

The Navig8or

‘Bringing Clarity and Direction’

Akwaaba (Welcome)

To the October issue of ‘The Navig8or’ newsletter. This issue will continue the biography of the great Marcus Mosiah Garvey. We will complete the saga surrounding the BBC drama programme ‘Shoot The Messenger’ with a review by the writer Abdullah Uhuru. This programme has provoked considerable discussion in the UK, generating a wide variety of views and generally more heat than light, however I believe Abdullah provides a thought provoking, considered review. There then follows news of a campaign by various Black organisations against the effect of mental health legislation in the UK. The final story looks at the proposal to bring in mandatory cervical cancer vaccinations in the US for girls as young as eleven.

Marcus Mosiah Garvey (17 Mosiah 1887- 10 June1940) – Part 2

Marcus Garvey arrived in New York on 23 March 1916, one of an increasing flow of Jamaican nationals emigrating to the US. He moved in with a Jamaican family and obtained a job as a printer, however as was his wont he worked for as long as it took for him to save enough money to allow him to embark on a lecture tour. In a whirlwind effort Garvey lectured in 38 of the country’s (then) forty eight states during the next year. During this period Garvey went to great lengths to familiarise himself with Black life in the US and was clearly impressed. He noted in 1917 that “I have seen Negro banks in Washington and Chicago, cafes, restaurants, theatres and real estate agencies that fill my heart with joy to realise... that at one center of Negrodom, at least, the people have sufficient pride to do things for themselves.” (Garvey quoted in Martin 1983 :41)

However Garvey correctly recognised that much of this self-help was not spontaneous but rather due to White racism, which forcibly separated Caucasian from Afrikan and thereby forced Afrikans in the US to provide many services for themselves. It is sadly ironic that many of these types of Black businesses were to disappear in the aftermath of the 1950’s-1960’s Civil Rights Movement which mistakenly fought for integration, as opposed to equal protection under the law, and in the end became little more than a consumer rights movement. In censuring the behaviour of Afrikans in the Caribbean he commented “We are throwing away good business opportunities in the beautiful islands of the West. We have no banks of our own, no big stores and commercial undertakings; we depend on others as dealers while we remain consumers.” (Garvey quoted in Martin 1983 :42)

The ideology of Black Power, in all its manifestations, which Garvey promulgated was rejected by many of those who inherited the mantle of Black leadership after Garvey’s death, with some notable exceptions.

With a year of speaking engagements under his belt, Garvey’s oratorical skills were now finely honed and upon his return to Harlem, New York, in 1917 he proved an enormous hit whenever he spoke. He had planned to return to Jamaica and wished to set up a New York branch of the UNIA before departing, however as fate would have it, and in a prequel of his later betrayal, his first two attempts were thwarted by infiltrators from the Socialist and Republican parties. In order to sort things out Garvey decided to stay in the US and New York as opposed to Kingston, Jamaica, became the headquarters of the UNIA.

Garvey set to work building the membership of the UNIA, and his disciples, many of them seamen, travelled around the world spreading the word. The UNIA bought a building on 120 West 138th Street as its meeting place and named it Liberty Hall, which became the name of its meeting places all over the world. Today, the Liberty Hall on King Street in Kingston, Jamaica, has been developed into a multi-media centre celebrating Garvey's work, however it is sadly underutilised by contemporary Jamaicans, most of whom seem locked in the 'waking coma' that afflicts so many Afrikans around the world.

The scent of revolution and tumult was in the air across the world, following the first European tribal World War and Afrikans were recognising the hypocrisy of being held in oppression by a people who claimed to be fighting a war to free people from tyranny (Such sentiments would become even stronger following the second European tribal World War). Marcus Garvey was the right man at the right time in the right place. With his passionate, powerful oratory he had a messianic air and roused Afrikans from their slumber with his ideas and philosophy which have become known as '*Garveyism*'.

'*Garveyism*' was founded upon three main ideological planks, *Race First*, *Self-Reliance* and *Nationhood*. Race First centred around Afrikans using their race as their primary source of identity, engaging in self-interested practice and included a disapproval of miscegenation. Self-reliance was particularly focused upon the need for Afrikans to become producers and not just consumers as well as to take responsibility for fighting their own political battle and not to rely upon members of the oppressor group to free them. Nationhood was a recognition of the need for strong Afrikan nations to offer protection to Afrikans all over the world. In 1918 Liberia and Ethiopia were the only independent Black nations in the world.

In Part 3 we will see how Garvey put these ideas into practice and how his name began to spread right across the world.

The historical details for this review of Marcus Garvey's life have been taken from Professor Tony Martin's book '*Marcus Garvey, Hero – A First Biography*'

Shoot the Messenger – The post Mortem

On Aug 30th 2006 the BBC broadcast a documentary 'Shoot The Messenger' which claimed to be an honest look at the problems which the Black community in the UK was unprepared to discuss and address. The programme provoked much discussion and was previewed in an earlier edition of this Newsletter. In our final comment we have asked the talented writer and social analyst Abdullah Uhuru to review this programme.

Review by Abdullah Uhuru – Writer, Photographer and Educationalist

Our illustrious teacher Nana Kwesi Abakah Kuntu (Del Jones), who recently departed from this world, told us that the Trinidadians made music from the waste of the American presence. He was talking about the oil cans left by the US military, which were turned into musical instruments (Steel Pans).

I am in no way saying that 'Shoot the Messenger' is total rubbish. On the contrary, it is in parts entertaining, humorous, well written and innovative. As a lecturer I found

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myself relating to Joe's battle with his Afrikan-Caribbean student Germal. This type of student is very REAL and becoming more representative of "On the edge students". We are as a community in deep denial of his existence.

I have wrestled with women over the issue of hair, processed or purchased. I can even relate to the "Crabs in a Barrel" theory present by the Christian character. These are real issues that have not really been dealt with on television. Yet "Shoot the Messenger" raised these issues in a wacky, unconventional and uncomfortable way. This is not the problem.

The use of crude stereotypes of Black people is acceptable, but risky, as some Black people do not like to see themselves warts and all. However, the writer delivers a series of stereotypes with no redeeming characters to counteract the assumed views of Black people. Here lies the problem. Now, if the author chose to call the programme "A Day in the life of a set of Deranged Negroes" the drama would then work. But the film leaves no avenue for redemption, and more importantly refuses to accept that slavery is the root cause of the social and economic ills of the Afrikan Diaspora. The Black intellectuals in the film are challenged over this position with the heart warming suggestion to "get over it".

The question then should be presented as how one gets over 400 years of slavery, rape, family breakdown, torture, colonialism, segregation, Jim Crow, lynching, Sus Laws, Neo colonialism and the general acts of racism our people face on a daily basis.

It is interesting to note that the writer feels that Black history should not be taught in schools. I agree with her when she states that Black history should be taught at home. However, White history is hideously warped and inaccurate. Black history counter balances the omission of Black achievement and most importantly *our* instigation of civilisation.

I feel the education system projects White Supremacy, but along with the joint efforts of Black parents, we are producing dysfunctional young people whose *Kiblah* (source of spiritual direction) comes from MTV (moronic television). Parents need to start instilling Afrikan value systems at home and forget the daily antics of folk at Albert Square. For me as a lecturer, the likes of Germal and his parents need to be re-educated in Afrikan history, sociology, psychology, economics and physiology. If not these students will continue to frustrate our one dimensional White teachers who now have been given proof by this film, that all Black people are mad.

Back to the Nana Kwesi Abakah Kuntu theory...this wasted opportunity provides the material for Afrikan-centred scholars to demonstrate how our people collude with the media to further confuse the unthinking Black masses. Hence from the political garbage comes useful material to educate our people.

Oppressed people need heroes and in this film we find none.

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Abdullah Uhuru is a noted author and social analyst. His latest book 'Killing Me Softly – Death by Assimilation' has been highly acclaimed and is a powerful critique of the efforts to keep the Afrikan-Caribbean community in Britain in a position of mental subordination, under the anaesthetic of Entertainment and Multiculturalism.

Abdullah Nazir Uhuru

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Navig8or Comment -

Just because a programme contains what are perceived to be *realistic* characters does not necessarily make for a realistic programme. Just because 'Shoot The Messenger' contained characters who were recognizable to many Afrikan people in their everyday lives does not make it a realistic portrayal of Black life in Britain. I know many conscious, stable, hardworking Afrocentric Black people, however if I presented a drama, which supposedly had something meaningful to say about Black life in the UK, in which all of the Afrikans were conscious Afrocentrics, not only would it not stand a chance of being screened on the BBC, it would be as equally unrealistic as 'Shoot The Messenger'. The word which is vital in this whole discourse is **context**. Black life is neither comprised of dysfunctional, self-hating, apathetic individuals with a victim mentality nor is it comprised of community oriented, caring, sharing, self-sacrificing, conscious individuals. It contains both and all shades of characterization in between.

As Abdullah Uhuru suggests in his review, if the writer and producers had made it clear that this programme was about some crazy Afrikans then fine, viewers would have had some context for interpreting the programme as a slice of Black life, but in no way the whole cake.

We get so little serious programming about the experiences of Afrikans in the UK and when we do get an hour and a half drama from the BBC (or any of the other main channels come to that) we should know what to expect. If it is not 'Shoot The Messenger' it is 'The Trouble with Black Men'. I believe that the regular appearance of such programming is no accident. White Supremacy/Racism operates in all areas of human activity including media & communications and it is a well proven trueism that one of the quickest ways to get ahead as a Black person is to attack other Black people.

In some respects 'Shoot The Messenger' reminds me of the film 'The Colour Purple' written by Alice Walker. This was another programme with *realistic* characters, it just so happens that virtually all of the Afrikan male characters were irredeemably negative whilst the Afrikan women were stereotypically strong and long suffering and the lead female character found solace in a homosexual relationship. Just because some Black men are violent or sexually abuse children, does not make it realistic to portray all, or most, Black men in this way. Once again where is the **context**. Of course Ms Walker was widely lauded and rewarded for this warts and all 'realistic' portrayal of Black life just as Ms Foster (writer of 'Shoot The Messenger') has been. Ms Walker was also a *'pioneer'* in inter-racial marriage in the Southern states of the USA, being one of the first Afrikans to engage in such a union, so perhaps she had some scores to settle with brothers.

In an article which appeared on the Colourful Network www.blackbritain.co.uk which was posted on 04 September 2006, Deborah Gabriel highlighted the growing

concern of Black voluntary and community organisations working with Black people experiencing mental health difficulties over the negative impact that the Mental Health Act (1983) and the operation of mental health services in the UK are having on Black people who come into contact with these services.

In her article Ms Gabriel notes that a government inpatient census carried out in 2005 called **Count Me In** revealed the extent to which Black people are adversely affected by the mental health system in the UK. African Caribbean men are 4-6 times more likely to be detained in hospital; 46 per cent of African Caribbean men and 29 per cent of African Caribbean women in-patients have been detained under the 1983 Act; African Caribbean males are 50 per cent more likely to be placed in seclusion and 29 per cent more likely to have control and restraints used against them.

The campaign: **Black Mental Health UK** (BMH UK) being led by Independent BME Mental Health consultant Matilda Macatram was launched last week at the Kingsway International Christian Centre (KICC) which played host to an international Christian conference attended by 200,000 individuals from the African and Caribbean communities.

Spelling out her reason for launching the campaign, Matilda Macatram told Black Britain: **“Despite the catalogue of death, despite the Rocky Bennett Enquiry and the government report that came out of that, despite the Count Me In Census showing that mental health services are institutionally racist, despite the mental health network sitting down with the government for the last six months and telling them that they need to acknowledge the destruction that mental health services are wreaking in our community, the government has ignored every call.”**

The National Black and Minority Ethnic Mental Health Network (NBMEMHN) represents around 700 mental health practitioners across the country and is playing an instrumental role in the BMH UK campaign.

NBMEMHN provided supplementary evidence to the Department of Health’s Scrutiny Committee last February when it was asked to provide evidence of the over-representation of African Caribbean people within the mental health system.

The report, prepared by Dr Kwame Mc Kenzie, a Senior Lecturer in Psychiatry at the Royal Free and University College Medical School notes: **“People of African and Caribbean origin who are diagnosed with a psychosis are at least four times more likely to be detained under a section of the Mental Health Act 1983 than people who are white.”**

But crucially: **“The rates of diagnosed psychosis in the African and Caribbean origin population are higher than the rates in the white British population. This has been demonstrated by numerous studies over the last 30 years.”**

The study highlights the two major areas where there is considerable disparity between the white and black UK population as firstly the increased risk of being diagnosed as psychotic if you are of African Caribbean origin and secondly an

increased risk of being sectioned if you are African Caribbean and have been diagnosed with psychosis.

But the study points out that : **“The rates of schizophrenia and other psychoses are not raised in the Caribbean but have been reported to be elevated in people of African and Caribbean origin in the UK.”**

The study stresses that African Caribbean people have no genetic predisposition to psychoses, in fact: **“Rates of depression and other mental illnesses are not raised in people of Caribbean and African origin in the UK compared to white British.”**

It concludes in respect of the African and Caribbean UK population: **“Their shared high rates of diagnosed psychosis reflect a difficulty that the mental health system has in dealing with people who are black.”**

A major concern about the draft Mental Health Bill is the wide definition of mental disorder which it is believed will lead more black people to be diagnosed by practitioners who misinterpret behaviour. Felix told Black Britain: **“The tools that are used for the diagnosis of mental disorders are based on western psychological tools. Many would argue that the approach used is not suitable for people of African origin.”**

NBMEMHN is calling for a statement of principal relating to equality to be included in the Act. Felix explained: **“This would mean that when staff are carrying out assessments they would have to take cultural identity into account. At the moment this is not a necessity.”**

NBMEMHN also recommends that mental health treatment should be culturally relevant and tailored to what works best for a particular individual, rather than the **“One size fits all”** approach. **“What helps is having representative staff teams and clinicians and practitioners...who have an understanding of what is norm for a particular culture,”** Felix told Black Britain.

NBMEMHN is also calling for mental health practitioners to undergo cultural awareness training to minimise discrimination.

Felix suggests that people of African origin develop better and feel more comfortable in groups and within their communities and feels that the mental health system fails to acknowledge this. She said: **“Although individually we can achieve, we work better when we are connected.”**

Navig8or Comment – In reading the above it is interesting to note, firstly that these issues of the disproportionately negative outcomes for Black people who encounter mental health services are longstanding and as persistent and unchanging as the similarly negative outcomes experienced by Black people in relation to the education system, the criminal justice system and in fact all areas of human activity in the UK. Of course we know that this situation is essentially the same in the US, Brazil, continental Europe and all other societies where Caucasians dominate and African people live in significant numbers.

Secondly, it's a usual sociological phenomenon that migrants experience increased levels of mental health difficulties due to the psychological stresses of moving to an alien country. It has, in the vast majority of cases, been found that the next generation which is born in the new country shows decreased levels of mental illness since they have less issues of transition and fitting in to the host culture/society. What has been noticeable about the Afrikan-Caribbean experience in the UK has been that the second generation which was born in Britain shows significantly greater levels of mental distress than their parents who migrated to Britain. It seems that being Black in Britain can literally drive you mad and if you're not mad there is always someone available to diagnose you as such!

Sixth grade girls to face mandatory cervical cancer vaccinations under Michigan bill

The following article appeared on www.NewsTarget.com on 13 September 2006

A bipartisan group of female lawmakers backed legislation that, if passed, would require all Michigan girls entering sixth grade in the Fall of 2007 to be vaccinated against cervical cancer.

Lead sponsor Sen. Beverly Hammerstrom said the legislation is the first of its kind in the United States, and said the group believes the law could save girls' lives. American Cancer Society numbers estimate that 9,700 women will be diagnosed with cervical cancer in 2006 in the United States alone, and 3,700 women will die from the condition.

The new three-shot vaccine has been lauded as a breakthrough in [cancer](#) prevention for its ability to prevent infections from some strains of the human papilloma virus, which can cause [cervical cancer](#) and genital warts. Since the human papilloma virus is sexually transmitted, a government advisory board proposed that the vaccine be administered before girls become sexually active.

Hammerstrom said Michigan employers would cover the \$360 cost of each shot, except for uninsured girls, whose [vaccines](#) would be paid for by the federal government's Vaccines for Children plan.

Conservative opponents say they fear the vaccine may be made a requirement for enrollment in schools, that it oversteps parent rights, and could be misconstrued as an endorsement for underage sex.

Health freedom opponents say the [legislation](#) is an affront to parent and patient rights. Critics such as health advocate Mike Adams point to the harmful ingredients found in [vaccinations](#), plus the flawed theory that viruses alone are responsible for cervical cancer. "Cervical cancer is not caused solely by the presence of Human Papilloma Virus," Adams explained. "Rather, it occurs when an opportunistic virus meets an unhealthy host with inadequate defenses. There are countless young, healthy women who have been exposed to the virus but do not have cervical cancer. A healthy body naturally resists infection and subsequent cancer."

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The proposed law fails to consider studies finding that vaccines can be harmful to health, as many of them use formaldehyde and thimerosal, a form of [mercury](#), as preservatives. "The idea that the State of Michigan would impose a mandatory injection of mercury into the bodies of teenage girls is bewildering," Adams said, "and it demonstrates just how profit-driven public health policy has become. The primary beneficiaries of this policy would of course be the drug companies who sell the vaccinations and who are strongly supporting this legislation."

Navig8or Comment – The above article highlights one of two growing trends within 'Western' medicine, namely the desire to ascribe all illness to firstly, a viral infection or secondly to some form of genetic inheritance or mutation. The idea of the possibility of multi-factorial causes of disease or illness seems to have gone out of the window. Hence the drive for medical *silver bullets* in the shape of vaccines or genetic therapies grows ever stronger.

It is interesting to note that it has been demonstrated that in many cases where people have multiple personality disorder; different personalities manifest different medical conditions! For example, there was a person suffering from this condition and one of his personalities had hives - *Hives* (medically known as *urticaria*) are red, itchy, raised areas of skin that appear in varying shapes and sizes. They range in size from a few millimeters to several inches in diameter. Hives can be round, or they can form rings or large patches. Wheals (welts), red lesions with a red "flare" at the borders, are one manifestation of hives. Hives can occur anywhere on the body, such as the trunk, arms, and legs – however when he moved into another personality the hives would instantly disappear. This suggests that illness and disease may be a little more complex than the medical-pharmaceutical industrial complex would have us believe.

Conclusions

'The Navig8or' newsletter was created to provide a small window through which Afrikan-centred information could shine, illuminating issues in a way which provides readers with a different perspective to that provided by so-called mainstream media. There is no pretence of impartiality or objectivity on our part. No human being is truly capable of objectivity since we have all been socialised into particular cultural norms and values, we all have some beliefs that cannot be fully substantiated, we all have loyalties and allegiances based upon emotional attachment. Given this reality 'Navig8or Press' seeks *evidence based subjectivity* i.e. we are unapologetic about the primacy of our loyalty to Afrikan people and seek to uncover evidence/information which will assist our people to rise up to the highest level of human development. Our people need to let go of over-emotionalism and ultra-religiosity. In this way we will assist all humanity to rise. We are only against those, of whatever race/creed, who wish to hinder the resurrection of Afrikan people.

Marcus Mosiah Garvey, sought nothing more than that which I have described. He asked the question as to why a people (Caucasians) would seek to hinder the development of another group of people (Afrikans) whom they said were inferior. You only try to stymie the efforts of those whom you consider a threat! Garvey understood the importance of the media and propaganda, which is why he immediately set up newsletters, then newspapers to disseminate his message. 'Shoot The Messenger' merely reinforces the desperate need for Afrikan-centred media which is different to Black owned media. Bob Johnson created BET (Black

Entertainment Television) in the US and sold it to Viacom for around \$2bn. BET was one of the most destructive cultural forces to strike Afrikan America, yet Johnson was lauded for his entrepreneurial genius by hypocrites such as Oprah Winfrey, who in the next breath could be found castigating rappers such as Ludicrous and Snoop Doggy Dog for their misogynistic, violent and sexually degenerate music which of course were widely showcased on Johnson's BET. Who really is more dangerous? The man who creates the media platform and format or the 'artistes' who perform on the media platform? Aren't both culpable for their actions?

Health is another area where the dissemination of information has a profound impact upon people's beliefs and actions. The widespread and profoundly negative beliefs about the nature and character of Afrikan people has a direct impact upon the type of diagnosis and care we receive from mental health services. These beliefs infect not only non-Afrikans but also Afrikan mental health practitioners. There is a cultural paradigm which informs the classification and assessment of mental illness and there are sadly, only a small number of Afrikan-centred mental health practitioners. Finally, we covered the drive to vaccinate girls against cervical cancer in Michigan, USA. On the face of a laudable aim, however when we scratch a bit deeper we see that there are assumptions underpinning this proposed action that need to be questioned. One obvious starting question is why are there such widely varying levels of cervical cancer across the world if it is simply caused by viral infection during sexual intercourse?

Well, that's it. Spread the word. Our subscribers list is growing steadily and we would welcome your input. If you would like to submit an article (600-900 words) for future issues get in touch so we can consider your idea. Remember, keep on recycling those Black Pounds, don't be penny wise and pound foolish!