

PART 2

Times of Interactions

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The Heritage of African Language Manuscripts Written in Arabic Characters (Ajami)

There is a different field of cultural research of a limited appeal to African and Arab intellectuals, and all those interested in issues of cultural identity in Africa and the Third World, as alluded to by the title of this chapter. The message of this relatively new field is to expose the interrelations between studies of social and cultural history of African identity on the one hand, and the history of African-Arab relations on the other. The histories of African or Arab peoples are not just a series of incidents, but rather centuries of interactions which need to be studied in detail.

Culture is a collective historical product of people's lives, while languages are the lively expression of social and historical interactions of societies. Script was always the means for people to leave their mark on history, and the same applied to Africa and the Arab world. However, Africa was denied much of its worth by colonialists and historians, who described Africans as peoples without history, and the continent as a stateless societies, as modern states are known, or a huge 'Tower of Babel', where thousands of languages are spoken, but none are written down, except in very recent times! Hence, some claimed, there was no way to ascertain its history, its social and historical identity, or its interactions in time.

There is no shortage of books by Arab travellers in Africa or about Africa, or of African heritage in Arabic, or indeed, of travel books by Europeans, all of which were put to good use by colonial administrations in modern history, to better understand and master the realities of these peoples. Yet, there are few who showed interest in what Africans recorded about themselves since they mastered the art of writing, especially during the centuries that elapsed

since they first interacted with the Arabic language and culture, namely, the heritage of African manuscripts in Arabic characters (Ajami).

Colonialism has disfigured wide areas of the world, and denigrated the culture of the 'other'; it has separated the colonised from the cultural and social history of the world and even blemished their self-image, thus spreading their ignorance of their historical cultural presence. However, the wave of national liberation worldwide and in Africa in particular, has prompted African intellectuals to rediscover their identity and their rich cultural heritage, acknowledged widely today.

Languages and written heritage were always part of the heritage of civilisations, as well as murals in ancient caves, inscriptions on ancient monuments and on parchment, and as recorded in more modern writing. The various schools of African thought and culture have highlighted the richness of African expression, but most of them, like the Negritude and those of African, Bantu or Ethiopian personality, chose not to adopt the heritage of African languages written in Arabic characters as a source of their self-discovery. They did not correctly assess the tremendous impact of either the deciphering of the hieroglyphic writing on the understanding of the millenary Egyptian civilisation – although the Egyptian people had acquired newer languages and cultures – or of their interactions on its evolution. Yet, no one thought such new acquisitions detracted from the value of the known history of this great people. We also have the experience of the peoples of Asia who underwent various phases of recording their heritage in several ways throughout their history, the latest of which was the writing of Persian, Urdu, Turkish and the Kurdish languages in Arabic characters. Some of these peoples have changed the characters they use today, yet this does not lead to ignoring their older heritage written in Arabic characters.

The writer had all this in mind when undertaking this study; he had noted the existence of more than 20 African languages written in Arabic characters, as a result of the historical African-Arab interaction. This interaction led to various degrees of cultural exchange, and even integration, at certain periods of the Middle Ages, and modern times. The author notes that the historic presence of these African languages and their broad spread over the whole continent is in itself a proof of the effective presence of these African kingdoms on the one hand and their successful stand on equal terms with Arab culture, on the other.

We would state here that the present project and treaties are the outcome of the collaboration of the writer, all through 2003 and 2004, with the

African Arab Cultural Institute in Bamako. This institute was the fruit of an agreement between the Organisation of African Unity (OAU) and the Arab League in 1985, but came into effective existence in 2002, to stress the interaction between the African and Arab heritages in all fields of language, literature, arts and social and natural sciences, in order to support the ongoing African-Arab cooperation.

However, I would highlight the protracted and rich discussions over a period of more than 25 years with numerous African and Arab intellectuals, foremost among which is the dialogue with the social scientist, and African and Arab anthropologist, the late Dr Mohyi Ed-Dine Saber, the General Manager of the Arab League Education, Culture and Scientific Organization (ALECSO). This dialogue about the cultural dimension of African-Arab relations took place during the author's stay in Tunisia with Dr Saber (1982-1986), within the framework of ALECSO, and in the period 1998-2000 after Dr Saber had quit ALECSO, in their joint effort in founding an African-Arab group intent on the resuscitation of African manuscripts in Arabic characters (Ajami). This interest in the study and dissemination of this rich heritage stemmed from their appreciation of its importance, and their noting that Arab efforts have neglected this rich source of African heritage, while showing interest only in Arabic and Islamic African manuscripts. Thus, the part of the African heritage that received some attention was that written in Arabic by Arab or African authors. Indeed, both ALECSO and its Islamic counterpart, ISESCO, have deployed some effort towards writing some African languages in Arabic characters, but have shown little interest in the collection and study of their Ajami texts. It is to be noted that the problems concerning such texts have been the subject of much debate in recent years, whether as regards the debate about the expedience of writing some languages such as Somali or Swahili in Arabic or Latin characters, or the historic and social value of the texts in African languages written in Arabic characters (Ajami).

The debate about these issues concerned many elements, which we would enumerate in the following:

- (i) The heritage of any people is closely related to the roots of its identity and to its place in history. The present-day self-consciousness of the people cannot be based on the negation of its heritage on any pretext, and is explained by its past, and sheds light on that past.
- (ii) Recalling the heritage does not necessarily act as a coercive force on the present. Hence, the Arabic language is not the only source of history for the non-Arabic speaking peoples of Africa, nor does the fact that the

first recorded heritage of these peoples was written in Arabic characters impose on them any constraints in continuing to do so, unless they freely so choose.

- (iii) The issue of analphabetism is acutely present in the context of the project of modernisation, the limitations of the available education, and the conflict between the traditional and the modern as concerns heritage. While the masses of Africans are more attached to the traditional and to their heritage expressed in Arabic or Ajami, yet their degree of education is generally assessed by their mastery of the relevant European language, or their own language but as written in Latin characters, and this raises much controversy. Indeed, while collecting the material for this book, we noted how some politicians, human rights activists, and intellectuals seeking the establishment of national identity, have resorted to writing in Ajami, in order to reach the widest masses in their countries. I actually met such cases in Senegal, The Gambia and Nigeria, to mention but just some examples.
- (iv) We must also give some thought to the issue of the size of the existing heritage written in Arabic characters, and the value set upon it in the study of the social history of any given people. Our experience showed the scarceness of such manuscripts in the official sources existing to date, i.e. available for study; yet, this does not mean that they do not exist in fact. Indeed, all reports received concerning this issue stress the necessity of deploying serious efforts towards collecting such heritage, and remedying its official scarceness. Possible explanations for such scarceness could be that colonial anthropologists intentionally neglected it.
- (v) Some argued that their neglect of such heritage was due to its predominantly religious nature or to its cultural naivety, and hence its irrelevance in a social or historical context. Such an argument is incompatible with the modern assessment of the elements of popular folklore or heritage in general, or the importance of the written heritage in the development of the language, on the one hand, while it also ignores the fact that Islamic literature, although religious in form, treats all aspects of the social life of the Moslem, on the other hand; hence, the all-inclusive nature of the written heritage.
- (vi) It is sometimes argued that the well-known African authors in the regions where the widespread African languages, e.g. Fulani, Manding, Hausa and Swahili are spoken, such as Ahmad Baba Al-Tinbucti, Abdel-Rahman Al-Saadi, Mahmoud Kaate and Othman Dan Fodio, did not write their well-

known works in Ajami, but in Arabic. This meant that little scientifically acknowledged heritage was written in those languages during the main period of literary activity, and hence, neither the Europeans nor the Arabs gave much attention to such heritage. Such arguments ignore the fact that many such texts, including those recorded in this work, were produced in the context of the resistance to colonial incursions or in defence of religion and social cohesion during the periods of decline of the African kingdoms. As such, it was natural for the colonial administrations to ignore such a heritage, and to concentrate instead on the Arabic books of travel and exploration, of which many were translated during the colonial era. This was to be expected on the part of the colonial administration which aimed at integration of the culture of the colonies into the European culture, and hence the negation of the other cultures, or at least, to move them into modernity by using Latin characters as a vehicle for their integration.

More recently, colonial anthropology, as its functional methods have developed, has shown renewed interest in the heritage of these cultures and languages, in order to utilise African texts to better understand the systems of thought, and modes of social life of these peoples. This has enabled them to be governed in a more acceptable fashion designed to facilitate their modernisation and integration; and hence, collecting more modern texts and not the older ones. Yet, following the more modern phases of interest in such heritage shows a remarkable tendency to ignore it, after the national cultural policies had settled down to the use of Latin characters for writing down their national languages.

The Framework for Interest in Ajami Manuscripts

Any researcher can note the lack of interest in manuscripts of African languages in Arabic characters early on, despite their importance for African social historiography and their significance for African linguistics across the continent. So far, we are unable to note a date for renewed interest in Ajami manuscripts, despite the widespread interest in African languages *per se*. Probably, monitoring the debate over the ways of writing African languages may decide the degree of interest in such heritage. Similarly, the museums of national cultures may accomplish this goal, but this is outside the scope of this study.

There is no doubt that colonial administrations showed some interest in the folkloric and anthropological aspects that may help administer their colonies, but this was confined to the framework of what was named Francophonism or Anglophonism. After independence, the national administrations showed even more advanced interest in the content of such aspects, and in their

assessment. This interest included Arabic manuscripts and some Ajami texts as well. However, the full volume of the latter was not clearly indicated in the indexes of manuscripts, and this was keenly felt during our visits to various African capitals over some decades. The general result of our search was that the available supply of Ajami manuscripts was remarkably meagre, because of the attitude of the holders of such heritage, using it in traditional medicine and rituals, in refusing to surrender it to 'aliens', or asking for lots of money for handing it to foreign collectors.

Such a result was again corroborated by the replies to our requests for such manuscripts that we received from the Institut Fondamental de l'Afrique Noire (IFAN) in Dakar, the National Museum in Zanzibar, the Manuscript Library of the Institute for African Studies at the University of Ghana and the French National Library in Paris. All these bodies apologised for their inability to help, either because of the rarity of such manuscripts, or their not having the competent personnel for indexing what they possessed. Indeed, the number of such manuscripts mentioned in a comprehensive index made by the Furqan Institute (1998) of some 9,000 manuscripts in the Ahmed Baba Library was very limited.

Yet, the interest shown by the scientific community in Nigeria – from Ibadan to Zaria, Sokoto and Kano – promises better possibilities in this respect. Similarly, the interest shown by the Mama Hedra Library in Timbuktu is promising. One of our collaborators, Dr Momouni Seini, noted that the Library of Niamey University in Niger contains some 4,000 manuscripts in Ajami. Also, L. Munthe noted the existence of some 7,000 pages of Malagasy manuscripts in Arabic characters in Norway. Finally, the studies of the creative English Scholar J. Hunwick 1976 are based on a large array of Ajami manuscripts, in view of his long-standing Afro-Islamic studies.

We would note here that more interest in the studies of African languages and their writing will lead to better information about the volume and locations of Ajami manuscripts. Indeed, we have benefited in the present work from the early efforts of some European scholars in this respect, such as Munthe 1989 for the Malagasy manuscripts, W. Hichens 1972 for the Swahili and S. Rattray 1969 for Hausa.

However, we must note the rarity of mentioning this heritage, or referring to it as a source of data for the study of African languages and their written heritage, even in the works of a well known anthropologist: K. Prah, despite the value of such heritage as noted by the well-known African historian Ki Zerbo 1981 in his introduction to the first volume of the General History of

Africa published by UNESCO. We would point here to some encouraging developments in this direction, which may lead to more positive results for this research:

- (i) The first phase of interest was shown by the colonial administrations at the beginning of the 20th century in some of this material during the early attempts at writing the African languages in Latin characters, to help promote the relations between the administrations and the local people. Then, in a second phase, the French administration in West Africa and their British counterparts in East Africa officially imposed the use of Latin characters in the years 1914 and 1931, respectively.
- (ii) After the wave of independence in the continent, the issue of the official language, and hence its alphabet, came to the fore. So, Swahili was adopted as the official language in Tanzania and Hausa was adopted, among others, as a national language in Nigeria. Other combinations of official and national languages were adopted in other African countries, such as Mali, Guinea and Senegal. In some cases, this caused cultural conflicts, as in Somalia. In many countries, the African languages were adopted as the national language for teaching in the lower levels of education, while retaining the relevant European language as the official language for all other purposes. With all these alternatives, Latin characters were adopted for writing the national language.
- (iii) Within the framework of this interest in national culture, some countries in both East and West Africa began to collect the heritage of national languages as recorded in manuscripts in Arabic and Ajami. Notable in this respect were the efforts deployed by the northern Nigeria universities in Zaria and Sokoto, and the University of Ibadan in the South of the country. Also notable was the role of IFAN in Dakar, sponsored by the late Cheikh Anta Diop and the efforts in Niger, sponsored by the politician Bobo Hamo and the political researcher Hambate Ba. Later, these institutions were joined by the Ahmad Baba Center in Timbuktu Mali, the EACROTANAL Institute in Zanzibar, the Library of the Institute for African Studies at the University of Ghana and the University of Madagascar in Antananarivo. Some national libraries in the countries of the African North, in Chinqueit, Rabat, Khartoum and Cairo, also participated in the collection of African and Arabic works.
- (iv) After the wave of independence, the interest in African languages moved from the national to the international levels, as represented by UNESCO

and the OAU, as well as some European institutions. It all started with the meetings of a group of African experts, within the framework of UNESCO, in Abidjan (Ivory Coast) and Ibadan (Nigeria) in 1964, in order to adopt a common alphabet for African languages. Their effort was based on a memorandum by the International Institute for African Languages in London in 1930, on the alphabet and orthography of African languages (presumably using Latin characters). Of course, the outcome of this study did not even mention Arabic characters in which these languages were – and still are – written. UNESCO then convened a general conference in Bamako (Mali) in February 1966 that became known under the slogan ‘Unifying the Alphabet of National Languages’ (again in Latin characters). This general conference did not mention the heritage of these languages in written form, or treat the problems of writing in Arabic characters as used by these peoples for centuries.

After this beginning, some twenty conferences or seminars were convened to treat the practical steps to be taken for some languages (Swahili, Hausa, etc), the last of which was held in Bamako in 2002, after Akra, Harare, Asmara, etc. The Bamako conference dealt with the problems of only six languages (Manding, Fulani, Tamashek, Songhai, Hausa and Kanori), but other conferences treated problems of modern literature, and writing in Latin characters for most of the languages of the continent. Many of these conferences adopted oral traditions as the main source for the texts to be studied or for the study of phonetics.

The interest shown by the OAU in cultural affairs led to the promulgation of the Cultural Manifesto at the Algiers Cultural Festival in 1969. This was followed by the African Cultural Pact in Mauritius in 1976. Both documents laid particular emphasis on national languages and their ways of writing and on their role in education and cultural life, with special emphasis on oral traditions, which have to be studied, but with no mention of the previous official languages dominant in the former colonies.

Within such undertaking, a number of African language and oral tradition centres affiliated to the OAU were created in several African capitals, where UNESCO had already started similar centres. Foremost among these centres were those in Niger, Gabon, Zanzibar, Ethiopia and Uganda; but according to the limited information available, these centres have few resources to perform their duties apart from what little they can glean from the countries of residence. Thus, they could not meet the expectations of the OAU in the field of African heritage, and whatever was achieved was confined to the conferences financed by UNESCO.

In the 1970s, a movement of Arab-African cooperation began, which invigorated cultural Arab and African institutions. Thus, an Arab-African cultural cooperation committee was created and ALECSO played a prominent role in this field, under the direction of the late scholar Mohyi Ed-Dine Saber. A special organisation was created for the development of Arab-Islamic culture (1981) which had its counterpart in the cultural administration of the OAU. The two bodies signed an agreement to create the African Arab Cultural Institute in 1985. This institute was reinvigorated in 2002 in Bamako by the Arab League and the African Union (AU).

ALECSO organised many seminars around Arab and African culture, and the role of African *ulemas* in Islamic culture. The organisation sent various groups to several African countries to survey the elements common to both Arab and African culture, including Arab and African manuscripts. I was honoured to be a member of the groups that visited Kenya, Madagascar, Nigeria and Senegal between 1982 and 1985, to get acquainted with the situation of Arab and Islamic culture in those countries.

The above activities of ALECSO were matched in certain areas by those of ISESCO which also demonstrated its interest in African languages and their heritage by convening seminars and publishing some booklets that demonstrate the close ties between those languages and Arabic, including the editing of dictionaries for such languages and Arabic. The aim of this endeavour is to facilitate the study of Islamic teachings by the use of Arabic characters (with certain technical assistance such as the supply of typewriters with Arabic characters). This was a continuation of previous efforts by ALECSO.

We wish both organisations would pay more attention to the modernistic tendencies of African intellectuals who are nowadays attached to European languages and writing in Latin characters alone, which necessitates reactivating their relationship with the old heritage of their language. Such efforts would make use of such tendencies that are deploying efforts towards modernising their national languages and their heritage written in Arabic characters (Hausa in Northern Nigeria). I personally saw newspapers in Northern Nigeria (Fajiri) published in Hausa in Arabic characters. Likewise, the well-known Gaskiya House does some publishing in Hausa in Arabic characters, as did Cheikh Anta Diop, who published his party paper – Taxaw in Wolof – in Dakar (in the 1980s) with some pages in Arabic characters, in order to reach the widest public. Similarly, the Institute for Human Rights in Bangoul (Gambia) prints some of its stickers in West African languages in Arabic characters, so as to raise the consciousness about human rights of the masses that do not speak English or French.

The interest shown by political and civil society in reviving the heritage of African languages has urged some senior political authorities to share such interest and take certain steps in this direction. So, ex-President Omar Conary of Mali – then the Commissioner of the African Union – within his capacity as an ex-professor of African History met with President Thabo Mbeki of South Africa, who is personally interested in the discourse on African renaissance, in the summer of 2001, and both men sponsored a joint project for the study of Islamic manuscripts (presumably both Arabic and Ajami). The aim of this project is to highlight the contribution of Africans over the centuries to the cultural heritage of mankind. Such a project is not only concerned with national identities or values, but also tries to amalgamate these values with development plans, as South Africa is officially soliciting the sponsorship of business investors for this project, as a means of relating cultural activities with development.

After the final agreement was signed in August 2002 and the Working Group was formed, the two presidents took their project to the African Union which adopted it in its first conference in Mozambique in 2003, to become one of the first cultural projects of the Union.

Within the framework of this renewed interest, we have come across other interests that may have scientific or political consequences. A seminar was held in Bamako (Mali) in August 2002 under the auspices of the Society of Islamic Ulema of Transvaal (South Africa) and some researchers in Mali, under the title 'The Ink Road' (a reminder of the Silk Road, the symbol of Arab-Asian relations in the Middle Ages). This seminar studied the situation of manuscripts in various parts of Africa, which included a study about Ajami manuscripts in South Africa by the researcher Mohammed Haroun who disclosed the existence of manuscripts in the Afrikaans language, written in Arabic characters by some of the Asiatics living in South Africa, dating from the latter part of the nineteenth century.

Interest in African manuscripts was revived at Dakar University, whose History Department convened a seminar in October 2004 to discuss ways of collecting such manuscripts and their role in African culture. Thus, the heritage of African languages in Arabic characters may become a means for democratizing culture, and not a mechanism for Arab hegemony. It will also save the wide masses from analphabetism in the field of knowledge, and activate the national memory to revive the old Arab-African contacts.

Hopefully, the interest shown by numerous institutes in many African and Arab universities in this issue will bear fruit. Indeed, we note a movement

to modernise Hausa on a scientific basis in Kano and Sokoto, and active language and heritage studies from Dakar to Dar es Salaam, through Bamako, Niamey and N’Jamena. This interest is also noted in South Africa in various governmental and non-governmental centres, as well as in north Africa, where the universities of Cairo, Azhar, Mohammad V and Khartoum have created sections and institutes, although these show little interest in literary heritage (manuscripts). Such interest may be an incentive to the African-Arab Institute and other regional Arab and African institutes to pursue such studies diligently and to support them by relevant meetings and publications.

Study Plan

The research aims at providing photocopies of certain African manuscripts written in Arabic characters, known as Ajami, as samples of the cultural work of some African peoples across the continent, over periods of pre-colonial times, or under colonial rule, for study by African, Arab and other researchers. Some of the included texts are of a folkloric nature – although recorded in writing – such as the history of the Antimoros or the Hausas, some take the form of letters addressed to rulers or dialogues with them, and some are *fatwas* or other rulings of a social nature.

I took special pains to ensure the authenticity of the texts by relying only on well-known academic persons as sources of the texts. The same persons undertook the transliteration of the texts into Latin characters and translating them into the French or English languages as the case may be, while I only undertook the translation into Arabic by reliable authorities. In a few cases, some authoritative sources were available such as L. Munthe (1989) on Arabic-Malagasy heritage, and S. Rattray (1969) on Hausa folklore. In such cases, the reference book included the text in Latin characters and its translation into French or English, and I only added the translation into Arabic.

As the samples chosen refer to a heritage rich in its historic or social content, I confined myself to a brief exposé of the general geographical, historical and cultural framework of each language, and the peoples speaking it. Any linguistic, philological or literary treatment of the text is left to specialised researchers in the respective disciplines.

It was noted during the long period spent on gathering this relatively small collection of specimens – from Madagascar, to Senegal and Guinea – that there was a considerable degree of lack of interest exhibited by universities and study centres in keeping such texts or listing them. This added to their rarity in general, and to the reluctance of individuals who own such texts to

cooperate, either due to lack of confidence, or because the texts are considered to be sacred, and not to be parted with.

After two years of tireless effort, lots of correspondence, and visits to various capitals, and relying on personal friendships, we managed to acquire a number of manuscripts from which we chose 16, in the following languages arranged geographically across the continent, from East to West:

- (i) Malagasy (1 manuscript)
- (ii) Swahili (3 manuscripts)
- (iii) Hausa (3 manuscripts)
- (iv) Fulani (2 manuscripts)
- (v) Wolof (3 manuscripts)
- (vi) Manding (2 manuscripts)
- (vii) Songhai (1 manuscript)
- (viii) Tamashek (1 manuscript)

The manuscripts of each language were presented in a separate chapter, beginning with a note about the situation of the language in its region, and the manuscript(s) presented in that language, with some brief remarks to help researchers pursue their study. Each text is presented page-by-page in the following arrangement: a page of the manuscript (in Arabic characters) is followed by its transliteration in Latin characters, then its translation into the European language dominant in its region, followed by its translation into Arabic. The number chosen varies from one language to another, according to the subject matter of these manuscripts, which included political and social history, debate on the language itself, social criticism, judicial rulings and religious texts.

Some Remarks on the Chosen Texts

- (i) Some were chosen from among thousands of manuscripts in Norway, such as the Malagasy Arabic, of which Munthe mentions the existence of seven thousand pages of this kind named Surabi. Others were recorded by colonial administrators who got them from some prominent social personalities, such as the history of the Hausa people, recorded by S. Rattray (1969) and accompanied with a remarkable study well worth further perusal.
- (ii) Some come from libraries such as IFAN in Senegal and the Sokoto Library in Nigeria which are known for their rich collection of manuscripts.

- (iii) Some, such as the Tamashek texts, came from university libraries.
- (iv) Still others, such as the Songhai texts, came from administrative authorities.
- (v) Some texts exhibit a tendency for historiography from a popular standpoint that merits careful study (Malagasy, Fulani Hausa, etc.). However, there are also some modern texts from local newspapers from Zanzibar (1960) and Senegal (2003), demonstrating a modern treatment of Ajami.
- (vi) Some manuscripts reveal social issues of importance such as problems of private ownership (Songhai), social relations between different communities (the conflict with Al-Mahdi), or *fatwas* or rulings on social issues. This rich contribution may urge anthropologists and social history researchers to conduct more research in this field, instead of simply relying on the prejudiced colonial anthropology.

E.W. Blyden: The Modern African Voyage to Egypt and the Levant

Many historians of Arab-African relations have written about the Arabs such as Al-Bakry, Ibn Batuta and others who travelled to Africa during the prosperous years of the Arab-Islamic kingdoms, when there were close relations with many parts of the outside world. Yet, little has been written about pure African literature in those times, except that which has come from the Islamic-African *ulema* and become part of the culture of the Arab world itself, in its tongue, and with its own interests about Fiqh and legislation (Sharia). Such was the literature contributed by Ahmed Baba Al-Tinbukti and others like him.

However, the personality in which we are interested here, Edward Wilmot Blyden, comes from a different context, for he belongs to the Christian culture of Afro-Americans (or Negroes in the language of the time), who returned to their continent in the mid-nineteenth century. He chose to merge with the peoples of the continent, and to promote the process of modernity among them. He put such ideas into practice as one of the pioneers of pan-Africanism, taking advantage of his teaching profession in Liberia and Sierra Leone. On the other hand, Blyden also thought that the relations with the peoples of the Arab world would benefit the African heritage, and guide it into modernity. He thus travelled to the Levant in 1866, where he visited Egypt, Palestine, Lebanon and Syria to get acquainted with their peoples and their Islamic culture. He wanted to master the Arabic language, in order to promote the common interests of the African and Arab worlds, both plagued by colonialism. In this endeavour, he was prompted by his positive assessment of Islam.

We will look into the following:

- (i) Blyden's cultural background and his assessment of African culture, and the pan-African movement.
- (ii) His intellectual voyage between the African, Pharaonic and Arab Islamic cultures, with constant comparison with European Christianity in Africa, and Jewish Zionism.
- (iii) His voyage to Egypt and the Levant.

Blyden's Cultural Background and Assessment of African Culture

Blyden first came to Africa in 1850 with his family to join the land of their ancestors who had been taken to the Virgin Islands and Venezuela, along with the slave traffic across the Atlantic. Blyden's family were not happy with their stay in the USA, so they returned to the land of their ancestors in the newly created state of Liberia. The young Blyden had started his study of Christian theology in the USA and completed it in Monrovia, then started a career as a teacher in high school.

Before the age of 25, he was also writing articles in the press about the issue of teaching Africans, and other public issues. He advocated the return of American Africans to their old continent in the context of rising pan-Africanism, with its various ramifications, which was in opposition to the stand by Du Bois, despite their friendly personal relations.

Facing the aggravating rise of racist discrimination against African Americans on the one hand, and the rising Anglo-French competition in colonising Africa on the other hand, he started reservation in his call for Afro-Americans to return. He relied mostly on reasoned articles in well-known cultural publications in the USA and Britain, in contrast with the populist propaganda of men like Marcus Garvey. He founded newspapers in Liberia and Sierra Leone, and did not favour the popular mass meetings.

Blyden's cultural and media background led him to serious sociological studies of the local African societies and their cultures. His comparative studies of Christianity, Islam, Judaism and animism are a noted contribution in religious sociology. H. Lynch 1967 and others mentioned some 29 books and booklets, as well as some 20 studies on various topics that were of interest to him (Lynch 1967).

Blyden's thoughts were always oriented towards the interior of Africa, because he believed the newcomers into the coastal areas, whether intellectuals or those formed in the Christian mission schools, could not really grasp the

deep cultural heritage of the kingdoms and regions of the interior. He was always concerned with modernising African societies, making use of the 'civilised Christian culture'; yet, he felt a romantic attraction to the traditional African culture. Some even consider him among the founders of the Negritude Movement of the 20th century which actually borrowed some of his thought. This orientation towards the interior and its traditional culture led him to look with special esteem at Islamic culture and its Arab sources, which he believed the Africans had adopted voluntarily because it was appropriate to their traditional beliefs. He noted its role in uniting Africans on a wide scale, its equalising between all races, and its appreciation of their cultural contribution. He found proof of such tendencies in the proliferation of African-Islamic manuscripts, in Arabic, which he saw during his visits to the interior, or to the British Museum in London in 1871. However, he was always concerned about the reticence of the traditionalist Moslems towards the issue of modern education in these vast territories that he considered the eventual land of African unity.

Blyden's Intellectual Voyage between the African, Pharaonic and Arab-Islamic Cultures

Blyden had a comprehensive outlook on African culture all across the continent. He moved from this outlook to the idea of constant interaction between cultures as the basis for advancement, side-by-side with social development. He believed African culture was the basis for all human cultures, as the descendants of Ham transferred it from Ethiopia to Egypt, and from there it moved on to Greece and Rome, then to Europe. He was one of the founders of Ethiopianism, the school of African Christian fundamentalism, and shared in founding the magazine *The Ethiopian* in Sierra Leone in 1871. His belief in the ancient origins of the African culture led to his theory that the builders of the pyramids in Egypt were African Negroes. He also claimed that the West Africans came from the East of the continent, then migrated to Sudan. He said Africa was the first refuge for Christ in Egypt; and hence, African influence spread to the whole world. However, the Europeans took the Africans as slaves to America, and could not make up with the Africans; instead they colonized their countries and spread the 'curse against Ham's descendants' to legitimise their oppression of Africans. He asked that this 'curse' must not be taught to Africans. He called for raising the self-consciousness among black Negroes, using the term with self-pride. Such sentiments were manifested in his *A Voice from Bleeding Africa* (1856). He claimed the African personality could be

redeemed by modernising African societies and by creating national states, starting with Liberia.

Blyden believed that progress for Africa was possible if it firstly revived its foreign relations by getting back its sons and daughters from the Americas; secondly, if it mastered the Islamic culture of the majority in its hinterland; and thirdly, if it reached out to the Moslems of the North and East who were in contact with modernism, and adjusted with European Christianity, the bearer of modern civilisation. He was concerned by the inability of the Christians in the coastal areas to cope with the Africans of the hinterland, which resulted in his deep sociological study of both Islam and Christianity in Africa – *Christianity, Islam and the Negro Race* (1888). In this book, he maintained that both Christianity and Islam were great religions, but he always favoured the spirit of Islam. Although recognising the spirit of modernity carried by Christianity coming from abroad, he thought its chances of penetrating Africa were limited by the wide influence of Islam. He therefore considered it imperative for Moslems to participate in the modernising process in cooperation with the Christian bearers of the new civilisation.

Blyden's keenness on Islam stemmed from his appreciation of its unifying spirit, its support for independence, and its rejection of slavery by rejecting any discrimination between Moslems of any colour of skin. He even went into hot polemics with journalists and researchers in London and Liberia in defence of this sentiment, despite his reserve in criticising Christianity which he seemed to blame more for its attitude to the Negro race than for the theology that he studied elsewhere. This romantic keenness led him to delve into Islamic texts of various Islamic doctrines (Madhabib), and to acquaint himself with Islamic scholars in the interior and even with Islamic heritage. He also pursued the mastery of the Arabic language to the extent of traveling to the Levant in 1866, in order to be better acquainted with Arabic and those who spoke it. On his return, he decided to have Arabic taught in the schools under his supervision. Indeed, he was for most of his active life in charge of Mohamedan schools in Liberia and Sierra Leone, and he even went to Lagos in 1894 to inaugurate a mosque, and started teaching the Arabic language there.

Blyden's Voyage to Egypt and the Levant

Blyden was personally interested in mastering the Arabic language because he considered it to be the unifying force of Moslems, and even learned Fulani because it was the language of the majority of Moslems in West Africa. He

started learning Arabic in 1860 in Monrovia, as a prelude to disseminating it among the Moslems of the interior, as a tool for a better knowledge of the heritage of Islamic manuscripts which he valued greatly, but he was also keen on Moslems learning English as a tool for modernising African society. He believed teaching Arabic in the coastal areas would provide African teachers for the children of the Moslems of the interior, in contrast with the English language which was taught by European missionaries who did not care to work in the 'backward' hinterland. He never trusted the mulattos to work on such a mission, nor did he expect their cooperation. Likewise, he hated the racist attitude of the French, and their condescension towards the African character. In 1866, Blyden was a permanent emissary for the Liberian Government abroad, and in this capacity, he travelled to the Arab world, in order to master the language and get better acquainted with the Moslem society. His ideas about Jews, his enthusiasm for their historic experience, and the Zionist Movement were also a reason for his visit to Jerusalem.

Blyden arrived in Beirut on 11 May 1866 and joined the Protestant College there to study Arabic. He declared himself the Consul of Liberia in Beirut and Damascus, considering this would help him recruit the Syrians (including the Lebanese) to migrate to West Africa, which migration had already started at the time, under the influence of the French. He did not trust the French, nor did he see a future for their language in Africa, but he was on the lookout for people to whet the appetite of the people of the interior to cooperate with those in the coastal areas, to achieve the modern renaissance and build the African united independent state. His writings show

... concern that the Europeans can never be really acclimatized in equatorial Africa. They cannot work in Sudan or the Congo as peasants, mechanics or workers generally... or to develop industry and trade in this vast continent, but African Mohammedans, and the Negroes coming from the Christian countries, the bearers of civilization and progress are the only force capable of implementing the African renaissance (Blyden nd).

It seems Blyden was intent on mobilising the Lebanese for that task, since most of these ideas came as comments on the progress he witnessed in Egypt and Syria, and were mentioned in his book *From West Africa to Palestine* (1873).

In Cairo he was awed by the pyramids, on one of whose stones he carved the name of Liberia. After that visit, he wrote his book: *Negroes in Ancient History* (1869). He also wrote in *From West Africa to Palestine* that 'the Negroes played an important role in the civilisation of this country' (Egypt). He equally wrote:

I thought this great work was constructed by my African ancestors. My sentiments are running higher than it did before the glowing works of European genius. I felt the owner of a unique heritage in the form of the pyramids built by my ancestors descended from Ham. The blood runs high in my veins as I hear the echo of the voices of these great Africans ... I feel the action of these personalities that their civilization to Greece ... I feel superior to all the great people of modern times, and raise my voice to all Africans saying: Raise up your torch, once again (Blyden 1869).

In this spirit too, Blyden extolled the sentiments of tolerance and non-discrimination in Egypt, as reported by Europeans who lived in the country. He also cited this non-discrimination throughout the history of Egypt, where once it was governed by Kafoor the black ruler, this non-discrimination being one of the tenets of Islam. He even mentioned the historic Islamic author Al-Jahiz and his book: *The Superiority of the Sudan (Blacks) over the Bidhan (Whites)*.

In-between Beirut and Cairo, he visited Jerusalem, as a token of his appreciation of the role of the Jews and their suffering throughout history. He saw a parallel between their plight and that of the Africans, who suffered greatly like the Jews, although this gave them both great spiritual qualities which make them eligible to be the spiritual leaders of the world. Such views were expressed in his book *The Jewish Issue* (1898), which appeared after his previous ideas about Pharaonism, Islam and Christianity. This book also came after the first Zionist Congress in Basle in 1896, and in it he praised the Zionist movement which called for the return of the Jews to their ancestral land, in the same manner that he called the Africans to go back to their continent. He believed the Jews to be a powerful secular civil force, who had the right to have their own state, but he warned them against dabbling too much into politics, urging them to give priority to the spiritual side of things. He urged them to extend their activity to Africa, which was where they had historically prospered. Blyden was favourably impressed by some Jewish personalities and traders whom he had encountered in Africa, but he did not favour their integration into the continent, as he always favoured different races keeping their own personalities. Such concepts stood behind his support for Islam as a belief adopted voluntarily by the Africans, who made their cultural and scientific achievements within these tenets. In contrast, he had his reservations about the work of Christian missions in Africa.

These conflicting views led to his adopting ambiguous ideas at times. Some accused him of vacillating between his considering Islam as a positive element in the traditional culture, and the Arabic language as a unifying element on one hand, and his seeing Christian civilisation as a factor to be adopted as a vehicle

for African renaissance, yet not approving its spread among Africans, on the other hand. Similarly, he considered the Jews as most civilised, yet he criticised their political fervour.

Blyden rejected colonialism, yet his biographers report that, near the end of his life, he considered the British presence as an element of progress. When Orabi's revolution in Egypt was overcome, he even spoke of the stability the British occupation would establish, and the abolition of the Arab trade in slaves.

Blyden's rich cultural wealth was always present in his political thought. His long journey within the African, European and Arab cultural worlds earned him honorary doctoral degrees from some European universities. He was always intent on tapping the sources of traditional African culture, as well as delving into Islamic culture, as shown by the list of his writings. He tried to keep close to Christian missionary circles to keep in touch with sources of modernism, yet he kept even closer to the Islamic African circles until the end of his life. Thus, he directed the Mohammedan High School in Sierra Leone from 1901 to 1906, and published several studies on the Koran, Islam and the Negro race, in the last decade of his life.

8

Mahmood Mamdani: A Rebel from Dar es Salaam

The title one of the books by Mahmood Mamdani is *Good Muslim, Bad Muslim: America, the Cold War and the Roots of Terrorism* (2004). This may indicate the main aim of the book, namely to display the American administration's intention of coining this classification of Muslims, whether during the course of the Cold War, or the so-called war on terrorism. Mahmood Mamdani has the right political and ideological background to treat such an issue, as he has done with great competence in previous treatments of colonialist, class or ethnic oppression.

I first met Mamdani in the mid-1970s as a young, free insurgent who had just returned from Columbia University in New York to join the staff of Dar es Salaam University in Tanzania. Born in Bombay, India, he moved as a child with his father to Uganda where he lived within the prolific Asiatic community in East Africa, and later completed his studies in the well-known Makerere University in Kampala. We met on the occasion of the founding of the African Association of Political Science, with a group of distinguished young scholars of the social sciences, most of whom had a lasting effect in the realm of political and social studies in various parts of the African continent.

Mamdani's life represents a lively journey of scientific endeavour without the usual relaxation we often see in other intellectuals at a certain stage of life. This may be explained by the fact that he always assumed the role of the engaged scholar who came from a historic Asian culture to African cultures that he deemed to be traditional, and struggled all the time against alien

western, or indeed American, political cultures. He also moved from the social field to the political one across cultural debates. We also see him move from Marxism to modern social philosophies and analytical trends across numerous challenging debates fit for an insurgent scholar all through the various stages of his life, which we may dwell upon in brief.

During his stay in Kampala and Dar es Salaam, he was seriously engaged in the debate over the class analysis of the various social groups and formations. Later, he moved to Cape Town, South Africa, then to the Great Lakes region, where he undertook a brilliant analysis of social and economic ethnic supremacy and segregation. He then moved on to a study of foreign powers infringing upon the peoples of the Islamic world as exemplified in Iraq and Darfur. We shall meet many of these analyses in the present work – *Good Muslim, Bad Muslim*.

Apart from his ideological struggles, Mamdani also took part in armed struggle against the oppressive regime of Idi Amin in Uganda, where he participated in the long march through the forests of Tanzania to Kampala, a march reminiscent of the Maoist Long March in China. After the success of this political campaign, he was embroiled in Ugandan politics – first in power, then in opposition – but he soon reverted back to his preferred realm of human knowledge and wisdom, and the struggle for human emancipation in the south and centre of the African continent. He now extends his analyses from New York to those oppressed in the south by the foremost imperialist power in whose capital he now lives.

The Ideological Foundation

Mahmood Mamdani began his intellectual life in a multi-ethnic, Asian-African atmosphere, aspiring to ethnic blending different from the deeply segregated atmosphere he met later in South Africa. Thus, he started in Kampala (with his Indian heritage) and Dar es Salaam in close contact with the philosophy of Julius Nyerere and his TANU Party of a multi-ethnic society.

With this background, the young man undertook his studies of tribes and social classes; on tradition and modernity; on relations of production and relations of power and authority. He was always concerned with the socio political spheres, first from a Marxist standpoint, then through Maoism, later in his own endeavours as a researcher in Pittsburgh, USA (1962), and later in Harvard where he obtained his PhD in anthropology in 1974. In his first

book entitled *Politics and Class Formation in Uganda* (1976), he differs with the empiricism of his tutor Karl Deutsch whose liberalism he none the less admires.

From his early youth, Mamdani expressed his reservations on certain tenets of the Marxist Leninist analysis of social classes. He was critical of G. Frank when he maintains that underdevelopment is a consequence of the primitive production forces. As Mamdani notes 1976, it also has roots in backward social relations and ideas.

In contrast with the dominant functional ideology in Harvard that considers backwardness to be a natural condition, thus providing pretexts for exploitation of colonized peoples, Mamdani resorts to class analysis as the basis for his study of the Ugandan society and its petty bourgeoisie that inherited the gains of independence, whether the Asian merchant class or its African bureaucratic branch. His first book on Uganda, published in 1976, is a clear example of this phase in his ideological journey. The issues he treats in this book also reflect the atmosphere of ideological debate on the African level in the 1960s and 1970s, and its reflection in the West. We shall only touch on some of the main issues dealt with by Mamdani in this fundamental work to illustrate his main trends.

The main issue under discussion in the 1960s was the role played by western colonialism in modernising traditional tribal Africa, in order to create colonial markets and an administrative middle class to bind the newly independent societies in the periphery with the capitalist centre. The young Mamdani was annoyed by the contentions of the functional empiricist modernists that the root of backwardness in African societies was their inherent backwardness and irrationality, and their lack of a state, history or class struggle. Mamdani noted the class struggles in the kingdom of Buganda, while the racist ideology described it as a mere tribe. Such thinking relates the position of individuals in African societies to their personal merits or charisma, while the positions of their homologues in bourgeois societies are classified according to their class relations. Similarly, the poverty of African societies is related to traditional backwardness or natural conditions while in fact it is the product of the historical fact of colonisation, where the colonies were exploited for the benefit of the capitalist accumulation of the western powers.

Thus, for the young Mamdani, class is not merely a formation for deciding the distribution of incomes, but in African societies, it reflects the relations

of power in these societies, and hence the political significance attributed in Africa to class forms and class consciousness. Therefore, Mamdani saw that tribalism in Africa was a product of colonialism and not a natural African formation. A case in point was the conflicts instigated by the colonial power between Buganda and Bunyoro in Uganda over the cultivation of cotton to supply the capitalist market. However, the class consciousness between the *kulaks* of both groups drives them to more acute competition in pursuit of their class interests. Similarly, the aim of the head tax was to drive the rural population into the cities in order to lower wages and to boost capitalist accumulation. Colonial rule also gave preference to indirect rule to isolate the different tribes or ethnic groups from each other. Further, the migration from rural areas helped the settlement of Europeans or Asians in these areas. The class analysis also led Mamdani to the conclusion that the commercial bourgeoisie (European or Asian) dominated the petty bourgeoisie to retain the dominance of the metropolitan bourgeoisie (according to Fanon) 1961. Based on this class analysis, he explained the onslaught of Idi Amin in 1972 against the Asian bourgeoisie in pursuance of the interests of the Ugandan petty bourgeoisie.

The Leap Forward

Social analysis was the centre of serious debate in the campus of Dar es Salaam University before and after the Arusha Declaration by Julius Nyerere (1966), where the petty bourgeoisie claimed the building of African socialism in order to avoid the existence of a class struggle. This campus was then the ground for the opposition to Nyerere who accepted their opposition in his role of a friendly guardian, and considering them to be Maoists or followers of President Mao whose lifestyle he admired (but not his ideas, of course). In this lively atmosphere, Mamdani studied the differences between African socialism and Maoism on the basis of Marxist Leninist theories. Along with Mamdani, there were a number of active young scholars whose friendship we cherish very much, such as Archie Mafeje (South Africa), Nathan Shamuyarira (Zimbabwe), Issa Shivji (Tanzania), Dan Nabudere (Uganda) and Nnoli Okwudiba (Nigeria). Some of these friends have passed away while others are still active and all of them have contributed richly to African political and social literature, having had fruitful discussions with Samir Amin, Hansen and other leaders of socialist ideologies.

All these scholars took part in active ideological struggle within the national state presided over by Nyerere and his Tanu party, and his doctrine of African communalism. Similar regimes were constructed in Zambia, Ghana and elsewhere in Africa. Everywhere, these young scholars militated for scientific socialism and its Maoist versions mostly. In the meantime, an older character such as Ali Mazrui (Kenya) seemed, in comparison, more liberal and almost conservative, although he shared with them their abhorrence of Idi Amin and his regime, as well as the totalitarian practices of Nyerere.

After Nyerere ousted the Arab feudal regime in Zanzibar (1964), Abdel Rahman Babu and his radical group sprang up and boosted the radical tendencies in Tanzania. This incited Nyerere to issue the Arusha Declaration (1966) in order to contain these increasing progressive tendencies in the region. It was no coincidence that the other liberation movements flourished in other parts of colonised Africa, such as the ANC in South Africa, the FRELIMO in Mozambique, the MPLA in Angola, the SWAPO in Namibia and the ZANU/ZAPU in Rhodesia (Zimbabwe). Dar es Salaam served as the focus of all the liberation movements in Africa as it was the seat of the Committee for the Liberation of the Colonies established by the Organization of African Unity.

The development of the armed struggle was not the only fruit of the national effort in the region, as the class analyses by Cabral, Neto and Dos Santos had affected most of the members of the group of young scholars, as expressed in a publication entitled *Maji Maji* about the class struggle in Tanzania (1976). In this context, Walter Rodney (1972) expressed the effects of such analyses about the bureaucratic bourgeoisie on the political consciousness in Africa, and in it Dan Nabudere pursued his debate over the postulates of Samir Amin on imperialism and the relations between the capitalist centre and the periphery. In this context also appeared the analysis by Mamdani of class struggle in Uganda and the tendency of the petty bourgeoisie for coup d'états as expressed by the regime of Idi Amin. The expulsion of the Asian traders by Idi Amin in 1972 was another manifestation of such tendencies. For some time, the 'political' took the ascendancy over the 'ideological' with Mamdani, as he and his comrades in the Ugandan opposition followed the Chinese example and carried their march from Tanzania. However, the petty bourgeois nature of this liberation army made it more of a coup d'état rather than the Maoist Long March they aspired to achieve. Thus, Mamdani took part with Museveni and the others in the revolutionary government for a short time, a fact seldom remembered.

I had the privilege of the acquaintance with Mamdani all through this period as founders of the African Association of Political Science (1974-1975) and up to the present. After we met, he relinquished his government office and joined the ranks of the opposition as a member of the staff of Makerere University. His ideological expedition then moved to the wider space of the intellectual struggles in the African south and centre, then to the struggle against the concepts of American military hegemony in the space of the three continents.

Social Politics: The Citizen and the Subject

Mamdani returned from the USA to his alma mater, Makerere, as a professor of Political Science, but Idi Amin soon expelled him and many of his colleagues of the elite in Uganda. He spent most of the 1970s as an exile in Tanzania until his triumphal return to oust Idi Amin. I dare say he was happy with his ideological efforts in Kampala, especially through his Centre for Basic Research, but his more illuminating role matured during the 1990s in Cape Town, as the founder of the Center for Fundamental Studies at Cape Town University. There, as professor of African Studies, he was one of the forerunners of the African scientists who accompanied the liberation of South Africa from the abhorrent apartheid system. Before that, we used to adopt resolutions condemning any form of cooperation with the apartheid regime, and South African scholars such as Archie Mafeje and Bernard Ben Magubane fled their native South Africa to work in the universities of Botswana or Dar es Salaam.

The sojourn of Mamdani in Cape Town (1993-1999) was a boon to the cultural movement at both the local and continental levels. His main ideological contribution during that period was expressed in his book entitled *Citizen and Subject: Contemporary Africa and the Legacy of Late Colonialism* (1996). This book was a radical change from the classical racist studies that pretended South Africa to be a special case, while he put it within the general African space. This book was acclaimed locally and internationally as it took into consideration the local modes of sharing of power and resources, and the social resistance to capitalist mechanisms. This meant a certain advance on the prevalent analysis of the centre/periphery dominance relation.

The model of South Africa made its impression on Mamdani; I believe it led him to an understanding of other African societies, and he led many other scholars of African countries along similar lines. He studied the case of

South Africa within the wider scope of colonialism where the ideology of the urban modern society stands against racism and tribalism. Similarly, the semi-colonial rule in the newly independent Africa is not greatly different from the apartheid system in South Africa.

Thus, we note the urban citizens under apartheid in opposition to the natives or the subjects in South Africa, just as we note the urban civil society which enjoys liberal democracy in the newly independent countries in opposition to the rural population or subjects. The population that suffers coercion in the urban apartheid is encouraged to practice tribalism and tradition in their Bantustans. Mamdani finds that the situation in other African countries is not much different from that in South Africa. He also finds the explanation for the dominance of the conservative Inkatha Party in the Zulu areas around Durban in the rural nature of those areas. The ANC did not gain ascendancy in those areas except lately with the modernising process. Personally, I believe the late success achieved by Zuma (a Zulu) over Mbeki was brought about by this modernity in Durban. Indeed, Mamdani in his analysis neglects the role of the working class and whether it is just one of the constituents of urban society, or an active player in the struggle for power.

When studying the case of Uganda and the march of Museveni, Mamdani gives more prominence to the role of the rural community and its traditionalism. He also stresses these tendencies in his studies of the situation in Tanzania. In most cases, he gives more preponderance to the rural element and its resistance to modernity rather than to class oppression, in contrast with many other scholars.

I do not intend to present all the contributions of Mamdani in detail, but insist on his great role in enriching African thought in the fields of politics, economy and social sciences. It is remarkable to note his ability to take in Marxist and modernist ways of thinking in his far-reaching analyses. He exhibits his deep understanding of the Great Lakes region and its problems in his book *Citizen and Subject* (1996) that explains much of the ethnic strife in the region. He again analyses the Rwandan massacres in his book *When Victims become Killers* (2001), explaining how the Belgian colonialists had treated the Tutsi minority as a superior Hamite ethnicity and as such they enjoyed the privileged status of citizens, while the majority Hutu were treated as their subjects with few or no rights. This privileged situation of the Tutsi was resented by the Hutu majority to practically the same degree as the old

colonial rulers. After independence when the majority took over power, the Hutu needed little incitement to take revenge on their former oppressors (the former citizens) and the result was the massacre of hundreds of thousands of the Tutsi. This racial bloodshed spread out into other countries of the region, including the eastern Congo.

Confronting Media Terrorism on Darfur

Here, Mamdani approaches a new front in his cultural debate with modernity and tradition, where he presents some new subjects for discussion after his close study of events in Africa, starting with his stay in South Africa (1993-1997), then his sojourn in New York, and the mission to the Congo on behalf of the Council for the Development of Social Science Research in Africa (CODESRIA) in 1997. His report on the conflict in eastern Congo resulting from this mission was eventually presented to the UN General Assembly. Later, he visited Darfur, Sudan (2006-2007) and wrote about the conflict there extensively. Again, he was commissioned by the committee in charge of the Nobel Peace Prize to make a report on the conflicts of the 20th century and suggest solutions for the 21st century.

We shall first refer to his standpoint on the conflict in Darfur, as it raised much debate in the West, as a prelude to our exposition of his book on the relationship between political Islam and terrorism – *Good Muslim, Bad Muslim* (2004). His debate on Darfur appeared in the *London Book Review* under the title “The Policies Behind the Term Genocide, the Civil War and the Uprising”. Here, he discusses the use of the term ‘genocide’ and how it appears or disappears in cases such as Rwanda, Iraq or Darfur. This study merits a detailed examination, and so also does his intervention in a CODESRIA meeting (attended by myself) where he stressed the need for a new African knowledge in opposition to the dominant knowledge (coming from western sources). He noted the exaggerated interest shown by the American media and universities concerning the conflict in Darfur, in contrast with much less interest in more bloody conflicts in Rwanda or Iraq. He directly attacks the bulwark of this campaign in the Solidarity with Darfur Coalition (SDC) that has its shady relations with arms suppliers and the media circles that choose to expose or cover up the facts as may best suit their purpose. He notes that the term ‘genocide’ was seldom used to describe the massacres in Rwanda despite the millions of victims there, besides the famine and displaced populations.

He also notes the term genocide is never used to describe the situation in Iraq despite the millions of casualties and displaced persons. He finds the explanation for such inconsistency in the unfairness of the cultural hegemony and the disparity of the standards of values, and hence his call for a new African system of knowledge.

He applies this reasoning to the case of Darfur and argues that it could be termed as civil war, uprising or insurgency, but not necessarily as genocide as it is currently, all the time. Mamdani then goes on to study the use of the appellation 'Arab' or 'African' for the populations of the province. He notes that the population is mostly made up of West African immigrants who like to call themselves Arab as a means of imitating the elite Arab Muslim merchants in Sudan. He also notes the extreme drought in the region lately that forces these nomadic populations to migrate to the southern areas of Darfur in search of pastures for their cattle, hence the local conflicts over such areas. Yet, American media keeps harping on about Arab terrorism and the genocide committed by the Janjaweed forces to legitimise their intervention, which was forthcoming anyway. He even notes how obstacles are placed on the road of the efforts of the African Union to solve the problem. Thus, Mamdani sees the Darfur problem as another example of the cultural and social roots for conflict ruling the relations between Africans and Arabs.

The Cultural Debate: Good Muslim, Bad Muslim

Mamdani wonders in his book *Good Muslim, Bad Muslim* whether the American hegemonist policy divides the world today, after the end of the Cold War, and in particular after 11 September 2001, on the basis of religious cultures, instead of the previous division on the basis of politics and capitalism versus communism. Now, they see the world as producing either a real modern creative culture, or a backward inflexible culture that breeds terrorism. Such judgments appeared first as the principle of the conflict of cultures or civilisations, and then it spread into the different cultures that are subdivided into moderate cultures that can be modernised and those that are inflexible. The first category will produce the Good Muslim who can respond to modern culture, while the second will breed the Bad Muslim. Thus, Mamdani dedicates a good part of his argument to the cultural discourse that prevailed after the 9/11 terrorist event and classifies Islam into two trends, one of which automatically breeds terrorism.

I shall not attempt to present the whole book, which I leave to the attentive reader, but I would like to draw the attention to some salient points that I believe are worthy of consideration.

He considers political Islam as a new phenomenon that first appeared after World War II when Pakistan was created on a religious political basis just like the Jewish state of Israel. Again, Islam was taken up by the Reagan administration to fight communism and the Soviet Union in Afghanistan. Later, the same administration decided to fight Islam as exemplified in the Islamic regime of the Ayatollahs in Iran. Recently, the American administration has been supporting the moderate regime of Saudi Arabia against the terrorist Bin Laden although both parties are Wahabis!

Yet, the Americans overlook the fact that they actually created and armed the Mojahedeen in Afghanistan; and before that, in the 1970s, they supported and armed the bands of RENAMO in Mozambique and UNITA in Angola that were directed from apartheid South Africa. They also organised the Contras to fight the democratic regime in Nicaragua with Saudi financial support, and also the war by proxy or by drug traffickers in Latin America. Now that Islamic terror has hit inside the US, the cultural war on Islam must don pseudo-scientific attire and political Islam must be stigmatised as the bearer of the irrational principles of the Jihad. Thus, we are confronted with the contrast of modernity versus traditionalism.

Thus, the general attack on a given culture finds its excuses regardless of the party that recently helped found and re-arm it. Mamdani asserts that his studies show that terrorism does not have its roots in the Islamic culture. Indeed, cultures develop and are reformed throughout history. Hence, we must study the recent upsurge of political Islam in connection with the vicissitudes of the Cold War in various regions, the most serious of which lies in the machinations of the American administration in the Islamic world.

In the chapters of the book, Mamdani closely follows the covert relations of the CIA in restructuring terrorist groups, foremost among which stands Al-Qaeda. Similar relations were noted between the Israeli Government and the nascent Islamic movement in Palestine. Mamdani blames the US administration for the increase in the ferocity of conflicts due to the rise of its militarism and the aggressiveness of its imperialism. He goes on to analyse its policies all over the world, from Indochina to Iraq passing by Palestine for which country he can only visualise one democratic solution, viz, one

democratic state that embraces all citizens on its territory. However, this overall democratic solution, and not the Islamic one, is far from practical in view of the deteriorating state of democracy in the US because of its war on terror following the Cold War.

9

The Sudanese Issue: The View from the South*

Many claim to have a stake in objectivity, but few are able to admit how much their perspective shapes their opinions and drives their interests. The Sudanese issue highlights this dilemma today more than any time in the past. Khartoum's perspective on the issue no doubt differs from the perspective in Juba, both of which differ from that of Cairo, not to mention the view from Washington and Nairobi. The Sudanese issue has been much discussed in many world capitals, but without lingering for too long on southern Sudan. We are thus obliged to step back somewhat from the matter. Any true discussion of the issue is essentially a suggested perspective, which might prove useful in the future, even if it has not been in the past. The view set forth here concerns the Arabs, and in particular the Egyptians, as much as it concerns the parties involved in the Sudanese conflict. Indeed, despite efforts to understand the Sudanese issue, the disregard that continues to be shown towards the south in many Egyptian writings is embarrassing. This chapter studies the following:

- (i) A method for approaching the Sudanese question;
- (ii) The roots of the problem: The alienation, 1947-1972;
- (iii) A chance for trust building, lost, 1972-1983;
- (iv) Vision of a new Sudan
- (v) The Naivasha Agreement

* This paper was read at the OSSREA International Conference on African Conflicts in Addis Ababa on 1 December 2004 and elaborated on after the Naivasha Agreement.

A Method for Approaching the Sudanese Question

In Cairo, and in Arab political culture in general, I feel that we have not yet begun to deal in-depth with the entire range of Arab cultural and social diversity, although we continue to live with many of the problems this causes. We have the Kurds in the Levant, the Amazigh in North Africa, the Negroids in Mauritania, and Arabism-Africanism in Sudan, but an all-encompassing perspective that might help us handle this diversity has yet to be reached. We are still not very attentive at reading the lessons of recent history – both reassuring and disconcerting – from the former Soviet Union, the Balkans, or East Asia. We have no rule of thumb relating to the model of unity (many Arabs here supported the partition of India and the Balkans), or pointing out that, in historical terms, partition is not always a necessity (an option offered to the Bantustans and the Kurds, but rejected on a popular level), or also for dealing with a hegemonic force's insistence on separatism (as against northern Italy's desire for secession). We must see these issues from the proper perspective to be able to deal with them in an appropriate manner.

Here, I shall attempt to approach the Sudanese issue (conflict) from the southern perspective, in the hope that something new can be achieved, while at the same time taking heed of the importance of external considerations that might suddenly arise.

I must first consider the factual perspective. Despite its simplicity, this perspective raises the most significant questions related to the formation of the Sudanese nation, national identity, and the nature of citizenship in Sudan. Members of the early South Sudanese leadership, such as Joseph Garang, Abel Alier, Francis Deng and Bona Malwal, discussed this subject seriously in the 1960s. Any discussion of national unity or integration must be accompanied by an examination of social and cultural unity and diversity in Sudan, an issue taken up by these southern Sudanese intellectuals at a very early stage and developed further by northern intellectuals, such as Mohamed Omar Bashir, Mohamed Abdel Hayy, and Abdel Ghaffar Mohamed Ahmed, in all sincerity. I only mention 'sincerity' here because the colonial anthropological approach played a negative role in this regard, using diversity to raise, automatically, the issue of partition.

Secondly, we need to consider the historical perspective. Many northern historians have not recounted Sudan's social and political history so much as they have written a history of the Sudanese problem and its roots in the modern political development of Sudan. Thus, we are not familiar with the 1901 Zande revolt, the revolt of the Dinka in 1922, the Shulluk, or the general revolt of the

south against the British solution proposed at the Juba Conference in 1947, all of which would have given us a sense of Sudan's integrated structure, shaped by Nubian kingdoms, the Sinnar, the Fur, and the sultanates of Dinka and Zande. We must become acquainted with the writings of Joseph Garang and Francis Deng on Sudanese society at a time when Sudanese history was written solely from a northern perspective, which fell silent on the history of the south, as we see in the writings of Youssef Fadel, Mekki Shebeka, and Mohamed Ibrahim Abu Saleem. This legacy is extremely significant to modern historiography.

We must next consider the developmental perspective. Related to the social and economic history of Sudan both before and after independence, this perspective raises the subject of integration and alienation, whether we are talking about historical forms of exploitation (slavery and the history of the Jallaba or slave traders), the absence of development programs and the uneven distribution of wealth in successive political eras (see the documents of the southern regional legislative assembly in the 1970s and 1980s), or the demand to divide wealth, forcefully presented in contemporary settlement talks, such as at Machakos.

Fourthly, we must examine the issue of hegemony. This is not simply a matter of direct political control – northerners have not been in complete control for any long period of time – but also includes the process of inserting Sudan as a whole into the global hegemonic order, thus expanding regional or global capitalist markets and engendering forms of colonialist policies, a fact sometimes disregarded in the southern perspective. Here, also, is where ideological hegemony comes into play. Put in sociological terms, a certain social class imposes its hegemony over others outside its natural sphere of influence by using cultural elements, such as Islam, or social elements, such as Arabism. In doing so, this class exploits historical or geographic facts, which the ideology reshapes to become a form of control, such as the history of the Jallaba in the south, the Mahdists, or the behaviour of the ruling northern class in general. This situation may continue until such hegemony becomes relatively acceptable, as seen in the ideas of southern moderates such as Bolen Alier and Joseph Lago, and during the implementation of the Addis Ababa Agreement in the 1970s. However, an increasing sense of alienation tends to give rise to the opposite reaction, which is longer lasting. Examples of this type of hegemony are still being played out in different forms in India, Nigeria and South Africa.

Finally, we must consider the issue of counter-hegemony, examining African history in general for examples of counter-hegemonic movements. Hegemony has historically led to violence and counter-violence between regional, social or

tribal forces, which has then grown into revolt and war, followed by the rise of a new hegemonic vision, which may tend either towards integration or alienation, though not necessarily separatism. This is a process of imposing a new ideology with the objective of achieving regional counter-hegemony. This model applies to the Museveni's resistance movement in Uganda, which rejected northern, and later Baganda, hegemony. It also applies to the revolt of the Tigre against the Amhara under the leadership of Zenawi and the march on Kinshasa from the eastern Congo under Kabila.

These models are not incompatible with the thought of the Sudanese People's Liberation Movement (SPLM), which raised the slogan 'The New Sudan' to break the traditional hegemony of the bourgeois and sectarianism over Sudan, as is clear in the movement's written documents and the writings of John Garang. Garang, like most of the leaders of the insurgency movements mentioned above, was influenced in Dar es Salaam by the ideas of the Maoist Revolution prevalent in the 1960s and 1970s concerning the use of socio-political coalitions and the Long March, and the popular march to gain control of the capital. Indeed, in his published interviews, Garang does not deny this strategy for the rule of the new Sudan. This raises not only the issue of national unity, but the form of the state and the social system, and enjoins us to see the extension of the SPLM's influence on the Nubian mountains and the other marginalised regions of the country.

We can now examine how the negative aspects of all these approaches or perspectives have led to the erosion of trust between south and north Sudan. Did north Sudan facilitate trust-building or national integration during its leadership of post-independence Sudan? The policies implemented as the modern Sudanese state was being formed do not appear to have had this objective in mind – neither the political coalitions organised during the national liberation movement, nor the development and economic programmes enacted after independence, nor even most of the tussles for power in Khartoum. Indeed, steps to build trust began only recently, starting with the programme of the opposition National Democratic Rally (NDR), and they are still a source of conflict in the Machakos Agreement.

Certain historical events and the stances taken by southern Sudanese of various persuasions prominent in Sudanese political life surprisingly reveal that, in general, southern Sudanese seemed much keener than northerners – albeit to varying degrees – to uphold the principle of coexistence. This is perhaps a response to the mistaken approach – taken by certain Sudanese politicians and intellectuals and ingrained in a broad section of Arab culture – to the Sudanese issue from the tense events surrounding the moment of independence, or from

the logic of Anyanya I, which disappeared from the Sudanese stage at the hands of Garang himself. Nevertheless, Arab writers continue to dwell on separatism of the South, which has not helped efforts to build trust, but has instead led recently to tangible shifts in the position of some southerners.

The Roots of the Problem: The Alienation, 1947-1972

It is remarkable that Sudanese historians did not pay much attention to the history of the south when they wrote about the Marwe civilization in the north, the Sinnar Kingdoms in the east, and the Darfur Sultanates in the west. They may have felt some self-guilt because of the slave trade practised by some northerners in the south, even with the help of some of the southern notables. They may have missed the correct analysis of the global system of colonial capitalism which exploited the south in a manner different to its exploitation of the north due to the 'backwardness' of the former. This may explain why they omitted any mention of the history of southern resistance to the attempts at modernisation, which would have provided a key to the understanding of the political and social integration after independence.

Some may be surprised to learn that at least two of the generation of modern education, from the Dinka tribes, who were students in the same class of law studies at Khartoum University after penetrating the barriers set up by the British around the south for half a century, tried to write the history of the political movements in the south behind those barriers. One of them was Joseph Garang who went left, and became a minister of state, but was executed by Numeiri in 1971. The other was Abel Alier who chose a centrist path, and was appointed by the same Numeiri as Governor of the south, then Deputy President during the period of self-rule, following the Addis Ababa Agreement, from 1972 to 1983.

Joseph Garang wrote a series of articles in the communist magazine *The Southerner* as early as 1961, then in another magazine *Progress* in 1965 onwards, and this series of articles was published in 1971, in a booklet entitled: *The Dilemma of the Southern Intellectuals, Is It Justified?* Noting the early dates of the first of these articles, we find Joseph Garang criticising the stance of the southern intellectual, perplexed in his stand towards the Sudanese question in general and not merely in his position as a southerner.

Joseph Garang, whose only relationship with John Garang is that they both come from the Dinka clans in the South, notes three stands taken by southern intellectuals before and during the first revolt in the early 1950s: a 'rightist', a 'perplexed' and a 'leftist' tendency. He notes that the rightists see only one

issue for the south, which is immediate secession. They consider the problem to be ethnic in essence, the southerners being Africans, while the northerners are Arabs, and the innate hatred between the two makes their separation an absolute necessity. He goes on to refute such contentions. The perplexed are a much wider group, and share the hatred of the northerners, but are aware of the threats of imperialism; especially in the light of the Congo debacle, they have no illusions of possible help from the United Nations, and fear the consequences of secession. Here lies their dilemma, but they are more progressive than the rightists because they give priority to the contradiction with imperialism, and know that the solution of this contradiction is the condition for any building of democracy, or any economic, social or cultural progress for the south. They also admit that the contradiction with the exploiting classes of the north, and their representatives in the state bureaucracy, including their imposition of their bourgeois culture (Islam and the Arabic language) on the south, is a remnant of the British administration. As for the leftists, represented by Garang himself, they adopt the tactics of the alliance with the democratic forces in the north against imperialism and in the pursuit of progress, and refuse the logic of the secessionist racial forces. They do not share the view of the perplexed who equate the threats of imperialism with those of the northern bourgeoisie, since the defeat of the former is a fundamental first step towards any fruitful solution of the southern issue under an alliance of the southern leftists and the nationalists in the north.

Joseph Garang finds that the southerners were aware of the threat of imperialism as early as 1901 with the revolt of the Zande and that of the Nueiris in 1902, followed by the revolts of the Dinkas in 1919 and 1922, and then the Nueiris again in 1927-29. All these revolts were directed against the British, and were not re-directed against the Arabs except after independence when the oppression of the north replaced that of the British.

Abel Alier laments in his book *Southern Sudan: Too Many Agreements Dishonoured* (1995) that the northerners followed the British tradition of dishonouring their promises – which was to be expected – even to the point of annulling the Addis Ababa Agreement of 1972, as early as 1983. He feels this disappointment very keenly, having been the staunchest champion of that agreement. He joins John Garang in noting the persistence of the southerners in building friendly relations with the north, but in vain.

At the Juba Conference in 1947, attended by the sultans of the south alongside the northerners and the British, the latter supported the suggestions of the sultans to proceed gradually in preparing the southerners for self-

government – in order to retain their prerogative for the longest possible time – while the representatives of the north extolled the virtues of integration, and the benefits it promised the south. Thus, they secured the approval of the conference for independence for Sudan, but in the end the southerners got only 13 out of the 93 seats in the Legislative Assembly, as a result of collusion between the northerners and the British who were trying to woo them away from Egypt. Further, the negotiations for independence between the British, the Egyptians and the Sudanese were not attended by any southerners. Alier comments:

Thus, the self-rule agreement concocted between the British, the Egyptians and the northern parties could not contain the guarantees for the south, on which their representatives in the Juba conference insisted, and this was the second deceit. The third deceit came with Sudanification of the civil service, where the southerners got only six posts against eight hundred for the northerners. When Parliament convened on 19 December 1955 to approve the Declaration of Independence, the southerners presented as a condition for their approval, the creation of a federal system of government in compliance with the spirit of the Juba Conference. The northerners accepted this condition just to please the southerners, but with no real intention of eventual implementation (Alier 1995).

Thus, the shaky agreement was reached; but in 1958, in the committee for the preparation of the constitution, and the Constituent Assembly, the northerners refused any mention of federalism.

The democratic fervour of the Sudanese masses after the declaration of independence in 1956 was such as to raise the concerns of the new rulers (the Omma Party), who feared the south would refuse their hegemony imposed through their religious dominance, or that their Unionist rivals would go into alliance with Egypt or even downright unity with it. Therefore, the Abboud military coup of 1958 was concocted to pre-empt any such dangers. The coup directed the army to the south to secure the hegemony of the northern rulers in the name of propagating Arabic and Islam in the south. The expected reaction was for the leaders of Anyanya to raise the issue of secession, and to go into alliance with Israel in search of its logistical help.

The deterioration of the situation continued until the outbreak of the popular revolt in October 1964, which demanded the ceasefire in the south, and reconciliation with the ‘South Front’ being the political dissident front, and not with the extremist Anyanya cadres. This front – one of whose leaders was Alier – rallied with the front of civil society in the north, together with the parties opposed to the military leaders, to form a provisional government.

The spirit of reconciliation was enhanced by the invitation to the South Front to nominate their representatives in the Sovereignty Council and the Government, despite their continued concerns about the arrogant behaviour of some traders and government officials in the south.

The Round Table Conference, in which the parties of both north and south took part, was convened in March 1965, with the participation of some African countries (including Egypt and Algeria). In the conference, opinions varied between centralised or federal unity, with a small southern minority for secession. Yet, the northerners insisted on declaring a unified country and on laying down arms, before proceeding any further, which threatened to explode the whole process. The Sovereignty Council decided, however, to proceed with general elections, despite the boycott of the southern parties. Yet, the southerners remained in the committee of twelve for trust-building measures, which were not implemented properly, and repressive measures in the south were intensified (Beshir M.O 1968).

The Committee of Twelve approved a number of legal, administrative and cultural measures that would help trust building, but the northerners foiled much of their effect by deciding to appoint the head of the south by unilateral decision of the head of the Sovereignty Council and not by elections in the south. Also, the southerners were not given a fair share of the leaderships in the military or the police, and were denied the right to form any militias of their own, nor did they get any posts of responsibility in their education system.

Alier, who took part in all these discussions, notes that the northerners showed all along their distrust of the leaderships of the south. Matters came to a head with the traditional parties of the north insisting on their proposal of an 'Islamic constitution' which the southerners saw as perpetrating ethnic and religious segregation. They withdrew from the committee, and the Committee of Twelve demanded that all parties to the Round Table be invited to meet in March 1966, as had been decided before. The Government of Sadek Al-Mahdi, however, refused to do so and instead called for a conference of the traditional parties in October 1967, which excluded the democratic forces that led the revolution of 1964. It is clear from all these events that the system of religious and traditional hegemony in the north did not only undermine any real solution to the problem of the south, but also the whole process of democratisation of Sudan as foreseen by the forces of the 1964 revolution.

Here, some young elements of Nasserist tendencies in the military institution realised the seriousness of the situation and the dangers of the continued hostilities in the south, and led what was known as the May

1969 Revolution. They declared a nine-point 'Document of the South', and appointed Abel Alier as a member of the cabinet, and Joseph Garang as a minister for southern affairs. After achieving a certain measure of stability, including the liquidation of the left, the new regime signed the Addis Ababa Agreement in February 1972, which granted the south regional self-rule, unification of the armed forces, and the appointment of some prominent southern personalities in the central authority in Khartoum. The agreement also stipulated an active economic and social development programme in the south, all of which, if properly implemented, would have provided great progress of the whole Sudanese question. However, the conditions gradually deteriorated because of the new class in the south and north, and the agreement itself was unilaterally abrogated by the centre in 1983.

A Chance for Trust Building, Lost, 1972-1983

The Addis Ababa Agreement ushered in many positive developments in the south, despite the fact that it was not a direct outcome of the democratic, political and social solution advocated by the leftist wing of the May 1969 Revolution. The agreement was also criticised by the 'nationalists', both Sudanese and Arabs, because of the role of the World Council of Churches and the world reactionary circles in its implementation. It also ushered in a change of course of the central government led by Numeiri which went to the right, away from the democratic forces behind the revolution, and even away from the traditional parties, as it increasingly became a dictatorial regime.

We shall not go into the details of the agreement, as these have been covered in much of the literature on the subject, but shall content ourselves with its main provision of guaranteeing the proper representation of the southerners. It provided for a single regional parliament and a regional administrative cabinet, all of which was to be represented in the centre in Khartoum. Similar provisions were foreseen for education and cultural activities in the south, to take account of the specifics of the south. Thus, the agreement guaranteed a certain continuity of the political-cultural dialogue, and a negotiating stance for the south, even with the emergence of internal conflicts in the south as well as north-south conflicts. However, violations of the agreement were soon to appear on the hands of the central authority in the north (and not only as a result of the antagonism between the elites of the Dinka and of the Equatoria Province as was claimed by some northerners). This was the essence of the lost opportunities which materialised after 1972.

As we concentrate here on the view from the south, we shall try to expose the points of view of the southerners, rather than their assessment of some of the negative aspects of the experience. As I heard or saw in Juba (1980-81), this vision also had its impact on their view in the period of insurgency in the 1980s and later.

A remarkable phenomenon of the 1970s in Sudan is the proliferation of literature that treats the relations between north and south freely, both in criticism of the Agreement, and in the pursuit of a unified and democratic Sudan. The protagonists came from both north and south (Mohammad Omar Beshir and K. Mom). The literature also included literary and sociological studies on the issue of the diversity of the Sudanese society as a means for unity (Francis Deng, Abdel Ghafar Ahmad and Mohammad Abdel Hay). Some even advocated a role for Sudan in building the relationship between Arabs and Africans (Bona Malwal). During that phase, Khartoum witnessed open criticism of the regime from within, mainly by southern authors who militated actively for a unified Sudan (in the magazine 'Sudanese Culture' and the supplement of the Al-Ayam newspaper in Arabic, and in 'Sudan Now' in English). This healthy activity was proof that the good faith on the part of the northerners immediately produced positive responses from the southerners, in the direction of building a unified Sudan.

We shall now review some of the literature of this period, foremost among which are those of Francis Deng, the Dinka intellectual, prominent anthropologist, and social and political scientist. The works by Deng and other southerners are of great importance to Sudanese sociological studies, and contrast much with the north Sudanese school of history which is more traditional and which neglects the social history of the Dinka in relations with the 'others', so aptly exposed by Deng.

Let us now review some of Deng's works and their dates, before looking in detail at some of his views:

- (i) *The Dinka of the Sudan*, 2001
- (ii) *Dynamics of Integration: A Basis of National Integration in the Sudan*, 1973
- (iii) *Africans of Two Worlds*, 1978.

Deng considers the world of the Dinka – some 3 million in the early 1970s – an example of social self-consciousness, and the outreach to the African and Arab worlds close by. Their heritage reflects the unity and multiplicity of the worlds of African legends, and of the monotheistic religions of the Middle

East. In his view, the Dinka personify, just like Sudan as a whole, the diversity of social structure, and spiritual heritage. Thus, they symbolise the interaction of the African and Arab worlds, which belies the arbitrary separation of Arabs and Africans. As a social conglomerate, the Dinka encompass not a small amount of diversity and conflicts (the Kjook and the Boor). Their folklore goes back in history to certain contacts with Egypt's Pharaonic past, then the Christian and Islamic eras as well. They have historical and mythological ties with the Shulluk, the Nueir, the Homor, the Shindy, the Massay, and share with them the problems of identity and integration.

As a scholar of folklore, Deng notes the desire of the Dinka to meet with other ethnicities, as when 'the Arab Mohammad marries Thelma, the girl of the Dinka'. They fear the savagery of the other, yet the God of the Dinka created all peoples and gave each of them their language and way of life. Both Dinka and Arabs come from the same source of creation, although the Dinka and their cattle are superior, of course. Deng insists on the fact that Arab and Negro elements are intermingled in both Nilotics and Semites, and infers from that the solid basis for unity and nation building. It was only the political history that stressed the differences, and pushed the mistrust and enmity to the fore.

In contrast with Deng's social history of the South, Abel Alier recounts in his *Southern Sudan: Too Many Agreements Dishonoured* (1995) the problems of its political history. The man is not a researcher, but a politician who recounts his own political career over the period from 1953 to 1989. This history shows the constant political will in the south to work within a 'Sudanese unity' where the elite of the south can find their proper position as their counterparts of the north.

Alier was a member of all committees, negotiations and parliaments before the May 1969 revolution. He became Chairman of the Legislative and Executive Council of the South after the Addis Ababa Agreement of 1972. He was appointed Vice President to Numeiri (to remove him from the south) when the northerners started to undermine the agreement and put their men in all executive posts in the south. All through his book, he speaks of the hope he cherished to create new realities in the south for Sudan that 'we want to keep and develop, and we can salvage a lot by acting with wisdom, justice and finesse'. He keeps posing the questions about 'the possibilities for making Sudan a viable homeland, despite this long history of social and economic imbalance.

Another voice that has a notable place in the Sudanese cultural life is that of Bona Malwal, who was Minister of Information and Culture during the 1970s and who furthered the issue of integration of north and south, and even that of the integration of Sudan with Egypt. He faced the attacks against the Jongli Canal Project from the Europeans and some southerners. Despite his protests in London today against the domination of the north as implemented by the present authorities in Khartoum, the essence of his policies was publicised in 'Sudan Now' which he maintained as an independent tribune while he was a minister. In a published text, he says:

If we study the structure of Sudanese society, we notice the danger of dividing it on an ethnic basis. Indeed, there are no Arabs and Africans in the Sudan, but a homogenous mixture of black Arabs and Africans that we do not describe as Arab or African only. We do not want to relinquish our Arab or African roles, so we decided to call ourselves Little Africa (Malwal nd).

This clear political vision from another Dinka minister is the counterpart of the socio-cultural vision of Francis Deng.

Other voices may be more significant on the effect of 'political and social entente' on the change in tone in the south. Here, we find Joseph Lago the leader of Anyanya 1 during the 1960s, signing the 1972 Agreement and becoming a member of Parliament and Chairman of the Executive Council of the South, and then Vice President towards the end of the Numeiri regime. In an address to the South Legislative Council published in 1978, he says:

Before the May Revolution, Sudan was torn apart on grounds of religion, community, ethnicity, but national unity has been realized, and our duty now, is to cement this unity. We must confront the forces inimical to peace and security and prosperity, and to safeguard our unity, and not allow tribalism to force us asunder. My election to this house is proof of the political and national maturity of the South, and overcoming ethnic and geographical differences when choosing leaders. There exists now a basis for implementing the character of the south within the framework of a unified and diversified Sudan (Lago 1978).

Such texts show what could be expected to be the political thought in a Sudan under a different regime. This is the political climate that prevailed in the 1970s, and prompted a generation of young scholars and researchers who advocated the principle of unity and diversity, and respect for the identity of the south (Mohammad Omar Beshir and Abdel-Ghaffar Mohammad Ahmed). It even prompted diversity in the cultural and social climate in the north itself (Mohammad Abdel Hay, Salah Mohammad Ibrahim, Ibrahim Isshaq and Mansoor Khalid). Some of the protagonists of this trend cooperated with

the southerners in studying the side effects of the Jongli Canal Project, and in transforming Juba University into a cultural and scientific monument. Yet, the onslaught of the Socialist Union with its well-known totalitarian bureaucratic policies stifled any political action on the part of any of the leftist or even traditional parties in the south. In the absence of any healthy political activity in the south, the enemies of progress raised their heads again, and the project for building a new south started to flounder.

Why was the Chance Lost in the 1970s?

There is no doubt that the Numeiri regime used the Addis Ababa Agreement as a propaganda ploy to bolster its rule, and to gloss over its struggles with the communists on one side, and the Umma Party on the other side. Yet, the structure of the agreement was such as to allow for much progress towards unity and much reconciliation with the south. However, matters did not proceed as hoped for. As soon as the transition period in 1972-1973 had elapsed, the 'harassment' began to break the negotiating power of the south as stipulated by the agreement. We shall summarise the steps taken in this direction as epitomised by southern writers:

- a) The southerners never had the chance to choose the head of their regional self-rule Council, as Numeiri decided it through the obligatory membership of the Socialist Union. The Chairman was a southerner, but always of Numeiri's choice.
- b) While the southerners expected an accelerated development as promised by the May revolution for the whole country, the economic development projects actually implemented meant more impoverishment for the south. The South Parliamentary group records certain cases where development deteriorated, or some projects were transferred to the north, such as the sugar-producing projects in Mongola and Malweet, the fruit packing in Waw, or the cement factory in Kabiota. Doubts about the Jongli canal were raised by talk about its negative effects on cattle-raising by the Dinkas. When oil was discovered in the Bentio, the disputed district in the northern parts of the south, many hopes were nurtured when it was planned to refine it locally rather than exporting the crude. Yet, it was decided to locate the refinery in Kosti in the north, and not near the oil wells in the south. Eventually, no refinery was built but bad feelings were created, and hence the importance of the wealth-sharing issue during the protracted negotiations.

- c) Many southerners considered that the united north refused to see similar steps towards reconciliation with the south, or among southerners. Malwal notes several divisive decisions in that direction, such as inciting Lago, the former secessionist leader, to confront Alier – the champion of compromise – and inciting the representatives of the Equatoria Province against those of the Dinkas in the South Legislature. Then, the law of Regional Rule was decreed from the north without prior consultation with the south, in order to undermine the unity of the south. It is significant in this respect to note that Lago, the separatist, commended the Socialist Union's plan to enhance democracy by breaking up the south.
- d) The last straw came with the decrees proposed by Hasan al-Turabi as Attorney- General, purportedly to institute decentralisation, by breaking up the main provinces of the south (and attaching the petroleum-rich district of Bentio to the north) and dissolving the political bodies of the south (which the southerners saw as a prelude to the plans for Arabisation and Islamisation of the south). These measures were implemented in 1980, and the southerners saw this as *de facto* abrogation of the Addis Ababa Agreement.

All the above measures indicate the gradual erosion of trust between south and north during the whole period. This means that the implementation of Sharia laws was simply the tip of the iceberg rather than the only reason behind the insurgency of the south. It proved that the north was intent on marginalising the southerners, who in turn decided that recourse to armed resistance was the only way to regain their eroded interests.

Vision of a New Sudan

The insurgency of the garrison at Bor on 16 May 1983 was not a simple military mutiny such as that of Toret back in 1955. The latter was the prelude to the secessionist movement of Anyanya I while the former was different, although most of the Arab media persists in interpreting it as secessionist, and so do some powers that seek to exploit it in such a direction, the latest being the Americans. Whoever has read the literature of the Sudan People's Liberation Movement (SPLM) since its inception in 1984 and until its vision and programme in 1998 can see at a glance that the analysis of the movement of Sudanese society, its slogan of a unified Sudan, and its aim to create a 'Unified Secular and Democratic Sudan' did not mention once the word 'secession'.

The practices of the Numeiri regime, and its renegeing of its development projects for the south, have encouraged the elements of division and alienation in that region. This change of attitude came with Numeiri moving over to new alliances with the Islamists and Al-Turabi during the later period of the Addis Ababa Agreement. The SPLM documents recount that the mutinies in Kobo in 1975, and in Waw in 1976, were secessionist, and John Garang disapproved of such movements. He saw that what was needed was a vanguard movement, starting in the south but aiming at the liberation of the whole Sudanese people. Thus, it was no coincidence that Garang dismissed the wing of Anyanya 2, which had participated with the SPLM for one year.

It is remarkable that the SPLM was supported by leaders from the Nuba mountain region, such as Mohammad Haroun Kafi, and from western Sudan, such as Mansour Khaled and Dreig. Leaders from the north, such as Yasser Araman, Tayseer Mohammad Aly, and supported by Mohammad Omar Beshir, also joined the movement, thus creating a united democratic dissident Sudanese movement.

We note the philosophy of the revolutionary vanguard which adopted the concept of the march of the Sudanese masses from all parts of Sudan on the north – according to the Maoist concept – or even the Ugandan, Ethiopian or Congolese models. Such a model must be contrasted with the onslaught of the phalanges of the Mahdists on Khartoum in an attempt to overthrow the Numeiri regime in 1976-77. Yet, despite the destruction wrought by this onslaught, it was not stigmatised as a ‘vicious’ insurgency, as was the case of a similar insurgency led by the southern vanguard, with the aim of liberation from oppression, exploitation and alienation.

We shall now try to review the literature of the SPLM and its leader, John Garang, as gleaned from its manifesto in 1983, the Fundamental Statement in 1984, the Vision and Programme in 1998, and the statements of Garang in Cairo in 1997.

Despite the long history of repression and divisive and alienating measures directed against the South, we find no secessionist expressions in the first statements of the SPLM, but only an accurate analysis of the repressive nature of the ruling regime in the north against the whole Sudanese people and not the south alone. This stance was followed constantly by the movement for a period of over two decades. We shall now note in detail the main standpoints of the SPLM as follows:

- a) The Fundamental Statement recounts the oppression suffered by the Sudanese people throughout its long history, whether at the hands of

foreign oppressors (Turkish, Egyptian or British), or the ruling clique in Khartoum. The oppressors always relied on the ethnic and religious diversity to adopt the principle of 'divide and rule'. They divided the Sudanese into northerners and southerners, and the northerners into people from the west, the east, Halfa or the centre. They divided the south into the Dinkas, the Equatorials ... etc. Another division was between Moslems and Christians, Arabs and Negroes. The early texts accuse the reactionaries and religious extremists (in north and south) of threatening the unity of the Sudanese people, and pledge that the SPLM and its armed forces, as the vanguard of the mass movement, will confront all projects aimed at dividing the Sudanese people and eroding its unity, which it will guard zealously, while developing all the ethnic groups in the Sudan.

- b) The Statement of 1984 confronts the dangers of division of the south with the aim of depriving it of its unity and wealth, by annexing the oil regions to the north. The SPLM tries to accomplish this aim by obstructing the operations of Chevron Petroleum and the Jongli Canal project. However, Garang considers that all such problems could be solved within the framework of a united Sudan, where a democratic socialist system will secure all democratic and humanitarian rights for all its citizens and ethnicities, as well as freedom of religion and belief. The armed resistance, starting from the south, is the guarantee of the success of this endeavour in view of the failure of all peaceful efforts in this direction.
- c) Garang realises that the SPLM will be stigmatised by the regime as being communist, but refutes this accusation as a deliberate ploy by Numeiri who uses the word 'socialist' to describe his own regime, while trying to come to terms with Washington. He reminds that Numeiri had described Anyanya 2 as imperialist, and then came to terms with it in 1972.
- d) What was the discourse of the SPLM after 15 years in action? The 'Vision and Program' issued in March 1998 crystallises the experience gained over 15 years of its existence, having implemented many internal and external relations, and developed a strong negotiating power. The discourse of the movement might have shown more secessionist tendencies after so many failed attempts at reconciliation, but it does not exhibit any such tendencies, although it contains many reservations, and allusions to the right to change its stance within the 'right of self-determination'. Unfortunately for the perpetual detractors of the SPLM, the 'Right of Self Determination' was endorsed at the negotiating table between some dissidents of the movement and the Islamic Salvation Government in Khartoum in 1992, and was

officially recognised at the negotiations between Lam Akool and the representative of the Government, Ali Al-Haj, in Frankfurt in 1993. Then, it was endorsed during the negotiations of the SPLM with the government in Abuja and Nairobi, and then in Machakos, in 2002.

Before studying the new texts of the SPLM (1998) in detail, we would point to the Kokadam Declaration in 1986 and to the Sudan peace initiative in November 1988. The Declaration was with representatives of Sadek Al-Mahdi, while the initiative was with Mohammad Al-Merghani – in person – whose party was in the Cabinet at the time. These two agreements could have solved the long-standing problem of the Sudan, were it not for the resistance of certain sectarian Islamist forces in the north, namely Al-Turabi, who urged Al-Mahdi to continue fighting, while the Minister of Defence advised the cessation of hostilities. As for the Merghani Initiative, it met with the opposition of the Prime Minister, Al-Mahdi.

We would note here that both agreements did not even mention the right of self-determination. The Kokadam Agreement mentioned the ‘New Sudan’; it did not specifically mention the problem of the south, but rather the problems of Sudan, and it called for a National Unity Government. The Sudan peace initiative was even more advanced, stressing the national unity, and calling for a constitutional congress on a national scale, and the repeal of the September Laws. It was decided to discuss the practical steps for implementation of this initiative when the 1989 Islamist coup stopped everything and raised the banner of the Jihad in the south.

The regime of the coup of 1989 rejected the documents of 1986-88 and continued its holy war in the south with no prospect of a peaceful solution, as its aim was more ambitious than Islamising the south. However, the interminable war was also very costly for the SPLM, especially as Ryak Mashar in 1991 attempted the coup of ‘Al-Nasser’, in collaboration with Lam Akool and certain elements of the Shulluk and the Nver. This was an attempt to sway the movement from its military endeavour (which would have moved it nearer a secessionist leaning). It was also an attempt to reduce the influence of John Garang and the Dinkas, for the benefit of the Shulluk, the Nver and the people of the Equatoria Province.

The SPLM regained its cohesion after the Lafon Declaration (April 1995), as attested to by P.A. Nyaba, a dissident who returned to the movement and is now a member of its Executive Committee. Yet the Khartoum Government would not make use of this reconciliation as a step towards a national solution of the conflict, but persisted in supporting all manner of splits in the movement,

in order to destroy Garang at any price. Indeed, the regime in Khartoum insists on its biased assessment of Garang as a secessionist, despite the fact that he had liquidated the Anyanya secessionists in the '80s and the dissidents in the '90s, who went in the same direction. It is more likely that the project of a 'New Sudan' defended by Garang in his talks with the parties of the 1985 uprising was what urged General Bashir to stick to his guns against General Garang, in what took the shape of a personal feud between the two men, to the extent that the Khartoum regime (both Bashir and Turabi) were ready to accept the right of self-determination in its agreements with the 'secessionists' – Ryak Mashar and Lam Akool.

What seems really strange is that the 'Arab visionists' never criticised such agreements on the grounds of their being secessionist, while they fly at any remark or reservation on the part of John Garang to describe it as such. In this connection, I was dismayed lately when a Sudanese intellectual of the stature of Abdullahi Ali Ibrahim, in an unpublished article entitled "About the Blocked Oil Well, and the Great Palace, in Sudan Politics", in which he considers Garang as a despot and individualist leader, while he treats those occupying the palace in Khartoum with obvious tenderness!

In these circumstances, the SPLM issues its Vision and Programme, in which it describes the history of the Sudanese people and the diversity of its social structure, until it comes to the sectarian and exclusionist coup of 1989. Then it goes on to state its vision in several points, of which we summarise the ones relevant to our subject below:

- a) The SPLM militates for a new model Sudan to which we all belong, a Sudan united on a new basis, and new commitments based on the realities of Sudan and not the old Sudan which cost its people 32 years of war.
- b) The SPLM rejects the arbitrary rule of the unprincipled local elite, clinging to political authority, by pretending to be nationalist. It proposes either a confederation comprising a number of independent states, or a new Sudan in a social and political unity, to which we pledge our allegiance irrespective of ethnicity, tribe, religion, or gender; a democratic Sudan based on the voluntary will of the people, and the rule of law, and adopting a democratic secular system, and popular participation.
- c) The SPLM aims at the implementation of the right of self-determination in a new Sudan, reiterates the assurance of the national unity and peace in the 'liberated areas', and the new Sudan as a political unit where ethnic, cultural and linguistic diversity is recognised.

- d) The SPLM will not alienate itself from the centre (Khartoum), and will not become a regional movement, but will continue as a national movement within the new Sudan, and urges the northerners to join it.
- e) The SPLM will persist in holding peace talks with the Government in Khartoum, but on the basis of a confederal state, the right of self-determination, and the new Sudan. It shall continue its membership of the National Democratic Rally (NDR) and the Asmara Pact, while retaining its political, organisational and military independence.
- f) The SPLM will continue its joint efforts with the NDR to implement the joint military action in the rural areas, and the uprising in the cities, to topple the rule of the Islamic Front, and the creation of a new Sudan within the alternatives proposed by the NDR.
- g) The SPLM will ensure the objective conditions for the people of the new Sudan to practise the right of self-determination. Such a right cannot be unilaterally imposed, but must be decided in a free referendum under international supervision... This right is recognised by all political forces in the Sudan, the pact of the NDR, the IGAD, as well as the Government of the Islamic Front.
- h) The SPLM reiterates its international commitments to the African cooperation and integration, the Organisation of African Unity (OAU), since the African people includes all inhabitants of the African continent. Thus, there is no place for ethnic prejudices, but equal relations with the cultures of the Middle East, and the special role within the Arab world and the Arab-African relationships.

With these concepts, the SPLM participated with all nationalist political forces in the north to unify the opposition to the regime in Khartoum. The Asmara Pact (1995) recognises the right of self-determination, as was recognised by the Khartoum Government.

Then the SPLM extended its influence to other regions: in the south-west (the Nuba Mountains), the south centre (Abei), and east Sudan, with what is known as the Sudan Liberation Army (SLA) led by General Abdel Aziz Khaled. Some consider this to be an extension of the basis for secession, but this is absurd as this base goes as far north as Kasala. The SPLM and its allies, on the other hand, see it as an extension of their concept of a new Sudan, and the rallying of the popular alliance around it.

A significant gesture here was that the SPLM announced in its first conference (1994) its intention to support the creation of the New Sudan Brigade (NSB), to open its ranks to all Sudanese irrespective of their previous

political allegiances. The founding act of the NSB was issued the next year (1995), aiming at building a new nationalist force to ensure the unity of the Sudan, by borrowing from the SPLM and the democratic movement in the north the best elements of their experience. The NSB will also help the marginalised regions overcome the unequal development elements. The creation of the NSB provides a positive answer to the negative attitudes of the north towards the secessionist tendencies of the Al-Nasser movement.

The NSB is not a rally of intellectuals alone, but is a rallying point of all groups marginalised by the Islamic Front, which include the trade unions, the associations, the businessmen, the officers expelled from the army, and women, and even some Arab tribes such as the Messirs, the Rasheeds and others. In other words, the NSB is not the movement of the Dinkas, the Christians, the Africans, or the animists alone.

The Decline?

The southerners have always believed that the failure to implement the various opportunities for agreement between the warring parties lies squarely with the Government of the Islamic Front, which insisted on the military solution only, and mobilised its forces – youth and soldiers – for military action. It also tried to isolate the south from the rest of the world, except through the humanitarian aid agencies and church institutions in Africa and Europe, until lately when the American churches monopolised these contacts. African and Arab neighbours of Sudan have come up with various initiatives to solve the problem, notable among which was the Declaration of Principles (DOP) of the IGAD, and the Libyan Egyptian Initiative. The United States took an active stand in support of the IGAD initiative, when the Secretary of State Madeline Albright stated in Nairobi in November 1999 that the US will not consider any but the IGAD initiative. This position of the Clinton Administration was based on the study prepared by the Centre for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS) in Washington, which was later adopted by the Bush Administration, and eventually led to the Machakos Agreement.

What Led to Such a Deterioration of the Situation?

The Sudanese Government did not recognise the IGAD Initiative except in 1998, with some reservations of course, and no pressure was applied towards the implementation of the Egyptian-Libyan Initiative. Both sides seemed to be playing for time as the prospecting for oil went on, and the Americans pressed for *détente* in the oil areas in the west of Sudan and the Nuba Mountains,

eventually securing a ceasefire agreement in 2002. This meant the failure of the constant aim of the Khartoum Government, of continued hostilities, and its succumbing to US pressure.

After almost two decades, many southern Sudanese intellectual elements with various visions had lost all hope of a peaceful solution, even within the limits of the position of the SPLM. We would remind the reader of the efforts of men like Alier, or Malwal, to accept a minimum of self-rule, the efforts of Francis Deng on integration and diversity in a united Sudan, and the movement of Lam Akool back and forth between the SPLM and government positions. No wonder the frustration they suffered, yet their various visions will still have some impact on the final solutions reached by the protagonists in Machakos.

We may refer to Alier's *Southern Sudan: Too Many Agreements Dishonoured* and his recent withdrawal from the arena, which disqualifies him from playing a compromise role as a Dinka. Similarly Akool, who dismissed himself from the role of an intermediary between the two parties, or Malwal, Numeiri's onetime man, who became frustrated by both SPLM and Government, and who slanders the Arabs (in the Sudan Newsletter), after being a one-time member of the Sudanese Egyptian Integration Committee.

As for Francis Deng, he went as far as collaborating with the CSIS in shaping in 2001 the document defining 'the American Policy to End the War in the Sudan', which served as the basis for the mission of John Danforthe, President Bush's envoy to the Sudan, and the 'godfather' of the Machakos Agreement. This policy document came as a surprise, as it endorsed the principle of one state and two systems, a quick end to hostilities, adopting the IGAD Initiative, peace negotiations, self-rule in the south after fixing the frontiers, unity in a democratic secular state, separation between state and religion, the right of self-determination after a transition period, followed by a referendum in the south, and measures to help the marginalised populations in the north, especially the Nuba Mountains. The document even recommends the use of the 'carrot and the stick' as incentive for both Khartoum and the southern opposition.

This is the vision of the one-time advocate of integration, and unity and diversity, after his recent frustration. He presents such views to the Americans who have shifted from a position favouring division of Sudan to a position of keeping it whole to make it easier to exploit the country, now that the oil areas are spreading from the south to the west, with more being found in neighbouring Chad. Therefore, the 'fur' has been put on the agenda!

As for Dr John Garang, he retains his coherent position and, despite the frustration due to the actions of the Khartoum Government, he lends his support to the new dissident fronts in the west and the east. Another means of putting pressure on Khartoum was to seek some help from the new power trying to pacify the south for its petroleum interests, and apparently, this pressure was the only force that could lead Khartoum to Machakos. However, Garang assured the NDR that Machakos was imposed on both parties and its leaders seem to retain their trust in the man.

In the meantime, we believe we must give credence to what Garang exposed during his lengthy visit to Cairo in 1997, to both the Egyptian Government and the leaders of the NDR, and was published in a booklet by the SPLM office in Cairo. The booklet was entitled *John Garang: His Vision of the New Sudan and the Issues of Unity and Identity*, in the light of his visit to the ARE (Egypt) in November – December 1997, and is especially significant because it came immediately before the document *Vision and Program of the SPLM (1998)*. During this visit, Garang addressed the Sudanese masses, and met with government circles, Egyptian parties and NGOs, journalists and intellectuals. He considered his meetings in Cairo as a significant achievement of both the SPLM and NDR, saying in his Juba Arabic: ‘This is a great opportunity... The Turabi people in Khartoum are unsettled today’.

During two weeks in Cairo, Garang exposed the main elements of his project for the state of the new Sudan that will encompass diversity, but exclude elements of separation. He even stressed the importance of cooperating with the traditional forces in Sudan, in contrast with the ‘new’ forces that would exclude them from the common action. Garang explained that he had to negotiate because he could not afford to be isolated, and that his acceptance of a confederal state in Nairobi, in 1997, was a tactical step to press the government of the Islamic Front to accept a unified Sudan, even if confederal, since it had accepted this concept in negotiating with separatist southern forces before. He stressed the necessity of armed action, which has to be spread into other regions of Sudan, then starting a popular uprising in Khartoum. He excluded the possibility of any army coup as the Islamic Front is in complete control of the army.

Garang assured all those concerned about the unity of Sudan that his movement was also concerned with this unity. In his discussions with the Egyptians, he touched on the issue of the Nile water and the Jongli canal, and confirmed his view that this canal is beneficial to the whole region and not Egypt and northern Sudan alone.

Garang asked Egypt and the Arab countries to provide humanitarian aid to the southerners, and not to leave the Europeans and Americans to monopolise this aid. He refuted the calumnies that try to mar the image of the SPLM in Egypt and the Arab countries by claiming it was a Dinka movement, anti-Islamic, or anti-Arab. He assured his audience that the SPLM belonged to the whole south and to other ethnicities in the west and the western part of the country. He said the leader of the forces in the Nuba Mountains and south Sudan was the Moslem Yusef Koh Mekki, and the leader of the liberated areas south of the Blue Nile was Malek Khafar, another Moslem. A third Moslem, Abdel Aziz Adam Al-Helw, is in charge of the NSB on the western front. The first blood drawn in the south was in battle against the secessionists. Garang ended his speech to a big rally in Cairo with: 'Turabi has become the eighth wonder of the earth. We shall exhibit him in the museum of history for the future generations to see the man who almost destroyed the Sudan'. Maybe the end of Turabi is a measure of Garang's perspicacity.

The Naivasha Agreement

Many heaved a sigh of relief when the 'preliminary' Final Agreement was signed between the Government of President Omar Hasan Al-Bashir and the SPLM at the end of the first week of June 2004, amid a demonstration of jubilation and optimism, and the presence of the IGAD African countries, Egypt, the Arab League, and the main sponsors of the agreements, foremost among whom were the US representatives. Many excerpts of the texts were published, as well as many optimistic declarations from all parties, which remind us of many such demonstrations which seldom reflect the realities of the situation, although they indicate the myriad of possible alternatives.

The first such optimistic declarations were announced with the signing of the Mashakos Agreement back in July 2002. However, it took about two more years to arrive at – again the preliminary – agreement between the parties, and we still have to wait until later in 2004 to come to the real beginning of the peace process. We even have to wait another six months for the start of a tentative real process when the protagonists lay down their arms after the final agreement on ceasefire arrangements. This will mean the start of a certain transition period of three years, followed by a more effective transition period for another three years!

An active implementation of the agreements is expected under the auspices of the US sponsor who indicated from the beginning its support of a 'One state, and two systems', which was the essence of the report of Mr Danforthe

which was the basis of the process of negotiations back in 2002. And here, we see Mr Danforth becoming the US ambassador at the UN in recognition of his efforts. This, they contend, is the guarantee of the credibility of the agreements supported so heavily by the world Number One Power. Others consider that Egypt 'finally' attending the signing ceremony, together with the Arab League, enhances the credibility of the agreement still further.

However, before this agreement, we were wondering about another essence of the situation which is still open to questioning. We had commented on the Mashakos Agreement in 2002, saying it was the admission of two generals who were sick of an interminable war that military action will never bring the situation to a decisive end, and that it was time to stop the hostilities. Thus, it seemed nearer to a ceasefire than a lasting peace agreement, a ceasefire to gain a moment to breathe, or to take some steps for re-arrangements at home to prepare for other measures.

Some even thought it was a preliminary for some sort of secession on the part of the southerners, and a preparation for renewed hostilities on the part of the northerners, or the government. The follow-up of all subsequent phases of the negotiations was seen in the light of such expectations of the positions of both generals Bashir and Garang. At certain junctures, Garang would again be called the 'insurgent', or attention be drawn to Garang signing a cordial agreement with another 'insurgent' At-Turabi. Again, we note ups and downs in the assessment of Garang's position in accordance with his so-called ambiguous stance towards the NDR, during their meetings in Cairo and Asmara. Also, there were numerous mutual accusations of malicious interventions by Garang in Darfur in western Sudan, and by the government in the south. All this led to a degree of unease, and doubts about the seriousness of both parties, if it were not for the insistence of the foreign powers on one hand, and the steadfast position of certain concerned forces inside the country.

Now, we come to Nairobi in 2004 (Naivasha), and the warm meeting between Dr John Garang and the Deputy President Aly Osman Taha, and the ceremonies of signing another set of 'preliminary' documents in an atmosphere of wide smiles and rosy declarations about the end of all fratricide wars, and constant peace, and even stability in Sudan 'for ever and ever'!

Indeed, we have witnessed a step forward, from an agreement between the two generals, to an agreement between two political movements, viz the ruling National Congress in the north, and the SPLM in the south. This political turning point indicates a change in political concepts and not a mere

ceasefire, and thus lends much greater credibility to the present agreements. It also raises questions about the political robustness of both parties that have to implement the agreements during the transition period of six years, and the position of the foreign parties and the degree of their support in implementing them. It also raises the major question of the ultimate choice of unity or secession.

The first problem to be faced is the trust-building phase. Will this be achieved hopefully within the first six months, or will it be protracted over the whole transition period of six years as legally construed from the terms of the agreements, and up to the referendum on self-determination? Will the contracting 'persons' survive politically as long as the agreements themselves? Here, Dr John Garang looks to be in a more confident situation, holding important trump cards that allow him to consolidate his position with his army, political power and even his tribal backers, quite apart from the backing he enjoys on the part of the 'American Vision', his African alliances, and even his personal charisma in Sudan.

However, John Garang adopted his philosophy of the 'New Sudan', and made it well known early on, which prompted the secessionist elements of Anyanya to quit his ranks when he started his revolution back in 1983. There were even rumours that he had expelled them. In this context, he signed the Kokadam Agreement with the Mahdists, followed by the more significant Addis Ababa Agreement with the Democratic Unionist Party, a few months before the Bashir/Turabi coup in 1989. He was even making arrangements with the unionist Merghani to convene a constitutional congress endorsing the Unity of the Sudan in September 1989, which attempt was foiled by the coup in June of that year.

The obvious failure of any military solution, and the weakness of the northerners' alliance, has led to the recurrence of talk about the right of self-determination, which the government of Khartoum was the first to reintroduce at the negotiating table. The north was further weakened by the continued conflicts between the government and the various political factions, the latest among which was the conflict with Turabi himself, who stood behind all the recent weakening of the position of the north, in contrast with increasing stability on the front of the SPLM.

Judging by simplistic short-term expectations, we would expect any threat to the stability of the present agreements to come from the north, during the confidence building phase. There are other parties in Khartoum, and also in other regions, that look forward to some degree of participation or equal

rights, which fact was alluded to by Dr Garang all through the negotiations, and in the signed texts, in repeated references to principles of justice and democracy.

Similarly, special agreements were also signed concerning the Nuba Mountains (south Kurdufan), the Blue Nile and the Abei region, which constitute the peripheries of the south, and the probable sites of wealth, as well as armed forces separate from both north and south, and separate finances and administration. All this, within the framework of the interests of the Sudanese people and the spirit of joint responsibility and joint action, gives rise to hope for a better future based on justice, democracy and good governance. All such references in the signed texts go hand-in-hand with promises of building a national unity government, throwing over old differences, and joint action for achieving the interests of the people and the joint aspirations of the whole of the Sudanese people.

This lays down the basis for 'another' front for unity in the 'New Sudan', and not the Sudan of the salvation front, or of the ruling National Congress alone (incidentally, the SPLM was seriously considering announcing its transformation into a national party for the whole of Sudan). This would mean that the basic question of identity in Sudan will need to be reviewed, whether geographic, or unifying of society, as well as studying the differences between state and nation. Numerous new questions about the relation between the 'national body' and the existing socio-political unity based on diversity will have to be answered. These are not specific problems of the north but they have become a problem for the south. Both are asked to deal with other marginalised regions.

It remains to be seen whether the Government of Sudan will continue with a true confidence-building process, where President Bashir will start by conceiving a process of democratic alliance with all the Sudanese forces, or will he try to hold on to the status quo, just to cling to power for the longest possible time. In the case of the latter, Sudan will continue as a failed state – because of the continuing conflicts in the west (Darfur) or those which may start in the east – which may be a convenient situation to some of its neighbours, such as Somalia, Congo, Rwanda, or Ivory Coast, for obvious reasons. The crux of the matter is whether the Sudanese Government will implement the creation of the true unity government, as specified in the agreements, and not let the north become the scene of 'secessionist developments'.

Such attitudes were prevalent throughout both democratic and military stages of rule in the Sudan, yet we are 'surprised' when we are told of conflicts

between Africans and Arabs in Darfur, and marginalised Biga and others in the east, or even Nubians in the west and north. The northerners on their part only see the 'Fallata', or the 'boys', who abound in the regions but enjoy no citizenship rights, when indeed they make up the majority of the citizens. The history of Sudan witnessed many varieties of political rule in the old sultanates of Darfur, Sinnar and the Zandi, in the pre-colonial era in Khartoum. It is high time that our friends in Khartoum look at these other peoples in question, not as secessionists or insurgents, but as the protagonists of a worthwhile federal national unity. Whoever reads the text of the recent Peace Agreement in Naivasha (June 2004), and notes the number of references to the previous partial agreements and the ones that will follow, may be awed by the future prospects for Sudan. This, unless the present Sudanese Government announces a comprehensive plan for 'unity', or 'national reconciliation' for the next stage, something they have not done yet – maybe because of the events in Darfur. Many lessons could be learnt in Khartoum from the experiences of other countries, near and far, such as the Ethiopian example which recognised the right of self-determination to its regions back in 1991, and yet retains remarkable stability. The Nigerian experience of sharing oil revenues is also worthy of note, as well as the recent political alliance building in India. Similarly, the success of the African National Congress Government in South Africa in facing the legacy of the Apartheid Bantustans, where the correct administration of democracy allowed the ANC to defeat Chief Buthelezi in his Zulu stronghold, is worthy of contemplation.

The Government of Sudan – assuming it is serious in building a new democratic Sudan – has to face several situations both on the internal and external fronts. Some observers even express doubts about the seriousness of the Government in achieving national unity as a prerequisite to tackling these situations, having in mind real comprehensive unity, and not just the agreements with the south. It is the responsibility of the present regime in Sudan to determine the essence of the future social and political contract which will decide the choice of unity rather than secession.

It is one thing for the sole aim of the agreements to be just to keep the National Congress Party and President Bashir in power for six years, more and quite another to guarantee a real national unity in the Sudan. Such national unities elsewhere have led to fundamental changes in Eastern Europe, Central Asia, up to Sierra Leone and Mozambique. The recent texts keep referring to 'national reconciliation', 'constitutional changes', 'good local governance', 'social justice' and 'remedy of marginalisation'. The recent events reveal that

such problems have already materialised, by force in certain cases, and others are inherent in the political documents of the NDR, in preparation for political action. We cannot contemplate the use of exclusive acts such as the armed raids by the Jinjaweed in the west of Sudan, or the latent movements in the east. The Asmara or Cairo texts may contain better solutions than those in the Naivasha texts. What we look forward to is the wide vision in Khartoum, rather than the political inaction that some observers expect.

Here, Arab media should desist from spreading their usual scaremongering about the imminence of the secession of the south. Egypt already conceded the independence of Sudan back in 1953-56, and accepted the secession of Syria in 1961, yet both Sudan and Syria have remained staunchly beside Egypt through thick and thin. I do not believe the government in Khartoum is seriously anxious that any of its neighbours in Ethiopia, Kenya or Uganda may encourage any secession in the south when they are threatened by the same scourge. Even the problems concerning the waters of the Nile cannot be raised against Egypt or Sudan, except through huge development projects that cannot be tackled except by a big assembly such as the Nile Basin Initiative, supported by the World Bank.

Sudan is in great need of a comprehensive economic and political development plan, something that has been the object of numerous discussions in recent Arab meetings, and Egypt can – apart from vulgar propaganda – participate in such plans for the development of a new Sudan in cooperation with the Arab north. It may even take the initiative within the African framework to transfer the Sudanese issues from the isolated framework of the IGAD, to the more integrationist framework of the NEPAD, which aims at African development under the leadership of South Africa.

John Garang, the adept of the Dar es Salaam school, has often taken part in serious dialogue in Cairo and Tripoli and can play an effective role in the discussions within the Nile Basin Initiative, the COMESA and the group of the Sahel and Sahara. All these are assemblies intent on integration, and may thus help contain any secessionist tendencies, unless the governments entrench themselves behind narrow group interests, leading only to short-term solutions.

Rebuilding Sudan, the state and nation, is bound today with the historic decisions to be taken by the active actors, where its Arab-African identity does not depend on the composition of the authority in the country, and where the argument about the Arab or African ethnicities is simply idle talk. After all, most of these ethnicities are in very poor shape, and what matters is

tackling the new choices and activating the forces newly entering the political arena from the south and west of the country. An urgent task is to prepare for the joint management of the huge oil resources in accordance with a comprehensive development plan. Another task are the radical social, cultural and political transformations that transcend the selfish narrow ethnic and regional interests in favour of a new Sudan that encompasses the slogans of the SPLM of the south, as well as the truly modern forces in the north intent on real transformation.

Conclusion

I hope this study will not be considered as proof that Sudan is the country of lost chances. This will only come true if the political forces and the military institution fail to implement the necessary steps leading to a new democratic Sudan that secures the interests of all its citizens by consensus and not by force. Hopefully, the NDR, including the SPLM, will come to some form of comprehensive agreement with the Government in Khartoum, in order to thwart the real threats that hang over Sudan from the hegemonistic world powers, with the USA at their head.

10

African Renaissance in the Experience of the New Anti-apartheid Regime*

Introduction

This chapter attempts to look at the main tenets of the 'African Renaissance' project, presented by the then President Thabo Mbeki of South Africa some years ago to inaugurate a new phase of the history of that country, and at the same time to present himself as a new face different from the traditional ANC figures. Indeed, there is something new, since the project is not limited to social and political aspects, but encompasses new cultural and ideological dimensions, leading South Africa into the post-apartheid era. It is therefore appropriate to ask: What is new and in which context? Or we may even ask: Where to?

We may subdivide our study into two parts:

Part One

- (i) The Renaissance Projects in Africa after Liberation
- (ii) The Challenges of the New Project in South Africa
- (iii) Post-apartheid South Africa

Part Two

- (i) The Ideological World of Thabo Mbeki
- (ii) Who is the African?
- (iii) A New Nation
- (iv) The Pillars of the Project:

* This paper was read in Arabic at the seminar of AAPSO Cairo on "Vision of Culture in the 21st Century", 6-7 November 2000.

- a) South Africa and the African Continent
- b) South Africa and the World

Conclusion

The National Project and the Policies of Globalisation

Part One: The Renaissance Projects in Africa after Liberation

The fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989 was a historic moment of radical significance to the capitalist world, since it meant an end to the Cold War and to the competition against socialism, as well as the hegemony of unipolar ideology. However, the downfall of apartheid a few months later (the release of Nelson Mandela in February 1990) was a moment of no less significance for all of humanity and oppressed peoples all over the world. This moment meant a great deal to liberation from colonialism, if not from imperialist domination in its globalised form.

Thabo Mbeki's project for African Renaissance comes in conditions that differ from those prevalent in the phase of national independence after World War II, or the years of national liberation. Those movements were called the national liberation revolutions, in contrast with their main supporter – the socialist revolution – and the social revolutions in the peoples' republics in that period of history. It is no coincidence that Mbeki does not often refer to this phase of history despite his numerous quotations from the history of civilisations.

Thus, we do not see here a model similar to the old nationalist projects such as the 'consciousness' of Nkrumah, the 'Ujamaa' of Nyerere, the 'African personality of Toure', or the 'national revolution' of Nasser that generated straightforward positions against colonialism. It would appear that the settler colonialism in South Africa would necessarily lead to a revolution that has national and social dimensions as the national liberation movement maintained for quite a long time. However, Mbeki's African Renaissance project goes beyond much of the old slogans of the liberation movement throughout its history.

The traditional liberation movements were straightforward because they moved directly from a state of traditional colonialism to that of a new political authority, under some charismatic leadership that led the nation along the path of independence and modernisation. Such leaderships generally created single political organisations of a totalitarian nature, favouring more or less independent choices, such as self-reliance, and the nationalisation of the basic

constituents of national wealth. However, such slogans could not supersede market relations, especially as concerns foreign trade, or the class situations, which led during the 1960s to all manner of deterioration of the national projects under foreign and domestic pressures alike.

In other words, the traditional national liberation project braced itself to face great conflicts, or become part of which, while the African Renaissance comes at a time when the continent faces the so-called second liberation wave. This wave was prompted by the movement of national popular congresses in West and Central Africa, or under populist slogans in East and Central Africa, but they did not assume general features comparable to the South African Renaissance. However, the peoples of the continent still aspire to a new social substance that has not materialised so far by the resistance movements in the old independent states having been shackled by the structural adjustment policies imposed by the international financial institutions. Similarly, Mbeki's African Renaissance does not attempt to face the great struggles foreshadowed by apartheid before its downfall, as manifested by the national and social struggles of the people of South Africa before and after Sharpeville and Soweto.

The Challenges of the New Project in South Africa

Mbeki faced great challenges ever since he led the movement for a negotiated solution, starting from the mid-1980s. We shall confine ourselves to the internal factors that led Mbeki to formulate his new thought, within an international climate that led most protagonists, even the racist power in South Africa itself, to rethink its position. The original position of the ANC leadership was as strong and sharp as the struggle with the racist regime in power, and all parties sought a solution to the explosive situation. Yet, it was clear the continuation of such struggles would not further the interests of either party; both the multinationals owning the mining interests (Oppenheimer and De Beers) and the leadership of the ANC came to understand that the class positions would undermine the interests of all parties concerned. Such were the conditions that led to the assassination of Chris Hani, the General Secretary of the Communist Party of South Africa and a member of the executive of the ANC, and the conflict with Cyril Ramaphosa, the trade unionist leader, and such were the challenges that Mbeki deeply understood, and which underlined his African Renaissance project.

Mbeki noted the debate around the Freedom Charter which had been adopted by the representatives of the different social forces back in 1955 – the era of national liberation revolutions. This charter stipulated that South Africa

was the home of all who live on its soil, whites or blacks; that the people share the resources of their country; that nationalisation was contemplated; that land would be shared by those who till it; and that all ethnic groups had equal rights. Such principles meant the creation of a democratic state for all citizens, and were the basis for the socialist ideology that was adopted by the national alliance for four decades. The ideal that people had in mind was that of popular democracy, and not the traditional liberal democracy. All prospective economic policies had a socialist-inspired social content, in a country ruled not only by the local racist capital, but also by some multinationals. A country where 86.5 per cent of arable land was owned by a few million whites, while thirty million blacks owned only the remaining 13.5 per cent. Yet, violence was not advocated as the means to achieve such a transition, because the Gandian non-violent means were predominant in the ideology adopted.

This was the first challenge to any new project in South Africa, as it also meant the predominance of the Marxist analysis of the forces in society in the literature of the ANC, as well as its close alliance with the Communist Party as they both shared a socialist perspective on the Soviet model. Later on, and in view of the intransigence of the racist minority, which seemed to rule out the possibility of forming one nation with them, the non-violent means were contested by many party cadres who favoured the armed conflict as the only possible way out. In this phase, the labour movement came forward, as also did the feminist role which had not figured prominently in the Freedom Charter. The Pan-Africanist Congress ideology which led to the Unity Movement also gained prominence at this stage which saw the bloody Soweto uprising in 1976. This all meant that black consciousness would raise the debate on the Freedom Charter, and about the new thought on the expediency of revolutionary violence, or the negotiated solution. The Soweto uprising imposed new ideas and new forces on the political arena throughout the 1980s, which were well publicised world-wide, and it was Mbeki who wrote to a seminar in Canada in 1978 about the 'historic injustice' and the class society dominated by the white bourgeoisie, allied with the white landowners, which imposes the revolution as a necessity and makes any compromise solution impossible.

Here appeared the new ANC slogan of 'Power for the People', and the slogan of the Communist Party of the 'Path to Power', which outstripped the Freedom Charter, and laid the foundation for new alliances which included youthful trends represented by Steve Biko and working class forces, as well as nationalist forces within a united front. This was more a crystallisation

of the violent struggle over half a century, rather than a prelude to a peace culture as promoted by world capitalism and the Perestroika of the 1980s. This challenge in South Africa put international capitalism as well as the local racists in an impasse which could only be solved by a compromise solution, and not by force. Such a compromise solution prevailed in the end, which led to the policy of truth and reconciliation to contain the consequences of apartheid, and eventually led to the African Renaissance project.

Post-apartheid South Africa

The international situation in 1990 may have created its local corollaries, especially in South Africa where the tensions were great and the demands after Soweto were very high. This could have meant a big obstacle to a negotiated solution, but we cannot forget the black bourgeoisie in South Africa, located in Soweto itself, in the neighbourhood of the white bourgeoisie in Johannesburg, and its need for some sort of stability. It took some eight years of the charismatic leadership of Mandela to sort out the differences between the principles of the Freedom Charter and the upshot of the Soweto uprising, and to reach the compromise of the African Renaissance project.

All through the negotiating period (1985-1989), Mandela and his comrades on Robben Island refused to condemn violence as was demanded by the apartheid regime in exchange for their liberation. Indeed, the slogan raised by Mandela as he left the prison was 'continued violence until the democratic transformation is accomplished', as he stated in his autobiography. However, three years after his liberation, he announced his 'new patriotism' as a transitional phase and included the 'sunset clauses' in the new constitution to reassure the white population, who participated in the national unity government. Thus, the ceiling of the Soweto demands was reduced so as to change the culture of violence into one of social and political peace. The first economic and social programs, and the democratic practices in the white-black relations, where Mandela had as deputies De Klerk and Mbeki, raised hopes of a peaceful social transformation as expressed in the Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP) of 1994. This programme expressed a consensus on social justice, including free universal education, government housing, land distribution and invigorating public and private sectors of the economy. However, the strong position of local capitalism took precedence over the weight of the Freedom Charter and the Soweto movement, and led within two years only to the replacement of the RDP of 1994 by the Growth Employment and Redistribution Programme of 1996. This meant a new

opening on the liberalisation of the economy which went hand-in-hand with Mbeki's African Renaissance, but was quite new to the main partners of the ANC, the Communist Party (CP), and the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU), who complained that they had not taken part in the formulation of this programme.

Indeed, Mbeki had prepared the ground during the years 1994-1998, before assuming the presidency in 1999, for making such a radical move. He was able to face the challenge of accepting the conditions imposed by world capitalist globalisation on the national project, thanks to his long history as one of the bulwarks of the ANC, as he participated with Oliver Tambo over a period of four decades as a leader of the youth organisation, and as a comrade of M. Suezzi who was responsible for the radical line adopted by the ANC. He was also a leading member of the CP, and was noted for ideological innovations in a movement known for its pragmatism. He was also noted for his academic background due to his studies of social sciences and economics at the University of Sussex in England, followed by a period of scientific and military training in the Soviet Union. All this gave him a prominent role in the external relations of the party, for which he was responsible during the 1980s. He was the representative of the leadership during the initially secret, then open, talks with the people in power (including business) from 1985 onwards, and he helped adopt a policy of a 'negotiated settlement' by the executive of the party, in the Harare Declaration of 1987. This declaration was later endorsed by the OAU, despite some opposition by certain elements of the union leaders, and the Communist Party, who did not agree to the mechanisms of the declaration, if not to its essence. Mbeki also advocated the early cessation of the armed struggle with the beginning of negotiations, as a gauge for a successful conclusion of such negotiations, while there was certain opposition for such cessation. He also recommended an end to the international boycott of the apartheid regime soon after the release of Mandela, again despite some opposition from the ranks of the party. The question is therefore legitimate: whether these attitudes spring from a correct assessment of the crisis of the racist regime and its supporters in world capitalist circles which would lead to the success of a negotiated settlement, or else whether it was an early decision that armed struggle against apartheid would not be greatly effective in the context of the present world state of affairs? Mbeki is actively elaborating on the answer to such a question being the basis for a constructive cultural debate about the African Renaissance project. His own participation in this debate far surpasses the efforts of any other leader in the country, or indeed, in all African countries.

No doubt, this project presents a big challenge in a country whose capitalists are the strongest in Africa, and where world capitalism has its biggest investments and strongest influence, and where the mechanisms of globalised liberalism are strongest. To some, such a project is a challenge to the national social thought in the current situation in the country. To others, it is simply a transitional stage after apartheid, to be followed by the internal ideological struggle.

Part Two: The Ideological World of Thabo Mbeki

Thabo Mbeki took great pains to make his ideas known, whether in print or verbally, making sure that he presents a lucid expression of his deep thinking. He had always been ready for debate about his thoughts ever since he became Deputy President in 1994, whether in the UN University in Tokyo, in Hong Kong or in Ghana. All this debate culminated in a big conference around African Renaissance in Johannesburg in 1998, and in publishing his book, in that same year, entitled: *Africa: The Time Has Come*.

He was always after new ideas to enrich his thinking, and believes the 21st century to be that of Africa, as a corollary to the old prophecy of William Du Bois that the 20th century would be that of colour, meaning the conflict between blacks and whites. Mbeki believed of course that such a conflict would end with the accomplishment of the universal African Renaissance. In-between Mbeki's first writings on the project in 1995 and his speech to the Conference on Racism in 2000, his ideas evolved visibly.

Some observers consider that presenting African Renaissance to replace the concept of the African Nationalism, or National Liberation, had its roots with some of the older leaders of the ANC such as Kasemi in his writings about resuscitation in 1906, or Anthony Limpedi, the leader of the youth in 1944. They even mention a precedent in the writings of N. Ezikiwe (1973), the Nigerian nationalist leader. Indeed, Mbeki revealed a knowledge of African realities from north to east and west, as much as his knowledge of the national history of the peoples of the south. Therefore, many expected that the policies of South Africa would proceed with this project to unlimited horizons. Yet, they are concerned that it is a far cry from the radical project that made up the dreams of the generations of the National Liberation Movement. There is also the concern that the discourse of Mbeki contained much implied content. We shall try in what follows to give an overall picture of his thinking.

Who is the African?

Mbeki tries from the outset to formulate a national consensus to make the basis for a national agenda that transcends the phase of the settler colonial regime, without stressing too much the naming of this phase, and confining himself to the reference to the painful period of oppression, relying more on the relative reconciliatory tone of the Freedom Charter of 1955. In his inaugural speech in the National Assembly that adopted the Constitution of 1996, he announces the first call for his Renaissance Project saying: 'I am an African', describing the constituents of the nation of South Africa. He evokes at one time the African in general, on the continent, but he notes that these elements are various, but make up one people. South Africa is the home of all who live on its soil, blacks, whites or coloureds, as he maintains. He is the African, descended from the Khoi and the San; he is the descendant of the Europeans who left their homes to make new homes on our land; he is the descendant of the serfs from Malaysia, and the Chinese and Indians; he is the descendant of the warriors led by Sekhukhune, the descendant of the victorious battles in Isandhlwana, and in Khartoum and Ethiopia of the Ashanti and the Berbers. He says that he is the descendant of the patriots who would not accept oppression, but also the descendant of those who put flowers on the tombs of the Boers in Saint Helena. He says he saw those who deny that God created man in his image, yet he declares there will be no discrimination on the grounds of colour, race, gender, or ethnic origins. He is the African who shares poverty and destitution on the level of the continent, and shares the pains suffered by the peoples of Liberia, Somalia, Sudan, Burundi and Algeria.

Thabo Mbeki is fond of the history of the continent, and he refers to the histories of the African civilisations in Egypt, Nubia, Carthage, Benin and Makundi more than any other African leader. He quotes Sheikh Anta Diop on the creative historic consciousness from which the torch of the new civilisation will flare up. He notes the role played by the Christians of Ethiopia, the Moslems of Nigeria, and the historic roles of the universities of Alexandria and Fez; and he reminds us that the school of Timbuktu was flourishing at the time of the European renaissance in the 15th century. He wonders why there is presently backwardness, and he blames the African intellectual who forgets his heritage and emigrates to the West, causing an unnecessary brain drain. Yet, this discourse of this 'historic African' does not contain any substantial reference to the Arabs or the modern history of national struggle, and the lessons gained from it. One cannot fail to note the silence of Mbeki on the current history of the continent, despite his wide knowledge of its past history and its outcome at the present day.

A New Nation

Despite the insistence of Mbeki in defining the identity of the African in South Africa, on the old history in all parts of the continent, and its civilisation sites, he tries to avoid the newer phases of its history. When talking of the elements that make up the 'nation' which he inherited from the apartheid regime, he tries to go beyond modern history, or treats it in a critical manner in order especially to remove any racist, ethnic or linguistic minefields. Thus, he begins his speech at the Conference of African Renaissance (September 1998) by announcing a break with history. He stresses that the past periods of slavery, colonialism, neo-colonialism and constant marginalisation should not divert us from looking into our past achievements in art and literature, and our trust in our renaissance. The African intelligentsia should play its part in this task, and we are capable of accomplishing it. The break with history is 'the promise of a better future for our nation'. This is his favourite slogan.

He relies on achieving a process of negation to precede the act of rebuilding. This process of negating apartheid means it could be ignored rather than be kept constantly in mind. Similarly, he considers it expedient to ignore the fallacy that the Bantu are incapable of governing. Thus, he calls on both parties to ignore some parts of their past rather than to keep reiterating the past grievances, in order to build a stable society, one that is non-racist and non-ethnic.

In August 2000, he decides to convene the conference on racism to discuss 'putting an end to discussions on racism' as a social issue. He does not want to keep reiterating that blacks were subjected to discrimination, which might lead to a redirecting of discrimination against whites, with all the ideological, social and economic consequences of such reversed racism. He would not allow the continued debate to mar the achievement of national reconciliation and the construction of the rainbow state, noting that no society in this world is totally free from racism. Mbeki notes that the miracle of transition from apartheid to a non-racist society has been achieved, and goes on to consider the difference between historic collective responsibility and individual responsibility. He notes that some whites were victims of the injustice of practising racial discrimination against their own will, while others believed the argument that it was a legitimate defence against black aggressiveness. Mbeki quotes Mandela in his memoir who says: 'My message is the liberation of both aggressor and victim ... We are not liberated yet, but we have the will to be liberated' (1998).

In an important speech on nation building to a conference of black and white youth (June 2000), Mbeki warned against the continued absence of the

concept of nationhood except in the identity document, and the persistence of separate social psychologies of the different race and ethnic groups in society. Such a state is caused by the continued feelings of insecurity, which, while 'we trust our democratic constitution of 1994, guarantees such security and stresses the will for a life of equality and democracy, to supersede all obstacles to the building of a common history, and a new homeland.'

Mbeki here warns against the creation of new class differences between the rich and poor blacks, as was the case between the blacks and whites under apartheid. He stresses that the new nation cannot be built on the concept of two nations, perpetuating the conditions of discrimination, or on class differences among the blacks. He considers the convening of the conferences on nation building and on racism in close succession in 2000, an indication of the nation's will to proceed to the post-apartheid era, which favoured the concept of two nations, now tolerated no more. He insists here on the precedence of the political over the social, and the precedence of the national over the social renaissance, putting special stress on the concept of nation building. Mbeki says the country passes through the national renaissance experience which has a double task: achievement of the goals of the political and constitutional revolution in society and parliament, then the continuation and protection of the social, economic and cultural renaissance. He alludes to the role of culture, education and intellectuals against the heritage of apartheid, before insisting on the necessary social and economic measures (South African Renaissance, from the address to Transkei University, May 1995).

The Pillars of the Project

The ANC followed a distinctive method of building alliances which helped it gain the support of many elements of the nation, and helped promote slogans such as 'power for the people'. It also made it possible to rely on its Marxist class analysis and yet keep close to the traditional leaders in the Bantustans, or the church leaders such as Lutholi and Tutu. With such an ideal conception of the nation, it put forward its slogans of nationalising big business and building socialism at the time of its alliance, in the 1980s, with the trade unions (COSATU), the United Democratic Front (UDF) and the white base members of the Communist Party. This alliance was the driving force behind the Soweto Uprising in 1976, the meeting of thousands of civil associations in Cape Town in 1983 to form the front, and then the great strike of the miners, which mobilised 4 million workers in 1992, in support of the nationalists in their negotiation with the racist regime for a democratic constitution.

Such was the situation that confronted Mbeki, but matters changed between 1993 and 1998, as the negotiated settlement was not the purely local outcome of negotiations with apartheid, but rather the result of the intervention of the European businessmen and international mining companies that had started the talks in Lusaka in 1985. There was also the influence of the black bourgeoisie in Soweto, and the traditional leaders in the Bantustans, as well as the dire need for land that had to be satisfied. Retaining these two groups of actors in society in view, we may assess the extent of the political choices that had to be made in the transition, or final stages. Designating the confidence-building clauses in the transitional Constitution of 1994 as 'sunset clauses' may raise the question: what 'sunset' does it refer to? The sunset of apartheid to be replaced by a general national formation, or the sunset of the deep-rooted social realities that were addressed by the strategies of the ANC and its main allies, COSATU and the Communist Party, who actually make up part of the regime in power? Indeed, the conflict raged, as mentioned before, around two main documents: the first was the DPR, and the second was GEAR, which was thought to undermine the first. This was a fundamental choice decided by Mbeki, and contested at the time for not coming after prior consultations with the allies.

As we are not assessing here the political economy of South Africa, I shall leave aside the debate that took place with Mbeki's assumption of the presidency in 1999, and even before that, with the electoral campaign in 1998, which was expressed in the manifestations of the unemployed, and the stand from the land issue in Zimbabwe, which made the headlines. What strikes me in Mbeki's writings and in his general discourse is that he always tries to cut any relations with the past, even when writing on the strategic National Prospect in 1995, and on the Common Vision, and the Economic Transformation, etc (1995).

However, Mbeki makes the constitution the basis for his project, since the said constitution is a firm text that was endorsed by all the elements of the nation in a peaceful consensus. He considers that 'problems of ethnic diversity, and causes of strife can be treated constitutionally, by the action of cultural, language and religious rights committees'. He gives great importance to the human rights movement, and the good conclusion of the efforts of the Truth and Reconciliation Committees as indicated in the constitution.

In his new vision, Mbeki considers good governance, labour and businessmen as the components of the golden triangle, or the pillars of the new regime, that will carry out the social transformation and social revolution

after the achievement of the political and constitutional revolution. After stating his choice of pillars of the regime, he goes on to speak in general terms in his broadcast speech to the nation in August 1998, where he points out the role of the politicians, businessmen, youth, women, trade unionists, religious leaders and professionals, who from Cape Town to Cairo, and from Madagascar to Cape Verde, are concerned about the conditions in Africa, and have the will to join the popular Renaissance campaign (Mbeki 1998).

We note that Mbeki gives much prominence to intellectuals, women and youth as the bearers of the renaissance process, in contrast to the previous subdued interest of the ANC in these categories. Another point of interest, often repeated recently, is his rejection of the 'fortune seekers' in the military. He carried this aversion to the point of direct intervention in the military coup in Lesotho (1998), and his refusal within the OAU to recognise any military regime. Mbeki does not show – so far – any desire for totalitarian rule, as he forcefully rejects single party regimes. Indeed, he indicated in one of his speeches the possibility of the break-up of the ANC into several parties (meaning its break-up into its conflicting constituent trends), since democracy, in the final analysis, is multi-faceted.

In his search for the pillars of his renaissance project, Mbeki recognises the intellectuals, the scientists, youth, etc. but he does not consider these to be the real protagonists of the project: for he only considers them to be the 'men of the economy', or what he calls 'business'. He gives much prominence to the role of investment, and considers the 'market' a sort of new deity, and as a space worthy of being managed by responsible people, since the upper echelons of society cannot just live as parasites on top.

Mbeki often resorts to the new discourse of the recent international conferences about poverty, the conditions of needy children, and deficient nutrition. Yet, in his visit to Tokyo in 1998, he rejected aid as unacceptable charity, and calls for useful investment. He always calls for invigorating the economy by local and foreign investment (he often condemns the inaction of the black bourgeoisie), and seeks to encourage the private sector and to limit the participation of the state in the ownership of the economy, to the grief of those who still uphold the Freedom Charter!

Some researchers note his great support for 'black capitalism' as a solution for development, and fighting poverty in the black regions often neglected by 'white' capital. Indeed, the number of black companies rose from 11 in 1995, with a total capital of 4.6 billion Rand, to 28 major companies in 1998, with a total capital of 66.7 billion Rand. Similarly, their share in the public services rose from 2 per cent in 1994, to 30 per cent in 1996.

However, this flourishing of black businessmen is accompanied by an increase in unemployment, as the number of unemployed rose by a quarter of a million between 1994 and 1998, whereas GEAR calls for the employment of another quarter of a million more. Mbeki's men managed to present black businessmen to the congress of 1997 as having now gained a special social status. One youth leader even presented a paper in which he claims that the Freedom Charter itself encouraged capitalism, hence the state must support businessmen now. Mbeki now attacks COSATU and the Communist Party in his new programme, while one of his ministers attacked the 'extreme left', in a reference to these bodies.

South Africa and the African Continent

Mbeki remembers Nkrumah saying that 'Ghana cannot become independent unless all of Africa is independent', but he modifies it by speaking of common growth and African renaissance. He keeps talking about the regional role of South Africa within SADEC, and the joint projects, investments and infrastructure projects at the continental level. He considers the African renaissance to be a continuation of the development aspects and building of the infrastructure in the whole of the continent. He insists on building a modern economy, on giving free reign to the private sector, and on reducing the state control of the economy.

He refers here to South Africa's projects which extend from the SADEC countries to Ghana, Uganda, Senegal, Mali and Mozambique, and cover the fields of mining, communications and tourism. This means that African unity is not limited to the ideological and political spheres, but that it has its practical material basis in joint development and investment.

Mbeki speaks about the projects and investments of South African companies with no bad feelings about their ownership by the white or black bourgeoisie, and he even commends the growing black share in these projects, despite the blame levelled against him from members of his party, COSATU and the Communists for not showing any sensitivity on this score.

Mbeki considers that the fast democratisation of the continent is helping to secure stability for such growth within the framework of African Renaissance. He insists in most of his speeches and writings on the virtues of this democratisation instead of pointing a finger at those who impose it (alluding to the generalised attack on the structural adjustment policies). This is because he believes that African liberation from colonialism and neo-colonialism, and overcoming foreign diktats, is a function of Africans' feelings

of dignity and human rights, and of their cooperation with other countries of the South, and especially of Asia. He favours the cooperation of South Africa with Japan and the Asian tigers, and notes favourably the discourse of Mahathir Mohammad on Asian Renaissance, close to his own project.

Mbeki rejects all the armed conflicts in Africa, and supports the intervention to stop violence and find a peaceful solution to such conflicts. He favours the creation of regional peace-keeping forces, and says in Press Statement :Humanity needs to reconsider the principles of sovereignty and non-intervention in the internal affairs of states'. He also says: 'We must stop considering democracy and human rights as mere western concepts'. This may have been a forethought of South Africa's intervention in 1998, to put an end to the military coup in Lesotho. South Africa also supported the ousting of Mobutu by cooperating with Kabila. Such actions raise doubts among South Africa's neighbours, such as Zimbabwe, Namibia and Angola, and point to the possibility of future interventions. Some even point out the similarity of such concepts with those held by the white Afrikaners about their zones of influence in southern Africa. What is more serious about such thinking is that it coincides with similar interventionist policies on a world scale, and his putting forward the 'new generation' of African leaderships to carry out the intervention at the behest of the world market.

South Africa and the World

Mbeki is intent on strengthening relations with the South, including South Asia and the Arab Gulf states. This is manifested in his discourse on globalisation. According to him, we live in a global village, and we should strive to transform this into a global neighbourhood, based on cooperation (with Japan) and mutual support (with Malaysia). We should not rely on technical assistance, for

we are part of the world economy, and the globalisation process, and the market is the new God', [but the market means] people who take decisions, and who understand the mechanisms of the on-going process, and plan their intervention in it, and this is what we should do. And African Renaissance will accomplish that goal by struggle, for liberation does not come by itself [...] something new always comes from Africa [...] and the next century is that of Africa (Mbeki nd).

Conclusion

The National Project and the Policies of Globalisation

When we review a project such as that of African Renaissance of Mbeki's South Africa, we may wonder if it is some sort of national project common in Third World countries. However, we soon realise that the size of the legacy of the imperialist capitalist interests inherited by the present regime after the 'reconciliation', the 'democratic transformation', and after the backward steps to the social programme, and noting the ideas put forward by Thabo Mbeki, does not indicate a positive answer to the query about a national state, leaving us looking for an alternative model. One wonders if the reason for this uncertainty is that we are still attached to our old ideas of 'independent development', 'self-reliance' and 'radical social transformations', the ideas about Arab or African unity and the progressive camp, let alone 'socialism'. However, we cannot escape the fact that the world is undergoing radical changes, and that such ready-made answers are no longer possible. Suffice it for a man like Mbeki to formulate a project for his country, similar to other national or local projects, at a time when such projects are hard to come by.

A country with the size and resources of South Africa, having such a long un-democratic history, and proud to be the land of Mandela, Tambo, Sisulu, Biko, Nzo, Hani, Slovo and Ramaphosa, is capable of producing a great national project that challenges the deterioration in the countries of the historic national projects. Indeed, national projects were never sectarian, or self-contained, as the experiences of China, Egypt, India or Yugoslavia clearly show. Certainly, they were never autonomous with respect to the hegemonic world capitalism that threatens the prospects of national independence.

Thus, we are apprehensive of the possibility of South Africa becoming the springboard for this destructive world capitalism that envelops societies in the name of the market mechanisms, globalised space, regional hegemonic interests, and that may seduce this or that national project to be integrated instead of maintaining its independence. The economy of South Africa inherited from the old alliance between apartheid and imperialist capitalism makes for the continuation of such alliances and obstructs their defeat by the bogus of reverse racism. It embellishes integration into the world market as a remedy for the period of boycott and the European capitalist growth. The Renaissance project itself may simply become a project for the integration of certain comprador elements into the world market, and not for the relief of those – the Khoi, the San and the population of Soweto – who were marginalised for hundreds of years, and leading them to the better life heralded by Thabo Mbeki.

