



THE

THE PEOPLE'S VOICE

CALABASH

TOOLS OF RESISTANCE

JUNE / JULY 2017

ISSUE 5



THE BLUE FYAH RETREAT

I WRITE THE POEM

THE GONG

WHAT A WHITE MAN TOLD ME

YEMANJA

EDITOR NEWS & NOTES

"The free exchange of support and ideas is an essential condition to world understanding and equally to world progress."
- Haile Selassie I

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IS ME HAILE,
BRINGING DE
CALABASH COME
GEH YUH...



RAVIN-I



CALABASH E-MAGAZINE
EDITOR IN CHIEF
KATRICE "IRIE TREE CEE" BEEPATH



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AH... DE LIFE.
AFTER AH FINISH MEH DRINK
HERE, AH GOIN AN CHECK OUT
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CALABASH AH BRING WID MEH.

AH SEE AH STORY
CALLED "WHAT A
WHITE MAN TOLD
ME" ON **PG. 5**, AN
DEN AH GOIN READ
ON DE SISTREN "BLUE
FYAH RETREAT" ON
PG. 14. AN SISTER IJAHNYA
ALWAYS HAVE INTERESTIN SOUND,
NOW SHE SOUNDIN "THE GONG"
ON **PG. 28**. AN DEN DR. LANCE
TELLIN AH STORY BOUT YEMANJA
WHAT HE MODDA TELL HIM ON **PG. 33**.

BEACH →
SWIM AT
OWN FISH



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WHAT A WHITE MAN TOLD ME

I have no idea whether the white man I am writing about is still alive or not. He gave me an understanding of what actually happened to us Africans, and how sinister it was, when we were colonized. His name was Ronald Stanley Peters, Homicide Chief, Matabeleland, in what was at the time Rhodesia. He was the man in charge of the case they had against us, murder. I was one of a group of ANC/ZAPU guerillas that had infiltrated into the Wankie Game Reserve in 1967, and had been in action against elements of the Rhodesian African rifles (RAR), and the Rhodesian Light Infantry (RLI). We were now in the custody of the British South Africa Police (BSAP), the Rhodesian Police. I was the last to be captured in the group that was going to appear at the Salisbury (Harare) High Court on a charge of murder, 4 counts.

'I have completed my investigation of this case, Mr. Bopela, and I will be sending the case to the Attorney-General's Office, Mr. Bosman, who will take up the prosecution of your case on a date to be decided,' Ron Peters told me. 'I will hang all of you, but I must tell you that you are good fighters but you cannot win.'

'Tell me, Inspector,' I shot back, 'are you not contradicting yourself when you say we are good fighters but will not win? Good fighters always win.'

'Mr. Bopela, even the best fighters on the ground, cannot win if information is sent to their enemy by high-ranking officials of their organizations, even before the fighters begin their operations. Even though we had information that you were on your way, we were not prepared for the fight that you put up,' the Englishman said quietly. 'We give due where it is to be given after having met you in battle. That is why I am saying you are good fighters, but will not win.'

Thirteen years later, in 1980, I went to Police Headquarters in Harare and asked where I could find Detective-Inspector Ronald Stanley Peters, retired maybe. President Robert Mugabe had become Prime Minister and had released all of us... common criminal and freedom-fighter. I was told by the white officer behind the counter that Inspector Peters had retired and now lived in Bulawayo. I asked to speak to him on the telephone. The officer dialed his number and explained why he was calling. I was given the phone, and spoke to the Superintendent, the rank he had retired on. We agreed to meet in two days time at his house at Matshe-amhlophe, a very up-market suburb in Bulawayo. I travelled to Bulawayo by train, and took a taxi from town to his home.

(CONTINUED ON THE NEXT PAGE)



WHAT A WHITE MAN TOLD ME

I had last seen him at the Salisbury High Court after we had been sentenced to death by Justice L Lewis in 1967. His hair had greyed but he was still the tall policeman I had last seen in 1967. He smiled quietly at me and introduced me to his family, two grown up chaps and a daughter. Lastly came his wife, Doreen, a regal-looking Englishwoman. 'He is one of the chaps I bagged during my time in the Service. We sent him to the gallows but he is back and wants to see me, Doreen.' He smiled again and ushered me into his study.

He offered me a drink, a scotch whisky I had not asked for, but enjoyed very much I must say. We spent some time on the small talk about the weather and the current news.

'So,' Ron began, 'they did not hang you are after all, old chap! Congratulations, and may you live many more!' We toasted and I sat across him in a comfortable sofa. 'A man does not die before his time, Ron' I replied rather gloomily, 'never mind the power the judge has or what the executioner intends to do to one.'

'I am happy you got a reprieve Thula,' Ron said, 'but what was it based on? I am just curious about what might have prompted His Excellency Clifford Du Pont, to grant you a pardon. You were a bunch of unrepentant terrorists.'

'I do not know Superintendent,' I replied truthfully. 'Like I have said, a man does not die before his time.' He poured me another drink and I became less tense.

'So, Mr. Bopela, what brings such a lucky fellow all the way from happy Harare to a dull place like our Bulawayo down here?'

'Superintendent, you said to me after you had finished your investigations that you were going to hang all of us. You were wrong; we did not all hang. You said also that though we were good fighters we would not win. You were wrong again Superintendent; we have won! We are in power now. I told you that good fighters do win.'

The Superintendent put his drink on the side table and stood up. He walked slowly to the window that overlooked his well-manicured garden and stood there facing me.



WHAT A WHITE MAN TOLD ME

'So you think you have won Thula? What have you won, tell me. I need to know.'

'We have won everything Superintendent, in case you have not noticed. Every thing! We will have a black president, prime minister, black cabinet, black members of Parliament, judges, Chiefs of Police and the Army. Every thing Superintendent. I came all the way to come and ask you to apologize to me for telling me that good fighters do not win. You were wrong Superintendent, were you not?'

He went back to his seat and picked up his glass, and emptied it. He poured himself another shot and put it on the side table and was quiet for a while.

'So, you think you have won everything Mr. Bopela, huh? I am sorry to spoil your happiness sir, but you have not won anything. You have political power, yes, but that is all. We control the economy of this country, on whose stability depends everybody's livelihood, including the lives of those who boast that they have political power, you and your victorious friends.

Maybe I should tell you something about us white people Mr. Bopela. I think you deserve it too, seeing how you kept this nonsense warm in your head for thirteen hard years in prison.

'When I get out I am going to find Ron Peters and tell him to apologize for saying we wouldn't win,' you promised yourself. Now listen to me carefully my friend, I am going to help you understand us white people a bit better, and the kind of problem you and your friends have to deal with.'

'When we planted our flag in the place where we built the city of Salisbury, in 1877, we planned for this time. We planned for the time when the African would rise up against us, and perhaps defeat us by sheer numbers and insurrection. When that time came, we decided, the African should not be in a position to rule his newly-found country without taking his cue from us. We should continue to rule, even after political power has been snatched from us, Mr. Bopela.'

'How did you plan to do that my dear Superintendent,' I mocked.

'Very simple, Mr. Bopela, very simple,' Peters told me.

'We started by changing the country we took from you to a country that you will find, many centuries later, when you gain political power. It would be totally unlike the country your ancestors lived in; it would be a new country. Let us start with agriculture. We introduced methods of farming that were not known in Africa, where people dug a hole in the ground, covered it up with soil and went to sleep under a tree in the shade. We made agriculture a science.

WHAT A WHITE MAN TOLD ME

To farm our way, an African needed to understand soil types, the fertilizers that type of soil required, and which crops to plant on what type of soil. We kept this knowledge from the African, how to farm scientifically and on a scale big enough to contribute strongly to the national economy. We did this so that when the African demands and gets his land back, he should not be able to farm it like we do. He would then be obliged to beg us to teach him how. Is that not power, Mr. Bopela?’

‘We industrialized the country, factories, mines, together with agricultural output, became the mainstay of the new economy, but controlled and understood only by us. We kept the knowledge of all this from you people, the skills required to run such a country successfully. It is not because Africans are stupid because they do not know what to do with an industrialized country. We just excluded the African from this knowledge and kept him in the dark. This exercise can be compared to that of a man whose house was taken away from him by a stronger person. The stronger person would then change all the locks so that when the real owner returned, he would not know how to enter his own house.’

We then introduced a financial system – money (currency), banks, the stock market and linked it with other stock markets in the world. We are aware that your country may have valuable minerals, which you may be able to extract...but where would you sell them? We would push their value to next-to-nothing in our stock markets. You may have diamonds or oil in your country Mr. Bopela, but we are in possession of the formulas how they may be refined and made into a product ready for sale on the stock markets, which we control. You cannot eat diamonds and drink oil even if you have these valuable commodities. You have to bring them to our stock markets.’

‘We control technology and communications. You fellows cannot even fly an aeroplane, let alone make one. This is the knowledge we kept from you, deliberately. Now that you have won, as you claim Mr. Bopela, how do you plan to run all these things you were prevented from learning? You will be His Excellency this, and the Honorable this and wear gold chains on your necks as mayors, but you will have no power. Parliament after all is just a talking house; it does not run the economy; we do. We do not need to be in parliament to rule your Zimbabwe. We have the power of knowledge and vital skills, needed to run the economy and create jobs. Without us, your Zimbabwe will collapse. You see now what I mean when I say you have won nothing? I know what I am talking about. We could even sabotage your economy and you would not know what had happened.’

(CONTINUED ON THE NEXT PAGE)



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THEN ONE OF THE ELDERS SAID UNTO I, "WEEP NOT! BEHOLD THE LION OF THE TRIBE OF JUDAH, THE ROOT OF DAVID HAS PREVAILED TO OPEN THE SCROLL AND TO LOOSE ITS SEVEN SEALS."
REVELATIONS 5:5



"LET US NOW, AS WE PLAN FOR THE COMING YEARS, SET OUR GOALS TOO HIGH; LET US DEMAND MORE OF OURSELVES THAN WE BELIEVE WE POSSESS."

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WHAT A WHITE MAN TOLD ME

We were both silent for some time, I trying not to show how devastating this information was to me; Ron Peters maybe gloating. It was so true, yet so painful. In South Africa they had not only kept this information from us, they had also destroyed our education, so that when we won, we would still not have the skills we needed because we had been forbidden to become scientists and engineers. I did not feel any anger towards the man sitting opposite me, sipping a whisky. He was right.

‘Even the Africans who had the skills we tried to prevent you from having would be too few to have an impact on our plan. The few who would perhaps have acquired the vital skills would earn very high salaries, and become a black elite grouping, a class apart from fellow suffering Africans,’ Ron Peters persisted. ‘If you understand this Thula, you will probably succeed in making your fellow blacks understand the difference between ‘being in office’ and ‘being in power’. Your leaders will be in office, but not in power. This means that your parliamentary majority will not enable you to run the country....without us, that is.’

I asked Ron to call a taxi for me; I needed to leave. The taxi arrived, not quickly enough for me, who was aching to depart with my sorrow. Ron then delivered the coup de grace:

‘What we are waiting to watch happening, after your attainment of political power, is to see you fighting over it. Africans fight over power, which is why you have seen so many coups d’etat and civil wars in post-independent Africa. We whites consolidate power, which means we share it, to stay strong. We may have different political ideologies and parties, but we do not kill each other over political differences, not since Hitler was defeated in 1945. Joshua Nkomo and Robert Mugabe will not stay friends for long. In your free South Africa, you will do the same. There will be so many African political parties opposing the ANC, parties that are too afraid to come into existence during apartheid, that we whites will not need to join in the fray. Inside whichever ruling party will come power, be it ZANU or the ANC, there will be power struggles even inside the parties themselves. You see Mr. Bopela, after the struggle against the white man, a new struggle will arise among yourselves, the struggle for power. Those who hold power in Africa come within grabbing distance of wealth. That is what the new struggle will be about....the struggle for power. Go well Mr. Bopela; I trust our meeting was a fruitful one, as they say in politics.’

(CONTINUED ON THE NEXT PAGE)



NO JUSTICE NO PEACE

WHAT A WHITE MAN TOLD ME

I shook hands with the Superintendent and boarded my taxi. I spent that night in Bulawayo at the YMCA, 9th Avenue. I slept deeply; I was mentally exhausted and spiritually devastated. I only had one consolation, a hope, however remote. I hoped that when the ANC came into power in South Africa, we would not do the things Ron Peters had said we would do. We would learn from the experiences of other African countries, maybe Ghana and Nigeria, and avoid coups d'état and civil wars.

**Asking you to give me
EQUAL RIGHTS
implies they are yours to give.
Instead, I must demand
that you stop trying to
deny me the rights
all people deserve.**

In 2007 at Polokwane, we had full-blown power struggle between those who supported Thabo Mbeki and Zuma's supporters. Mbeki lost the fight and his admirers broke away to form Cope. The politics of individuals had started in the ANC. The ANC will be going to Mangaung in December to choose new leaders. Again, it is not about which government policy will be best for South Africa; foreign policy, economic, educational, or social policy. It is about Jacob Zuma, Kgalema Motlhante; it is about Fikile Mbalula or Gwede Mantashe. Secret meetings are reported to be happening, to plot the downfall of this politician and the rise of the other one.

Why is it not about which leaders will best implement the Freedom Charter, the pivotal document? Is the contest over who will implement the Charter better? If it was about that, the struggle then would be over who can sort out the poverty, landlessness, unemployment, crime and education for the impoverished black masses. How then do we choose who the best leader would be if we do not even know who will implement which policies, and which policies are better than others? We go to Mangaung to wage a power struggle, period. President Zuma himself has admitted that 'in the broad church the ANC is,' there are those who now seek only power, wealth and success as individuals, not the nation. In Zimbabwe the fight between President Robert Mugabe and Morgan Tsvangirai has paralysed the country. The people of Zimbabwe, a highly-educated nation, are starving and work as garden and kitchen help in South Africa.



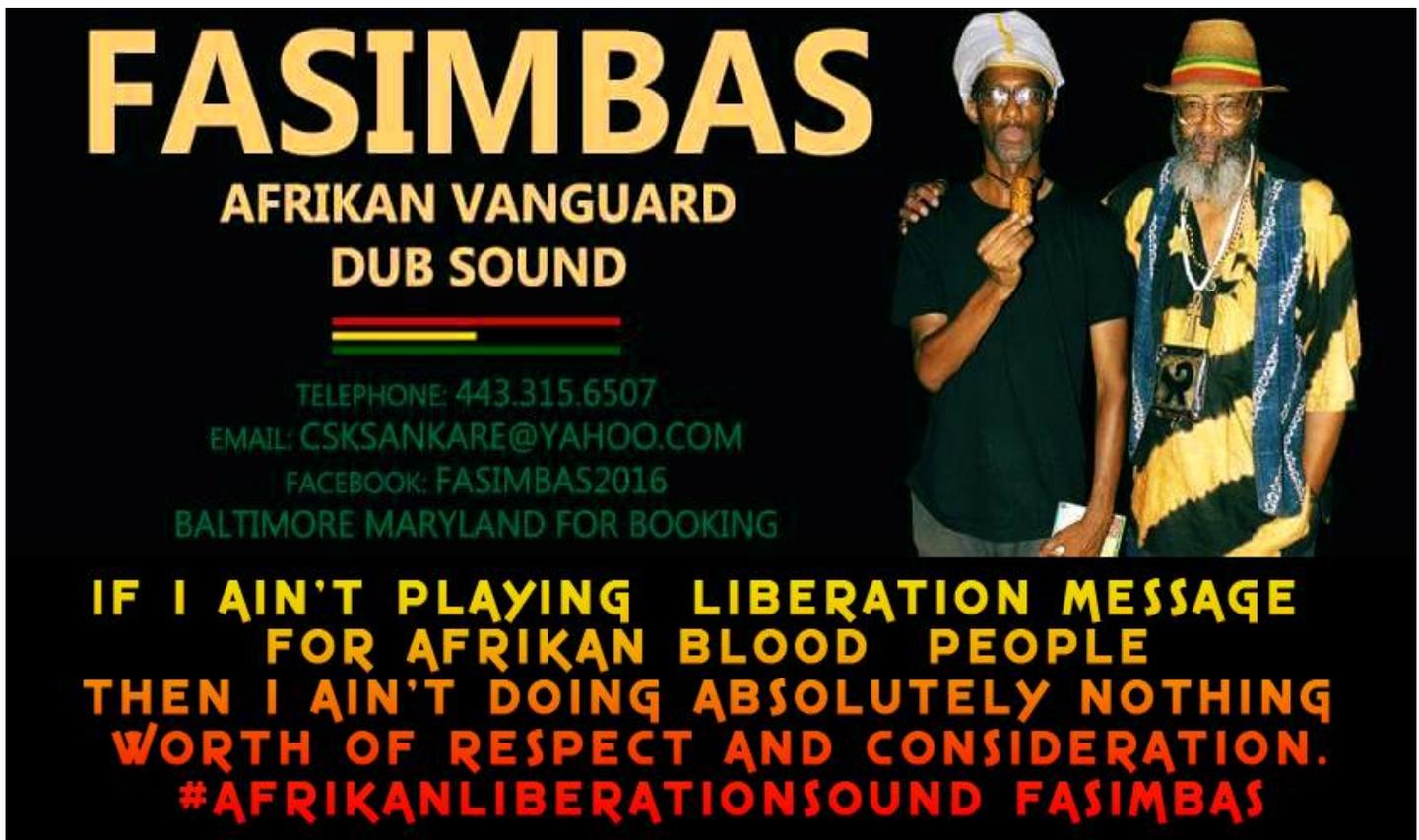
WHAT A WHITE MAN TOLD ME

What the white man told me in Bulawayo in 1980 is happening right in front of my eyes. We have political power and are fighting over it, instead of consolidating it. We have an economy that is owned and controlled by them, and we are fighting over the crumbs falling from the white man's 'dining table'. The power struggle that raged among ANC leaders in the Western Cape cost the ANC that province, and the opposition is winning other municipalities where the ANC is squabbling instead of delivering. Is it too much to understand that the more we fight among ourselves the weaker we become, and the stronger the opposition becomes?

Thula Bopela writes in his personal capacity, and the story he has told is true; he experienced alone and thus is ultimately responsible for the ideas in the article.

Source: Thula Bopela

<http://azaniamag.com/will-never-forget-white-man-told-zimbabwe-1980/>



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BLUE FYAH

Empress Menen Asfaw "Blue Fyah" Leadership Retreat March 31st-April 2, 2017 — Miami, FL



DR. WOLETE BERESFORD

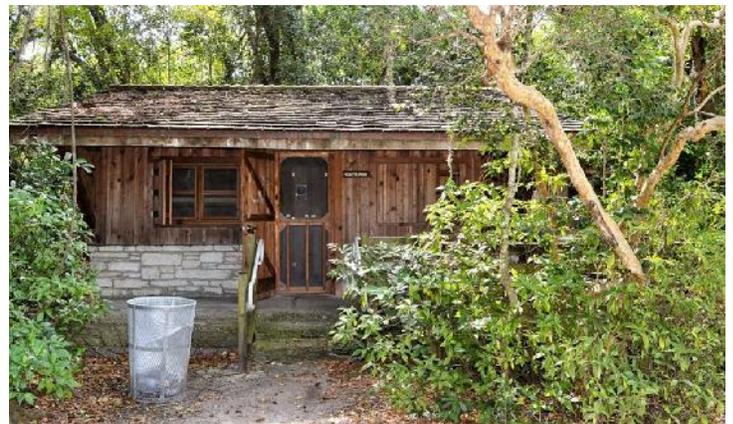
The inaugural Empress Menen Asfaw "Blue Fyah" Leadership Retreat brought together RasTafari women from St. Croix-USVI, St. Thomas-USVI, Tortola-BVI, Ohio, Illinois, New York, Maryland, Washington, DC, Connecticut, Georgia, Florida, and Jamaica, W.I.

In anticipation of the event, a monthly conference call had been established as a means to bring about harmony and sisterhood amongst the attendees. As the first wave of Dawtas began arriving on Thursday 3/30 it was evident that that effort had been successful. They greeted each other by name and shared joyous

moments reminiscent of a reunion. Empress Menen is the glue that united them and her name resounded throughout the workshops, the leadership presentations, and in the word-sound of all in attendance.

Each day began with Sister Trea presenting the morning M.E.D.I. (Menen Enlightenment Dawning Iwah). This offered opportunities for meditation, affirmation, and Ises.

Dr. Asantewaa Opong-Wadie delved into the Ivine nature of Empress Menen Asfaw, showing a clear path to her divinity. She further discussed the Ishango bone and its place in history as the original calendar of non-European origin.



BLUE FYAH



Dr. Wolete Beresford presented workshops on crochet, offered lavender foot wash, and led the Chant Writing workshop. It was truly heartwarming to witness the presentation of chants dedicated to Empress Menen Asfaw. Dawtas were chanting choruses such as, “Let her rise, rising high, teach I n I your virtue, raise her up on high” and “Empress Menen, Empress Menen, Blue Fyah, Blue Fyah...”.

Some additional highlights included Mama Thea’s Asli Pure Body Salts workshop. Dawtas explored the infusion of Himalayan Pink Salt with lemongrass, lavender, mandarin, peppermint, and a plethora of other essential oils and dried flowers.



Sister Montez’s Waist Beads workshop shared some great historical information on the significance of the beads. Sister Diane shared some great insight on womb care. Finally, Empress Ruth blessed the event with her melodious songs entitled “Inner/Deeper” and “Lioness”.

A great time was had one evening at the beach as we charged our crystals in the ocean and exchanged gifts created at an earlier workshop.



(CONTINUED ON PAGE 18)

BLUE FYAH

Twenty-five RasTafari Dawtas all exhibiting their own “Blue Fyah” vibrations were together in one space sharing love, irits, and dispelling the myth that women are not able to get along and are unable to work together.

All Ises unto Their Ivine Majesties Haile Selassie I and Empress Menen Asfaw. Give thanks for blessing this mighty work and for empowering I n I with the tools to bring it to fruition.

- DR. WOLETE BERESFORD



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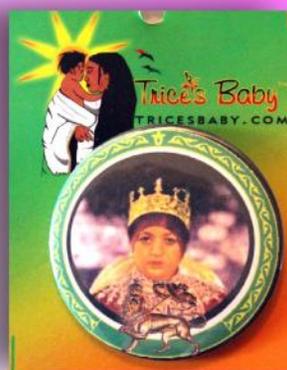
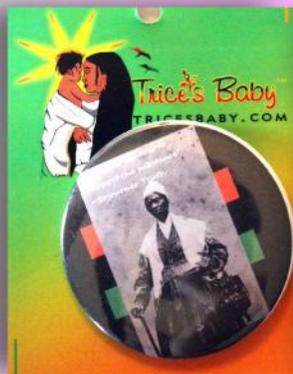
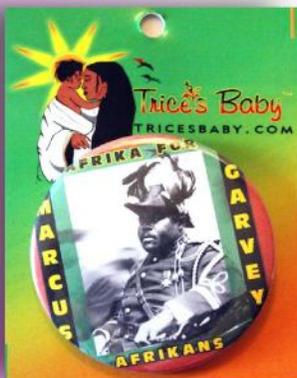
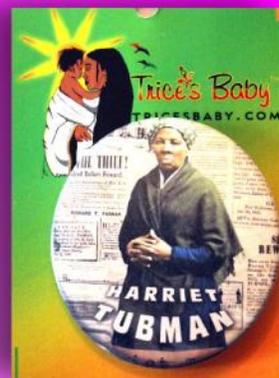
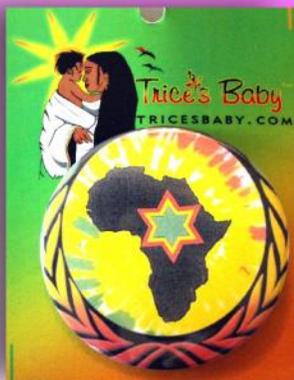
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BLUE FYAH

Meditations on The Empress Menen Blue Fyah Retreat 2017



RASESS IGINA

Greetings in the name of INI Ivine Majesties Emperor Haile Selassie and Empress Menen. I greet deh I with Honor and Love. While Trodding Rastafari, INI have always had this vision, a vision that INI have seen in this day. A vision that INI am still, both humbled and honored to have been a part of.

First, to even overstand what the retreat was about, ones must have had to recognize what is means to possess that “BLUE FYAH”. To acknowledge INI Ivine Mother Empress Menen Asfaw , to uphold the Royal legacy with grace, dignity, leadership, strength and love. To raise INI youth with respect, honor and knowledge of INI livity. To trod side by side in balance with INI Kingman. To support and encourage INI families, villages, and communities. Once INI acknowledges that, in INI mind, that is BLUE FYAH!



I give humbled thanks to Rasess Jahzani for inviting INI to first take part in the BLUE FYAH reasonings and conference calls months prior to the retreat and then for being such a ROYAL and GRACIOUS hostess. Along with the sistrens who were right by her side and made everything just flow. The Empress Menen Blue Fyah Leadership Retreat was held on Camp Greynolds grounds in Miami, Florida. Upon arrival INI was greeted with the sweet scent of sage burning

and from that moment, I knew everything would be Ilah!



As ones would start to arrive and gather, ones embraced each other as if INI had known each other for years, ones were known from the conference calls and ones were literally meeting in flesh for the first time.

BLUE FYAH

flesh for the first time. We then chose cabins and started to vibe, imagine eight strong lionesses in each cabin. Amongst the beautiful wordsounds of “Greetings”, “Blessed Love”, “Rastafari”, wafting in the wind were aromatic scents of Frankincense and Myrrh, Lavender, Chamomile... you smelled it all, everyone started on one perfect balance. In the evening, INI gathered in the main hall which was decorated so welcoming. Each Dawta received an Empress Menen Shirt and a journal from Rasess Jahzani, a Rose Quartz stone from Sista NaTasha and a blue mesh pouch containing a Empress Menen Blue Fyah Retreat 2017 calendar magnet, a sandalwood fan, a blue Lapis Lazuli stone, royal blue earrings and a Rose petal bath tea bag from INI and Empress Inde. This was just the beginning to the amount of gifts that INI would receive.



Workshops immediately started, and while reasoning and welcoming, INI knitted! Ones were professional and ones were starters (ehemm lol), but I couldn't feel no way, INI sistahs were right there to assist and guide you along. For the next two days it was just that... Love, strength, leadership, knowledge, laughter, tears and motivation. Ones truly build and bonded, through consistent workshops.

INI met for morning breakfast, meditation and some Tai Chi, next was the Chant writing, which was one of INI favorite workshops, outside of the Empress Menen Reasoning, this portion was so fulfilling that I cried uncontrollably, not only because of what was told but, the delivery was magnificent. I was so proud!

Reasonings on Makeda and Taitu, also reasonings on Blue Fyah and manifesting The R.A.S.E.S.S. (Royal Aethiopian Sistren Exemplifying Stately Strength) all delivered and received with greatness.

BLUE FYAH

There were workshops on waist beading and scented bath salts, ones received facials and massages. Self care and preservation was priority. Dawtas reasoned on their personal leadership qualities and roles and if anyone couldn't pinpoint one, then ones definitely forwarded from the retreat looking forward to blazing a new trail.

All of this was done while being served an Ital breakfast, lunch, and dinner. On Saturday evening all the Dawtas wore white with Royal Blue accents and went to the beach for Ises, stone charging, exchanging of bath salts made by another and just reasonings. I fulljoyed every moment. Through it all, these Dawtas remained... consistent, loving, and true. From holding individual



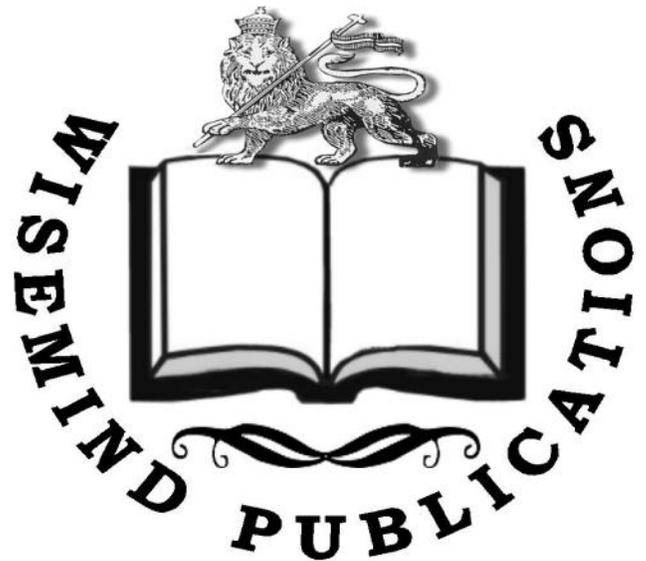
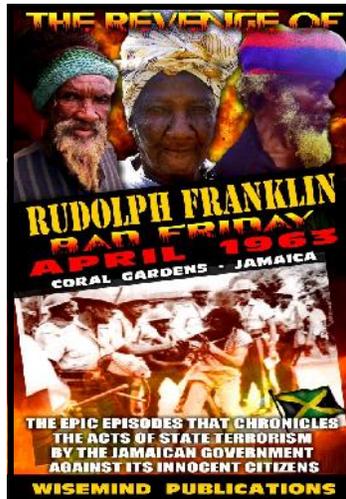
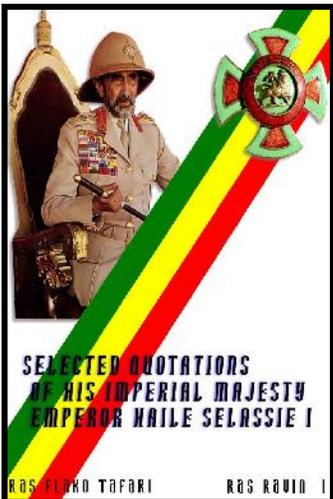
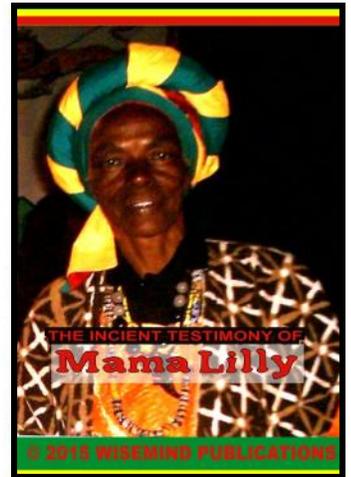
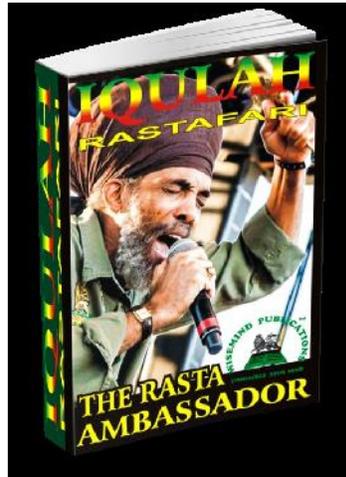
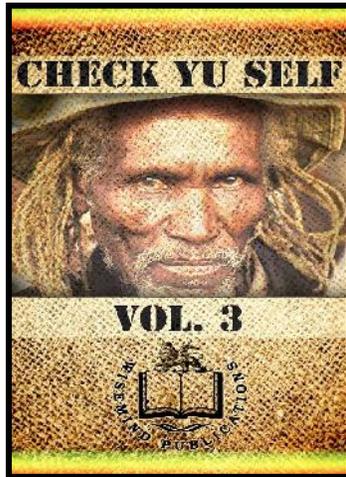
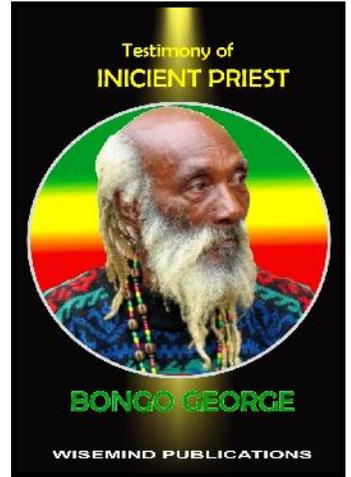
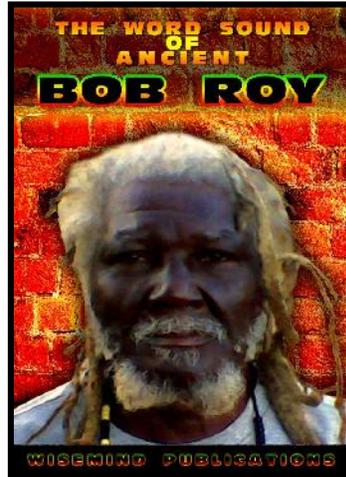
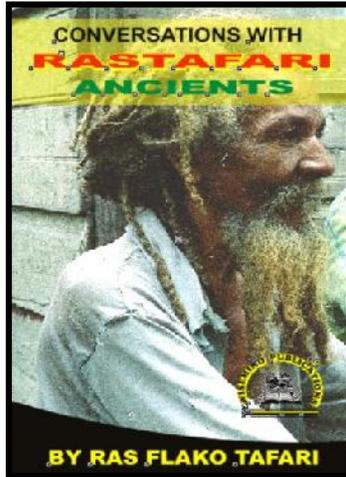
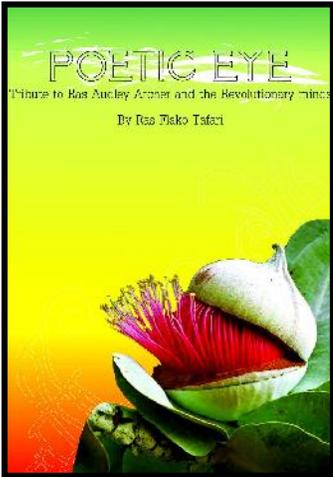
reasonings at night to holding a medi to holding a space. Everyone was held accountable! Even as INI slept, we slept in order, one would wake at 4am and whisper, "I'm forwarding to the bathroom" and without hesitation another Dawta would whisper "I'm going with you"... Now that's LIONESSE ORDER! INI have so many positive and loving memories to share and some I will hold deep in INI heart!

INI received so many jewels from this experience! I went knowing I had that BLUE FYAH, but now it's Blazing! I forwarded wanting to be a better Queen, Wife, Mother, Sistah, Friend, Aunt, Leader, and most of all, Dawta of RasTafari...



It was truly a humbling experience, I give thanks again to Rasess Jahzani Kush and all who assisted her, To the Brethrens who cooked, protected, and served all of INI, give thanks! To all INI new sistrens, 23 to be exact, an abundance of blessings forward, may INI Ivine Majesties continue to guide and keep INI, may INI youths sight in INI, HIS and HER ways. I am most grateful to have been a part of this Royal event, I am most grateful to be a BLUE FYAH DAWTA.

Blessings,
SISTER REGINA GORDON
RASESS IGINA



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BLUE FYAH



EMPRESS INDE

First and foremost I Empress Inde aka Sekhmet, Give thanks and praise unto InI God and King, King Alpha and Queen Omega Selassie I Jah RasTafari! For the Mighty experience, At the Empress Menen Asfaw Blue Fyah Retreat 2017 in Miami, Florida.

I would like to give thanks for The Lalibela Institute and the ones behind the wheels manifesting great works for the RasTafari community!

As a young Wombmon troddening RasTafari I always longed to be apart of a strong RasTafari collective and 16 years later I finally feel a sense of stability amongst Daughters, which I Give thanks unto InI Honorebel Blue Fyah Mamas and Sistars for helping I create that actuality.

Trodden Boboshanti for several years I was able to truly tap into I feminine energy and really learn and know the powers INI hold as a Wombmon as Daughters of the Most High, so a retreat of such magnitude only heightened the Blue fyah.

The Empress Menen Asfaw Blue Fyah Retreat created a deep connection of Divine belonging not just belonging to a group of other Beautiful Sisters but an extensive divine belonging to INI livity. The mighty three days spent gathering, reasoning and educating INI on INI role and INI profound spiritual connection to INI Mama Mega had an enduring effect on I heart that will last a lifetime which in turn will manifest a legacy for the younger generation of RasTafari Suns and Daughters to come in actions and deeds.



BLUE FYAH



RASESS JAHZANI KUSH

Rastafari is an ever changing and evolving livity. In fact, to not change and evolve would be death, the anthesis of Rastafari. The growth of the Rastafari wombman and her impact on the movement is reaching a noteworthy level. Sisters are reevaluating the movement to ensure that it is heading in a direction that is beneficial to all Rastafari, wombman, man, and child.

This year, Lalibela Institute, Inc., hosted an event aimed at cultivating the leadership skills of Rastafari wombman. The Empress Menen Asfaw “Blue Fyah” Leadership Retreat held in North Miami Beach, Fl. a three-day event, provided a unique opportunity for Rastafari Wombman to fulljoy Irusalem schoolroom at its highest

levels. Cognizant of Haile Selassie I’s challenge to InI to become members of a “New Race” Lalibela Institute, Inc., considers his precepts on effective and humanistic leadership as necessary tools to build such a consciousness. Therefore, Lalibela Institute, Inc. advanced its education agenda by supporting the growth of the iritical backbone of the African nation, the Rastafari Wombman.

The vision for the retreat was to bring together Rastafari Wombman in a relaxing and intimate setting where the focus would be on them, mind, body and soul. With leadership at the helm, the aim was to have sisters examine their leadership skillset and reflect on how they contribute to the progressiveness



of their families, communities and nation. The emphasis on

utilizing Blue Fyah as the iritical catalyst for aiding sisters in viewing themselves as complex and multifaceted creatresses was purposeful and direct. Blue Fyah, a term I coined and detailed in the 2011 publication, *Roaring Lionesses: Rastafari Woman, Journeys of Self Liberation*, focuses on the spiritual strength that the Rastafari nation particularly Wombman garner from Empress Menen Asfaw.

BLUE FYAH



Sisters who were drawn to the retreat are those who acknowledge their connection to the feminine ivine personified in the embodiment of Menen Asfaw. Her strength, royalty, dignity, grace and spirituality all embers that emanate from her Blue Fyah. The retreat was a trumpet call. Those who heard it forwarded from near and far over land and sea to learn and hear the voice of EMA through each other. A united force of lionesses was formed during the event and the synergy born left an indelible mark on participants. An impact so

deep that sisters have collectively decided to maintain their connection via participating in daily group texts, continued monthly phone conferences and the proposal of "Blue Fyah" on-line courses through Lalibela Institute, Inc. Furthermore, sistren who attended the retreat have determined the necessity to establish an order as a testament to their commitment to leadership within the Rastafari nation. The order's name, tenets, and membership requirements will be highlighted at the 2018 Empress Menen Asfaw "Blue Fyah" Leadership Retreat. InI look forward to more opportunities to build and strengthen InI selves through service unto their Ivine Majesties. Rastafari Love & Light.

- RASESS JAHZANI KUSH, PHD



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Rastafari Woman, Journeys of Self Liberation

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Legacy of 'The Gong': Pinnacle, A Ras Tafari Model of Self-Reliance



**MAMA IJAHYNA
CHRISTIAN**

Leonard Percival Howell, was born on June 16, 1898. One hundred years later, in 1998, the international Ras Tafari conference in Barbados from which the Caribbean Rastafari Organisation emerged, agreed that the date of Howell's birth should be included on the annual calendar of Ras Tafari holy days. But who was this man that became known as 'the first Rasta'? He is the one who first declared in Jamaica, the divinity of His Imperial Majesty, Haile Selassie I.

The seers and seekers after knowledge that heralded the advent of Ras Tafari, crowned Haile Selassie I, had something in common. They were bold and fearless in promulgating their insightful knowledge and visions to advance Pan-African solutions to the trauma of that great crime against humanity. Among them, my forebear from the island of Anguilla, Robert Athlyi Rogers, documented his vision in *The Holy Piby*, how the God of Ethiopia had anointed him as a Shepherd for the 'suffering posterities' of Ethiopia. To put the matter in perspective, he explained that the Biblical Christ had come to save the lost tribes of Israel. *The Holy Piby* was first published in New Jersey 1924. Two years later, in 1926, a Jamaican, Reverend Fitz Balintine Pettersburgh, again pointed to Ethiopia, in his publication, *the Royal Parchment Scroll of Black Supremacy*. That publication focused on the primacy of the King Alpha and Queen Omega balance in guiding those who had been taken away, in reclaiming their Ethiopian sovereignty.

Some nine years after that, around 1935, using, to a great extent, the same language as Pettersburgh, Leonard Percival Howell, born in 1898, published *The Promised Key*. The last of this trilogy considered to contain the philosophical foundation of the Ras Tafari faith and movement, was published under the pseudonym of G.G. Maragh (Gong Guru Maragh, a Hindu name which means 'teacher of famed wisdom'). It was from Howell's nickname "the Gong" that both Bob Marley and his recording studio became known as "Tuff Gong", and his son Julian Marley, "Junior Gong". *The Promised Key* identified King Alpha and Queen Omega as Ethiopia's Emperor Haile Selassie I and Empress Menen. The world's attention had been drawn to the imperial coronation in Addis Ababa on November 2, 1930, manifesting the vision of other Jamaican preachers such as Archibald Dunkley, Joseph Nathaniel Hibbert and Robert Hinds, who had all arrived at the conclusion that this was the Black King, crowned in the East, ushering in the Age of African Redemption.

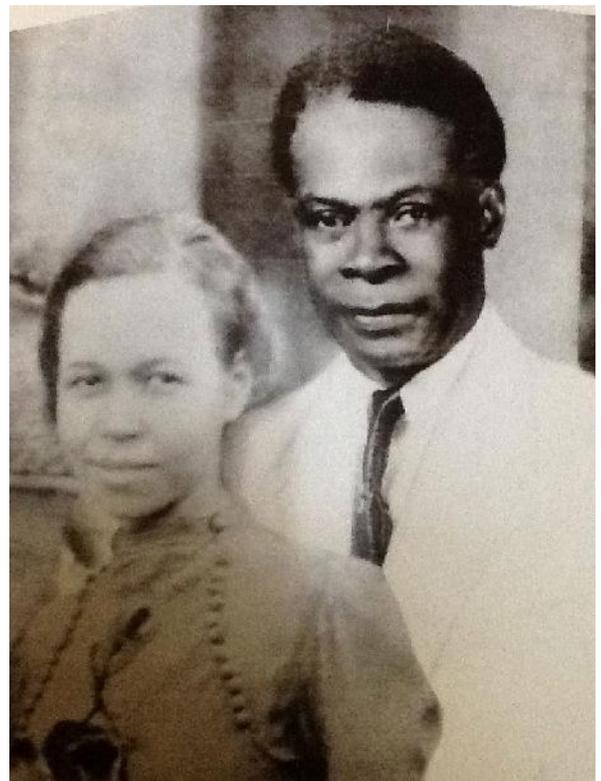


Howell had begun preaching about the Black God and King around 1933 and is credited for much of the early development of the Ras Tafari Movement in Jamaica. He spread the glad tidings of King Ras Tafari throughout Jamaica, urging the people to recognize His Majesty as their King of Kings and to disregard George V, King of England. But not every received the news gladly and Howell was repeatedly charged and prosecuted for sedition. Around 1940, Howell, established an independent community at Pinnacle Hill, Sligoville, St. Catherine, Jamaica. The community grew to approximately 4,500

members and Howellite philosophy vehemently rejected all colonial agents and practices, promoting the idea of repatriation to Africa. It is also said that the green, yellow and black colour scheme of the Jamaican flag were colours sported in a rosette that Howell was known for wearing.

Life at Pinnacle was not without its challenges but the community was an example of Howell's striving to 'construct the black race economically, the better to serve God.' What really earned the ire of the authorities though, was the fact that Howell admonished the people of Jamaica not to pay taxes to King George and Pinnacle established its own banking system in which women were the bankers. It is on record that during one police raid, £3,000 were handed over to the police, and from one woman only, over £800. Howell talked about the people having their own currency – and not just independent banking but having our own mints – making the money. According to Miguel Lorne in 2003, 'no one was poor in that community...'

The almost self-sustaining commune grew many food crops but suffered from many police raids largely because it produced marijuana in commercial quantities. Oral accounts say Pinnacle produced the best and the Ras Tafariites, as the early adherents were called, would journey there to obtain it. The community was finally broken up in 1954. In 2016 at AbiReggae, in Cote d'Ivoire, I was privileged to hear one of Howell's sons, Bill, recount memories of the





place where he was born and the trauma of the police raids. Many of the former residents settled in West Kingston and other parts of the island where camps were formed, groundations held, and distinct Ras Tafari culture continued to establish strong roots.

Even though controversy continues to surround the fate of Pinnacle, there is no questioning the significance of the site, not only to Ras Tafari patrimony. In 2003, during the Opening session of the Rastafari Global Reasoning at the University of the West Indies in Jamaica, then Minister of Information, Burchell Whiteman 'applauded the principle of self-reliance and the rejection of mendicancy and dependency dating from the days of Pinnacle...'

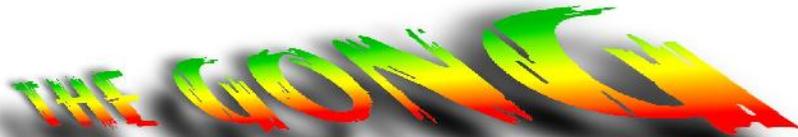
Dr. John Maxwell of the Faculty of Social Sciences ...recalled his personal history as a small child 1940s Spanish Town and the interesting occasions of passing the Pinnacle community, which made a strong impact of him, particularly the presentation of the community there, the name Pinnacle in the side of the mountain in white stones and the impression of order and stability. He noted the unsympathetic and aggressive order of the day that led to the destruction of Pinnacle causing the people to disperse and spread all over the island.'



During his presentation on the History of Rastafari, Attorney Miguel Lorne shared that during Howell's trial for treason in 1930, he was asked, '[D]id you say anything about Rastafari?' His reply was, 'Yes, I told them to think of their king Ras Tafari...' Brother Miguel was making the point that, when faced with persecution, those early brethren did not waver from their path – even at risk and after being placed in jail or in the mental hospital.

Pinnacle came up again during the panel discussion on the protection of Ras Tafari intellectual property. The late Attorney, Sister Sajoya Alcott acknowledged Pinnacle - an important historical site, noting the development taking place around it. However, she thought that the Ras Tafari community does not have the ability and monetary resources needed to engage in the work of preserving Pinnacle. I am not sure whether this concern is being prioritized by the





various stakeholders in the decision making about how Pinnacle is to be preserved.

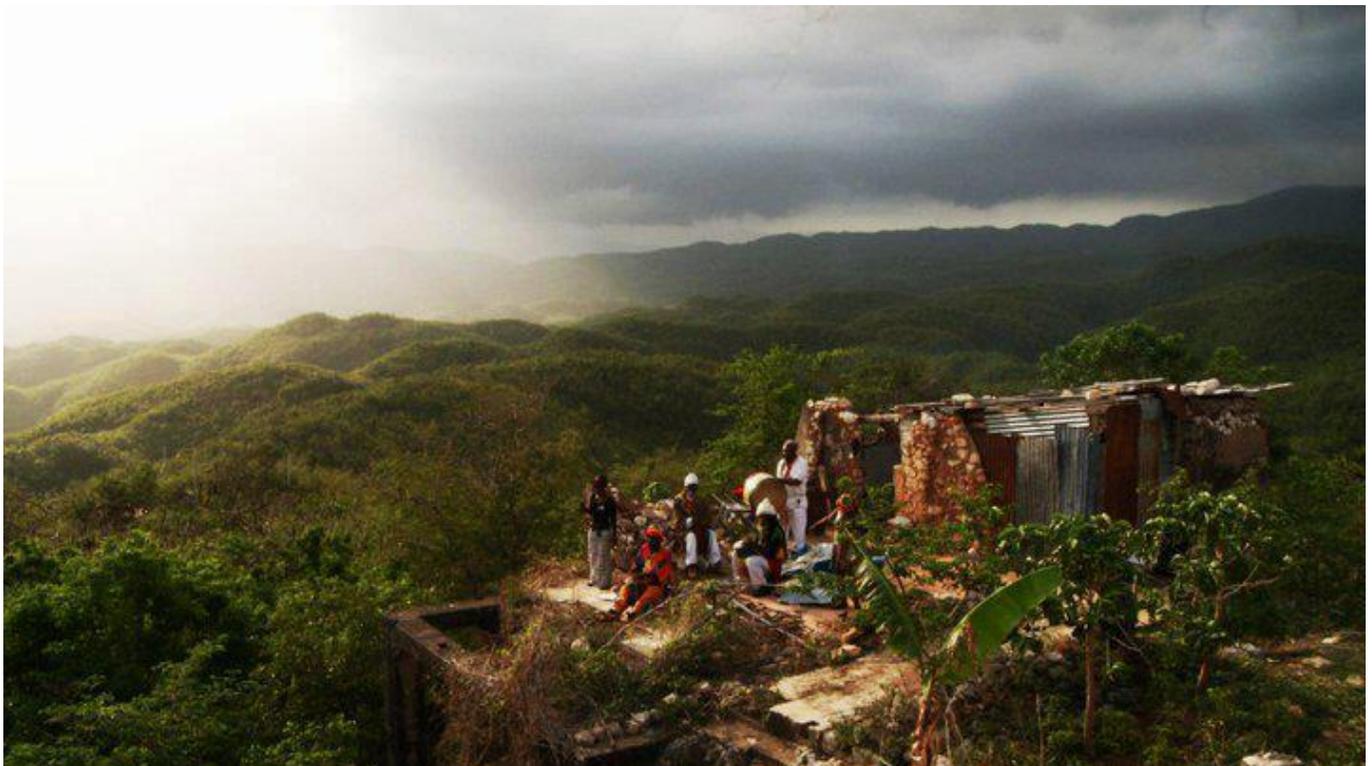
Later that year, the late Ras Iration I, in a letter to Jamaica’s Minister of Education dated 27 September 2003, wrote in protest:

‘It is with deep regret and natural indignation that I bring to your attention for prompt rectification the matter of misinformation on Ras Tafari in religious education as is contained in New Steps in Religious Education for the Caribbean [book 1] by Michael Keene. The first sentence of paragraph one on page 86 to wit: “The religious beliefs and practices of the Ras Tafarians have their roots in the teaching of Marcus Garvey” is fundamentally incorrect and erroneously misleading. Of the four pages dedicated to the subject Ras Tafari there is not a single mention of our great luminary Leonard Percival Howell who was historically the first conceptualizer and teacher of Ras Tafarianity..’

This is why June 16, is commemorated annually in the Ras Tafari world. We salute the life and work of Leonard Percival Howell and must never forget the legacy that connected the dots to provide practical preparation for the return of the African Diaspora to our African homeland.

- IJAHNYA CHRISTIAN

JUNE 8, 2017



I Write the Poem

I write the poem
Rastafari put it in song
I write the poem
So help HIM sing along
I write the poem
Rastafari liveth forever
I write the poem

Chant!
Help HIM to deliver
Chant!
Spread love all around
Chant!
Freedom must come
Chant!
Wickedness cease
Chant!
WISEMIND increase

I write the poem
Rastafari seated at the mountain top
I write the poem
Dat mek the wicked drop
I write the poem
Rastafari rules the nation
I write the poem
Fallen is Babylon



YEMANJA

In the pantheon of African Gods, amongst the Yorubas of Nigeria there are the Orishas (Orisas) saints, that Africans during slavery, were able to maintain their spiritual contact with their ancestors and their motherland. **Yemanja** was the mother of all the Orisas and she is also known as the orisha of the ocean.

Dem Africans were able to make boball on dem colonists. Meh ancestors fool dem for so. Just like deh fool dem with Shango, saying he was St. John the Baptist; we people tell dem British and dem Roman Catholics dat Yemanja was de patron saint named St. Anns. Dem taught we black people is dotish and pagan. Dem didn't know den, dat we kept religion whole to overcome de brutality. Today, every year de people who live by de sea make a pilgrimage to Yemanja. Dey ask she for great abundance when dey go fishing an dey asked her for help wid de other orisas.

Ah remember one time meh friend named Sharon was possessed by Yemanja. She became ah horse, and began to whine on de beach in de sand, moving she body like ah water snake, while de drums continue to beat. She "sisters" were all carrying candles to light up de path for Yemanja. Sharon, as far as I know, is still ah "god daughter."

Den dere was dis ooman, whose son drowned de day before one of dem holidays. She bauled for so, and continued to baul down de palce de next day for dey no find she boy child – she oldest child to boot. She asked de Babaloo for help. He tell she "to take ah shiny new ten cents piece, not an old one that you can put in de sand press it down wid your heel until it get shiny, and to take some milk from yuh left breast and then throw the milk and dey money in the sea." De ooman tot tot hanging down by she belly. She no care. She squeezed and squeezed she breast until she get de milk. Boy, dis ooman go try anything to get she son's body back from de ocean. All she tinkin is dat she want to light up he grave and make it pretty on All Saints Night. De babaloo told she "to wait 24 hours and she go get she son back." De next day, Yemanja cough up she son oui, just like Jonah in de whale – and dat happened after dey say they no go find he body ever again. Dis ooman no listen to dem fools. She still go to the sea every time and bring offering and flowers for Yemanja.

(CONTINUED ON THE NEXT PAGE)



Dey say, Yemanja no happy wid dem government people who say dey want to make we ah developed country. Dem people who take charge of the government, is poisoning de fish and stinking up the water wid all de poil dat make you look like de pitch lake with all dat tar on yuh body. We nah treating Yemanja right, ah tell yuh. All de otha chemicals make de fish come out with one eye. Now, dem fisherman have to go further out to sea to catch de good fish. Dey worry dat dey no go feed dey family, dat dey family go starve. Dat's why dey pray to Yemanja. Me modda tell me Yemanja made de winds go "whoosh, whoosh, whoosh" so de fisherman boats can go fast, out dere in de ocean. Dey use de conch shell to call on she when deh out there and deh need ah wind to bring them back home.

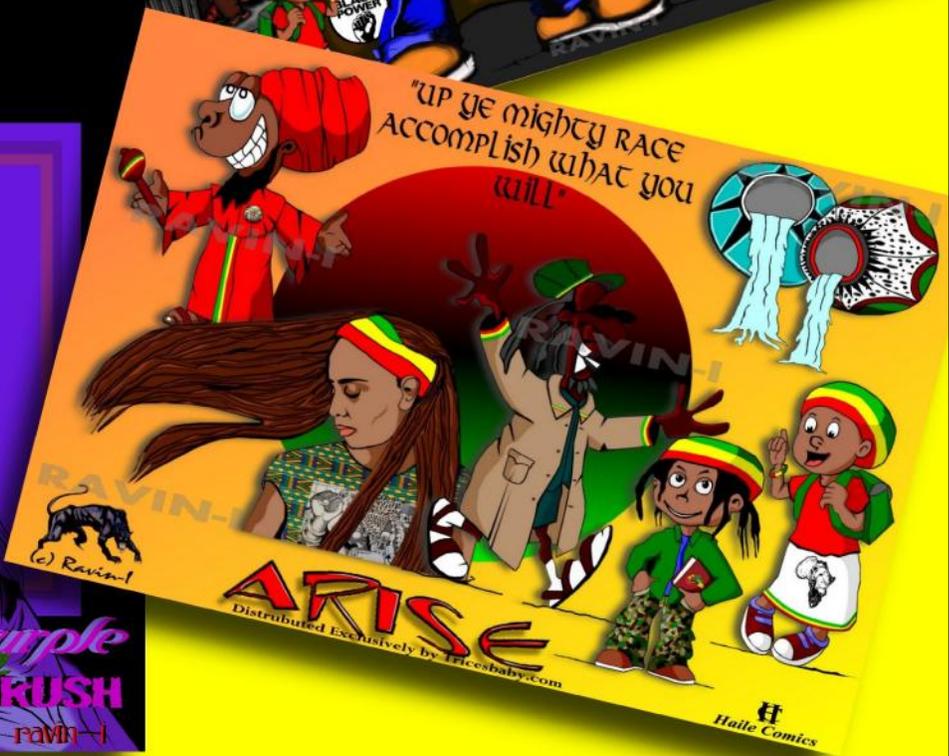
Ah hear Yemanja mad, mad, mad for so. Meh Tanty V says dat dem white people start dey foolishness again saying de Africans nastying up she waters. Eh, eh, oh Geed, what happen to dem highfulutin' people. Dey doh know we independent now. Dey still think Massa Day is still here. Meh Tanty says, she feel for spite, to call on Yemanja to bring on a storm to keep dem from burning dey skin to look like we. We better look out, dey go tink we go have to bow down to dem soon. Meh moddha cut I like 610 and say when Yemanja is mad, she always call up ah hurricane and blow de roof tops and flatten de houses for sure. This is what she go do to dem white people up in Gasparee. Dey better watch out!!

This excerpt taken from, *Stories Meh Moddha Told Me*, by Lance Seunarine



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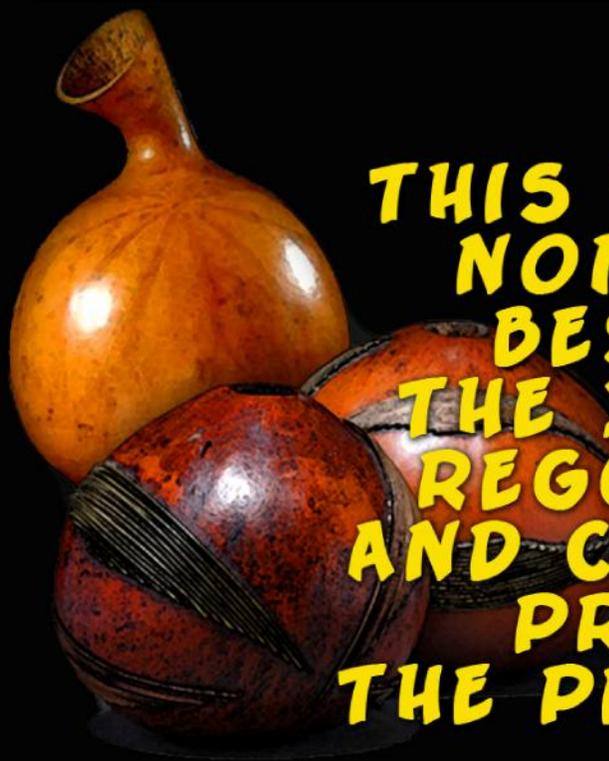
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