007 I capitulated! I agreed to run for no less than the Presidency itself. To my delight, as well as to my dismay, I was elected overwhelmingly! I was of course also flattered by the vote of confidence.

The Association serves Muslim scholars and researchers in both the United States and Canada. Non-Muslims working on Islam are also eligible to be members, as well as serve on the Board of Directors. As an Association we organize regional conferences on Islamic subjects in both Canada and the United States. We also hold one major annual convention which tries to bring together all the members and other interested paper writers. Our next annual convention will be held at the Divinity School of Harvard University in October 2008.

From the first meeting of the AMSS Board of Directors I initiated one additional activity if we could raise the money. I wanted the Association of Muslim Social Scientists to co-sponsor lectures about Islam with different colleges and universities in the United States and Canada. Each member of our Board of Directors was eligible for a grant from AMSS to co-sponsor a visiting lecture on their campus. With the help of the International Institute of Islamic Thought based in Virginia we did raise the money.

I took advantage of the new scheme to apply for AMSS co-sponsorship of a symposium at Cornell



Mazrui with the Emir of Sharjah, United Arab Emirates (Centre) and Mazrui's late friend, Khamis El-Hashar

University, co-sponsored by the Africana Studies and Research Centre, Cornell, in collaboration with the annual meeting of the New York African Studies Association. Cornell used this elaborate event to celebrate my 75th birthday. As I mentioned earlier in this Newsletter, two-and-a-half papers presented at the conference, by three different authors, addressed the subject of “Barack Obama and Ali Mazrui in Comparative Perspective.” Can you imagine?

The Association of Muslim Social Scientists also edits and publishes the *Journal of Islamic Social Sciences [AJISS]*. I have published in this journal in the past. I may offer them another article before long. I am now being asked to serve as Editor-in-Chief.

I have continued to serve on the Board of Trustees of the Oxford Centre for Islamic Studies, Oxford, England. My Association with this Oxford Centre goes back to the mid 1980s when the British Broadcasting Corporation in London first broadcast my television series, The Africans: A Triple Heritage. Suddenly the academic world discovered that I was qualified to interpret Islam, as well as interpret the African condition! The Oxford Centre promptly invited me to give a couple of lectures at Oxford for them.

Under the Directorship of Dr. Farhan Nizami, the distinguished Oxford historian, the Oxford Centre for Islamic Studies [OCISS] has grown in activities, personnel and reputation. I have been active with them in a variety of capacities, the most important of which have been my serving as a member of the Board of Trustees and as a member of their Academic Committee.



New Oxford Centre for Islamic Studies Building

OCIS is now building a special college-size structure of its own, designed in Islamic architecture and large enough to be almost the equivalent of an Oxford college in its own right. Critics and adversaries of Islam put up a stiff resistance against the construction of such an Islamic style building in Oxford. They argued that it

would spoil Oxford’s historic skyline of rising majestic special spires. We retorted that Oxford’s ancient skyline was itself influenced by the domes and minarets of medieval Islam in those great days of Islam as a global intellectual force. Even the academic gowns of western universities today are in part inherited from the ancient Islamic robes of scholarship.

The City Council of Oxford finally gave us permission to build this elegant Oxford Centre in the architecture we had proposed. It probably helped our case as an Islamic Centre that our patron was His Royal Highness, Prince Charles, the Prince of Wales. Indeed, the Prince had once given a lecture at the Centre entitled “Islam and the West.” It was an Islam-friendly lecture, which has since been translated into Arabic and other languages of the Muslim world.

The OCIS also holds annual conferences at an elegant Lord of the Manor building in the countryside of Oxfordshire. Over the years the topics have varied considerably. Sometimes in the evening we have had more light-hearted conversations about art, architecture, and the like.

Let me try and recollect a tongue-in-cheek but stimulating evening conversation about “Islam: From ancient sacred waters to modern secular oil.”

The history of Islam has in part been a dialectic between water as an ancestral natural resource and petroleum as a modern industrial commodity. The birthplace of Islam, the Hijaz, was ancestrally short of water. In modern history Arabia has become a location of abundance of oil. In both Africa and the Middle East nature has been kind to Muslim areas with one liquid (oil) but less kind to the Muslim parts of Africa and the Middle East often short of another liquid (water).

Islam's love affair with water as something sacred began with Zamzam, the sacred well of Mecca which is sometimes described as the well of Ismail. The Zamzam is located within the sacred complex of the Kaaba, opposite the sanctuary of the Black Stone. Pilgrims to Mecca seek to drink from Zamzam, and take its water home to administer to the sick. Zamzam was an ecological lesson to Muslims throughout history, teaching them to regard water and its purity as sacred.

On the other hand, the actual worship of rivers in the Middle East declined with the consolidation of Islam. No river under Muslim jurisdiction has ever enjoyed the level of divinity which is attributed to the Ganges by the Hindus in India. Over the centuries the Nile became the most important, as well as longest, river under Muslim jurisdiction as it meandered down the valleys of Uganda, Ethiopia, the Sudan and Egypt. As the longest waterway in the world, the Nile had given birth to ancient Egyptian civilization, and continued to be crucial to the survival of both Byzantine Christian Egypt and to Muslim Egypt afterwards. But while under the Pharaohs the Nile enjoyed divine status almost the equivalent of the Ganges to the Hindus in India, under Islamic values the Nile remained metaphorically sacred but no longer literally divine. But I personally will always remember the source of the Nile as the genesis of my academic career – the source being from Lake Victoria in Uganda.

Another Muslim institution which has engaged my attention in the course of 2007 and 2008 has been the American Muslim Alliance, which is committed to promoting political



*Barack Obama with wife Michelle
and their daughters Malia Ann and Natasha*

participation by American Muslims in American democratic processes. The idea is to get Muslims in America not only to vote, but also to lobby in support of certain policies, to help raise money for Muslim-friendly candidates, and to run for election themselves for local, state and federal institutions. Our meetings under this umbrella have been led by Professor Agha Saeed, a Pakistani American, and Jamal Barzangi, an Iraqi American. But these meetings have brought together activists, leaders and scholars associated with sister-Muslim and American organizations under a broader umbrella. From time to time our meetings have been addressed by members and former members of the United States Congress (Muslim-friendly Christians or Jews).

We have been discreet about the fact that the U.S. Senate now has for the first time a member whose father was a Muslim, and whose own second name is Hussein. We have also been discreet about the possibility of having a U.S. President whose biological father (a Kenyan) and step-father (an Indonesian) were both Muslim. Barack Obama himself is of course an African American Christian.

Barack Obama's mother was a white woman from Kansas, genetically related to George Bush's Vice-President Dick Cheney (according to U.S. Press reports). There has been speculation about whether both Obama's Kenyan father and his Euro-American mother were intellectually brilliant. Would that explain Barack's outstanding performance at Harvard Law School where he became the first African American President of the Harvard Law Journal, and graduated from Harvard at the top of his class (*magna cum laude*). Barack Obama's intellectual brilliance may also have been crucial in his remarkable performance as a strategist and campaigner for the Democratic Party's 2008 nomination for the U.S. presidency.

It is quite clear that having had a white American mother has not hurt Barack Obama in the primary campaign for President of the United States. On the contrary, it is widely believed that his white mother (deceased) and his white grandmother (still alive and very supportive) have been major assets electorally to most white voters.

But what if Barack Obama had had a white wife instead of a white mother? Is American white opinion more comfortable with a Black man whose mother was white than with a Black man married to a white woman? Indeed, would African American voters have been more alienated from Barack Obama if his prospective First Lady for the White House had been a European American?

Both white and black opinion in America is of course aware that nobody is ever in a position to choose their own biological parents! Barack had no say in the marriage between the white female student from Kansas studying at the University of Hawaii and the Luo student from Kenya studying at the same university. They were destined to be his parents.

However, Barack's own choice of spouse was within his own volition. If Barack had indeed decided to propose to a white woman and married her, it is almost certain that his candidacy as a prospective President of the United States would have been more negatively affected by his own "wedded miscegenation" than it has been by his parents' intermarriage.

But Barack Obama has his own special kind of "American dream". He aspires to play an important intermediate role towards the long-term dream of a post-racial America. Becoming the first Black President of the United States would indeed be an important stage towards ultimately attaining an America that was close to transcending racism.

It may now be appropriate to examine how far the United States has indeed come since the days when many states had laws against "miscegenation" [inter-racial sexual mating and inter-racial marriages]. These laws were declared unconstitutional in 1967 by the U.S. Supreme Court in a case called *Loving V. Virginia*. Mrs. Loving died in 2008.

Another ironic development of America since September 11, 2001, is that the House of Representatives now has, for the first time in its 200 year history, two Muslim members. These Muslim Congressmen are Keith Ellison of Minnesota and André Carson of Indiana. In swearing his oath of allegiance Congressman Keith Ellison used a copy of the Qur'an once owned by Thomas Jefferson, the author of the Declaration of Independence and the third President of the United States.

With regard to Islam and my teaching schedule, I taught an undergraduate course at Binghamton University on "Islam in World Politics". There were some ninety students in the class. Normally my courses on Islam generate enough controversy that the end of the course comes almost as a relief!! But my Islamic course at Binghamton in the spring of 2008 ended with a thunderous applause from the students. It was a very pleasant surprise. I must be mellowing in old age, and no longer sound like a firebrand in class!

My more advanced course at Cornell was on "Islam in Africa and Its Diaspora." It ended with a lot of verbal thanks from individual students, but no collective applause. What am I to make of this difference?

The Islamic Society of North America [ISNA] is another organization whose membership includes Canadians, as well as Americans. Its annual meetings sometimes attract as many as ten thousand Muslims.

ISNA has a magazine called *Islamic Horizons*, with a readership of many more thousands. I have contributed articles to this magazine from time to time. Now they are asking me to be a more



Cover of Islamic Horizons Magazine May/June 2008

regular contributor. My most recent article compared two terms of religious abuse – “Islamofascism” (used by Islamophobes) and “Judo-Nazism” (used by extreme critics of Israeli policies in the occupied territories). Neither term is conceptually substantive. They are both mere expletives of abuse.

CONCLUSION: FROM OBOTE TO OBAMA

When I started my career at Makerere College in Uganda in 1963, Barack Obama in the United States was two years old. His Luo father was about to win a scholarship to Harvard – a temptation which made him leave his wife and son in Hawaii, almost never to return except for a short visit eight years later.

Uganda had won its independence from the British the year before my arrival. The basic ethnic divide in Uganda was between ethnic groups collectively referred to as the Bantu, concentrated in the south of Uganda, and ethnic groups collectively designated as the Nilotes, (of the Nile), concentrated in the North. The most illustrious single “Bantu” [or “Muntu”] was the King of Buganda, Sir Edward Mutesa, who became Uganda’s Head of State from 1963 to 1966. The most illustrious single Nilote was Apollo Milton Obote, who was first Prime Minister and later President. He was overthrown by Idi Amin in January 1971.

When I was growing up in colonial Kenya the Luo were sometimes referred to as the *Kavirondo* because their flat terrain near Lake Victoria did bear that name. The Luo of Uganda were often referred to “*the Lwo*” or split into smaller “tribes” much as Langi to whom Milton Obote belonged. Collectively all the Luo were associated with the Chari-Nile (Eastern Sudanic) linguistic culture of the Nile-Saharan family of Languages. Since Lake Victoria was the mother of the River Nile on its Uganda shore, the Luo or Lwo family of “tribes” were widely referred as *Nilotes* or people of the Nile.



A. Milton
Obote

In both Kenya and Uganda the Luo were major contenders for the post-colonial presidency of each country. In Uganda an alliance between the Langi and the Acholi did succeed in capturing the state in the 1960s. Milton Obote became Uganda’s first Nilotic Head of State.

When Kenya became independent in December 1963 the most prominent Luo political figures were Tom Mboya and Oginga Odinga (Raila Odinga’s father). Both Mboya and Oginga Odinga had their political eye on the Kenya Presidency, but Jomo Kenyatta beat them to the State House. Tom Mboya was assassinated in 1969; and Oginga Odinga was robbed of the Presidency by both Kenyatta and Daniel arap Moi.

The next Luo to aspire to the Presidency in Kenya was Raila Odinga. For a while nobody even remotely considered the Presidency of the United States as being also a potential trophy for the role of the Luo in history. But by October 2007 I was able to pose the following problem when interviewed by The Standard newspaper in Kenya: “Which Country will be the first to have a Luo President – Kenya or the United States?” If the Kenyan Luo candidate was Raila Odinga, the American Luo contender was of course Barack Obama.

In my thirtieth year of life (1963-1964) I lived in the shadow of Milton Obote, who was on his way towards becoming Uganda’s first Nilotic Head of State. In my seventy-fifth year of life (2008-2009) I lived in the shadow of Barack Obama, who seemed to be on his way towards becoming the first *son of the Nile* to ascend towards the Presidency of the United States.

Milton Obote had had considerable political influence on my life in my Ugandan past. If Barack Obama captured the American presidency, he might indirectly have considerable symbolic influence in my American future. Raila Odinga as Prime Minister of Kenya and potential Head of State is already having legal jurisdiction on my life as a Kenyan.

I first met Raila Odinga in his new capacity as Prime Minister not in our mother country, Kenya, but in Barack Obama’s country of birth, the United States. In his speech at a luncheon in his honour in Washington D.C., Odinga drew the attention of the large audience to my presence in their midst. I stood

up to a thunderous applause. He then referred to my historic question as to which country would be the first to elect a Luo President: Kenya or the United States. Prime Minister Odinga gave his own witty reply with a broad smile. “The question has actually been answered in Kenya’s favour. Kenya has a Luo President who has not been sworn in.” The huge luncheon audience burst into laughter and applause.

In the year 2007 I visited Uganda twice. The Nilotes were no longer in power. They had been replaced by “the Bantu”, led by Yoweri Museveni.

On one of my 2007 visits to Uganda I addressed thirteen hundred Rotarians – drawn from Rotary Clubs of the whole of Eastern Africa to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the Rotary movement in the region. The large crowd included many Luos and other Nilotes, but the leadership was Bantu.

My next visit to Uganda was even more decisively a Bantu affair. I went to deliver the Abu Mayanja Memorial Lecture. Mayanja had been my friend and political confidante when I lived in Uganda during the Nilotic days of Apollo Milton Obote in the 1960s. I even named my third son *Kim Abubakar* partly in Abubakar Mayanja’s honour. Like Mayanja, and indeed like Barack Obama, my third son went to a law school and became a lawyer. Today my third son is the Thurgood Marshall Distinguished Professor of Law at the University of Virginia in Charlottesville. Like Barack Obama, Kim Abubakar Mazrui had graduated from Law School at the top of his class.

2007 was also the year when Uganda hosted the Commonwealth Conference of some 50 Heads of State and Heads of Government. On my way to Uganda I had stopped in London to give the distinguished Commonwealth Lecture under the Chairmanship of the Secretary General of the Commonwealth. My subject was “The Power of Language and the Politics of Religion.” My lecture has since been published in the Oxford based journal, *The Round Table* in 2008.

My prior lectures in London in 2007 were to the Royal African Society (on the theme of “Waning Racism and Waxing Culture Conflict in World Politics”) and another lecture at Chatham House, the Royal Institute of International Affairs (on the theme of “Islam and the West since September 11”). Although I had published in the Institute’s Journal, *International Affairs* more recently, this was my first lecture at Chatham House since the 1980s. I was delighted by all these 2007 British opportunities.

Although the Eden of my professional career was indeed on the Nile in Uganda, my intellectual training was closer to the River Thames in England, whose upper flow alongside Oxford is better known as Isis. If my career was a child of the Nile, my education was nursed by Isis and the Thames.



Mazrui at 75

*The stream of experience meanders on,
In the vast expanse of the valley of time,
The new is come, and the old is gone,
And life abides a changing clime.*

APPENDIX I

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

In my career, I am, of course, indebted to dozens of colleagues, friends, relatives, and other personal and professional benefactors. But in this Newsletter I will only mention those colleagues who have helped me in the last twelve months in Administrative, Secretarial, and managerial roles:

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I am, of course, also greatly indebted to my immediate family and to my extended family across three continents. My gratitude also to my esteemed colleagues in the universities to which I am affiliated, to my students, and to my graduate assistants from semester to semester.



*Salim Ahmed
Salim*

TRIBUTE FROM SALIM A. SALIM

Dear Professor Ali Mazrui:

Amne and I want to join your family, many of your friends and admirers throughout the world and hundreds of your present and past students in wishing you a Happy Birthday. We want to celebrate with you a most productive life dedicated to ideas, freedom and service. Not only is Mombasa, Kenya and East Africa proud of you, but the African continent, the black diaspora and world at large are proud of your intellectual achievements. You have been a source of inspiration to many of us.

Throughout the decades you have tried to extend the frontiers of knowledge, debates and discussions that touch the lives of people and that concern the fates of countries.

You have earned for yourself many honours and adulations. I was glad when President Mwai Kibaki of Kenya appointed you to be the Chancellor of Jomo Kenyatta University of Science and Technology in recognition not only of your intellectual greatness but also of your patriotism and loyalty to Kenya. Personally I will always remember that historic occasion in Dakar, Senegal in 1992 when the OAU Heads of States and Government appointed you to be a member of the Panel of Eminent Persons to look into the question of Reparations. Here Africa was recognising you as a champion of its rights and interests. It was also an eloquent testimony to our Continent's recognition of your Pan African credentials.

Your books and writings have inspired many people; and those who had the opportunity of listening to your lectures must have been very pleased with your eloquence and arguments. Furthermore, it is significant to note that even some of those people who have disagreed with you, they have nonetheless always held you in high respect.

Amne and I pray to Allah to bestow you with a long, healthy and more intellectually productive life so that generations to come will continue to enjoy your presence, writings and speeches.

Happy Birthday my dear esteemed friend!
Salim Ahmed Salim

Chairperson of the Mwalimu Julius K. Nyerere Foundation,
Former Secretary General of the Organization of African Unity,
Former Prime Minister of Tanzania

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