

FILMSCREENING PRINCE AMONG SLAVES

The Cultural Legacy of Enslaved Africans

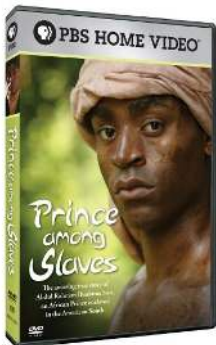


(Left to right) Michael Gomez, Eric V. Tait, Yusuf Ramadan, Zeki Gobelez

Ataturk's "Peace at home, peace in the world" policy is still consistent with "Zero Problems with Neighbors" policy.

The United Nations must play a role in peace building because it is the most legitimate and strongest power.

Human resource development reduces unemployment and allows for the rise of a working class.



Prince Among Slaves

The Cultural Legacy of Enslaved Africans

Prince Among Slaves is an award-winning PBS documentary about the life of Abdul Rahman Ibrahima Sori, a West African prince enslaved in the American south for 40 years. The panel will focus on the importance of Black/African American youth understanding their personal identity and history.

In order to analyze the self-understanding for Black/African American youth the Turkish Cultural Center brought together three esteemed panelists to discuss the importance of the movie Prince Among Slaves. This particular movie focuses on the life of a victim of the slave trade, Prince Abdul Rahman Ibrahima Sori. The issue of self-preservation and sense of self is discussed in the panel by Mr. Michael Gomez, Mr. Eric Tait and Mr. Yusuf Ramadan.

This particular issue, and background information on Prince Rahman, was first alluded to by Mr. Gomez, who provided the necessary context for the film before the film's viewing. We learn that Prince Rahman was originally a native of Guinea who was forcibly brought over to America despite his royal background. We also learn from Mr. Gomez that from the 15th to the 19th centuries, of all the Africans brought over to America there were tens of thousands of Muslims, which is important in the quest for finding one's own identity in the African American community.

BIOGRAPHIES

Michael Gomez, PhD is currently professor of History and Middle Eastern and Islamic Studies at New York University, having served as the director of the Association for the Study of Worldwide African Diaspora (ASWAD) from its inception in 2000 to 2007. He has also served as chair of the History departments at both NYU and Spelman College, and served as President of UNESCO's International Scientific Committee for the Slave Route Project from 2009 to 2011.

Eric V. Tait, Jr. is a veteran broadcast journalist and documentarian. His credits include ABC World News Tonight, Nightline, 20/20, Entertainment Tonight, and the ABC News Our World Documentary Series. He is the Executive Producer/Director of the award winning radio documentary series "Every Voice And Sing!" and the multiple award winning "Then I'll Be Free To Travel Home" radio and television documentary series.

Imam Yusuf Ramadan has served as the resident Imam of the historic Masjid (mosque) Nuriddin and Director of Education for the Clara Muhammad School of Queens, NY since 2000. He previously taught English, Islamic Studies and Social Studies at the Clara Muhammad School of Queens for ten years while serving as the security director for the school and Masjid and has worked as a Security Consultant.

KEYNOTES

How can global economy governance help global peace?

Economy and peace are the two important factors in economic stability and sustainable development.

Ensuring the coordination of international forces that create balances and results that are shared by all, we can lead a path to global peace.

Dividends of peace are much greater than the dividends of war.

Violence grows when was economy is not developed.

Political and economic instability leads to mass poverty.

Human resource development reduces unemployment and allows for the rise of a working class.

It is through economic stability and development that we will find a way to global peace.

Further on in the discussion, a documentarian by trade, Mr. Tait gives us an overview of the actual impact of slavery on the enslaved and enslavement's effects on self-identity and sense of self. According to Mr.

Tait, Prince Among Slaves, "gives a graphic example of the strata of the people enslaved." These were individuals that tried to maintain their identity, despite the enormity of the negative circumstances they found themselves in in a foreign land under enslavement. Prince Rahman is an example of an individual who refuses to give up his sense of self and who has the strength of will not to succumb to bondage. In discussing Prince Rahman's life, Mr Tait asks "are we as individuals, despite the types of negative circumstance able to rise out of those circumstances?" The question is indeed a very good one, though most of us have not experienced such a circumstance, the answer is a loud "Yes" as can be seen from Prince Rahman's life.

The next panelist was Mr Ramadan. Mr Ramadan also discussed the issue of identity in the film, and made a particular point about Prince Rahman' identity as being that of a Muslim's. As the Africans enslaved were done so irrespective of status and religion, Mr. Ramadan's discussion of Prince Rahman's religious background is an important issue. In Mr Ramadan's view, the film illustrates that "regardless of the perception from the outside, he refused to give up his sense of self-worth as a human being first. " Mr. Ramadan also made the comparison of the slave owners' practices of enslaving, with contemporary issues, in which responsibility for one's fellow man is ignored.

The event was followed by an answer and question session, where contemporary events and the film's contents were further discussed. In response to a question by a member of the audience where Mr. Gomez answers the question of why slavery is still carried out by Africans on Africans, Mr Gomez goes on to further state that the question of identity whether it be for those of Asian descent or "the concept of being African", or Asian, is an identity imposed on immigrants when they emigrate outside of their respective geographic regions. According to Mr Gomez, a common identity of being African is an imposition, and people in Africa, for example Mauritania, if they are of the same religious group but of different subgroups don't necessarily consider themselves the same.

In Mr. Ramadan's response, the kind of slavery was a new kind of bondage, not seen before except in the New World, where one's cultural identity was erased and it was forbidden to practice the religion of the homeland. Mr. Ramadan adds that all people have faults, and that there is only one race in the world, which is the human race and agrees with Mr. Gomez that the enslavers imposed a particular identity on the slaves.