

Self-Colonization and the Search for Pax African: A Rejoinder

Perhaps in my naïveté, I had assumed that Professor Archie Mafeje was a professional friend since he had been very gracious to me on a number of occasions in the past. But, as the saying goes, with friends like Mafeje, who needs professional enemies? He trivializes and denounces a lifetime's work of a colleague without showing any evidence that he has read any of the twenty books written by his victim. He uses as evidence anecdotes and hazy memories of what I might have said twenty or more years ago – and then accuses his victim of slipshod scholarship!!

If Dr. Archie Mafeje had read no other book of mine than *Towards a Pax African: A Study of Ideology and Ambition* he would have realized that I have been concerned about the issue of Africa's self-pacification for about thirty years.

..perhaps the most crucial aspect of the ethic of self-government in Africa lies in the African's ambition to be his own policeman. The following question has often been asked in the last few years: *Now that the Imperial order is coming to an end, who is going to keep the peace in Africa?* It is considerations such as these which make Africa's freedom itself sometimes depend on an African capacity for self-pacification. This is what the concept of Pax-Africana is all about...Just as the notion of self-government is central to African political thought, the concept of Pax Africana is in turn central to the ambition of self-government in the continent (Mazrui 1967).

It is true that while in the 1990s I sometimes use the vocabulary of Africa's 'self-colonisation', in the 1960s I had used the vocabulary of Africa's 'self-pacification'. But my central concern has remained constant – how can Africa develop a capacity for effective inter-African control, inter-African pacification, and collective self-discipline?

Both in the 1960s and in the 1990s I have allowed a role for the United Nations. But contrary to one more unfounded assumption by Archie Mafeje, I am not blind to the limitations and even injustices of the United Nations as presently constructed.

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My following statement, (Mazrui 1967: 204-216), still holds up:

As between the old idea of imperial pacification and the new ambition of Pax Africana the United Nations temporarily provided a third alternative. And yet it was soon clear that the United Nations as an alternative could never be as self-sufficient as imperial pacification had been and as African self-policing aspired to be...Towards the end of 1964 the United Nations therefore withdrew from the Congo. And yet pacification of the Congo by Africans themselves from internal continental resources was as yet not a practical proposition...In the meantime conflict between (African) leaders themselves, or between them and the military, or between one soldier and another, remains an aspect of the African political scene. So does the risk of foreign intrusion. The quest therefore continues for an African tranquillity capable of being protected and maintained by Africa herself.

I am advocating self-colonization by Africa. I am against the return of European colonialism and the equivalent of Pax Britannica. But I fear that if Africans do not take control of their destiny themselves, including the use of benevolent force for self-pacification, they will once again be victims of malevolent colonial force used by others. I was discussing the dream of Pax Africana decade before we experienced failed post-colonial states and before Africa paid the post-colonial price of four million lives. Does Mafeje feel that we have to lose a few more million lives before we help each other?

The United Nations help is needed but it has to be subject to the consent of Africans themselves. The UN has been a help to Mozambique, and may continue to be needed by Angola. The UN mishandled Somalia, and was grossly, almost crimi-

nally, negligent over Rwanda. But Africa will continue to need the United Nations for the foreseeable future. I am not sure if Archie Mafeje would like to join Republican extremists in the United States who would want to end the peacekeeping role of the UN, and perhaps even destroy the world body.

It is not the big countries which, in the final analysis, need the United Nations and its specialized agencies. It is the small countries, and the vulnerable people. That includes most of Africa. Archie Mafeje thinks I am being used by Westerners. Is Mafeje being used by Newt Gingrich?

Mafeje accuses me of being an 'intellectual tourist' in Africa. He assumes that I had a choice about being based either inside or outside Africa. When was the last time Mafeje offered me a permanent job in Africa and heard me turn it down? And has he forgotten his own long years as an 'intellectual tourist'? Has his own exile ended? Such chaotic thinking is enough to make one recommend inter-African intellectual colonization and re-education.

Professor Mafeje seems to regard inter-African colonization as a kind of fairy tale. In reality that is what happened in 1964 when Tanganyika annexed Zanzibar to form the United Republic of Tanzania. Nobody consulted the people of Zanzibar in a referendum or by a prior general election whether or not they wanted to give up their sovereignty and independence. Julius K. Nyerere of Tanganyika signed an agreement with Zanzibar dictator Abeid Karume – the same way British empire-builders used to get African chiefs to affirm the equivalent of the 1900 Uganda Agreement for so-called British protection.

Zanzibar was in disarray following the revolution of January 1964. The union with Tanganyika provided Zanzibar with a form of pacification. Although the terms of the union were very generous to Zanzibar, it was nevertheless a case of inter-African colonization.

Dr. Mafeje also cites a case where inter-African intervention has so far resulted in a stalemate – i.e., the case of ECOMOG

in Liberia in the 1990s. Mafeje conveniently forgets the case of the intervention of the Tanzanian army in Idi Amin's Uganda in 1979. The Tanzanian soldiers marched all the way to Kampala and successfully ousted the brutal dictator. 'Mission impossible' turned out to be 'mission accomplished' after all. The ill-trained army of a poor African neighbour was still strong enough to end Amin's tyranny.

Dr. Mafeje has convoluting speculations as to why my article on 'Recolonization' was datelined Pretoria. It never occurred to Archie Mafeje that the most obvious explanation was the correct one – that I was myself in Pretoria, South Africa, on August 4, 1994, when the article was published in the *International Herald Tribune* (and simultaneously in such African newspapers as *The Daily Nation of Kenya*). If I had been in Kampala, Dakar, Nairobi or Abuja, the dateline of the article would have been changed accordingly. Instead, I was invited to South Africa to listen to Archbishop Desmond Tutu, to extend my personal felicitations to President Nelson Mandela, and to attend a conference on 'Islam and Civil Society in South Africa'. The dates of these different events were not fixed for the purposes of datelining a newspaper article of mine.

I do not see myself as being in competition with either Edward Said, the distinguished Palestinian man of letters, or Samir Amin, the eminent Egyptian political economist. I am a great admirer of them both. However, in view of Dr. Mafeje's vitriolic attack on me, I am wondering if Mafeje sees himself as being in competition with me? If that is the problem, I sincerely wish I could help Dr. Mafeje. Must we see each other as rivals?

In 1971 when Idi Amin came into power in Uganda; it was not the year when I 'escaped from...Idi Amin' or when I resigned from Makerere University. Since Dr. Mafeje is pouring scorn on my scholarship, he should at least check his own facts and dates more carefully.

Dr. Mafeje says that my thesis about recolonization was intended for non-African audiences and especially for the Western gallery. Did he check on the geographical sequence of my presentations? I distributed a conference paper on the subject of recolonization at the Seventh Pan-African Congress in Kampala in April 1994. I presented a paper on the failed state and Africa's self-pacification (with

my 5 pivotal states) at a conference in May 1994 in Cairo sponsored by the Organization of African Unity, the Government of Egypt and the International Peace Academy. I presented a paper on related issues at a conference in Addis Ababa sponsored by UN High Commission for Refugees and the OAU. And the Kenyan newspapers published different articles of mine on 'recolonization' from time to time.

It was only then that the Western media sat up and took notice. *The Washington Post* quoted me from what I had said in the *Sunday Nation* in Nairobi. And the *Los Angeles Times Syndicate* called me to ask me to elaborate on my views. The article which Dr. Mafeje read in the *International Herald Tribune* was written long after many African audiences had heard me discuss those issues of 'recolonization' – in Kampala, Cairo, Addis Ababa, Nairobi and later Abuja. Dr. Mafeje cannot go around accusing others of shoddy scholarship when he does not even try to find out where else I had discussed the issue of 'recolonization' and for what kind of audiences.

Mafeje refers to a remark I made in Kampala in 1991 that socialism was best at redistribution and poor at production while capitalism was best at production and poor at redistribution. (Mazrui's epigram is 'The genius capitalism production' the genius of socialism is distribution'). Which part of the epigram does Mafeje want to contradict? He mentions some 'crisis of accumulation' in Scandinavia and the Netherlands. Mafeje carefully side-steps the examples of China and Vietnam which have been moving towards market Marxism. Fidel Castro has declared similar intentions for Cuba. Had my epigram anticipated the momentous economic changes in China and, increasingly, in Vietnam? The Chinese have certainly demonstrated the truth of the proposition that 'the genius of capitalism is production'. So have their neighbours in Japan, Taiwan, South Korea, Malaysia and elsewhere. But the Chinese also want to rescue the second part of the epigram – 'The genius of socialism is distribution'. Mafeje may prefer weary and all-inclusive phrases like 'crisis of accumulation' to explain global changes. That is Mafeje's privilege.

Archie Mafeje refers to my BBC Reith Lectures (Mazrui 1980) and my BBC/PBS television series (*The Africans: A Triple Heritage*, 1986). Mafeje suggests that I

am given these opportunities so that I can sing political songs which the West likes. If that is what Mafeje thinks, once again he has the books which emerged out of my BBC Lectures and television series. He would know that I infuriated Western listeners by nuclearising my concept of Pax Africana:

It is not enough that Africa should have a capacity to police itself. It is also vital that Africa should contribute effectively towards policing the rest of the world. It is not enough that Africa should find the will to be peaceful with itself; it is also vital that Africa should play a part in pacifying the world (Mazrui 1980:113)

In pursuit of this wider global goal, I recommended a temporary nuclear proliferation of the Third World (including Black-ruled South Africa and Nigeria) in order to shock the big powers towards universal nuclear disarmament. That was not a message which the West wanted to hear.

My TV series *The Africans* was regarded as 'anti-Western' and 'anti-American' by powerful forces in the United States. *The Africans* caused a national debate about the TV series; and the National Endowment of the Humanities (which had contributed to its funding) condemned *The Africans* as 'anti-Western diatribe' and withdrew its name from it.

Western media may give me a platform from time to time to express my views. The media may also give a high visibility platform to Edward Said, our Palestinian colleague at Columbia University. Neither Edward Said, nor I play to the Western gallery. We interpret the world as we see it. If Archie Mafeje did more research, he would have found out these simple facts. The facts are well documented and most are in the public domain.

Should I have treated Professor Archie Mafeje with greater politeness than he has shown towards me? In fact, I have treated him with less venom and less abuse, I have not used words like 'bankrupt', 'egotistical', 'self-prostitution', 'downright dishonest', 'malignant mind', 'servant of imperialism', or 'obscene' – which are freely scattered in his attack on me. There are depths of unprofessionalism to which I refuse to descend even under provocation.

References

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