

Tribute to Adewole John (5317) 1948 - 2011
by
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Hi every one

Today, we have laid our brother, our friend, our uncle, our son, our father etc. to rest, and now we assemble here to observe the new culture of celebrating the life of someone who passes on, rather than mourning his loss. Let me take this opportunity to express my deepest sympathy to the family as a whole.

Thomas Decker- that renowned son of the Sierra Leone soil, in one of his many translations of known literary texts into the **KRIO** language, wrote in the Daily Guardian in 1965 thus:

“Padi dem, kontri, una ahl wey dey na Rom,

Mek una ohi kak una yeys.

A kam ber siza, an nor kam preyz am,

Dem kin member bad we pohsin kin du, lohng ten afta di pohsin kin dohn dai;

Boht, plenty tem, di gud wey pohsin du, ken ber wit in bon dem....”

{The Daily Guardian-Sierra Leone: See Sierra Leone Language Review No 4 1965 – Shakespeare’s Julius Ceaser - Mark Anthony’s Speech- Act 3 Scene 2}



Many of you would recognise this piece in its familiar fashion:- “Friends, Romans, Countrymen, lend me your ears; I come to bury Ceaser not to praise him...” etc. etc

I have known Adewole for over 50 years. As a fellow Regentonian, (Registration number 5317- class of1957). We ‘rob shoulders’ together in the Grammar School at Fourah Bay Road, Freetown, where we exchanged infantile political discus, together with the likes’ of **SALAMY COKER, BILLY JONES**, (both of whom have left these shores as well). After leaving school, we became engaged in real politics as members of the **ALL PEOPLES CONGRESS (APC) YOUTH LEAGUE**. A little later, we surged “overseas” to

further our education but still did not leave the political virus behind. Its buried in our bones.

Over 2000 years ago, Plato (the famous Philosopher) observed that: *of all the animals, [in the world] the boy child is the most difficult – unmanageable, disruptive, conflict with authority with a propensity for risk taking.* All of us ‘**boy pekin dem**’ here, have some traits of these symptoms in our lives. *Plato’s observation was re-enforced in a BBC World Service Radio discussion sometime ago: Generation Next; The question – ‘Are Kids So Difficult- Why?’- again showed the boy child on top, in the issues raise. Between 13 to17, he is likely to be involved in small criminal activities, [consciously or unconsciously]; by 21, he is most likely to be a victim of crime. The pre-frontal cortex - the front part of his brain - is said to be there for him to organise everything. By the time he gets to adolescence, he uses more of it but, he is less adept in controlling behaviour without the capacity of evaluating wrongs and rights. He develops high degree of emotions; lives in denial; pays attention more closely to social factors, develops higher risk habits, challenge authority, order and traditional values, in a more defiant and distinctive manner- most of which is directed to ‘Novelty’ seeking.*

Without being ultra critical of my deceased brother, I am sure you will agree with me that Adewole’s active life history fits into most, if not, all of the above. This was a man with a heart of gold; a heart as big as the aeroplane that brought him from Sierra Leone to the UK in the 1968. He may not have been politically excitable in many ways, and may sometimes be seen as an impatient sneeze, looking for a vacant nose, but yet, possessed an eclectic independence of spirit. He was an interesting mix of facts and fancy! Like an orchestra in its own form, Adewole was like an organism in his own right. Regardless of his outside envelopes and fractious difficulties, arising from spells of multiple activities, he sometimes engages himself in the doctrine of positive neutrality and go all out to bear minimum relations with everybody. This is a necessary evil because, a simple trivial issue may be the bedrock for conflict and hatred. His philosophy appears to be enshrined upon the theory that ‘*You can learn many things from Ceaser, he made a speech from his golden chair and when he had finished, his friends killed him...*’ Adewole will never be caught in that yet, throughout his life, he fumbles with complications: whether in love, politics, social constructs and even religion.

He believed in himself and in his ideas, firmly and positively. His thinking process about ‘evils’ such as poverty, oppression, exploitation, appeared to be meticulous and factual; and when he had decided rationally in his construct, he opposed them with all the passion he

was capable of unleashing. He firmly and positively believed in identity, equality and community.

In January 1976, he joined in the literary debate about the universality of the **KRIO** language and the search for a common and International language for Africa.

From his contribution to this debate in West Africa Magazine (5th January 1976, page 7) he wrote thus: ***“...In post colonial Africa, our desire to rediscover our lost heritage is turning us more and more into isolationist; forsaking almost everything Western and extolling the virtues of almost anything African...”***

One could envisage his feelings and desire for belonging-for pure identity to the cause - an attachment to his roots and not let go of the values inculcated from what he had inherited. This passion translates and depicts the true nature of Adewole John (or John Adewole). Articulate, self indulgent and emotional yet pragmatic, ideological and ready to shift the dynamics as he sees fit. But that was Adewole John: you get what you see. Like the late President Gerald Ford once said: “I am a Ford, not a Lincoln”. There was only **one Adewole John** and no carbon copy, no replica.

So we must not even try to begin to understand the complexities of our brother, our father, our friend. The reasons for getting into the mix of Sierra Leone politics since age 14/15 at school, to fully participating in the success of the APC in 1967 elections under Dr Siaka Stevens; the ‘Marshall law’ intervention of Brigadier David Lansanah in stifling the victory; the coups and counter coups of the period before he travelled to the UK, {*Colonel Andrew Juxon-Smith’s National Reformation Council - (NRC) and the Anti-Corruption Revolutionary Movement - (ACRM)*}; His surprised defection from the APC Party to join Dr John Karefa –Smart’s UDP together with Dr Mohamed Forna, Ibrahim Taqi and his brother Olufemi John-with whom together we morn today- and all the troubles that generated: His involvement in the siege in 1971 in seizing the Sierra Leone High Commission and proclaimed himself ‘the new high commissioner’ over the BBC World Service, leading to prosecution at the Old Bailey Criminal Court in London and freed thanks to QC Sir Dingle Foot. This was triggered by the execution of Brigadier John Bangura for his violent, messy and bungled attempted coup on 23/24th March 1971. Mix all that with the dignity of being a father, a renowned **ACTOR**, a man of good heart, a good friend and above all - **A REGENTONIAN!**

Let me conclude by reading a verse or two from the eminent musician **YUSUF ISLAM ‘S** (Cat Stevens) Album-*An Other Cup*- who like Adewole embraced the **ISLAMIC FAITH** in place of his Catholic background and upbringing...

IN THE END

You can’t bargain with the truth; ‘Cause whether you’re right or you’re wrong

We’re gonna know what you’ve done; We’re going to see where you belong in the end

You can’t bargain with the truth; ‘Cause whether you are black or you’re white

We’re gonna know who’s right; We’re going to see you in the light – in the end

O every little thing you do, You' d better know its coming back to you

You can't bargain with the truth; 'Cause one day you're gonna die

And good's going high; And evil's going down- in the end

You can't bargain with the truth; whether you are old or young

We're going to see what you've done, There'll be nowhere to run - in the end.

You can't bargain with the truth; whether you're rich or you're poor

You're going to meet at the same door; You're going to know the real score - in the end.

And if you want to help your fellow man, You better start with what's in your hand.....

You can't bargain with the truth; 'Cause whether you're right or you're wrong

We're gonna know what you've done; We're going to see where you belong - in the end

You can't bargain with the truth; 'Cause if the world you chose

No further than your nose, will be where the door will close – in the end.

You can't bargain with the truth; 'Cause for those who where deceived

There'll be no reprieve, There'll be no time to believe – in the end

O every little thing you do, You better know it's coming back to you

You can't bargain with the truth; "Cause one day you are going to die

And good's going high, And evil's going down – in the end

.....
*When butterflies leave their silk palaces; and the scent of the garden blows towards
Heaven's way; Like the toils of man, those who worked for tomorrow, Will not miss the
dreams of yesterday.*

MAY ADEWOLE JOHN'S SOUL REST IN PERPECTUAL PEACE!!