

Reappraisal of Old Habits Follows Musical Party at Sudanese University

By Sister Christine

Last week I wrote about the necessity of a reformation of our people (the so-called Negro) in order for them to be fully accepted and respected by our brothers in the East. Our dear leader and teacher, the Honorable Elijah Muhammad, gives us through his teachings these necessary reforms.

DURING THE four years prior to my receiving the scholarship to study at the University of Khartoum, I corresponded with Sudanese girls. This, plus the continuous briefings I received

from the Sudanese students in America gave me a good understanding of the society in the Sudan.

I also was interviewed many times by two of the Sudanese university faculty members, and by the Sudanese Cultural Attache prior to my scholarship grant. I was instructed to stay with the female students and to follow their patterns of behavior. Yet with all of my briefing, there were still many personal reformations that I had to undergo.

DURING MY first week at the university, the annual musical party was held by the upper classmen for the new students. There was much hustle-bustle around the girls dormitory the week prior to the party, due to the large number of popular entertainers expected.

I, too, was very excited and was looking forward with all anticipation to this musical party. For this occasion, one of the girls loaned me a Sudanese tobe, which is a long piece of material of 10 yards, wrapped to comply with the Muslim laws concerning the proper dress of a female: floor length, concealing the hair, and the arms, and all of the body.

The girls were so helpful in seeing to it that I dressed properly for the occasion. We all wore white. The university female students there wear white to all classes and university affairs. The women in general tend to wear solid colors: during the day, pastels; in the evening, a variety of colors may be seen (generally solids).

ON THE evening of the party, all of the female students, dressed in white, went in a group to the students union. Upon our arrival, the

male students quickly evacuated the first two rows of chairs, and ushered us to these chairs.

It was so wonderful to see this respect shown to us by our fellow male colleagues. The music did not begin until after we had been seated and served cold drinks. This is just one example of the high respect shown to a woman within the Nation of Islam.

I really love the Sudanese music. I liked it so much that evening that I began to snap my fingers and move my feet. I enjoyed the music so much that I even wanted to dance. The two girls sitting on either side of me got very excited. They told me to sit still. They were surprised by my mannerism.

THEY WERE ashamed by my actions and thought that I should be. They told me that a female does not display her feminine charms and beauty before men. Her personal movements should be reserved for her husband, and kept within her family.

It is considered cheap and degrading for a female to dance and put herself on exhibition. A woman loses her respect when she does this. With much restraint, I took their advice and kept silent.

I believe this was one of the first factors which made me re-evaluate the habits that I had been accustomed to here in America. We students were to be entertained; we were not to be the entertainers.

IT WAS still a most enjoyable and exciting evening. The atmosphere was indeed a happy and pleasant one. The females sat separately from the males. This was a beginning and a very important step in the reformation I underwent in the Republic of the Sudan.