

Multicultural Britain

I have read your document regarding Multicultural Britain. At first I did not exactly get the meaning to which you were alluding to, for to me, "Multiculturalism" can easily go for "Cosmopolitanism" but going through the document, the gist of the matter became clear. Is it not a discussion of the black people and their position within the axis of multi-ethnicity around which everyone must spin or be thrown off tangentially into an irrelevant entity or a redundant element of the society? If economic power is the weights that keep the wheel of multiculturalism in balance, I agree with your implied statements that the balancing machine needs to be seriously re-calibrated if the vehicle in which we are riding will provide us with smooth ride. Regarding the role of black man with respect to history and historicity of mankind, his position has neither been fairly represented nor apparently well-received; not now, neither in the immediate past nor in the previous epochs.

Having said that, it is interesting to note that the Black man sits by the River Banks of History as the waters of his account silently flows by, composing an elegiac dirge of how his past has been misrepresented. But however well meaning those who compose the black man's history are, they can only do so from their own perspective...God help when they don't mean well! History is not just a matter of a cold story and frosty statistics, for to say that a hundred million Blacks had been put in enslavement over the four hundred years may be a fact, but the real effect of that social injustice runs wider in time, much deeper into the consciousness of those who are left, inflicting serious wounds into the heart of their psychology to transcend into every facet of their lives including their religion, almost leaving them with at best an inert God and at worst a dead one. History is a filial relationship with its own people. That is why it has to be written from within. The black man must wake up on that point.

Now, with regard to multiculturalism, it may not be a new history in the making or a new concept, but certainly it is part of the endless human journey in time. There is nothing negative with multiculturalism for it is the melting pot within which cultures blend, to coherently express themselves. It is a failed project when in the pot, different cultures coagulate in isolation like repelling globules of oil and water even though in the same vessel. It is therefore prudent to ask to what extent has Britain achieved good blending and what else can be done to achieve a complete and harmonious blend.

A complete blend of multiculturalism accepts some habits while rejecting some others, each community delivering their own to be accepted, while taking in those of the others it finds useful, without unduly trying to use a bias for rejection. This results in increased economic activities. In this case, there is tendency to achieve what Immanuel Kant, would have called the Kingdom of Ends in community relations. But blending does not mean the loss of identity, for to do so is to challenge the laws of nature. Physical science expresses itself in differences whose echoes too are picked in the social anthropology. The beauty of multiculturalism is reflected not in cultural monochromaticism, but when different cultures are allowed to grow into a rainbow alliance, each colour expresses its richness without debasing those of the others. Nature always speaks through physics.

Britain has had much longer contact with the Blacks than America has. But over the four hundred years or so of large-scale black contact within the two societies, black people have emerged out differently. In Britain, the Black man exists very much within the fringes of the society and even though the American experience at first was lagging behind that of British in liberalism and emancipation of slaves, America made up for it, agreeing to the Affirmative Action and accepting the Civil Rights Movement of the 50's and 60's. Today, we find we find beneficiaries of that movement close to the seat of power, in business, arts and literature. In Britain, Black stars in business, politics, arts and literature, like their celestial equivalents, are dwarfs and still very dull. But unlike those heavenly bodies, the black people are not smouldering as a sign of their terminal existence but history, revealed as a science of existence has a way creating underdogs as cultural revolutions and evolutions take place, cycles that tend to be rather long. It could be that Friedrich Nietzsche was right in his observation of Eternal Cycle as societies are always in a dynamic state. But culture is revealed and exists within a people and any mistakes that are culturally practiced cannot be excused as cyclic. Are we just passive players in a divine scheme or are we active subjects writing and unfolding a history of our own? I guess the later and I dare say that man was not created for nature, but man is a part of nature within which he has a choice to continually seek and strife to realise the self.

Despite that positive, optimistic and sanguine thought, it seems that man, whenever contacts are made with another, is continually looking to dominate and exploit, by using both psychology and sheer might in measures that he deems suitable to achieve his ends. The easiest way to create domination of a people is to create negative stereotypes; hence you will find that in Britain, a black person is identified with crime, lack of education and poverty. The mainstream media, especially Sun and Co. keep the fire of the mantra: *The Aliens are Coming*, burning without mentioning the positive role played by those aliens, who land without the Flying Saucers, in maintaining the economic superstructure of the Britain. But if capitalism is the system that the Britain has chosen, those who whinge while reaping the benefits, do so in vain but it is a system that needs to be fine-tuned all the time, otherwise it will create slavery repackaged in a colourful aluminium foil paper to satisfy the “Whingers”. We, the black people must continually demand to be fairly treated, to be given opportunities...or rather, stumbling blocks to be removed as we strive to acquire what everyone else does. Racism in all shapes and sizes must be curtailed and condemned and the society as a whole must remove the gamut of expressions and practices that allow it to exist in shades that are hard to detect. If Affirmative Action will help, the country must wake up and realise its usefulness, but that may not even be necessary, for all that needs to be done away with are the subtle and ingenious “Dis-affirmative Actions” in schools, public and private places of work.

Even though I assert that America is ahead with acceptance of multiculturalism, America seems to be suffering from some sought of blues and where America sneezes, Britain catches the cold. These mid-night American blues started to come to the forecourt of the political salesrooms with Reagan era and his Trickle Down Economic Theory of taking from the poor and giving it to the rich so that the wealth will then trickle down to the poor. The only place I know where this seems to make sense is in the bible. In congruence to the political thought today, Charles Murray et al, in a project to underpin racial prejudice, has written his own version of the *Mein Kampf*, *The Bell Curve*. While writing in the *Opinion Journal* of New York, on Sunday, 2nd October 2005 in an article entitled: *The Hallmarks of the Underclass*, he gives some alarming figures, showing that the proportion of black young men (20-24 years old) unwilling to work has risen from 9% in 1954 when the statistics were first gathered to 30% in 1999. According to him, illegitimacy among the blacks has risen from 4% in the early 50's to 68% in 2003, accounting for 35% of the national. In the *Bell Curve*, Charles Murray openly attacks the black population, throwing in as token the white working class, and asserts that the affirmative action should be terminated. He provides an overall vision that unless the American Government devises a way of curtailing the production of inferior people which, he keeps pointing out as predominantly black, America will become a blue print for Nazism. But then one wonders, what more is there in Nazism that the one he is already advocating?

The *Bell Curve*, received wide publicity in the media which SJ Rosenthal of the University of Michigan refers to us pseudo-science but which was in fact peppered with racist socio-political agenda. If my memory is not failing me, Labour's No 10 received Charles Murray's thoughts if not the person when he came to promote his book in Britain. The political agenda of Charles Murray et al is made explicit when he says in Chapter 15 that the black children receive inferior genes and inferior parenting...a double whammy so to speak...and that because of low IQ of the black people, they are out breeding the smart white people. He is sounding the alarm bells! In the book, Murray the Prophet of Baal, is giving credence to the Reagan's ultra-rightism, which seems to be engulfing America today. Nothing delineates that link with the ultra right more than Reagan's letter to the editor of *The Mankind Quarterly*...a journal which in the 1950 was vanguard in opposing the Civil Right Movement, defended Nazi Germany and Apartheid South Africa... in 1982 and the sponsorship that Murray received to write his book.

In conclusion, multiculturalism is an element of a democratic vehicle and for it to work, fair means of democracy have to be in control. It will not work by appealing to the spiritual tendencies of a people, nor to their moral bases, though these could be used to buttress the principles of fairness and justice but if I borrow for an instant from Nietzschean Ethics, “man is basically evil trying to do good” and for that goodness to be achieved, it has to be underpinned by the bedrock of sound democratic and legal strata. Nevertheless, multiculturalism, stand neutral and naked, in front of us, either to cloth it and to give its an appealing look, or like a peeping Tom, watch its nakedness without realising that the moral degradation it portrays is ours also. We stand before the question, or is it the question that stands in front of us? *What does Britain Want to make of multiculturalism?* Let every man and woman become the answer.

David Nderitu

Davidkn1@yahoo.co.uk

Sunday, 20 August 2006