



The iREP Report

2018 iREP Newsletter Vol. 7, Issue 1

Editorial

Goethe-Institut Nigeria proudly returns to the IREP International Documentary Film Festival with its support of the festival newsletter. As with previous years, a selection of German films curated by film producer Bärbel Mauch – with support from German Films, the agency responsible for the promotion of German cinema worldwide – will be screened at the festival.

In this context, filmmakers Jürgen Ellinghaus (*THE FIRE, A FOWL, AND AN (UN)FORGOTTEN PAST*), Jakob Preuss (*WHEN PAUL CAME OVER THE SEA*), Chih Musquiqui and Gregor Kasper (*CAFÉ TOGO*) have travelled from Germany to attend the festival and present their films. Milo Rau's *THE CONGO TRIBUNAL* completes this package.

Also showing is *GALAMSEY* by Johannes Preuss, who was recently in Lagos to shoot a documentary on Nollywood.

We hope that you are as excited as we are to read the newsletters and to enjoy the entire festival line-up over the course of four days in Freedom Park.

Happy reading.

Goethe-Institut Nigeria



Vineyard Chronicles



Akin Omotoso (2nd right) discusses *The Colour of Wine* at IREP 2018

by Aderinsola Ajao

"The difference between wine and beer is the size of the hangover," is one of the nuggets – paraphrased here – from Akin Omotoso's *THE COLOUR OF WINE*.

Rather than your preferred poison however, the documentary spotlights four black trailblazers in South Africa's wine industry: Ntsiki Biyela, Unathi Mantshongo, Dumisani Mathonsi and Carmen Stevens. A vast array of leading industry experts and professionals – amongst whom are mentors to our protagonists – comprise the supporting cast. They complement the narrative as the film's main quartet reveal their complex journey in the wine sector and its role in their consciousness of self and identity particularly at a time when apartheid was largely still in place in South Africa.

THE COLOUR OF WINE takes off with questions about first encounters with wine and family bias for or against it.

These are presented with humour, which slowly dissipates as the evils of apartheid and bureaucracy manifest in the narration.

The politics around alcohol swirl to the fore, and one quickly learns about a lack of access for potential black winemakers, preferential quotas for people producing certain alcoholic beverages, and some reasons why South African wine is not more popular abroad than it currently is. In the 70s during Apartheid, an embargo is placed on South African wine. It won't be lifted until 1993 when the first non-white elections would take place. As of then, 25 million litres were sold per year and now 400 million litres are recorded as local sales and 440 million litres as export annually.

To ease access into winemaking for young, black South Africans, Jabulani Ntshangase, a pioneer winemaker initiated a programme – for which he devotedly sought candidates – at the Stellenbosch University. *contd. on page 3*

German Films at IREP 2018: Echoes of a Violent Past and Present

by Aderinsola Ajao

THE CONGO TRIBUNAL is a stark reminder of the unending crises in the Democratic Republic of Congo. Theatre director Milo Rau brings together all concerned in a bid to offer a platform for fair hearing. From Bukavu to Mutarule, the trail of needless tragedy and poverty brought on by the desire to own and control Congo's vast natural resources is hard to miss.

At the 2015 tribunals staged in Bukavu's Collège Alfajiri, and in Berlin, victims and their aggressors take their turns at the podium answering questions from the jury, selected from in and outside the Congo. Government representatives stand accused of collision with multinationals amongst other foreign interests, with the sole aim of plundering the Congo's coltan (in high demand for use in mobile phones), cassiterite, wolframite, gold and diamonds.



As we see in the 100-minute documentary, local and global policies have failed indigenes, encouraged a black market and diverted profits to neighbouring countries. Security is lax, complicit and tyrannical, leading many civilians to form or align with armed groups.

While Rau says at the end that the Tribunal is fictional, it influences a cabinet change in the DRC. Both juries in Bukavu and Berlin pass their verdicts, generally in Congo however, the crisis deepens.

Showing at 4.30pm on Thursday, March 22.

The politics and dark histories behind street names in the African Quarter in Berlin-Wedding is central to **CAFÉ TOGO**, a 27-minute mockumentary by Greg-

or Kasper (Germany) and Chih Musquiqui (Taiwan). Shot in black and white and on 16mm film, the 3-channel video installation juxtaposes archival footage and fiction to



depict the personae and acts of colonial criminals Carl Peters, Gustav Nachtigal and Adolf Lüderitz. Driven by expansionism, nationalism and megalomania, the three orchestrated and oversaw Germany's worst atrocities in African countries like Namibia and Togo during the colonial era.

Nazi politician Joseph Goebbels made a propaganda film to honour Peters, and in what is considered Wedding's African Quarter, there are streets named after the trio: Nachtigal-Platz, Lüderitzstraße, Petersallee all fall within the same axis. Endless protests have called for the names to be changed with little luck so far.

The film's narration is based on the writings of Abdel Amine Mohammed, a Nigerian-Togolese tour guide in Germany, who is also briefly interviewed in Café Fredericks, a bar renamed from Lüderitz Eck.

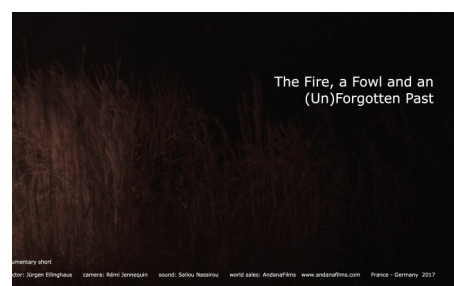
A striking feature of **CAFÉ TOGO** is the phone calls between actors in the 'present' and the antagonists of the 'past', in what appears as attempt to have the colonial criminals speak in their own words. At the end when a birthday cake is cut, one can only imagine the partitioning of Africa at the infamous Berlin Conference of 1884-85.

Showing at 12.04pm on Friday, March 23. Filmmakers in Attendance

Jürgen Ellinghaus's 13-minute film **THE FIRE, A FOWL AND AN (UN)FORGOTTEN PAST...TOGOLAND** can be considered in similar vein as **CAFÉ TOGO**. It examines Germany's footprints in what used to be known as Togoland

(now Togo) during the First World War based on contemporary opinion of the modern-day Togolese. Pinpointing and visiting key cities in Ghana and Togo, Ellinghaus's film draws a line from Adibo in Ghana to Wahala, Togo, briefly chronicling the impact of Germany's activities during the colonial era, and what is still said about them today in those places. Griots in Ghana and Togo have passed the stories along generations of how German troops were defeated in Adibo by Dagomba warriors in 1896, of how a curse meant the war between Africa and the West would know no end (a fowl is sacrificed probably to halt this curse), and of how the introduction of the German currency had ensured rewards for hard work.

Accounts in Togo however say that those



who worked for the German colonialists were not rewarded despite wearing themselves out building roads, rail and the Kamani wireless station that was essential to the German company's communications with Germany, incoming ships and neighbouring camps. The razing of the Kamani Wireless station by the German troops themselves precedes their surrender to their allied enemies – an act largely considered the latter's first victory in World War I, off European soil.

While both **CAFÉ TOGO** and ... **TOGOLAND** do not claim to be definitive guides on the worst deeds carried out during German occupation in regions of Africa, both films offer enough of an introduction for anyone interested in further research. **Showing at 11.50am on Friday, March 23. Filmmaker in Attendance contd. on page 7**

German Films at IREP 2018
contd. from pg 2.

Bursaries and scholarships from different bodies would enable the protagonists to study. To retain respect in their 'prejudiced' homes however, some have to claim that they are studying agriculture instead.

Biyela, Stevens, Mantshongo and Mathonsi all share their stories of failure, self-doubt and racism encountered in the "strange, unusual" world, in which they find themselves. Biyela speaks of having to attend classes in Afrikaans, a language she doesn't understand, and Stevens recounts being told she "shouldn't be here" and to refer to a fellow student as "baas".

All these leave a far bitter aftertaste than wine...or beer but forge a defiant spirit in the quartet who all go on to individual success as wine merchants, winemakers and viticulturists.

There is rarely a flat moment with Omotoso's combination of talking heads, archival material and potent musical infusions: it all blends into a crisp commentary on the film's subjects fitting right within the festival theme of 'Archiving Africa'. Simply put, *THE COLOUR OF WINE* is a multi-layered account of Africans in extraordinary circumstances excelling at the unexpected.



Notes from the Berlinale

by Adefoyeke Ajao

If you ever get to meet Chike Maduegbuna, the CEO of Afrinolly, a content distribution company, one of the first things you'll realise is how passionate he is about creating meaningful solutions to improve filmmaking and viewing experiences.



Maduegbuna attended this year's Berlinale as part of the Goethe-Institut Johannesburg's "Film School Network". The collective of 12 film schools from 9 African countries travelled to the Berlinale Africa Hub to share their knowledge about the challenges facing African film industries and how the network could foster a collaboration culture that would eradicate these problems.

In his presentation, Maduegbuna canvassed a re-evaluation of content creation by African filmmakers, since two things peculiar to the continent are its young population and mobile phones. While wondering how this market could be tapped into, he remarked, "we are better at using mobile phones than the rest of the world, but when are we going to start making these mobile phones? How are we going to create unique content for new technology?"

New platforms require suitable content and the Film School Network seeks to transform the notion of filmmaking by

raising a new generation of filmmakers. As part of the collective's plans to revolutionise filmmaking, it plans to unveil an application, Afrikijana, in Kigali in May, which will serve as a virtual hub for budding and established filmmakers. The app will enable these filmmakers to

participate in competitions, upload and share their content, as well as collaborate and exchange ideas. Its launch will be preceded by road shows to sensitise the public and harness interested participants. Plans are also in motion to create courses to be included in the curricula at selected film schools with regard to content creation for new devices.

Maduegbuna decried the lack of collaboration among Nigerian filmmakers who would usually "reconnect at film festivals abroad instead of building synergy in Nigeria" and the dire consequences for the country's market linkage and distribution.

While Maduegbuna does not call for a total overhaul of the filmmaking process, his presentation is a challenge to industry stakeholders to begin creating unique content that will suit the constantly-evolving gadgets and tell Africa's stories through sustainable media platforms.



“Where is home for any of us?”

by IfeOluwa Nihinlola

Documentary filmmaker Jean-Marie Teno met Naana Banyiwa Horne in 2010 at the annual African Literature Association conference. At the time, Horne was simply a professor of English at the Santa Fe College in Gainesville, Florida. She however told Teno that she was going home to become the Queen Mother Nana Ansomaa III, and invited the filmmaker to accompany her that same year to document the process in Ghana, her homeland, for what would form part of the film *CHOSEN*.

“She had used my work to teach her classes,” Teno says after the screening of the documentary on Day 1 of the iREP Film Festival. She was familiar with his work, but he had no preconceptions about what story to tell, just a desire to go with his camera. “I didn’t exactly know where it was going to lead me, but I had everything open, listening to know what is going to be the interesting story. I didn’t know the whole story from beginning to end, but in the course of filming her and speaking to people, eventually the story comes in.”

Horne had initially returned to Ghana for a research spurred by grief. This led her to discover more about her mother, royal lineage, and eventually Apam, where her family was already waiting for her to take up a responsibility her sisters had shirked.

“They told her she was chosen to be the Queen Mother,” Teno says to a group of two men and a lady interacting with him after the screening. “But what I did not have the opportunity to say earlier is that they also wanted her to come home. She had lived in the United States for 30 years, and they were worried she would die there.”

Horne and Teno returned to Ghana in 2011, in continuation of the process, but she fell ill shortly afterwards. This was a confirmation of the fears of people like Ama Ata Aidoo, - one of the subjects of the documentary and a teacher and mentor to Horne - who thought Horne shouldn’t have become Queen Mother.

The illness stalled her ascension, and effectively the film project for years, leading Teno to admit that, “when you have a main character who becomes ill in the

middle of filming, there’s nothing you can do.” But he smiles and reconsiders that position. “I could have edited the thing that I have, but it didn’t make sense. Maybe, also, I need to be more open to making stories that don’t have an ending.”

Queening and filming resumed in 2016, and Teno finally got his ending. But this was just the beginning of his work, through editing, to get that narrative he desired. “I could have made three documentaries out of the footage I had,” he says. Yet, what he produces in *CHOSEN* focuses on womanhood (and, for a moment, masculinity), identity and home.

“Where is home for any of us?” Teno asks, as we stand under the tree in Freedom Park, where he continues to talk courteously to people shaking his hands for a job well done. For the film’s running time, the story of how Horne became Queen Mother finds home through Teno’s lens, but on screen, Horne herself says, “There’s no place I can feel completely at home.”

Unravelling the Intricacies of Matrilineal Kinship

by Adefoyeke Ajao

Jean Marie Teno's *CHOSEN*, an 89-minute documentary film, follows the experiences of Naana Banyiwa Horne, a renowned poet and Professor of English as she makes the switch from her previous life as an academic abroad to a new one as the Queen Mother in her hometown, Apam.

Making its world premiere at the IREP festival, the film is the result of Teno's encounter, in 2010, with the then 60-year-old protagonist who had informed him that she was travelling back to her country, Ghana, to begin her installation rites. He decided to accompany her on the journey as a guest to satisfy his own curiosity, and observe the intricacies of power in a matrilineal society.

Teno's protagonist comes across as assertive and free-willed, a contradiction to the regimented lifestyle of her new role. But will she fit in considering that a part of her harbours Western inclinations? In spite of her frantic search for identity and her new responsibilities as a custodian of tradition, there are instances where she appears skeptical and unsure of what she is getting into. This is not helped by the revelation that she was more or less 'sacrificed' as the most qualified candidate for Queen Mother, since most of her family members expressed their reluctance to fill the role.

Considering that it is as much a journey for Jean-Marie Teno as it is for Naana, the filmmaker sparingly interjects, and allows Naana to tell her own story. He also allows those dearest to her to do the same, while providing images of the rites she is subjected to, and gives a multidimensional view of the character's place within her family and her community's traditions. The filmmaker can be forgiven for omitting to show the names and designations of most of the film's subjects - until the closing credits - as he later



explained during a Q&A session that he took on multiple roles in making the film and that it was still a work in progress.

Teno's motivation for making *CHOSEN* is quite simple: he wonders how traditional knowledge and leaderships can serve as a panacea to societal ills. However, what is left unresolved is how incapacitated and overwhelmed such leaderships become when they are confronted by the realities of power.



Beyond the Ganja

by Wome Uyeye

Storytelling within *FREEDIM*, a 76-minute documentary film at IREP 2018 takes on many forms without completely straying from its core message. This message is that global peace, love and unity can only be achieved the Rastafarian way.

In the film's opening shots, Japanese director Hiroki Sugino's use of drone shots of Jamaica's sand, sea and sun produce a strong aerial imagery that could make one believe they were watching a commercial for tourist attractions. We would soon return to the heart of the matter though. *FREEDIM* deals with the world's Rastafarian peoples, both in the Motherland and in the Diaspora with a focus on those living in Ethiopia, Belize, Los Angeles, Jamaica and Japan. Their history, culture, belief system, hairstyles and the marijuana are centre-stage.

The documentary specifically turns the spotlight on the Rastafarian people's homesickness (most especially those living abroad with their children and grandchildren). It explores their disgust and frustration with the world's distortion of their history and the stubborn refusal to embrace what they believe to be the only way to redemption from global destruction.

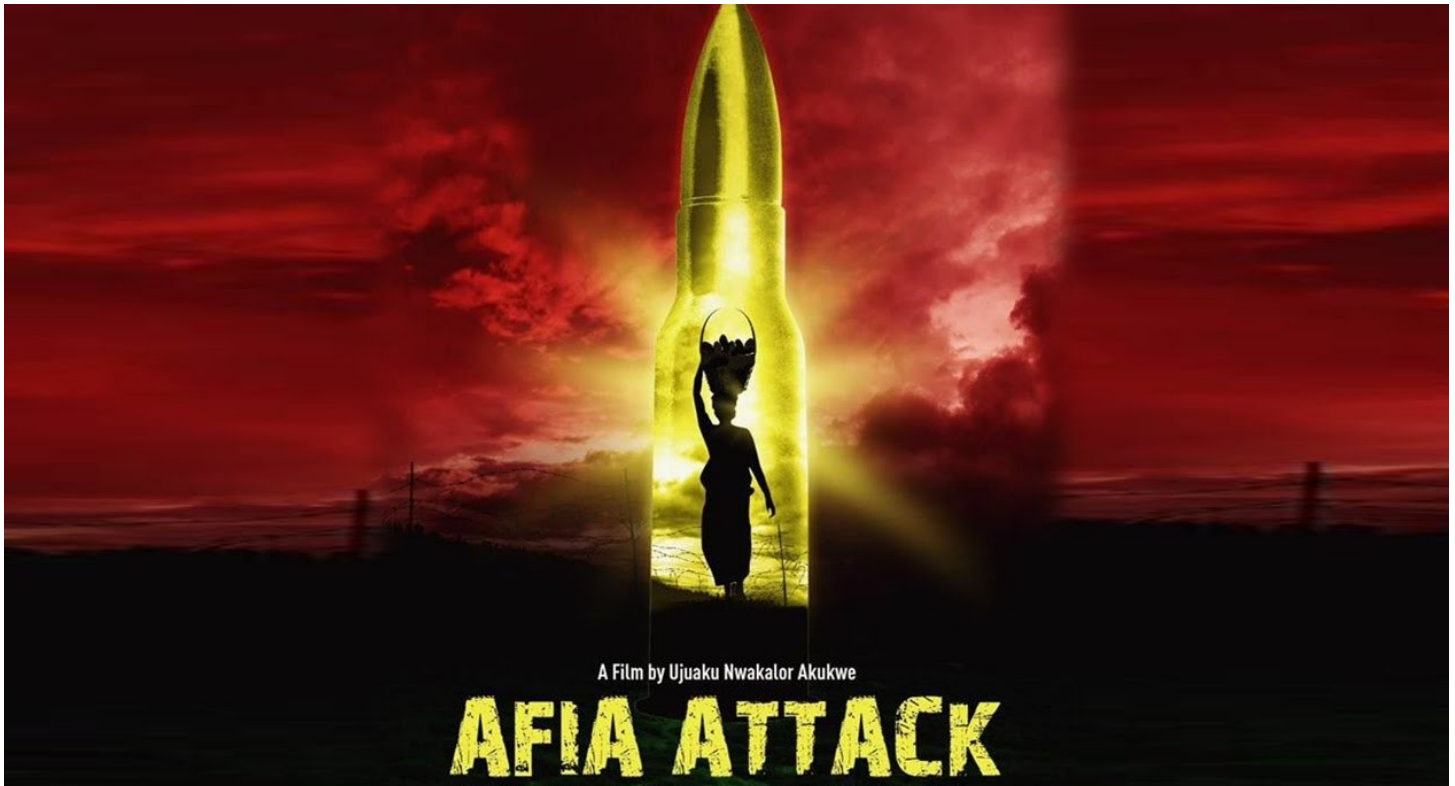
Part of the untold story of the aftermath of the 2011 tsunami that affected much of Kamaishi, Japan in 2011 is the creation of the song 'Starting Over'. To produce the song, the entertainment arm of the WessTrybe Rastafarian movement in Japan contacted those in Jamaica, who in turn connected with the rest of their brothers and sisters around the globe. The song featured leading Reggae artists from different generations, with proceeds going towards rebuilding Japan.

Is Rastafarianism a religion or a way of life or both? Do millennials find the movement sustainable? Is it the only answer to world peace?

A sequel to *FREEDIM* might have the answers.

Women as strong as a rock

by Lucia Edafioka



In 1967, hostilities between the Nigerian government and the Igbos of Eastern Nigeria escalated into full-blown war with the declaration of the Republic of Biafra. At the end of the war three years later, over 3 million people on the eastern side had been killed many of whom died from diseases and starvation.

Over time, as the Biafran story is told through books, memoirs, short films and documentaries, the role of women is often downplayed or totally overlooked. Monuments have been built for heroes of the war, remembrances held for the dead soldiers who fought during the war but little, if nothing has been said about the women.

AFIA ATTACKS: TRADING BEHIND

ENEMY LINES as directed by Ujuaku Akukwe is a historic short film that tells the story of bravery, resilience and strength of Biafra's women during the three-year civil war that ravaged Eastern Nigeria. Hunger and unimaginable agony are the usual souvenirs of civil wars with the highest casualties being women and children. This was no different in the case of the Biafran war.

'Afia attack' is the name of the trade Biafran women undertook during the civil war to get salt, stock fish and other essential commodities to sustain their homes. It was a dangerous trade done with the Nigerian side during the war. Many women who embarked on the trade walked as much as 7 hours per day, from Aro-

chukwu, to Nkana to as far as Ikot Ikpenne and Aba. Many were killed, raped by soldiers on both sides and others forced into marriages.

Using narratives from survivors of the deadly trade, and experts who fought in the war on the Biafran side along with pictures and footage from the war, Ujuaku Akukwe expertly guides us through the unimaginable pain and suffering Biafran women endured to keep their families alive.

A woman sitting in a forest clearing chants in Igbo to the melancholic melody of the ogene: "God made a woman to be as strong as a rock," she sings, "women are a symbol of dignity." She says all the words the narrating survivors could not say.



One could easily list a number of fiction and documentary films about migration that have become so much more relevant in the face of numerous tragedies recorded daily, particularly at sea.

Jakob Preuss' **WHEN PAUL CAME OVER THE SEA** joins films like **FOREIGN** (Miriam Fassbender), **YOOLE** (Moussa Sene Absa) or **FIRE AT SEA** (Gianfranco Rosi) that depict the suspense, drama and tragedy surrounding the dangerous sea crossings from Africa to Europe. Unravelling largely through the experiences of his protagonist, Paul Nkamani, who is a Camerounian university dropout, the experiences of those in flight or seeking flight are palpable: everyday seems like D-day but the eventual reality can be heart-breaking.

There are many obstacles in Paul's way but like others in the camp near Spain, who are equally desperate and running out of funds, he does not give up on his dream to access Europe because as he says, Cameroun can offer him nothing beyond disappointment. Between the refugees and the border guards who have to prevent their entry or rescue them from drowning, it is hard to pick heroes and villains.

As we wait to see if Paul will be one of the "lucky ones", we learn more about him and his travails. His grasp of global policies and politics is remarkable and his sojourn so far has not been easy. In the instances where he or his camera is absent, Preuss re-enacts Paul's itinerary using animation and interactive tools that portray for example, the journey with Paul's smuggler through Agadez to Algeria.

From the start of the 97-minute documentary, Preuss' presence - aside from his narration - is limited to asking the odd question. But as Paul inches closer to his dream, Preuss' own role as director steadily evolves into that of an 'actor', as he actively becomes one of those who help Paul along the way.

Showing at 8.10pm on Saturday, March 24. Filmmaker in Attendance

Documenting for the future: The Congo Tribunal

by Lucia Edafioka

In line with the theme of the 2018 iREP international film documentary festival, 'Archiving Africa', **THE CONGO TRIBUNAL**, by German theatre director turned filmmaker, Milo Rau, is exact in its intent to document events in Congo.

The Democratic Republic of Congo has been a theatre of war for many decades. DR Congo is the largest producer of cobalt ore in the world. It is also a major producer of gold, diamond and copper. The civil war that ensued, which has been described as one of the bloodiest wars in the world, stemmed from the conflict involving civilians, mining companies

The language of the documentary is majorly in French and Swahili, with English subtitles. Even without the subtitles, Rau's film tells a thousand stories. The film opens with footage of bodies of massacred people, mostly women and babies. It shows the struggles and suffering of the displaced people on whose soil the minerals are embedded. And then it slowly moves into the mines and explains the struggle for resource control.

Rau intricately weaves the narrative of the victims and experts in between the 3-day hearing. As the victims tell their stories of neglect and pain - from Northern Kivu, to the massacres at Matarule -, govern-



and armed rebel groups fighting for resource control. Since the beginning of the wars in 1996, over five million people have been killed. The crises have crumbled the once-thriving economy of the Congo and left behind in its wake, diseases, famine and a ton of human rights abuses. The wars in Congo are ongoing, and humanitarians say it is even worse than ever.

What Milo Rau did was to bring together an international jury comprising Congolese experts, human rights activists, newspaper editors and other experts from America and Europe to analyze and examine events that led up to 'the third world war' in the Congo in order to give everyone a chance to be heard, and represented, to seek justice for victims and tell the truth of their reality.

ment officials are bloated with excuses and explanations as to why they failed to protect the people of Congo. Civilians, including women who have joined armed groups, explain the pain of losing family, sources of livelihood and their decision to join the militia.

At the end of **THE CONGO TRIBUNAL**, every member of the audience understands the complicated economic, cultural and political war in Congo, including the role of the international community. The tribunal comes to an end, the people applaud, but the victims - the people of Congo - remain tied down in strife and endless violence. Now however, the world will forever know the events that led to the bloodiest war since the 2nd World War.

Admiring the Art of Burkinabe's Rising

by IfeOluwa Nihinlola



When Thomas Sankara changed the name of his country Upper Volta to Burkina Faso, he was molding the country after his own vision by calling it “the land of men with integrity.” Sankara was redefining the country’s image and tying that image, irrevocably to himself. So, when the narrator of *BURKINABÈ RISING: THE ART OF RESISTANCE IN BURKINA FASO* says, “When you choose a name, you strive to fully claim ownership of it,” it is at least clear that the statement isn’t just true of the Burkinabe as a people, but also of their beloved leader.

Of course, it is known that Sankara didn’t complete his vision for Burkina Faso. His old colleague Blaise Compaoré conducted a coup d’état where Sankara was assassinated, and ruled the country for 27 years. *BURKINABÈ RISING* documents events leading to and around Compaoré’s ousting from the presidency in 2014. But rather than create a mere document of the protests, the documentary examines art produced by the Burkinabe, especially the youth, in the time of Compaoré’s rule. Paintings, pictures, poetry, sculpture, dance, graffiti, theatre and music are all suffused with a questioning that eventually leads to the uprising.

The beauty of *BURKINABÈ RISING* as crafted by Iara Lee, the director, is that these various art forms are shown as not just agitprop, but as expressions inseparable from the details of the people’s daily living. An artist who is from a part of

Ghana bordering Burkina Faso teams up with another who lives in Sankara’s country and together they make music that questions the cartography that led to national boundaries drawn between people of the same ethnicity. Language becomes a form of resistance because only by singing in their local language will their people understand them.

A sculptor’s attempt to depict the origin of life through a wooden form that combines an egg and the female reproduction organ inevitably becomes a commentary about female genital mutilation. This all leads to a conversation about the experiences of women in Burkina Faso. And thousands of those women were at the forefront of the 27 October 2014 uprising, with their spoons and brooms in the air—the beginning of the end of Compaoré’s reign. As one of the women says, “If he had listened to the women on 28th, maybe there wouldn’t have been a 30th.”

These events are all edited into near perfection in *BURKINABÈ RISING*. There’s a care not to point to one movement or event as the origin of the uprising. Even *Babemba*, a prescient theatre with imagery that foreshadowed the 30th, with actors actively involved in the protests, is shown as just a small part of the art and culture that kept the resistance alive.

But through all these, the image and story of Sankara as a galvanizing force is

apparent.

Protest art isn’t often married to a politically-engaged culture, and rarely does it experience outcomes like that of the 2014 Burkina Faso uprising. But while the art and movement might be impossible to replicate, *BURKINABÈ RISING* presents an excellent opportunity for its admiration.

The iREP Report Newsroom

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