

"The Role of Malian Women in the Advent of Democracy Hailed by the American Center"

As part of the celebration of International Women's Day, consecrated by the United Nations, the American Center organized, on Thursday, March 9, 2023, a communication by videoconference on the struggle of Malian women for the advent of democracy and the promotion of women's rights in Mali whose theme was "Mali Women's Role in the Democratic Process in the 1990s," that is to say the role of Malian women in the process of accession to democracy in the 1990s.

The two lecturers from the United States working at Columbia University in New York were Devon Golazweski and Gregory Mann. These two Americans stayed here in Mali and did their doctoral thesis on the 'Mali Women's Archives Project (PAF).' The videoconference was on "Mali Women's Role in the Democratic Process in the 1990s," that is to say the role of Malian women in the process of accession to democracy in the 1990s. It was in the presence of the Director of the American center, Adama Kouyaté; the deputy director, Kadidia Makhi Samake; and center members.

The discussions focused on the heroic march of Malian women who participated in demonstrations for the advent of democracy in Mali. The latter took part in the march from Badalabougou to the city center, passing by the old bridge now called "Martyrs' Bridge." The bridge was so named because this women's march was bloodily repressed, causing several victims of women and children, including students. This is why a statue of the woman was erected at the exit of the point of the martyrs, representing a woman in distress, her arms raised to the sky and crying over the lifeless body of her child killed by forces of the army.

The American speakers showed the image of this statue of historical testimony to the participants of the American Center of Bamako. Many young Malians pass in front of this statue of the woman, but do we take the time to dwell on its real meanings? Group work allowed participants to reflect on the events that marked the evolution of Malian women's rights, the results of their struggles, and the benefit that women derive from them today.

This conference allowed us young people, who were not yet born in 1991, but who are inspired by the struggle of our grandmothers and mothers, to learn about their courage and what they were able to do. Beyond the American Center, and if the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Culture organized outings with students on the sites of monuments and statues to explain their stories, so that we know that they are not just for decoration, but for a purpose of utility and civic education, to transmit a message to future generations? What if the American Center joins in such an initiative?