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General Theme:

THE LEGACY OF LIFE, DEATH AND DEBATE

Sub-Themes:

- I. Flames of Controversy
- II. Between Wedding Drums and Passing Friends
- III. The Pits and Pinnacles of Conferences
- IV. Omari Kokole: A Triple Heritage
- V. Ali Mazrui: An Islamic Agenda
- VI. Kingship, Kinship and the Cold War

by

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My sincere apologies for the delay in sending out this Newsletter. The last few months of 1996 were especially difficult. Particularly devastating for me personally was the sudden death of one of my closest friends, Omari Haruna Kokole. He and I talked together that weekend mid-September. On Monday he taught his class as usual at Binghamton University. On Tuesday night he was admitted into intensive care at the hospital. On Thursday morning he was dead. We were absolutely stunned and truly bewildered. Omari had physically appeared to be the very epitome of strength and good health. He was tall, strong, muscular and seemed almost invincible. It was difficult to associate disease, let alone death, with him. Our shock was all that much greater. But more about Omari Kokole later on.

I. Flames of Controversy

Earlier in the year there were events which were memorable for other reasons. I was allowed to give a public lecture at the University of Nairobi for the first time in almost twenty years.

The occasion was to mark the 50th anniversary of the U.S. Fulbright scheme of academic exchanges. The Kenya Association of Fulbright Alumni and the University of Nairobi hosted my lecture, which was on the following topic:

"AFRICAN UNIVERSITIES AND THE AMERICAN MODEL OF
HIGHER EDUCATION: COMPARATIVE STRENGTHS AND
WEAKNESSES"

The Vice-Chancellor (President) of the University was in the chair at my lecture. Among other Kenya dignitaries at the lecture was Professor William Ochieng', Principal of Maseno University College. Professor Ochieng' subsequently wrote a devastatingly negative review of my Fulbright lecture, describing it as boring and full of cliches. His review was published in the Sunday Nation, the most widely read English-language newspaper in Eastern Africa.

But Professor Ochieng' made two mistakes in his review. First, he challenged my claim in the lecture that universities in Kenya did not enjoy enough autonomy and should struggle for it. Secondly, Professor Ochieng' made fun of my advancing years - suggesting that the old Mazrui intellectual fire was going out with age!

These criticisms were mistakes from Ochieng's own point of view because they outraged so many readers of the Sunday Nation.

The letters which poured into the newspaper were about ten to one against Ochieng'. When I finally also entered the fray in the Sunday Nation I challenged Ochieng' to a face-to-face debate either on his own campus at Maseno or at the University of Nairobi. My motion at the debate was to be as follows:

"THE PRESENT RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE
GOVERNMENT AND PUBLIC UNIVERSITIES INHIBITS
ACADEMIC FREEDOM AND REDUCES UNIVERSITY
AUTONOMY"

I argued that if such a debate were allowed to take place on campus, it would be one argument in favour of Ochieng's claim that Kenya universities already had enough autonomy. The debate would also be an opportunity to test Ochieng's thesis that advancing years had ended Ali Mazrui's old intellectual fire!

Although my challenge to Ochieng' was widely publicized in Kenya, Professor Ochieng' did not rise to the challenge!! I have no live debate of that kind to report to you, alas!

However, since much of the rest of my life is one long controversy, there were of course other kinds of debates. The Pan-African journal, CODESRIA BULLETIN (Dakar, Senegal), continued in 1996 the debate which was unleashed by Professor Archie Mafeje's vitriolic attack on me over my argument that some African countries were ready for recolonization. My argument had featured in a syndicated article of mine which was published in many newspapers and in several languages. Mafeje was responding to the version which appeared in The International Herald Tribune [August 4, 1994].

Unfortunately Mafeje insisted on misinterpreting what I had said. I was recommending that stronger African states should put under trusteeship collapsed states (the umbrella of Pax Africana). That is the recolonization I was championing. Mafeje preferred to react as if I was recommending the return of Pax Britannica. Anyhow the heated Mafeje-Mazrui debate in CODESRIA BULLETIN was joined by others.

My debates in Australia were calmer and more purely humanitarian. I was invited as the Chief Guest for the Refugee Week in Australia, a period every year when concerned Australians attempt to focus public attention on the worldwide problems of refugees and displaced persons. My itinerary included multiple appearances on national television, addressing the National Press Club, debating the refugee problem at a conference held within Parliament buildings, addressing the issues with relevant ministers and parliamentarians, and addressing public meetings in Sydney, Canberra, Melbourne and Perth. Friends from my old Makerere days who resurfaced, included Nursey Bray, who is now a prominent academic figure in Australia.

The African community of Melbourne made a special effort to entertain me. I became their guest in my final two days in Australia, and was delighted to give a public lecture on Africa in Melbourne under their auspices. Dr. Julius W. Mukhwana took the lead as my African host during those final Australian days, helped briefly by Professor Joseph A. Camilleri.

There was one experience in Australia which was at the time

alarming. On my second night in Sydney at the beginning of the Refugee week my hosts of Austcare and the Australian Council on Refugees took me to a delightful Thai restaurant. The car which brought me was parked right opposite the restaurant. After a most engaging dinner we discovered that our car had been burgled and my briefcase stolen. Among the contents was what had been intended to be my most important speech in Australia - the speech to launch the Refugee Week the next day at the National Press Club and to be televised live nationally. I had taken particular care in preparing that speech, collecting facts and figures about refugees and statistics about how Australia compared with other developed states. The copy in the briefcase had been the only one in existence!

The next morning I was scheduled to fly from Sydney to the capital, Canberra, where the speech was intended to be delivered as an after-lunch address to the National Press Club. Between the Thai dinner and my flight to Canberra the next morning I desperately tried to remember and reconstruct as much of my original speech as I could. They later gave me a video of my presentation to take home with me. Everything considered, I do not think I let the refugees down in my presentation, Alhamdu li Llah (the Lord be praised)!

II. Between Wedding Drums and Passing Friends

I went to Nigeria in July 1996 and got married! No, not to yet another wife, but to my same Nigerian spouse!! Basically, my visit to Nigeria in 1996 had two momentous purposes. One was indeed to reconfirm my marriage to Ejimah Pauline Maryam Uti through indigenous Nigerian rites and matrimonial ceremonies. (My original wedding to her was under Islamic rites in Mombasa, Kenya.)

My second mission in Nigeria, in 1996, was to give a lecture under the auspices of the Institute of Governance and Social Research in Jos. (The President is my old friend, Jonah Isawa Elaigwu, who was also the best man at the wedding.)

Even in the wedding rites and ceremonies there was a mock debate. I acted as if I was suing for Ejimah's hand in marriage for the first time. The family pretended to rebuff me. Through an interpreter I sang Ejimah's praises, extolled her beauty, and declared my dedication. I was again rebuffed. My interpreter and representer, Mr. Patrick Ossai, sang my praises - as to how honourable a man I was, and how worthy a son-in-law I was bound to be to Ejimah's mother and her elders. And so it went on, suing and rebuffing, until the moment came for discussing bridewealth and exchanging gifts. There was a lot of singing and dancing and joyful embraces. Both Patrick Ossai and Jonah Elaigwu were, in a manner of speaking, my "best men" at this wedding ceremony.

In important ways the wedding brought me even closer to my wife's family. But this indigenous ceremony was also one more stage in "the Nigerianization of Ali Mazrui." I felt integrated

into aspects of Nigerian culture more deeply than ever before.

My lecture for the Institute of Governance and Social Research was chaired by the Vice-Chancellor of the University of Jos. I spoke at the old Plateau State assembly, and my theme was "Africa on the eve of the 21st century". My most controversial recommendation was that countries like Nigeria, where military coups were endemic, should deliberately devise constitutions of power-sharing between soldiers and civilians, provided civilians were clearly the senior and elected partners (elected civilian supremacy). My recommendations were reported in the Nigerian media and hotly debated.

Even before Jonah Elaigwu and I had first met at Stanford University in the 1970s, Claude Ake, another Nigerian political scientist, and I met in New York in the 1960s. Claude was developing into a first rank political scientist. (Many believe he overtook me.) It was the more tragic when he was killed in an air crash near Lagos in November 1996. In a memorial at the annual African Studies Association of the USA held in San Francisco later in the same month, I was the concluding speaker.

I append to this Newsletter my San Francisco eulogy to this great son of Africa.

Another death which shook me in 1996 was that of Carl Sagan, the Cornell astronomer who became a world figure with his television series Cosmos. Why did Carl's death shake me? Because of what happened in 1986 when my own more modest television series, The Africans: A Triple Heritage, came out. My series was under attack from Reaganites and other right-wing forces in the USA. I was based in Michigan then. Carl dropped me a line of support, and asked me to look him up whenever I was at Cornell. Until then I do not think he knew me from Adam. But he was capable of identifying a kindred spirit and extending a hand.

Yes, I did take him up and alerted him when I was at Cornell. He fulfilled his part of the bargain and invited me to dinner at his beautiful home in Ithaca where I spent a most stimulating evening with him and his wife, Ann Druyan. That was only the first of our meetings at Cornell.

Carl Sagan was at Cornell what I once was at Makerere in Uganda. Although a Cornell professor, Carl could fill the largest Cornell lecture hall anytime he decided to give a public lecture on campus. I had once had the same magnetic power at Makerere University in Uganda, when students were prepared to sacrifice supper in the dormitory in order to get a seat at one of my public lectures. At Cornell I both identified with Carl and envied him at the same time. He was both me and beyond me! I first learnt about his death on the world service of the British Broadcasting Corporation. I was stunned.

Carl was a man who had strong reservations about Islam. He, his wife and I had argued about Salman Rushdie's Satanic Verses.

Yet these were people with whom a Muslim could disagree without resenting each other. And they in turn could dissent without disparaging. It was a civilized discourse.

During my Makerere days, my second-in-command for part of the period was an Englishman called John Chick. He was one of the most efficient lieutenants I have ever had. I was at the time both Head of Political Science and Dean of the Faculty of Social Sciences. John D. Chick was truly one of my pillars of strength.

After he left Makerere, John Chick went to the Pacific islands and later to Australia. In September 1996 John D. Chick died suddenly in Australia in the same week in which I was burying Omari H. Kokole in Binghamton, New York. If you like, my Anglo-Assistant when I was in Uganda died as I was burying my Ugandan Assistant in Anglo-America! Whatever playful names you give the tragedies, it was a double-blow.

Sue Chick, John's wife, was the woman who typed the only novel I have so far published - The Trial of Christopher Okigbo.

Our condolences and sympathies go out to Sue and her family.

Omari Kokole had been part of my life for so long that he had been an elder brother to my sons. So when he died suddenly, my sons scattered in different parts of the United States, wanted to come to the funeral. Jamal, my eldest son, was particularly concerned about the impact of Omari's death on their Dad. In the end it was agreed that my sons would concentrate on Dad's rehabilitation more than on Omari's funeral. So the boys visited me a week after Omari's funeral - leaving it to their cousin, Alamin M. Mazrui, to assist me during the funeral week itself. The division of labour worked out very well, everything considered in those difficult times.

I also organized a Memorial for Omari Kokole on campus approximately forty days after his death. The President of Binghamton University attended, and the Ugandan mission to the United Nations was represented. The Memorial was a truly memorable experience. The programme is appended to this Newsletter.

My Administrative Assistant at our Institute of Global Cultural Studies, Gloria Hopkins, decided to retire early, partly in order to spend more time with her husband, Terence Hopkins, who had already retired as professor of sociology at Binghamton University. Gloria had been not just a colleague, but also a friend of my Binghamton family. She was a constant help to Pauline when Pauline was pregnant with both Farid and Harith. Indeed, Gloria was present in the maternity ward for both those births. We wondered whether, after retiring, she would move more and more in other circles of friends and church-groups, and travel abroad with Terence. We braced ourselves for the prospect of seeing less and less of Gloria.

What happened was even more tragic. Her husband, for whom Gloria had retired early, was taken seriously ill at about Christmas time. The shocking diagnosis was that he had an advanced (and relatively rapid) variety of lung cancer. Terence died on January 3, 1997. We were all once again stunned.

Terence Hopkins was a sociologist who had once done research

in Uganda. He and I knew each other long before I really got to know Gloria. But in the 1990s Gloria was inevitably closer to me and my family. Terence's departure has left a gap in our lives in Binghamton. He had a keen left-of-centre sense of humour, and an incisive sociological mind. He was the first to invite me to his home on my arrival in Binghamton. He was indeed a friend.

Thomas Uthup, my Research Associate from India, got his PhD from Binghamton - and was soon after tempted away by Syracuse University in New York. Uthup was an embodiment of "Global Cultural Studies" - a Christian from a largely Hindu country who was very interested in Muslim societies and wrote his PhD dissertation on Islam. In his work with me, he enriched some of my conference papers and lectures with new examples for the points I wanted to make, and was a superb bibliographical guide.

Although he is now at Syracuse, I hope we can maintain some kind of collaborative relationship.

Thomas also worked with Parviz Morewedge, the General Editor of our Institute of Global Cultural Studies and our Conference Coordinator, and with Nancy Levis, my Secretary and Administrator. All three of us are in agreement that Syracuse has a lot to answer for!!! We miss Thomas.

III. The Pits and Pinnacles of Conferences

Since Nelson Mandela was released from jail in 1991 I have been going to South Africa every year. This year my hosts were the Institute for the Advancement of Journalism. I was in consultation with journalists in South Africa and reporters abroad about the wider issues of the African condition. Whither Africa? It was also wonderful to see my old friend James Kariuki, who came to the conference.

Professor Jacob Ade Ajayi, Ambassador Dudley Thompson and I have attempted to maintain onto the global agenda the issue of reparations for Black people for hundreds of years of enslavement, colonization and exploitation. We have been meeting at annual meetings of the African Studies Association of the USA. We now need to expand our agenda.

Professor Ajayi, Ambassador Thompson and I are members of the Group of Eminent Persons appointed by the Heads of State in Africa at their summit meeting in Senegal in 1992. The OAU summit meeting entrusted us with exploring the modalities of a crusade for reparations.

This time my trip to San Francisco was also partly a family holiday. Pauline and our children Farid and Harith also flew with me. My old Zairean friend, Mutombo Mpanya and his own family (who now live in Northern California), made themselves available as tour guides. Al'Amin A. Mazrui, my second son by my first marriage, also joined us in this delightful reunion. (Al'Amin is still at the University of California, Berkeley.)

Sometimes I get a little nervous at the topics I am assigned at conferences! The demand for my lecturing services is forcing me to be more and more interdisciplinary! In December 1996, I

was called upon to give the keynote address opening the world conference of the International Association for the Study of Traditional Environments (IASTE) which was indeed held at the University of California, Berkeley. The theme of the conference was "Identity, Tradition and the Built-Form: The Role of Culture in Planning and Development." Once again, Al'Amin and Mutombo Mpanya joined me, both at the conference and later for a meal together. Mutombo Mpanya knew I had been nervous about the topic, and had given me a few useful tips in advance.

From Berkeley, California, I went directly to Coventry, England, where the conference theme was more familiar and a little closer to my usual concerns. I gave a plenary lecture on the issue of whether Africa was getting "marginalized" in the post-Cold War era. Particularly pleasant was meeting old friends, both British and African, at the Coventry conference. In the social domain Oliver and Rita Furley hosted me, from the moment I arrived at Birmingham airport to the point of my departure. They also took me to their home, and also took me out for a delightful Indian dinner. We knew the Furleys when we were all at Makerere in Uganda together. George Kanyeihamba, also formerly of Makerere and now a special advisor to President Yoweri Museveni in Kampala, also attended the Coventry meeting. There was no consensus at Coventry as to whether Africa was or was not "marginalized"! No doubt such debates are also continuing elsewhere.

My old friend, Preston King (formerly of the University of Nairobi and now at Lancaster, England) encouraged me to make myself available for a conference in New Zealand. I complied and let the New Zealanders know I was available. The reaction was courteous but no more. Somebody in New Zealand must have asked "Ali who? Never heard of him!" They were very nice about it, but I began to feel like someone about to gate-crash into somebody else's party! I beat a retreat with as much dignity as I could muster. Wait till I next see Preston King face to face!! He has a lot to answer for! (On the other hand, perhaps the experience was good for my humility!)

IV. Omari Kokole: A Triple Heritage

Let us now return to the story of the life and death of Omari. African studies lost one of its emerging stars on political culture this year. Omari H. Kokole died this autumn in Binghamton, New York, at the age of 44. He was at the time Associate Director of the Institute of Global Cultural Studies, State University of New York at Binghamton. He was also in the process of completing a book about the Political Sociology of Gender, jointly edited with Professor Maria Grosz-Ngate of Northwestern University. Dr. Grosz-Ngate has since completed the project on behalf of them both. Their book is entitled Gendered Encounters (New York, Routledge, 1997).

Omari Kokole was born in Jinja, Uganda, in 1952. He graduated with a First Class bachelor's degree in political

science and literature from Makerere University, Kampala, in 1976. He was the first Makerere student ever to win a first class B.A. in that combination of subjects. He won a scholarship to the University of Manchester in England to do a Master's degree. He subsequently went to Dalhousie University in Canada for his doctorate, writing his dissertation under the Chairmanship of Professor Timothy Shaw, the renowned expert on the political economy of Africa's relations with the Western world. Kokole's dissertation was subsequently published under the title of Dimensions of Africa's International Relations (Delmar, NY: Caravan Books, 1993).

One of Kokole's last professional acts was to organize a Roundtable in anticipation of the annual meeting of the African Studies Association of the United States, which in 1996 was held in San Francisco late November. Kokole's choice of topic for the panel was "Africa's Triple Heritage Revisited: Africanity, Islam and the West". He died before the conference took place, but his panel did indeed occur. And the printed program still showed his name as the Chair. It would be fitting if we discussed the triple heritage itself as a way of understanding the meaning of Omari Kokole. Because his professional life was so closely tied to my own, the story of Omari Kokole is partly my own story. So he would have wished it, as we shall indicate.

Why did Omari choose the topic "The Triple Heritage Revisited"? It was partly to evaluate Africa's ten years since my television series "The Africans: A Triple Heritage" (BBC and PBS, 1986). Kokole was hoping that the panelists in San Francisco would either examine Africa's decade (1986 - 1996) from the perspective of those three civilizations (Africanity, Islam, and the West) or critique the model of the Triple Heritage as an approach to the study of Africa.

Where does Omari Kokole fit into all this? How much of a case study in Africa's triple heritage was he? How far did he reflect basic elements of the African condition?

Omari H. Kokole reached political maturity in Uganda when Islam was both politically triumphant and morally demeaned. These were the eight years of Idi Amin's rule in Uganda, 1971 - 1979.

Idi Amin was a Muslim and aspects of his rule were affected by his identification with Islam. These were the years when so many non-Muslim Ugandan males had themselves circumcised as a political insurance against the arbitrariness of Idi Amin's soldiers.

Under President Obote's first administration in Uganda, the cultural test which Obote's soldiers sometimes administered at check points, or when they arrested somebody, was linguistic. Could the particular Muganda in military custody speak Kiswahili?

I was once given such a test when I was in military custody. Fortunately, I passed the Swahili test.

The cultural test which Idi Amin's soldiers administered on those in their custody was sometimes religious. Was the suspect

a Muslim? In particularly desperate situations, the test of whether the suspect was circumcised could be the clincher. During those years, I personally was approached by a few non-Muslim Baganda to help them be circumcised in Mombasa, Kenya. I obliged in a few cases.

Where did Omari Kokole fit into those years of Muslim rule and mis-rule in Uganda? Idi Amin Dada was a Kakwa. So was Omari Kokole. Idi Amin was a Muslim; so was Omari. Idi Amin had close links with the Nubi of Uganda; so did Omari Kokole. Idi Amin and Omari Kokole knew each other personally. And their respective families often interacted.

But there the similarities ended. Omari Kokole was an intellectual, and pursued academic rather than political ambitions. He was deeply disturbed by both the tyranny and the anarchy of Idi Amin's rule in Uganda. Tyranny was too much government; anarchy was too little. Idi Amin's Uganda miraculously managed to be both tyrannical and anarchic.

In physical build, Omari Kokole was approximately of the same "stock" as Idi Amin - tall, strong, hefty and indubitably black. But while Idi Amin was often a political monster, Omari Kokole was more clearly a gentle giant. Indeed, one of Kokole's ambitions was to present to the world a kinder and gentler face of the Kakwa people - and the more reflective, rational and circumspect personality of Northern Uganda as a whole.

Quite inadvertently I stepped into Omari Kokole's dreams. Like both Omari and Idi Amin I was an African Muslim. And to all three of us Uganda had a special meaning. But while to Omari Kokole Idi Amin was a political force, I became to Omari an intellectual symbol. As Idi Amin became to Omari less and less of a political hero, Ali Mazrui (rightly or wrongly) became to this young impressionable Ugandan more and more of an intellectual icon. Mazrui became Kokole's supreme role model.

Kokole decided that, however indirectly, Mazrui was going to help him realize his dream of becoming the symbol of the gentler, kinder side of the Kakwa, and the symbol of a more rational and reflective Northern Uganda. Like Kokole, Mazrui was a Muslim who was both fascinated by and rebellious against Western culture. Mazrui was a fellow East African but not a fellow Ugandan. In this particular case of nationality, the fact that Mazrui was not a member of a Ugandan ethnic group made it easier for Omari to embrace him more fully as a role model.

But Omari Kokole did not want to receive anything for nothing. He decided that he was going to make Ali Mazrui more famous by playing Boswell to Mazrui's Samuel Johnson. Kokole was going to be Mazrui's ultimate biographer. His project had two phases. The first phase was to get other scholars to evaluate Mazrui's work in a series of chapters to a book. He completed that phase with the book, The Global African: A Portrait of Ali A. Mazrui (Trenton, New Jersey: Africa World Press 1996/7), consisting of essays by more than fifteen analysts, originally presented at the annual meeting of the African Studies

Association in Seattle in 1992.

The second phase of Kokole's work as Boswell to Mazrui's Samuel Johnson was never completed. He had collected considerable material about Mazrui's life and works, but he never got to the stage of analyzing what he had collected into a coherent portrayal.

By a strange twist of fate, while Omari Kokole was trying to become the ultimate biographical interpreter of Ali Mazrui, Ali Mazrui was trying to be the ultimate biographical interpreter of Idi Amin Dada. The Idi Amin phenomenon was also a combination of Africanity and Islamic identity. Certainly Idi Amin's own interest in Mazrui after Amin captured power in 1971 was partly because Mazrui was a co-religionist, a fellow Muslim.

Mazrui's intellectual curiosity about Idi Amin was partly because Amin was the least Westernized Head of State that postcolonial Black Africa had, until then, ever had. Was this a plus? Mazrui was attracted by this phenomenon, and discussed its implications with Omari Kokole long before either of them left Uganda for good. Did Idi Amin's presidency symbolize the coming erosion of the power of the Westernized elites in postcolonial Africa?

In time it was understood that Omari Kokole would one day write the most extensively documented biography of Ali Mazrui - and Ali Mazrui would one day produce the most theoretically ambitious biography of Idi Amin. In both those biographies Africa's triple heritage was bound to loom large - encompassing Africanity, Islam and the Western legacy.

Kokole did not complete his project of playing Boswell to Mazrui's Samuel Johnson. But he did succeed in symbolizing the kinder, gentler face of the Kakwa people. And he did also symbolize the intellectual, reflective and analytical side of Northern Uganda.

But even in death, the tensions of Africa's triple heritage followed Omari. Immediately after his death a major cultural dilemma had to be confronted. Traditional African culture recommended that Omari's body should be buried in the soil of his ancestors in Uganda. This would have meant a great delay of two or more weeks before the funeral.

Islamic culture, on the other hand, recommended that Omari's body should be buried as soon as possible. According to Islam, the dead cannot rest until they are buried.

We were therefore torn between the push of spatial distance and the pull of temporal urgency - between the trans-Atlantic distance to an African burial in Uganda and the urgency of a local Islamic funeral in Binghamton. Islam dictated the temporal urgency; Africa spanned out distance in space. Yet Omari had died in the West.

Initially, the dilemma between sending Omari to the soil of his ancestors in Uganda and burying him in Binghamton, New York, split Omari's family both in East Africa and in North America. But in the end, the Islamic point of view prevailed among family

members in Uganda and Kenya. The family asked Ali Mazrui by telephone to bury Omari Kokole in Binghamton according to Islamic rites. Mazrui asked for a confirmation in writing by fax. The confirmation came. Ali Mazrui responded accordingly - with the help of the Imam of the mosque in Binghamton.

But the preliminaries were a compromise with the other legacies of the triple heritage. There was the viewing of Omari's body - which is quite alien to Islamic culture. Audio-cassettes were played of both the Qur'an and of Western and African music at the viewing ceremony - and at the subsequent memorial service.

In life, Omari Kokole had been a walking embodiment of Africa's triple heritage - a Kakwa Muslim in quest of Western higher education and Western-style academic excellence. In death, the fate of his body became subject to a triple heritage debate. Realities and rituals of the three legacies continue to affect Africa, symbols and stereotypes interact.

V. Mazrui: An Islamic Agenda

Before she retired Gloria Hopkins used to organize all my trips, national and international. In 1996 those escapades included my trip to Marmaris in Turkey for a conference in preparation for the great United Nations' Congress, Habitat II, which was later held in Istanbul. The Marmaris conference was about cities of the world on the eve of the 21st century, and the urban problems which needed to be confronted. My own paper was entitled "Mombasa: Three Stages Towards Globalization" which is also appearing as a chapter in a book entitled Re-Presenting the City: Ethnicity, Capital and Culture in the 21st Century Metropolis (London: MacMillan, NY: University Press, 1996), edited by Anthony King. I was delighted to learn that Kenyans did not need visas to go to Turkey - although in the same year the United Kingdom started requiring visas of Kenyans for the first time in history! Was Kenya in the British Commonwealth or in the Ottoman Empire? I began to wonder! The Turks seemed to be kinder to us on the issue of visas than were the British!

Although Turkey is a Muslim country, my agenda there was not remotely Islamic. On the other hand, my agenda in the United Kingdom (a non-Muslim society) in October 1996 was decidedly Islamic. I was attending a conference sponsored by the Oxford Centre for Islamic Studies on the theme "Islam and the Third Industrial Revolution". The conference was held at the magnificent manor house at Ditchley Park in Oxfordshire, and I was a keynote speaker. The participants included not only scholars but also diplomats, princes, civil servants and moderate activists.

Another major Muslim event in my 1996 agenda was my multiple participation at the annual meeting of the Islamic Society of North America (ISNA) held in Columbus, Ohio. In my old age, I normally refuse to "perform" more than twice at one conference. But ISNA managed to get out of me four different "performances"

at one conference. My most controversial proposition was to the effect that since doctrinally the Ahmadiyya Movement was closer to mainstream Islam than was the Nation of Islam under Louis Farrakhan, mainstream Muslims should be as tolerant towards the Ahmadiyya as they often are to the Nation of Islam. Most South Asian Muslims disagreed bitterly with this proposition. They regarded the Ahmadiyya as heretical anathema. (Incidentally, so did my late father, who conducted a bitter pamphleteering war against the Ahmadiyya in East Africa in the 1940s.)

I have continued to work hand-in-glove with the Council for Islamic Education, based in California, under the leadership of Shabir Mansuri. The Council is particularly concerned about minimizing anti-Islamic bias in American publishing and American education. The Council has had impressive successes with a number of publishers, who have accepted advice. Indeed some have now begun to seek Muslim advice before publishing textbooks about Islam and the Muslim world. And some schools in California have begun collaboration with the Council to get the teaching about Islam on a sounder basis. I have been involved in some of the meetings and consultations.

In 1996 American Muslims confronted more frontally than ever what was the proper role for a Muslim minority in a Western liberal democracy. Should Muslims vote? Should they campaign for particular candidates? Indeed, should Muslims themselves be candidates in U.S. elections? What if the Congress produced by such elections passed laws incompatible with Islam (such as a law approving marriages between members of the same sex)? What if the elections produced a president who authorized the bombing of innocent Muslim civilians in a distant Muslim society?

The American Muslim Council (of whose Board of Directors I am a member) held a conference before the 1996 U.S. elections to thrash out some of these issues. I was one of the plenary speakers. My recommendation was that U.S. Muslims should move as fast as possible towards full political participation. I praised President Bill Clinton for going further than any previous US President towards recognizing Islam as part and parcel of American domestic pluralism. During the month of Ramadhan in 1996 the President sent out letters to leading Muslims wishing them well during the holy month. And for Idd el Fitr (the Festival of the end of Ramadhan) the First Lady held a reception for Muslims at the White House.

Under Clinton's administration, the U.S. military at last had recognized Muslim imams. And the President received at the White House leaders of the American Arab community to discuss issues of Arab and Muslim concern. I noted all this in my speech at the conference organized by the American Muslim Council. I wonder if that is why I was subsequently invited to President Clinton's Inauguration on January 20, 1997? Was there cause and effect? Who knows?

An organization called Muslim Women for Human Rights organized a special session between a group of Muslims and

Justice Anthony Scalia at the Supreme Court in Washington, DC. I was invited to this session. Justice Scalia's address to us was mainly a tribute to the greatness of the U.S. Constitution. At question time I argued that the U.S. Constitution did not start great; it became great as it evolved out of its original pro-slavery, pro-racist and pro-sexist format. I argued that the Constitution was helped to future greatness by judicial review by the Supreme Court, which re-interpreted it. Justice Scalia is judicially conservative and inclined in favour of the original framers of the Constitution rather than supporting daring re-interpretations by the Supreme Court. He and I clashed on those issues within the Supreme Court!!

Among the Muslims who attended Justice Scalia's special event was one of Kim's law students. The student enquired whether a professor called "Forde Mazrui" was related to me. I confirmed that detail. The student said he was older than his professor. I believed the student even had a PhD in another discipline. I assured him of two things - that my son, Kim, was fair minded and that my son was exceptionally intelligent and well-trained. I was sure that the two of them would get on and benefit from each other.

How do you like the title "Between the Crescent and the Star-Spangled Banner: American Muslims and U.S. Foreign Policy"?

Well, it is the title of my article in 1996 in International Affairs, the Journal of the Royal Institute of International Affairs, London. The last time I published in that journal was in 1963, when I was still at Oxford but as a Lecturer-Designate of Makerere University College in Uganda. My article in 1963 was on "African Attitudes to the European Economic Community."

VI. Kingship, Kinship and the Cold War

My article in 1963 included a lot of references to Kwame Nkrumah. In 1996 I went to Ghana to give two lectures on the theme "The African Condition Since Kwame Nkrumah's Fall 1966-1996." These were the first of what were going to be special distinguished annual lectures sponsored by the Pan-African Writers Association, with its Headquarters in Accra, Ghana.

My main host in Ghana was Dr. Atukwei Okai, who went well beyond the call of duty to make me feel welcome. I was also ceremonially enstooled (crowned) as "a prince among writers and a literary chief". I have come home with my ceremonial wooden stool. Some Ghanaian friends have already started addressing me as "Nana", an honorific regal title. We also went to pay our respects to the Vice-Chancellor of the University of Ghana at Legon. An old Makerere and Mombasa friend whom I discovered in Accra was Ahmed Mohiddin. I greatly enjoyed my reunion with him and his wife Anne at their splendid diplomatic home. (Anne is in the Canadian foreign service.)

Can I go to Ghana without touching base with Adu Boahen? Never! Of course my relationship with Adu is scholarly rather than political. On the one hand, he was my boss when he was

President of the UNESCO General History of Africa and I was Editor of Volume VIII. On the other hand, I was his boss when he was a research fellow at the Institute of Global Cultural Studies at the State University of New York, Binghamton. Adu Boahen and his wife Mary entertained me to a splendid dinner in Accra.

I know that some of you think I know very little about contemporary Western popular music. That may be so. Nevertheless, I was called upon to be Stevie Wonder's praise-singer at a special Peace Award Presentation to mark the 25th Anniversary of the International Peace Academy. Stevie was in great spirits, and I enjoyed being with him at dinner before the presentation. My tribute to Stevie Wonder is attached to this Newsletter as an appendix. The event occurred early in December.

The particular ceremony of the International Peace Academy also honoured former President Julius K. Nyerere of Tanzania (whom I had known since the 1960s), Mrs. Gro Harlem Brundtland, Prime Minister of Norway (whom I had previously met in 1991), Dr. David A. Hamburg (who was with me at the Center for Advanced Study in the Behavioral Sciences in Palo Alto, California, in the 1970s), and Cyrus Vance (who was Carter's Secretary of State at one time and whom I had never met before). The evening was graced by the presence of both Boutros Boutros-Ghali and Kofi Annan, the two African Secretaries-General in the history of the United Nations.

Whither democracy? In different ways, this theme also followed me in the course of the year. The United Nations University held a conference at Oxford University in England in July. We explored different dimensions of democracy both in the "old democracies" and within the tumultuous emerging democracies in Eastern Europe, Africa and Latin America.

Within my own country of Kenya, democracy since 1992 had taken two steps forward and one step backward. Kenya is now definitely a more open society than it was in 1991. But it may be a less democratic society than it was soon after the 1992 elections. Personally I was still prevented from addressing the Mombasa law society in 1996. My television series (The Africans: A Triple Heritage) has still not been publicly shown in my own country. On the other hand, I can now publish in Kenyan newspapers when it was much more difficult in the 1980s.

I must say that I was deeply disturbed by the government shutdowns in the showdown between Bill Clinton and Newt Gingrich in Washington. One reason why I was deeply disturbed was the simple fact that Jamal, my oldest son, was a U.S. Federal Government employee. How far were the shutdowns a product of sectional interests? My son Jamal could have been adversely affected by the precise economic and political configuration. As a parent I was almost on the war-path myself at the time!! The quarrel between the politicians was not fair to the civil servants.

Talking of parenthood, one of my biggest surprises of 1996 came from my own father, Shaykh Al-Amin Ali Mazrui. I received

in the mail a book written by him, and just published under impeccable British credentials. This was the more remarkable considering that my father had died in April 1947, and the book was published in 1995 by Oxford University Press under the auspices of the British Academy. I received my surprise copy close to my birthday in February 1996.

The book is entitled The History of the Mazrui Dynasty of Mombasa. My father's original text was written in Arabic. It was more recently translated into English by the Reverend James McL. Ritchie. Oxford University Press has published both the Arabic text and the translation in this well produced volume. The book is richly annotated by Reverend Ritchie.

How compatible was Islam with liberal democracy? I addressed aspects of that question in my presentation at the Council on Foreign Relations in New York. My more precise title was "ISLAM AND WESTERN POLITICAL VALUES: COMPARATIVE CULTURE AND HISTORICAL RELATIVISM". My presentation was part of a series at the Council on the wider theme of "Culture and Foreign Policy." Among those who came specially to listen to me was J.C. Horowitz, an old professor of mine from the days when I was a graduate student at Columbia University.

Another 1996 agenda of mine concerned "the World after the Cold War." This issue brought me into one more reunion with another old Columbia professor of mine. It occurred at the Institute for Global Conflict and Cooperation at the University of California, San Diego. The old teacher with whom I was briefly reunited was Dankwart Rustow, the Middle Eastern specialist. We were attending a workshop on "The End of Empire?: The Transformation of the USSR in a Comparative Perspective." A book of our papers has since been published, edited by Karen Dawisha and Bruce Parrott. Unfortunately my old teacher, Dan Rustow, died not long after the San Diego conference. The book The End of Empire? is dedicated to him.

Another engagement of mine about the world after the Cold War occurred at the Salzburg Seminar in Salzburg, Austria. There we discussed comparative policies of the Great Powers in the bewilderment caused by the end of the Cold War. My main clashes in Salzburg were with colleagues from France over the French role in Africa. My assertion that decolonization was further behind in former French Africa than in former British Africa was not much appreciated!

The Nigerian Community in Greater Cleveland did me proud in 1996. I was their main speaker for the Black History month, and they made spectacular arrangements at the banquet. I was honoured by the Mayor of East Cleveland and was given the key to the city. The President of the Assembly also issued a proclamation, declaring February 10, 1996 as "the Ali Mazrui Day". Cleveland and the Nigerians treated me like a prince. February was the month of my birth; 1996 was the tenth anniversary of my television series, The Africans. But in reality February 10 should have been proclaimed "Pauline Mazrui

Day" - for it was my wife's birthday! In my speech I re-dedicated the day to her, God bless her!

You must have heard of the Center for Muslim-Christian Understanding at Georgetown University, under the leadership of Professor John Esposito. Well, in 1996, I gave a lecture there on "Christianity and Islam in Africa's Political Experience: Piety, Passion and Politics." My plane was so late in arriving that the organizers were forced to begin the showing of an episode from my television series, The Africans, to humour the audience while they waited! I arrived eventually and helped to save the situation.

My 1996 lecture at George Mason University was a bonus in terms of the fee I was paid but basically a disaster in terms of the audience! A large hall had relatively few people in it. The most unexpected member of the audience was Yohan Galtung, the distinguished Norwegian peace-studies scholar and analyst of imperialism. It was great to see him and his Japanese wife again. Their prestige helped to fill the emptiness of the lecture hall.

I did a little better at my old haunt, the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, when I went to give a lecture on the theme of "Islam and the African Condition" under the auspices of the Center for Afro-American and African Studies, which I had once directed. It was wonderful to meet old friends again and to catch up with the local gossip. More importantly was the old debate at Michigan as to whether African Studies should be run separately from African-American Studies. When I was Director of the Center which combined both areas, any separatist sentiment tended to be manifested among some African-Americanists.

However, when I visited Ann Arbor in 1996, the primary separatist sentiment seemed to be coming from some Africanists. A case can always be made for the proposition that the two fields are very different in character. In some respects they really are. On the other hand, the country does need a number of centers which combine both fields. Michigan, Cornell and Binghamton are among the combined centers - what we sometimes call Africana studies (combining Africa with its Diaspora). Those centers which have already begun the adventure of combining African and African-American studies should continue to do so.

My role as a philosopher was reactivated when I was asked to be keynote speaker at the International Conference on Philosophy, Politics and Development in Africa. Since the conference in 1996 was hosted by Binghamton, I was extensively involved in the deliberations.

Also at Binghamton was our own annual conference on "Ancient, Medieval and Multicultural Philosophy". I made more than one presentation at this conference. The range of topics elsewhere in the program was from neo-Platonism to Sikhism. We were delighted to include more and more of the African agenda. We were also very pleased to welcome to the 1996 conference Dennis Brutus, the distinguished South African activist and poet.

He made his wisdom available to us all at the conference.

I heard with great distress in 1996 that the Manor Hotel in Mombasa was going to be demolished, to give way to some greater money-making venture. The hotel had been in existence since the early years of this century. In colonial days residence was exclusively for Europeans, but other races could book rooms for banquets. Some of my earliest speeches in English were given at the Manor Hotel in the 1950s on some inter-racial occasions. That was even before I went to Britain for higher education.

Much later, when I returned to East Africa after my education in Britain and the United States, I negotiated a deal with my mother. My professional base was in Uganda, but I wanted to visit my extended family in Mombasa from time to time. During those Mombasa visits I begged my mother on my knees to let me stay at the Manor Hotel! This was not because the Manor was a five-star hotel, and I wanted its comforts. Not at all. The Manor was a modest, home-atmosphere hotel. The reason why I begged my mother to let me, my wife and children stay at the Manor Hotel was that the alternative would have been my forcing other members of my Mombasa family to vacate their rooms for us every time we were in town. We did not want to inconvenience others.

Under strong protest my mother allowed me and my wife and children to stay at the Manor Hotel, provided we had virtually all our meals at home. That was the loving contract between mother and son - and the Manor Hotel was at the center of it!

My mother has since died. It is also distressing to see an old revered hotel die. My mother is no more - my Manor is no more! Such news makes me feel even older than my age.

I did stay at the Manor Hotel briefly on the eve of the special workshop to prepare the Kenya Coast Handbook, sponsored by the African Studies Centre, Leiden, the Netherlands. The workshop itself was a stimulating experience about the history of the Kenya Coast from the slave ship to the space ship. (The Coast has special space monitoring equipment.)

In 1996 I was still Senior Scholar at Cornell University and taught Africana courses there with delight. I was also Albert Luthuli Professor-at-Large at the University of Jos in Nigeria, and was hosted by the Vice-Chancellor in July. The School of Social and Islamic Sciences in Virginia (near Washington, DC) had also begun consultations with me and my Institute of Global Cultural Studies about long term collaboration. There was also the possibility of collaboration with Malaysia, as part of my Institute's Islamic agenda. My communication with Malaysia has included direct contact with the Deputy Prime Minister, Honourable Anwar Ibrahim. We are privileged by this direct access. I look forward to visiting Malaysia again in the summer of 1997.

My main base has of course continued to be Binghamton University, State University of New York. My Institute of Global Cultural Studies has had a special relationship with the

Department of Political Science, the Department of Africana Studies and the Fernand Braudel Center for the Study of Economies, Historical Systems, and Civilizations. We are improving cooperation with Middle Eastern and North African Studies on campus.

There are events and aspects of 1996 which I may have to weave into my story for 1997. There were indeed other exciting moments in 1996. Let me report them in the future, if circumstances permit. Some of them will be part of my next Newsletter.

My family joins me in wishing you and your loved ones all the very best. May you all prosper. Amen.