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COSMO PIETERSE:

This week we combine a festival and an exhibition; and these two events throw into our mix: some history, from both, some women's liberation demonstration, some geography, some hints on collecting, some of Nigeria and all of Africa. We report, namely, on the celebration of Queen Amina Day on the 23rd of January, 1971, at the Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria, Nigeria, and on a exhibition of maps of Africa held recently in the Nommo Gallery in Kampala, Uganda.

So, first to Northern Nigeria to hear from Robin Story about the celebrations that marked Queen Amina Day at the University in Zaria.

Now, it's a known fact that in many, in most, no in all African universities the women students are in the minority. But recently at the Ahmadu Bello University in Zaria the women decided to hold Queen Amina Day to let men know that, though few in number, the women could organise a big social occasion, and at the same time raise some money for improving the facilities of their Hall of Residence. This hall is named Amina Hall after the Queen who once was tremendously powerful in the Hausa Kingdom of Zazzau, of which the city of Zaria is the present-day capital. But who was Amina and why did the women students choose her as their inspiration for this occasion? From Ahmadu Bello University, Robin Story tells us about her, and reports on the celebrations.

ROBIN STORY:

Queen Amina of Zazzau not only intruded successfully into the preserve of men, but also outclassed them all. For she was the most famous warrior that has ever been seen in the whole of Hausa land. In the 16th century she took up her sword and waged war with the other six Hausa states, and conquered peoples as far away as the Benue and Niger rivers, thus, extending the influence of her kingdom over a vast area.

The story of Amina was told by Professor Smith of the Department of History of the Ahmadu Bello University, to those of us who crowded into the convocation ground to celebrate Queen Amina Day. But he did more than tell us a piece of local history, he drew a moral from the legend, suitable for the occasion. Amina had shown that women could equal or surpass men, but in so doing women usually lose their most precious asset, their femininity.

This talk was one item on the programme of celebrations, that marked Queen Amina Day, which has been organised by the women students of the university, and what a delightful and entertaining occasion it was the Emir of Beddle, Chairman of the University Council, opened the afternoons proceedings with a light-hearted speech, scattered with anecdotes illustrating the traditional battle of the sexes. He mentioned the wife who angrily demanded of her husband "where would men be without women?" The husband replied after some thought "in paradise with a complete set of ribs".

Women students of Amina Hall, from many parts of Nigeria enlivened the afternoon with traditional dances performed in their own distinctive and colourful costumes. Sandwiched in between the dances were invited speakers. The demand for more opportunities for women in Nigeria,

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which had been latent in much of what had already been said, came out into the open by a fighting speech by Mrs. S. Baba, who was a former student of the University. She knew what women wanted in Nigeria, even though most women did not know themselves, because men had brainwashed them into believing that the only place for a woman was in the home. The time had come for Nigerian women to stand up for their rights said Mrs. Baba, just as women were doing in other parts of the world. In Nigeria she blamed religion for much of the attitude that a woman should be subservient. But Mrs. Baba would have none of this idea, and she insisted that now was the time for women to get together, and to act, to further their cause.

Later on, Professor James O'Connell spoke on the modern woman and her family. He found neat illustrations to his points in the answers to recent surveys of students' attitudes and opinions that had been conducted in the university. For example, students thought that children suffered if their mother went out to work, yet at the same time believed in sending their own wives out to earn some money for the home. He advised the women to be more subtle and cunning in their dealings with their husbands, if they really wanted to get what they wanted. Straight demands were doomed to fail. But clever women had always manipulated men as they pleased. He quoted in support, the proverb that says, "the woman who is hungry asks the chicken to be cooked for the children".

Queen Amina Day came to a close later in the evening with a dance, and a dazzling fashion show of traditional and swinging clothes. Afterwards, the men students I talked to, had to admit that they had been surprised by the way the women had organised the whole

ROBIN STORY:
CONT'D.

thing so efficiently. Apart from giving us a thoroughly good days entertainment, the women had successfully got their message home. Queen Amina would have been proud of them.

COSMO PIETERSE:

That was Robin Story, our man in Zaria, reporting on the celebrations organised by the women students at Ahmadu Bello University to mark Queen Amina Day - a date for industrious lady diarists - January 23rd.

And now to our other item, an event which, alas, is probably unrepeatable, but certainly worth following. It went by the bizarre pet-name of a "Cartographical Phantasmagoria". It was, to repeat, an exhibition of maps of Africa, decorative maps, about eighty of them, drawn in five European countries and spanning four centuries. These maps were exhibited in Kampala's Nommo Gallery, and came mainly from the collections of Mr. Oriso Karombi, Chairman of the Uganda Electricity Board, and of Professor Brian Langlands, Head of the Department of Geography in the University of Makerere, Kampala. It was Professor Langlands who was mainly responsible for mounting the exhibition, and it's to him that Elizabeth Keeble is talking now.

ELIZABETH KEEBLE:

Professor Langlands, this display, seems to me, to be a very comprehensive collection spanning as it does 400 years, are there any obvious gaps?

PROFESSOR LANGLANDS:

Yes, well I have two interests in this type of collecting. Firstly, an interest in the decorativeness of the maps themselves, and there are certainly one or two Dutch maps which are highly decorative, and which I 'd very much like to have for that purpose. Then

PROFESSOR LANGLANDS: I'm interested in the maps for their geographical information, and whilst you would have seen that most of them show a number of lakes in the interior of Africa, usually with two laid side by side, east to west. There is also a section of mapping where the lakes are made from north to south; and I haven't got a good example of that type of map of Africa. But as you say, otherwise, the collection is really quite an extensive one and does cover a very wide time scale and a variety of different methods of map production.

The first ones, as you go in, are what are known as "Woodcuts", then the bulk of the collection are made by copper plate engraving; and then some of the 19th century ones are of steel engraving; and one can see a difference in style; difference in detail being shown by these methods, because the woodcuts are relatively crude, and some of the steel engravings are extremely delicate.

ELIZABETH KEEBLE: Could I ask you something there? A woodcut, for example, of those early maps; how many would there be in the world now?

PROFESSOR LANGLANDS: I've very little idea at all. One has very little documentation of this sort of thing. The second one I've got on show there is reasonably, readily come by. The first one, I think, is fairly scarce. The woodcuts are always uncoloured of course; they were always uncoloured in their original. The middle period ones, the copperplate ones, vary very much in their colouring this is something else which when collecting one has to look out for. Some of the colouring is of a contemporary nature, they have been coloured at the time the

PROFESSOR LANGLANDS: maps were first made; and this usually makes for a rarer map than those which have been coloured by a map-seller, perhaps in recent years. So that the colouring is also something to look for, as well as the style of production.

ELIZABETH KEEBLE: As these maps were arranged in the gallery, room by room, according to the century, I couldn't help noticing that the earliest Cartographers seemed all to have Dutch or German names, and then we got in the 18th century a lot of French sounding names, and then they became rather British in the 19th century. Why is this?

PROFESSOR LANGLANDS: Well it does, as you say, follow very much this sequence. I suppose for the very earliest period the mapping would be Italian, but an Italian map of Africa would be very rare for the late 15th century, early 16th century. After that the mapping quickly went to Germany, and most of the woodcuts on show there were German maps. Then the centre of map-making went to the Low Countries. French mapping came into its full force from 1700 onwards, I think perhaps the British mapping might reflect merely the fact that I'm buying from London, rather than other centres. But in the 19th century the presentation of information from exploration and travels of early explorers and so forth was, I think, perhaps a British contribution to mapping, particularly of Africa.

The history of Cartography which its showing is also interesting in that the knowledge about Africa is changing with these respective schools. The Dutch period was a period in which a great deal of information was being added to the maps, the lakes were

PROFESSOR LANGLANDS: multiplied, the numbers of mountains multiplied, and then there was a great number of cathedral cities scattered about the continent. Then in the 18th century the French contribution was largely to remove all this, and as well as removing the extraneous information on places and countries, they removed also the lakes which had been such a feature of the earlier period. So that by the time the exploration period started, the centre of Africa was largely left empty, and then the 19th century contribution is to add on. Again to get back to the lakes in the interior, to get to the source of the Nile, and to get the Mountains of the Moon back on, for instance, it was very much to go back in the 19th century on the basis of sound knowledge, what had been there in the 16th century on somewhat spurious knowledge. That very sequence is very interesting from the stand-point of the display.

ELIZABETH KEEBLE: I know that a lot of parties of school children have been to this exhibition. What do you think they've made of this?

PROFESSOR LANGLANDS: I find that the reaction is two-fold, that people do accept this as being highly interesting exhibition showing their continent in different shapes and forms; showing particularly the Nile in different courses. Also there's the interest in the colour, and decorative nature of the exhibition. But as a general reaction to this type of work, I think it falls much into the same category as the teaching of the explorers and the exploration of Uganda, or exploration of Africa, which is very much out of favour in the teaching syllabus and in many ways understandably so. Adopting, I think, the attitude that what is all the fuss about the Nile.

PROFESSOR LANGLANDS: That surely we knew where the Nile was, and that it was never really lost, there was nothing really to discover. And I sense in the reaction of children, and people visiting the exhibition, part of this reaction against the European discovery which has dominated so much of their history, and feeling that if we've been asked about this, we could have told where the Nile was, that there's no real basis for the mystery. I find this very curious, as far as I know no-one has ever asked where the Nile went to from this end northwards. There had been this enormous curiosity in Europe from the Greeks onwards, as to the source of the Nile, and this is really what many of these maps are showing, but from very much a European stand-point. I appreciate very much the fact that there is this reaction against this approach to the teaching of geography, and history, of the continent.

COSMO PIETERSE: Professor Brian Langlands talking to Elizabeth Keeble in Kampala on approaches to geography and history, and on the infectiously wide area of interests encompassed by map-making and map-collecting. Food for thought, there, and what a feast, for the eye also, the "Cartographical Phantasmagoria" must have been.

But now from me, Cosmo Pieterse, it's goodbye till next week.

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