

## **A YUNHOUSE TALE**

### **TITLE: WELCOME TO YUNHOUSE**

LAST CHRISTMAS HAPPENED one thousand nine hundred and seventy-three hours ago. I counted them. This is the sort of thing you do when you are actively hibernating, like I have been doing. And it came to pass, that for nearly two thousand hours I've consciously and very happily cheated the English winter. Thanks to the authorities of Yunhouse where the policy is not to spare North Sea gas so as to maintain tropicalised environment. (House Rule Number 1A: Yunhouse and all its appurtenances are African in every particular and must be so regarded at all times).

However, this winter saw Yunhouse temperature rise well above tropical level. The source of that extra heat is my hibernation corner: Hut 007, a Yunhouse dwelling in which an African lived through World War One as well as World War Two and died in fear of counting any further. That African is Dr Cyril Naikule, LL.B, BA, MPhil, PhD. This is the famous Cy, pronounced sii-wai or see-why, depending on how much meaning you wish to attach to the name in the Yun-legend that says an African once lived, studied, wrote and died for the continent shaped like a question mark. Hut 007 holds the complete set of Something To Write Home About, the final title for a writing expedition that its author once thought to call Through A Black Eye. It is a neat arrangement of forty-seven volumes in hardback notebooks numbered

with Roman numerals, the contents are penned in exquisite cursive of the days before the skill of handwriting became separated from the art of calligraphy. The last unfinished volume is titled Afrinc File\_ An Inquiry Into The Existence And Operations Of A Purpose-built African Computer Designed And Used Exclusively By Non-Africans.

‘Afrinc must be defeated’, Cy wrote, thus firing the opening shot of the intellectual battle which climaxed last Christmas and has been simmering ever since. That battle has now been officially declared as The Second Battle For Yunhouse.

Cy was a veteran of The First Battle For Yunhouse. In fact, A Black Account Of Our Battle was the original theme for Something To Write Home About, where, in the first volume, he asserted: ‘We may have to change the name of Africa in order to combat the carcinogen infused into our intellect since that day our ancestors had their continent baptised by people they knew not and for reasons they could not care less about’. He spent months investigating where, when and by whom, Africa was first written. He would later refuse to be listed as one of Africa’s Who’s Who because none of the competing dozens of publishers could tell him from whom it was or the occasion from which they inherited the profitable habit of taking the name of Africa in vain.

‘Afrinc knows!’, Cy wrote. But since knowledge is power only when applied, the challenge was to establish the possible use The Computer and its Liechtenstein-based transnational owners could have for a piece of information like: ‘Cyril Naikule is a classic case of an African with a lifelong addiction to scribbling learnt from an Irish missionary who gave him his first lead pencil’.

The cybernetic perception of himself amused him. He had volunteered such a definition of himself on numerous occasions, jokingly and seriously, publicly as well as privately, and in lucubrations on Something To Write Home About. Nevertheless, there was something scary in being thus identified and codified in the entrails of a Purpose-built African Computer Designed And Used Exclusively By Non-Africans. The Computer is versed in Yuntok, Cy concluded. That is even more sinister than he had imagined. Yuntok is his personal coinage, a tool designed to avoid a cliché-ridden account of The First Battle For Yunhouse, which, by the way, was really a battle of words, many of which acquired meanings that became unique to those whose souls had been touched by Yunhouse. Within the battlefield, a distinct medium of intellectual intercourse evolved, Yunhouse manner of expression, Yunhouse-talk, if you like, and why not Yuntok – phonetically rendered with African accent. In any case, as the story of the war became Something To Write Home About, Yuntok was the spring from which his daily thoughts flowed all these decades.

Copyright for Yuntok belonged to him, and he would so insist after making his case in Afrinc File. Meanwhile, if The Computer could be that versed in Yuntok it must be capable of reading his thoughts. In other words, The Computer can peer into his mind. So The Computer must be around somewhere... Where?...How?... Suddenly the walls of Yunhouse sprang eyes and ears. Cy was frightened. So much so that he would not turn on the electricity when he sat down to work on Afrinc File. Instead, he used candles from a box of ninety sticks bought from an Indian shopkeeper who was amused when Cy said he needed them for his next birthday.

Cy was about to turn eighty-nine when he was found slouched over the pages of Afrinc File that could easily have gone up in flames had the seventy-ninth candle not fallen on his bald head. Cy Naikule was buried with a black scar. This fact and its significance eluded Afrinc's cybernetic awareness for three years because of Yunhouse internal security measures that preceded the victoriously black Christmas of nearly two thousand hours ago.

The issue has been, is now, and perhaps will always be: whose intellectual property is Africa? Cy asked this question many times in his life, the last time being a margin note on The Printout at the point where Yunhouse was described as: "Once called Africa House; a multi-dwellings structure on the north bank of River Thames, in the

London district of Hampstead; constructed during the reign of Queen Victoria, saw major alterations in the reigns of subsequent English monarchs; regarded by Africans all over the world as their intellectual property since that day a renegade group of Africans legally gained material possession of the building and declared it a Colony of Africa in the year Nineteen Hundred And Fifty-One – Anno Domini.

But what really put the final fear of all computers in Cy was The Printout's glossary of Yuntok definitions that included:

Yunism is belief in Africa as the continent of hope and glory.

Yunists are converts to Yunism.

Yunis come and go out of Yunhouse, the sum total of their views on Africa contains everything you should know about the continent, and much more.

Yunkees are physically dwellers in Yunhouse, they are a multi-racial, intellectually privileged class of Yunis.

Yunactivists: Their activities make Yunhouse go round.

Yunstar: With words this category of Yunactivists move mountains, rivers and other realities in Africa.

Yuncom is a body of Yunactivists held together by a strand of Yunism, usually an international committee within whose name Africa is inserted somewhere, somehow.

Yunrumours are open secrets about Yunhouse, Yunis, Yunists, Yunactivists and the state of Africa; they make up the non- verbal backdrop to the heated discussions in the Palaver Hall of Yunhouse.

Yunanonymity is a dense intellectual cloud – mainly of Yunrumours, from which Yunstars shoot out en masse or individually to stake their intellectual claim on Africa.

Yunanza is a scene in London or any other major city in the world where Africa is materially or intellectually bought and/or sold, usually flows with wine – often sparkling, Yunstars abound there.

Yunrun is a soliloquized deluge of Yuntok, its length varies in direct proportion to how long the speaker has been a Yuni.

Yunblues is a debilitating affliction of mind and/or body, prevalent among Yunis of Negroid stock; Yunrun is one of its many symptoms

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