

“En Même Temps”: Emmanuel Macron Visits Musician Activist Fela Kuti’s Shrine in Nigeria

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So French President Emmanuel Macron made good on his promise to visit ‘The New Afrika Shrine’ in Lagos.

The venue was built as a homage to the late Nigerian musician-activist [Fela Kuti](#), who was a vehement critic of the military and civilian administrations that governed Nigeria during his lifetime.

I wonder how President Muhammadu Buhari took to Macron’s initial announcement of the visit. You see, Buhari was a member of the military government which on February 18th 1977 attacked and burned to the ground, the original ‘Shrine’. Fela’s ‘Shrine’ was considered by Nigeria’s rulers to have been a den of political subversion and deviant behaviour. And Buhari was of course the person who effectively set Fela up to be jailed for a currency violation offence during his later tenure as military dictator.

Like Barack Obama, who once mildly admonished an NBA basketball star for deigning to introduce him to Fela’s music by promising to gift him a Fela album (Obama: “You think I don’t know who Fela Kuti is?”), Macron is clearly one of these establishment-sponsored, high-achieving politicians who are nonetheless familiar with the pulsating beat and firebrand lyrics of fundamentally anti-establishment music.

Macron’s contradictions are legion. For instance, while he often speaks of his determination to restore French grandeur, he also calls for deeper European integration, a policy which necessarily entails French acceptance of German domination. Also, his initial highly publicised flattery of Donald Trump was followed by a severe rebuke of Trump’s policies in a speech that he gave before the American Congress.

His inconsistencies are underlined by his often used phrase: “en meme temps”, which means “at the same time”. So maybe the conversation with Buhari, or rather, his monologue to Buhari went something like this:

Monsieur President, I am totally against decadent marijuana-smoking, hyper-sexual persons like Fela, who wish to overthrow the existing social and economic order. At the same time, I will be going to pay homage to that principled and rebellious musician who you jailed in 1984 – the same chap who referred to you and other Nigerian dictators as “animals in human skin”.

L’homme est une contradiction ambulate ...

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This article was originally published on [Adeyinka Makinde's blog](#).

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