

ON LIFE IN THE SUDAN

By Bayyinah Sharriff

One of the most pitiful and disgusting articles which I have read was that which appeared in Ebony's August, 1969 issue on LeRoi Jones, being exalted as the "Nations leading Black writer" and the "newest cultural hero in the Black community."

I WONDER to which Black community they were referring? Perhaps only to a small one within Newark, New Jersey where his so-called "spirit house" is located. For certainly those who have been to Africa know that what Mr. Jones is promoting is certainly not practiced among the educated classes of Africans, nor is it for those who have an understanding of who is the Black man.

There is no limit to the confusion resulting from the lack of knowledge shown by the followers of Mr. LeRoi Jones and the actual stupidity of his representation as depicted in this article. For example: Nigeria used to be composed of five regions. The women of the four major regions have their own way of wrapping their head pieces, and their skirts. Each region has patterns of materials and colors to identify them with their respective regions. One would not find one woman with a combination of clothing from all of the regions in Nigeria.

However those pitiful followers of LeRoi Jones are so lacking in such knowledge that they show themselves representing not only different regions in one country,

but different cultures in countries as far apart as Ghana and Kenya.

THE NAMES which they have chosen for themselves do not even agree with the dresses they wear: Swahili (language of East Africa) names with western garments. They are mixing up dresses, cultures, foods, and now languages. This is a conglomerated mess. The African who sees my Black Brothers and Sisters wearing these mixed-up garments only hold pity for them. They themselves do not like to see their culture mixed with another culture.

IS MR. JONES trying to promote African unity on their persons by representing so many African countries? This is ridiculous. There are too many cultures there to try to mix them. There can only be one culture for one man: for if and when man tries to combine cultures, he often contradicts himself and cannot but help be confused. My poor Brothers and Sisters, why follow someone who will only lead you to mockery and ridicule — molding yourself after a mixed-up African style? Why choose to follow and identify yourselves with a civilization which has yet to be made civilized. Over the past ten years and until just recently these terms were used (civilized and uncivilized) now they have been replaced by the words "developing country," and "underdevel-

oped country." The Africans themselves refer to their countries as such. They see you identifying yourselves after the underdeveloped part of their country, and they do not respect you for such actions.

EBONY magazine pictured food spread on the floor. Only the poorest of the underdeveloped countries eat off of the floor. Ebony also pictured two shirtless brothers doing a "warrior's dance"; really, how far back have they gone? Have they reached back to those years prior to our being tricked and forced into coming to America in the white man's slave ships?

The reader may question my authority to write charging those who choose to identify themselves with the worst of civilizations in Africa. I lived in the Republic of the Sudan, Africa two years and while there associated with Africans from Nigeria, Ghana, Kenya, Uganda, Mozambique, Zambia, and Tanzania. I also had close association with many African diplomats in Europe for an additional year.

This article mentioned the "traditional dance" being the "high light" of the celebration. What tradition? Whose tradition? Was this something Mr. Jones made up? It also pictured women dancing before the men. The article stated that Mr. Jones is an "Orthodox Muslim." What Orthodox Muslim would permit such an affair violating the moral laws of decency of Islam?

The pictures clearly showed men sitting among women. This is certainly not Islam. It also showed bare arms and legs of women. This is not Islam. No decent Muslim woman would dance before a group of men as shown in this article. The article stated that this so-called Orthodox Muslim "is the minister of the Kawaida faith." How can a Muslim minister be anything but Islam? What is this Kawaida faith?

WHAT MUSLIM anywhere on the planet earth would recognize LeRoi Jones (chosen name Ameer Baraka) and his followers as Muslims by what was presented in this article? None, I am sure. Where did Mr. Jones get his Islam? What made him even consider Islam? He did not choose to even acknowledge Islam until he heard and read the teachings of the Honorable Elijah Muhammad. Why would he send his children to the University of Islam of Muhammad's Mosque No. 25 in Newark, New Jersey (up to very recently) if his ideas for child education were so good? He took some of what the Honorable Elijah Muhammad is teaching then added his confused thoughts and now has this "spirit house" in Newark. What kind of Muslim has a spirit house? He is no Muslim to promote those things which are

not even known in Islam. Why is he using Islam as a spring board for his made up religion? Is it because of the success which is coming to Messenger Muhammad and his followers?

THE HONORABLE Elijah Muhammad is honored and recognized by Muslim scholars and scientists all over the world. Look at the achievements of the Muslims under the guidance of the Honorable Elijah Muhammad and compare them to that shabby "spirit house" of Mr. LeRoi Jones and see for yourself who rightly deserves the title of the "Leader for the Black Man in America" let alone "the newest cultural hero in the Black community." The workings of the Honorable Elijah Muhammad surpass by far anything that LeRoi Jones could do, for he is not divinely guided, nor has he been taught by God in person as the Honorable Elijah Muhammad has been.

Study and compare for yourselves, then question yourself who is worthy to be the Leader. You will find none except the Honorable Elijah Muhammad, The Messenger of Allah.

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