

Pax Africana: Between the State and the Intellectuals*

I am not sure why I am continuing to debate somebody who takes pride in not having read any of my books and yet thinks he is qualified to judge my entire career. I am not sure why I am agreeing to debate a scholar who cannot distinguish between intellectual argument and personal abuse. I am not sure why I let myself cross-swords with somebody who judges my whole career on the basis of a single newspaper article – and yet thinks such reductionism is scholarly. Perhaps I am continuing the debate more out of respect for readers of *CODESRIA Bulletin* than out of conviction that this debate is much above a gutter brawl.

If Archie Mafeje insists on making this the kind of brawl which mixes abuse with argument, I can meet him halfway. I can even come half-way towards the gutter – but not all the way! But I have no idea how long I can keep up this unseemly exchange. In Mafeje I am clearly dealing with a more brash and less subtle antagonist than Wole Soyinka, with whom I had a debate earlier this decade (1991-1992) in *Transition*. In combating Soyinka I was inspired towards a higher level of discourse. In combating Archie Mafeje I find myself on the downward spiral of cheap invective.

Self-Colonisation: Benevolent, Benign and Malignant

Dr. Mafeje seems a little confused about how I use the two terms ‘recolonization’ and ‘self-colonization’. Actually, it is quite simple. Recolonization can be by non-African countries, or by the United Nations, or by other African states. I reserve the term ‘self-colonization’ for inter-African colonization only especially when its purposes are substantially benevolent. In such a context inter-African colonization could become part of Pax-Africana.

Africa’s capacity to control its destiny requires a capacity to stabilize and pacify itself. African countries which are larger and potentially more influential have a special responsibility in a world organized on the basis of nation-states. There may be occasions when a larger country has to be its brother’s keeper, or even its brother’s guardian. Inter-African pacifi-

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cation can become a form of benevolent self-colonization – a Pax Africana.

Inter-African colonization can be benevolent, benign, or malignant. It is benevolent when the intervening power stands more to lose than to gain from the intervention; and when the short-run advantages of the country which is occupied are considerably greater. Tanzania’s intervention into Idi Amin’s Uganda seemed to be, in the final analysis, benevolent – for it ended eight of the most brutal years in Uganda’s twentieth century history, Archie Mafeje rightly points out that the Tanzanian government’s intentions were not necessarily benevolent. Their motives were defensive against Idi Amin’s territorial claims. But the consequences of Tanzania’s intervention included the ending of eight years of Idi Amin’s tyranny. Tanzania’s temporary military occupation of Uganda was benevolent. Nyerere erred in trying too hard to restore Milton Obote to power – whose second administration turned out to be almost as disastrous as Idi Amin’s. Pax-Africana received a setback.

At the other extreme is malignant intervention or colonization which is very damaging to the weaker country, and usually perpetrated entirely in the interest of the powerful country.

Benign intervention is a situation where the moral case for and against intervention is about equally compelling. In such a situation the moral issues hang in the balance.

Was Tanganyika’s annexation of Zanzibar in 1964 benevolent, benign, or malignant? It would have been benign but for the attempt to make the annexation permanent. The wedding between Zanzibar and Tanganyika was a forced marriage, but the bride wealth from Tanganyika to Zanzibar was exceptionally generous. Zanzibar was over-represented on union institutions.

The moral issues were hanging in the balance. But since the bride never gave her consent, the unions could not be made permanent without ascertaining the wishes of the bride sooner or later. Zanzibar needs to give its consent to the union. Only then will this form of inter-African colonization be saved from becoming malignant, and become ethical under Pax-Africana.

In the final analysis inter-African colonization should never be permanent. It should happen only in times of desperation. It should then either end or be legitimized by a vote of the colonized people. The vote can either be a referendum or full participation in a truly democratic order.

I did not think that I would have to teach Mafeje the laws of logic. European colonialism meant colonization by category A countries (European). Self-colonization in my sense meant being colonized by category B countries (fellow African). Zanzibar was previously colonized by category A (the British). Zanzibar was subsequently colonized by category B (i.e. Tanganyika).

Therefore Zanzibar was recolonized. Obviously there is no contradiction between ‘self-colonization’ and ‘recolonization’. Just as self-conquest is a meaningful concept, ‘self-colonization’ is equally operational. But self-colonization can only be saved from being malignant if it is not permanent or if it is legitimized by a vote of the colonized people.

But between the self and the other is there something called the United Nations? Is that an intermediate political and moral actor? I thought it was self-evident in both my original *Herald Tribune* article and in my first response to Mafeje that I believed that Africa needed the United Nations and its specialized agencies. How much guidance does Mafeje need in interpreting my sentences? There are two forms of recolonization which I regard as potentially defensible under certain circumstances – by fellow Africans and by a multi-racial United Nations. I do happen to believe in both Africa and the United Nations, but both are for the time being dominated by the West. Just as I am unwilling to reject Africa simply be-

cause it is Western-dominated, I am unwilling to reject the United Nations either. If Mafeje read more of my work (instead of just the *Herald Tribune*) he would know my real position.

Mafeje thinks I am an Afro-pessimist because I have identified areas of decay and vulnerability. On the contrary, I am an Afro-optimist because I come up with ideas about how Africa can transcend those problems. Mafeje's paradigm focuses more on ECOWAS and SADC as failures. My more optimistic paradigm views these as organizations which simply need more experience, better leadership, and a will to act more creatively. We also need more effective continent-wide organizations. Endless verbiage about some 'crisis of accumulation' will get us nowhere.

Nor must we be limited to what will work in the next few years. It is time we planned the future of our continent with longer term horizons in mind. That means we need to institutionalize Pax-Africana.

On exile and Domesticity

Dr. Mafeje taunts me for being in exile. As a neo-Marxist Mafeje should know that exile is for some people a more creative condition than being at home. Does Mafeje remember for how long Karl Marx was in exile from his native Germany? Over thirty years! All those years he spent at the British Museum were much more fruitful for the intellectual history of the world than if Marx had remained at home in Germany to be silenced or imprisoned. V.I. Lenin also had a spell in exile before the 1917 Russian revolution.

What about Marx's friend and benefactor, Friedrich Engels? What was he doing making money from capitalist ventures in Manchester, England, while the German people suffered from tyranny? Engels also found exile much more productive than political domesticity.

History is littered with radicals, liberals and intellectuals who were forced into exile by the intolerance of power at home.

Just as exile is not necessarily barren, residence at home is not necessarily fruitful either. Indeed, as a South African, Mafeje should know that being located in Africa is no guarantee that one is rooted in African reality. The whites of South Africa were located in Africa for generations, but to all intents and purposes they were racial exiles. The question which arises is whether the Archie Mafejes of Africa are

ideological exiles in spite of being physically located in Africa. I suspect that if he and I were to address the same audience in South Africa, and I discussed ethnicity and race, and he addressed 'the crisis of accumulation', I would be closer to the real nerve of South African reality than he would, given his 'exile vocabulary'. Would he like to test this out in practice before a live audience in a debate with me in South Africa or Kenya?

What about my own physical exile? How voluntary is my own exile in the United States? What about Mafeje's location – is he in Africa by default?

Mafeje says I did not have to be a professor-at-large at the University of Jos when I could have become a professor-in-residence. It is obvious that Archie Mafeje does not have a clue that I had been a professor-in-residence at the University of Jos for years. Since he knows so little about my life, why does he presume to judge it?

He does not know that I have offered myself more than once to my old university, Makerere, in Kampala, Uganda, and not been taken up. He does not know that I have not been invited to give a public lecture on any of the campuses in Kenya since Kenyatta died in 1978.

How much freedom to say what I want would I have in Kenya? One test was the fate of my television series. Mafeje does not seem to know that my television series, *The Africans: A Triple Heritage*, which has been shown in dozens of countries, in several languages, has not been shown in my own country. Mafeje thinks I am hob-nobbing with the powerful in Africa. He does not have a clue about my life and its relationship with the powerful in Kenya.

Since he knows so little about me personally why is he giving me personal advice? I do not know much about his life either. But I hear rumours that Mafeje recently applied for a job in the United States. He was even short-listed. If he did not succeed in his application, it is not hard to understand why he is making a Pan-African virtue out of his failure to get the job. Is he in Africa by default?

On Power and the Intellectuals

Mafeje is right to raise the issue of power in relation to the role of intellectuals. But Mafeje has a few contradictions to sort out. I have been to South Africa every year since Nelson Mandela was released.

My credentials have been intellectual and academic. Dr. Mafeje would like to know who has been playing host. Actually it has varied. The range of hosts has included universities, religious groups, a Black Chamber of Commerce, a major national newspaper, students' groups, and a non-profit organization for international peace. Admittedly, I have never been invited by the poorest South African, partly because they have never heard of me. But I suspect they have never heard of Archie Mafeje either.

Mafeje assumes that I interact only with the powerful in Africa, and he regards this as evidence that I am against the people! And yet suddenly Mafeje is on the side of dictator Abeid Karume's decision to end the independence of Zanzibar without consulting the people in a referendum. Suddenly Mafeje is on the side of the power-structure controlled by Karume and Julius Nyerere. What happened to Mafeje's support for the people?

Nor does Mafeje seem to realize that part of the reason for Nyerere's decision to embark on a union with Zanzibar was the pressure from the President of the United States Lyndon Johnson, and the pressure from the Prime Minister of Great Britain, Sir Alec Douglas-Home. These two Western powers wanted Nyerere to prevent the emergence of an East African Marxist Cuba. President Nyerere colonized Zanzibar partly to appease President Lyndon Johnson of the United States. I thought Mafeje was on the side of the people. Has Mafeje's democratic instinct run out of steam over the issue of Zanzibar?

It is possible to argue that the power structure in Africa consists of politicians, soldiers and intellectuals, each category broadly defined. Politicians rely on skills of verbal manipulation and electoral horse-trading. Soldiers rely on the use or threat of military force to achieve desired goals. Intellectuals invoke the skills of wider expertise and the analytical power of the mind. Sometimes intellectuals like Julius Nyerere and Leopold Senghor become politicians. Sometimes the three categories enter into alliances with each other. How will the three units respond to the imperative of inter-African colonization?

Did I serve as an intellectual advisor to President Idi Amin Dada? Amin did want me to play 'Henry Kissinger' to his 'Richard Nixon', but I successfully wormed out of such a role. I had mixed feelings about Idi Amin.

Mafeje would like me to tell him more about my attitude to Idi Amin, either when he took over power or afterwards. I have written a whole book about such matters entitled *Soldiers and Kinsmen in Uganda: The Making of a Military Ethnocracy*. If Mafeje is too lethargic to read my books, he can continue his blind speculations about my relationship with Idi Amin. I invented the term *lumpenmilitariat* after Idi Amin captured power, and when I still lived in Uganda. The term was later adopted by a West-Indian colleague at the University of Dar es Salaam. I may write another book about the Amin phenomenon one day.

Behind Tanzania's invasion of Idi Amin's Uganda were there politicians, intellectuals and soldiers in alliance? Mafeje points out certain fundamental disagreements in Tanzania about the wisdom of invading Uganda. But the differences of opinion did not coincide with the divides between politicians, soldiers and intellectuals.

Dr. Mafeje keeps on trying to hold me to some intellectual standard ostensibly set by the Seventh Pan-African Congress in Kampala in April 1994 at which I was a participant. But the organizers of that Congress deliberately decided to marginalize intellectuals and scholars – including Makerere academics. I was amazed at how few Makerere colleagues were in the programme, or even in attendance at all. I and other scholars (academic intellectuals) were relegated to relatively obscure workshops. High visibility roles were given to either those politicians already in power (a head of state or a foreign minister) or those military leaders struggling to share power (like John Garang of Sudan and Mohammed Farrah Aideed of Somalia). Is Mafeje's support for the people as against the power-structure. Mafeje changes like a chameleon according to which power-structure he approves of.

I turned up at the Kampala Congress with 30 copies of my own paper concerning the spectre of recolonization. Copies of my paper disappeared without a trace – but with no impact at all on the final communiqué, since nobody in the drafting committee had read it! I gave copies of my paper to the Uganda Press, who were also slow. Strangely enough, Uganda did not pay attention until the same material was published in the Kenya Press.

Mafeje as a long-established intellectual should know by now that where an article is published can make all the differ-

ence in its impact. My views on recolonization were known in Africa before they were published in *The International Herald Tribune* – but once they were published in *The Herald Tribune* and in a syndicated column of the *Los Angeles Times*, even Mafeje sat up and noticed. African intellectuals themselves react differently to articles published in major Western media than to articles published in African newspapers and magazines. That is one of the facts of life of international power-relations and intellectual know-how.

Mafeje is right to compare African intellectuals with other intellectuals abroad. But how much does Archie Mafeje really know about Edward W. Said and his ideas? Mafeje keeps trying to cast me against Edward Said, the Palestinian scholar and man-of-letters. I assume Mafeje trusts Edward Said's judgment. In his book *Culture and Imperialism* (1993) Edward Said described me as 'a distinguished scholar... whose competence and credibility as a first-rank academic authority were questioned' (page 38). Professor Said went on to defend me against the furious attacks against me by the *New York Times*' television critic, John Corry. This is how Edward Said (1993:38-39) put it:

Here at last was an African on prime-time television, in the West, daring to accuse the West of what it had done, thus reopening a file considered closed. That Mazrui spoke well of Islam, that he showed a command of 'Western' historical method and political rhetoric, that, in fine, he appeared a convincing model of a human being – all these ran contrary to the reconstituted imperial ideology for which Corry was perhaps inadvertently, speaking.

Elsewhere in the book Edward Said includes me among a handful of intellectuals whose 'scholarship [has been] a catalyst for other scholars' (p.261). Earlier Said had made the following observation in another context (1993:239):

...it is no longer possible to ignore the work of Cheikh A. Diop, Paulin Hountondji, V. Y. Mudimbe, Ali Mazrui in even the most cursory survey of African history, politics and philosophy.

Why is Archie Mafeje trying to deceive readers of the *CODESRIA Bulletin* that Edward Said and I are ideologically and epistemologically at war with each other? I have myself always admired Said's work. And I have quoted Edward Said's own

words of his scholarly solidarity with me. Does Mafeje have any evidence from Said's writings to the contrary? Or is Mafeje as ignorant of Said's writings as he is of mine?

While it is a good idea to discuss African intellectuals in relation to intellectuals from other cultures and societies, we need to begin from a higher level of discourse than Professor Mafeje has afforded us so far.

Conclusion

In spite of it all, I am grateful to Professor Archie Mafeje for creating a situation in which I had to explain my concepts of self-colonization and Pax-Africana to readers of *CODESRIA Bulletin*. I am prepared to believe that Mafeje genuinely misunderstood my original article in the *International Herald Tribune*. Perhaps so did William Pfaff when he quotes me in his own article 'A New Colonialism?', published in the influential American journal *Foreign Affairs* (1995:26).

On the other hand, Leenco Lat, an African normally living in Canada, fully understood my idea of inter-African colonization, but rejected it as both immoral and impractical *Sunday Nation* (Nairobi).

In the same newspaper in Kenya, Stephen Harrison's rejection of inter-African colonization was based on a more unique argument. He argued that since post-colonial African governments had been so incompetent in governing their own countries, why should they be any more efficient in governing their neighbours? To Stephen Harrison (1995), the European colonizers were much more efficient.

The solution, I think, would be to invite them back to run the continent until the local population has been given proper time and training to take over again. This should be a commercial arrangement, in the same way that companies in trouble have to bring in temporary management expertise, or when receivers are appointed to run the affairs of near-bankrupt companies.

This is different from William Pfaff's call in *Foreign Affairs*. Pfaff called upon European powers to return to Africa and complete their unfinished moral responsibility of trusteeship as colonizer. Harrison, on the other hand, was proposing a new business contractual relationship between the colonizers and the colonized.

I prefer my original position of inter-African colonization for benevolent reasons, preferably under a system which includes



a Pan-African Security Council, a Pan-African Emergency Force and a Pan-African High Commission for Refugees. Assuming they survive in their present form my five pivotal states for the African Security Council will be South Africa, Egypt, Nigeria, Zaire and Ethiopia. Some of these are currently more in need of treatment themselves than of providing it But I must emphasize that my proposed design for Pax-Africana has longer time horizons well into the twenty first century.

We in Africa can occasionally live with benign (as distinct from benevolent) inter-African colonization when the moral arguments for and against even out – as was the case in 1964 when Tanganyika annexed Zanzibar. But we should be on guard against malignant recolonization –

as when the Emperor Haile Selassie I unilaterally ended the autonomous status of Eritrea, or when Morocco attempted to deny Western Sahara self-determination.

Outside Africa, India's annexation of Goa from Portugal in 1962 was clearly either benevolent or benign, whereas India's annexation of Kashmir in the teeth of militant opposition of Kashmiris themselves continues to be tragically a malignant annexation. Also malignant was Indonesia's unilateral annexation of East Timor in 1975.

I can understand why my old colleague, Professor Archie Mafeje is sometimes confused. The ethics of inter-African (or inter-Asian) colonization are often complex. But in the quest for comprehension what we need is more light and less heat, more argument and less abuse. Perhaps

one day Professor Mafeje and I will succeed in conquering our feelings in order to liberate our intellects? If such self-conquest is achieved, can self-colonization be averted?

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