

Writes to Ascertain Attitude of Black Americans Towards African Brothers

By Harriett Muhammad

THIS IS a pleasant change from the latest in local crime or society gossip that I find in other Negro weeklies. Also, the paper has a lot of information concerning Africa and Asia that is very interesting and stimulating. Before steadily reading this paper, I didn't know too much about Africa, but since I am of African descent, there are a few questions I would like answered. How do the Africans feel about us, the Americans of African descent?

Do they really feel we are brothers? What do they expect of our relationships with one another? What do they say about what we have been told — that they sold us into slavery for money and gains? J. M. New York, New York

DEAR J. M.

My answers will be based on history, my talks with African friends and diplo-

mats, my travels in Africa and general knowledge.

Africans have mixed emotions concerning our mutual relationships. Almost all do regard us as blood brothers in that we both have our origins in Africa. Some say the similarities end there—that circumstances, time and culture have made us of different mentalities. Some say that despite this, we do have certain traits in common with each other and that this factor will enable us to be re-united in ethnic ties.

When Africans come to the United States, their feelings about us are influenced by the way we treat them.

I'VE HEARD some Africans say that they get better treatment from the whites than they do from their own ancestral brothers. This they attribute to the fact that the whites are out to make an impression and the blacks have been and still are brainwashed to the extent that to

be associated with Africa is still painful.

THOSE THAT know of our situation are sympathetic. I had one African woman who was moved to tears, tell me that if she was in America and was attacked during a demonstration, she would fight with all her might and if she died, that was alright with her. They think we are much too passive when it comes to our freedom. Concerning what is expected of one another, there are comments ranging from one view to its opposite.

Some Africans say that we are a people in and of ourselves, due to the common background of suffering. They say we should stay in America and fight for what we have worked for and for what is due us.

Others say that White America is not going to change and that we are fighting a losing battle. They say that percentage-wise we are the most well-educated and trained black people there are, because of our living and learning in the United States. They want and ask us to return to Africa to help build up that rich continent that has been heretofore kept in check and robbed by white imperialist countries.

THIS IS the common suffering between us — that both (but we more than they) have been mis-used for centuries for the betterment of another race to the degradation of our own.

TO BE CONTINUED:

Something on your mind?

Write and tell me about it.

Harriett Muhammad

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Let The Buyer Beware.

"A LABORATORY analysis of respondents' materials conducted prior to the hearing revealed that the bone char in their units are chemically and physically indistinguishable from other bone chars and has no unique characteristics," the Commission decided.

The Commission also ruled that Sibco's advertising was false and misleading in unqualifiedly representing the units as fully and unconditionally guaranteed in every respect for 10 years.

The Commission found that in order to take advantage of the guarantee, the customer had to return the unit to respondents at his own expense and had to pay an additional service charge of \$30.

Parents' Magazine Enterprises, Inc., has been ordered to stop using false and deceptive practices in attempting to collect delinquent accounts.

Accro Watch Co., Inc., of New York City, was ordered

More on Africa

(The following is a continuation of information supplied Mr. J. M. of New York City, whose letter asking questions concerning Africans' attitudes toward Africans was carried in the February 4, 1966, issue of MUHAMMAD SPEAKS.)

By Harriett Muhammad

You asked in your letter: "What do they (Africans) say about what we have been told — that they sold us into slavery . . . ?"

YOU MUST remember that when you speak of Africa, you are speaking of a CONTINENT, not a country — a continent with hundreds of languages and cultures and histories.

The slave trade you speak of took place mainly in West Africa among people like the Yoruba of Ogo, Nigeria, and the Angolans — to name some names. It is not easy to track down which people made the first bids of a gun-for-slave with the Europeans — but this is the vicious circle that ensued.

For instance, a people may have feared the invasion of a foreign intruder. So, when the Europeans offered superior weapons in exchange for slaves, the transaction was made. These people then would be more materially ready to protect themselves from an attack.

Another group might have heard about this arms buildup and feared invasion or rebellion — and stockpiled guns through the same type of transaction. It is similar to the vicious circle we have in stockpiling atomic weapons.

THERE IS another thing to remember. Some of the Africans who were shipped to America already were slaves; others criminals, prisoners of war and others sent to America in search of the riches they had heard

about from the Europeans.

The slavery that existed in Africa was NOT the same institution it was here. An African "slave" was similar to an indentured servant. He may have been a slave because he had committed a crime and was being punished, or he may have been working off his debt. But he had certain rights — he was treated as a human being and could purchase his own freedom through his labor.

Some even have married into the family they served. The slaves had a lower social status, but they were never considered animals or pieces of property.

Some historians say that the institution of slavery in America was unprecedented in its cruelty. The Americans had no pattern to follow and were not familiar with the practices of others in this area. Consequently, they did what they wanted and had the worse results as far as human dignity is concerned.

AFRICANS who come here rarely deny that the slave trade existed, but their explanations show the many factors involved — factors heretofore unknown by Westerners.

They have dispelled the stereo-typed mental image we had of our own people selling us for some of the white man's glass beads and "fire water."

If you are interested in learning more about Africa and her peoples, there is much available material to read. In your city, there is

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INSURANCE
AUTO - FIRE - LIFE
BUDGET TERMS
FRANK L. WILLIAMS
4302 S. Pkwy. Chicago, Ill
LI 8-5871

For and About You

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a black nationalist book store in Harlem that has much to offer. (Book stores featuring African literature also can be found in other major cities.) Also, try reading some books written by Africans themselves, such as WEEP NO MORE, CHILD.

The world is in for a treat and a surprise soon, when the African historians working in Accra, Ghana, have completed their encyclopedia on the true histories of the African peoples.

This was the project W. E. B. Du Bois was working on at the time of his death. Friends there have told me that it will be a magnificent work of art — one that will change the history as we now know it.

SOMETHING on your mind? Write and tell me about it.

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