
THE BLACK KNOWLEDGE SOCIETY

№03- 2020

Know thyself,
love thyself

Out of the
Darkness...



WELCOME!



WELCOME TO ISSUE 3 OF TBKS: OUT OF THE DARKNESS... CAME A GLORIOUS LIGHT.

Beyond Black History Month, what does Black History really mean to you? Beyond late night BBC4 programmes on the Slave Trade; beyond 'Top of the Pops does Reggae' and Anansi-the-Spider-type stories in school, Rosa Parks poems and so on?

It is imperative that we focus on the hidden achievements of early African civilisations, in order to develop our understanding of self. When we do, we inevitably begin to look at ourselves in a powerful way and acknowledge what we have contributed, and still contribute to society.

Through 'HIS-story', generations have been stripped of pride, unable to connect with the significant accomplishments of the great African empires.

In this edition we speak to those with the clout and heart to take us beyond the standard fayre Black History content.

Our conversations with Chalice Richardson, bE Empowerment CIC and Nia Imara, National Association of Black Supplementary Schools (NABSS), reflect on the premise of Black History Month and address how we return to fostering successful social models and structures of times past.

For too long society's structural forces have created a system of winners and losers, in which our community is rarely positioned to make the winning choices.

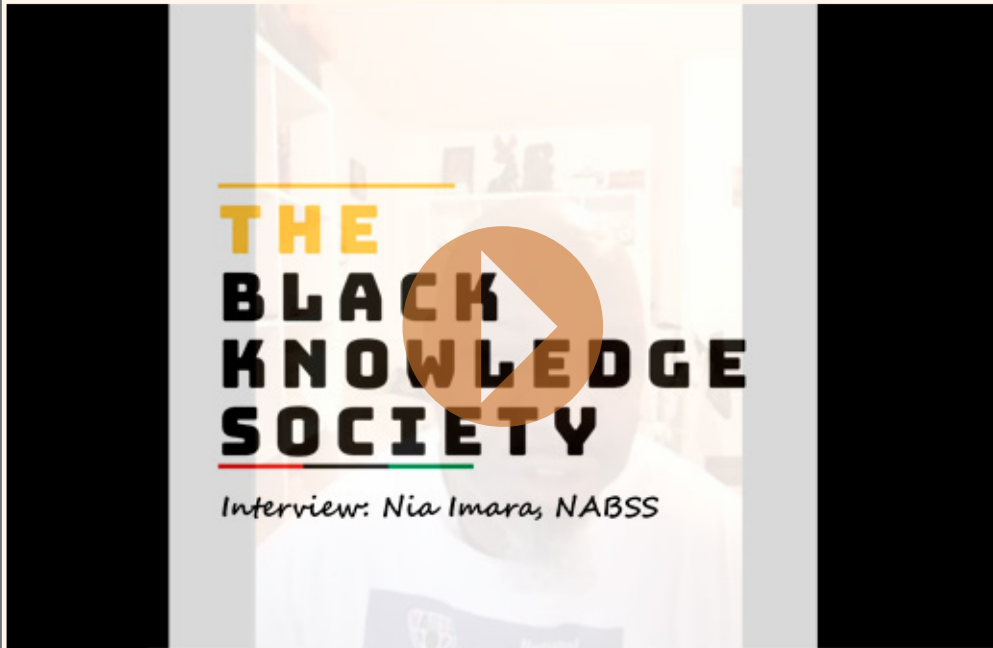
We believe the remedy begins with the truth, escaping the mental darkness by striking the match of *African* History. The truth can liberate and illuminate our minds, to a place where we create and control our own spaces to flourish, within (or without) mainstream society. The truth empowers us to be more, do more and, most critically, recognise we deserve more.

Abundant life & love to all,

Cherrelle Amo, with the Editor.

INTERVIEW

Esther Ademosu



[Click on the icon to watch the interview with Nia Imaras](#)

The decision to publish this edition of TBKS after Black History Month is far from a point of “protest” or “resistance” – both of which assume a starting position of oppression or disadvantage. Instead, the choice is an apolitical statement, a challenge to our community to author, curate, publish and engage in the culture defining practices to inform a new sense of Black society, here, in the present. For the works we commit ourselves to today, come to form the new chapters of our history - which we can only hope pay homage to legacies of our ancestors.

A reminder, that nobody has the power or authority to confer the rules of engagement with Black culture, African history unless we concede it.

Let's remain unapologetic in our expressions of Black, across all planes of the social landscape.

To this understanding, TBKS caught up with the formidable Nia Imaras, Director of the [National Association of Black Supplementary Schools \(NABSS\)](#) and one of the community's emerging thought-leaders, Chalice Richardson, Founder and Director of [bE Empowerment CIC](#). Read and listen, as they share their perspectives on what Black history ought to represent, beyond the prevailing mainstream account.

Since 1987, the UK has designated October, BHM. What (if at all) was the difference in your experience of BHM this year - personally and professionally - and is it welcome?

White guilt, but lack of meaningful traction? When a situation becomes solely about guilt, we can sometimes be blinded by the true impact of racism. Whilst atonement is a good thing, what is important is full recognition of the impact of slavery as a social phenomenon. Tokenistic gestures have always been a method of appeasing the Black diaspora, this hasn't changed much.

The need for Europeans to be at the head of organisations, or at the table without Black input on issues affecting the Black community - or integrating themselves into movements, takes the focus off our plight. The focus becomes about them supporting the cause and at times generating a culture of dependency, *creating perceived “white saviours”*.

There remains a sense of an altered (and frankly) “whitewashed” account of Black history, which upholds the narrative of an enslaved and oppressed people. Tell us if you would, of the wider narrative - of ancient Black civilisations that demonstrated the most successful practice of ‘cooperative’

micro and macro social organisation, for example?

We as people have always celebrated the heroes given to us by the Europeans, so much so that we are somewhat complicit in our children's lack of knowledge about their real African heroes. No need for me to go as far back as Kush and Kemet, just to name a few geographical places that possess timelines that would leave many cultures in awe; we can start post slavery, just so we can recognise the determination of some of our ancestors across the pond.

Great Britain has done such a great job in hiding their atrocities during their colonisation of three quarters of the world and in doing so, they ignore and discard a lot of our contribution to this country.

Black Wall Street, Frederick Douglass, Booker T Washington, Marcus Garvey, Malcolm X, Madam CJ Walker, Ida B Wells, **Fanny Lou Hamer**. All of those mentioned demonstrated an entrepreneurial spirit and their social commitments were so impactful. Had they possessed an aggressive capitalistic mindset, their wealth would exceed that of many people today.

These individuals are rarely discussed or celebrated, what we see here were the roots of African culture and social entrepreneurship, and not the capitalistic mind set of the West. All of the people mentioned wanted to do more for their community - and they did so, with their time, energy, and personal wealth.

There is considerable energy and determination to “buy Black”, modelling the financial and social cooperatives of times past, Black Wall Street being the most notable example. What are the challenges that today's society poses to realising the same - if not greater levels of success?

As Black people we first need to foster the attitude and mind-set that we are enough, we don't need to always compare ourselves to any other culture or heritage.

Our self-worth was evident, many of us foster the attitude that if the European doesn't 'rate it', then it's not good enough, it has no value. The crazy part about this narrative is that the western civilisation has always rated and admired what we do; they just don't want us to be the trailblazers, the innovators, the creators so they find a way to get involved, then repackage it and sell it to the masses as their own invention. Then we come along and buy into it.

We need to be committed in our approach to support our own like other cultures have demonstrated, no one said it's going to be easy. What we see when other cultures are supporting their own, is decades of commitment and vision now manifesting, we have a long way to go but we have to start now, so that in the next 15 years when the current generation are in a position to support the economy, it's intrinsic and organic for them to look within their communities first and foremost like it is for other diasporas.

How did we come to abandon our successful social models and structures?

Based upon my research, the evidence would suggest we lost our structures and social models through the abandonment of self-identity and culture; we assimilated to a way of life that was not congruent with our cultural identity. In doing so, many of us have taken the attitude of integration beyond the demarcation of where it would ultimately uplift the Black community. Some of us are now subconsciously and involuntarily taking out of the community, without realising, be that with their choice of partner, their lifestyle or even their newfound attitude.

The system was designed to work the way it is and to fully partake in the system, requires you to reject many of your own cultural, spiritual, emotional and mental codes that are within our DNA as Africans.

We hear in limited doses, about our history, as great ancient civilisations. What are some of the lesser known, but seminal points in Black history that the community should invest more time getting to understand?

The arts. I believe we should invest more time in the arts, get familiar with authors, playwrights and artists, whose activism was shared through their creative works. Generations overlook the contributions of Fela Kuti, Miriam Makeba, Billie Holliday to name a few. Written work from, James Baldwin, Richard Wright, Zora Neale Hurston. If

we look deep within the arts, we will be able to recognise our input.

The arts gave Black people a voice, the opportunity to be visible, and share stories, while giving back and inspiring generations to be positive and hopeful, despite being surrounded by a society of hatred and dystopia.

What do you believe the future looks like for the UK's Black community, in the wake of George Floyd's murder and the BLM protests?

I believe the future looks a lot brighter than it did before because the young people are now active; they are more vigilant, and not as easily influenced in this informative time. However, I'm concerned with the lack of transparent leadership and the current narrative which doesn't fight solely for Black rights. I do believe that in a country like the UK, the Black agenda is easily side-lined and it would seem to me that the BLM movement has a number of micro-agendas they would like to be addressed. As an organisation, they are doing well to raise awareness of the plight of BAME community, but which is also very much inclusive of other cultures.

In my opinion BLM isn't the organisation best suited to represent the entrenched issues that have affected the wider Black population within the UK. Economic, housing, educational and societal issues deserve an organisation fully committed to those causes. In my experience, movements representing the marginalised in society require expert leadership that is prepared to stick at the task until an outcome has been decided; the focus should always remain on one issue.

TBKS is committed to signposting the community to resources that edify and unify. What are you reading, watching, or listening to at the moment to feed your consciousness?

I am currently reading *The Blackout* by Candace Owens. Prior to this I read *Faces at the bottom of the Well* by Derrick Bell.

I don't watch television, I find it to be an expense I can't afford - an expense on my spiritual, emotional, physical and mental well-being. I will occasionally watch a series if someone suggests a good one.

Where can people find out more about the work you do?

Please go to www.beeducated.co.uk further information.

Profile: Chalice Richardson

Chalice Richardson is Founder and Director of bE Educated Ltd and bE Empowerment CIC. He is a qualified social worker, parenting facilitator, educator and speaker. For over 20 years, Chalice has worked within the youth justice sector, helping some of the most marginalised and troubled families, with a special focus on children's education, systemic cultural ignorance and gang culture.

The answers above represent the views and the personal opinion of Chalice Richardson. They do not explicitly reflect the views or opinions of bE Empowerment CIC.

Ways to Engage

If you share our values and like what we do, remember to:

- subscribe to the monthly bulletin (via WhatsApp or email): send mobile number or email subscription request to subscriptions@thebks.co.uk
- share the bulletin
- Like, Follow and Repost TBKS content on social media
- feedback: marketing@thebks.co.uk
- contribute to the mission – as a stakeholder of the vision we actively solicit contributions in the form of articles and Zoom guest speaker appearances
- volunteer – we are always looking to extend our reach and strengthen the work we are doing. Contact: volunteer@thebks.co.uk

Social media handles and general enquiries:

Instagram - [@tbksociety](https://www.instagram.com/tbksociety)

Facebook – The Black knowledge society

Email – enquiries@thebks.co.uk

SHIFTING PERSPECTIVES ON THE CONTINENT

Esther Ademosu



African Renaissance Monument

This edition, we take you to one of the world's most imposing sculptural works found in Dakar, Senegal.

Not only is the *African Renaissance Monument* imposing in scale, standing 52 meters high, it also forms somewhat of a cultural imposition, attracting criticism from a large cross-section of Senegalese society.

The *African Renaissance Monument*, remains an object that is at once celebrated and scorned.

But ours is not to posit a position, one way or the other – *far be it!* We thought we'd leave that up to you. Enjoy the footage (*or not*) - and share your thoughts, through comment via our social media platforms.

RESOURCES DIRECTORY

Rudie Masukume

Several links to...

The great pan-Africanist **Marcus Garvey** once stated, 'A people without the knowledge of their past history, origin and culture is like a tree without roots.'

With the recent toppling of monuments that have stood in the public view for years, this year's Black History Month was characterised by activism and newfound knowledge. Black history is "HUEman" history and the debate as to why it is restricted to celebration in a month and separated from mainstream education rumbles on.

We were left with little alternative but to expand our 'Five links to...' feature, allowing lesser known facts and stories about the Black experience to be uncovered and explored, beyond October.

Read: **Black History Studies** online shop has a pre-slavery book, written by "The Black History Man", Robin Walker, with fascinating images.

Buy: A Tribe Called Progress have a **6ft long Visual Timeline of African History** in all its glory, available for purchase on the site.

Visit: **Black Cultural Archives** for a superb exhibition from **Joy Gregory**. Gregory has taken photographs of pioneering Black women from different fields, in a style reminiscent of 16th and 17th century portraits.

Celebrate: Our Black politicians **Bernie Grant**, **Paul Boateng** and **Diane Abbott** on 33 years since being the first African and Caribbean politicians sworn into parliament.

Dianne Abbott is no stranger to online abuse, even in today's 'progressive' and 'tolerant' British society. **The Guardian's article** looks at the racism she experienced to gain a seat in government.

Show **Dianne Abbott** some love on her political page.

Celebrate: **The life of 83 years old, living legend and activist, Paul Stevenson**. He was instrumental in bringing in the first Race Relations Act in 1965, criminalising discrimination in public places.

Listen: Entitled **Dahomey**, after the strong and perhaps controversially famed female warriors, this track from Teka records has a distinctly tribal sound.

Sports: Traditionally called Laamb in the native language Wolof, **Senegalese wrestling** is one of, if not the most popular sport in the country. It is said to date back to the 14th century, possibly further, when it was a means of preparing for war amongst warriors. Like the well-known martial art capoeira, Laamb has its foundation rooted in spiritual practises, but is only performed on sand. Find out more about this sport, which has been adopted in France and other countries.

Out of the Darkness: What Beyond #BLM and BHM?

Join TBKS' Zoom Live

Nov 29, 2020 08:30 PM London

Register in advance for this meeting:

<https://zoom.us/join/register/tjctc-sqTspHdJ83IpBK1EhuF1bVK7gveQQ>



After registering, you will receive a confirmation email containing information about joining the meeting.