

Sharon Amos

J. Uyanneh (Nigeria) - Advisor for Statistics of Trade & Production - his office is at the Caricom Secretariat Annex, Lacytown (he is one of the UN Staff) dropped by to see him 4/8/78 (Tony Walker & Sharon)

- I had called to see if we could see him and he said we could drop by anytime between 9-12 and 1-5. When he answered the phone, instead of saying "what can I do for you" he said "what can you do for me" - he wasn't saying this because of a problem with English I don't think.
- he is originally from Onitsha in Nigeria / he said he has lost touch with his heritage as he has not been back for quite a few years and when he did go there on a visit, he hardly recognized the place
- he said right away that the Christians had ruined it/ taken away the cultural traditions of his people
- his uncle is responsible for maintaining the cultural traditions and is consulted for this, like if someone is going to plan a marriage/ his aunt is considered the first lady of the village because of being able to trace her heritage back
- there is a man who also is like a Chief Counsellor/ they call him the Owele of Onitsha who is also an advisor on the cultural traditions. However, he has no official position anymore, though he once had, he is just in a position of being a counsellor or the Chief Counsellor
- in Nigeria, the premier is called "Odu"
- Uyanneh doesn't speak Swahili, he speaks Erdo or something like that/ I didn't recall what his dialect is
- he speaks English rather well tho at times takes pains to formulate his words well
- he is a young man, late 20's I would say, large, -has a friendly open looking face but when you talk to him, you find a difficulty of communicating with him because he is a realist which is good but in his realism he has settled on no particular commitment to anything
- he has traveled a great deal, been to London, many places in Europe, has been to Yugoslavia and Hungary in the socialist Bloc
- I asked him what his politics were - he said he is a "Atheist" of politics as well as religion. He does favor a sort of welfare capitalism or rather a system like Sweden where there is some individual enterprise but with a welfare system
- he said that one thing he does feel about socialism is that people have more opportunity to develop as a person under socialism, but tho he believes socialism can be good, basically he believes that whatever works for people is alright
- we talked about our project, but in the beginning he wanted to talk about his tradition being destroyed in Africa, and we agreed with him about Christians being destructive of traditions of people, and mentioned how blacks in the US of course had all their traditions destroyed and how JJ had become a minister to help people come to socialism thru some of the things in Christianity that made sense in terms of socialism and in pointing out the errors of the bible
- he said that some of the things that the Christians teach are good and should be preserved
- he said that in Nigeria the older people have stuck to the colonialist ways but the young people are radical some of them/ he said that in some ways there is a tendency toward extreme capitalism/ but as the young people take over they are impulsive he said and are radical and young like him and have some of the ideas he has (but I guess he considers them more radical than himself as he called them impulsive)
- what he means by impulsive is that if they see racism in the US they want to "indigenize" the US industries - once they had him make up a statistical report on indigenizing all the foreign industries in Nigeria
- he said that Garuba the Minister of Foreign Affairs is one of the New breed
- his home town Onitsha means "white bank" - which is the impressive sight

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that the people saw when they first came to settle in this area/ some settled in this area and some stayed on the other side of the river and now they are joined by a bridge

-he said that in the North of Nigeria is a place x called Kano which is basically feudalistic. It is a moslem area and showed us a picture of a group of people dressed in ancient type clothing, Moslem, and the leader on a horse had a white moslem outfit on with a head cover (that long sheetlike thing) but he said that despite the garb, he personally knows this man to be liberal tho he wears the ancient clothing

-this man is the "Emir" of Kano - this area that is Moslem was settled by Moslem conquerers and tho it is feudalistic it is known for being one of the least corrupt areas of Nigeria and is very wealthy/ they are wealthy in agriculture, they raise horses and cattle and their people are very powerful in the federal representation as they have a lot of them in positions in the federal

-Uyannah said that he had been to London and among the wealthy English people they don't care what color you have as long as you have money, there is no racism

-his point was that racism is superficial but even if you get rid of racism you still have people who are in another social class and we agreed with that and I said that in Russia it wasn't a racial division anyway and in the US, some economists say that race is just used to divide people so that the poor whites and poor blacks and other minorities don't unite which would be dangerous and mentioned MLK only being seen as dangerous when he united the garbage workers

-Uyannah agreed/ he said that you find in certain areas that when certain minorities prosper, they cease to be concerned about liberation struggles and he used Bermuda as an example

-he said that Bermuda is capitalistic but the people are in such poor straits that they have ceased to think in terms of racial division as they have to work together to survive

-he said that when he was in England he and a Jewish x man worked together for summer work in some factory/ this Jewish man didn't want to associate with English people as he said he had nothing in common with them but this man would ask Uyannah to go out with him to look at monuments and the like and Uyannah would go with him but Uyannah would also play dominoes with the British people as they would help him, like giving him credit for working x extra hours etc as they x knew he wanted to save money to travel and Uyannah didn't see anything wrong with associating with them

-he said that tho he doesn't basically feel people are evil, he does feel that if you get rid of one social evil you often have another to replace it/ like if you get rid of racism, you have to deal with bureaucracy and that often can be just as cruel in terms of personal relationships/ he said that his friend in Poland complained about this bureaucracy

-we talked about Jonestown where we are working one by one on socialx problems as well as getting rid of racism

-he didn't pay great attention to us, but seemed to be intent on his own dialogue which is one I think he has had with a great many people with no particular answers

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