



Language

[J. Struggles for Racial Justice \[1\]](#)

[J.1 Black Lives Matter \[2\]](#)

History and strategies of the movement - 2013-2019

The rise of Black Lives Matter in 2013, during Barack Obama's second term as US president, marks a new phase in the long struggle for equality and justice by Black people in the US. It demonstrates that, despite the historic gains of the Civil Rights Movement (see section A.3 'The Civil Rights Movement and Black Power in the USA: 1955-68' in Vol. 1 of this web guide for historical background and bibliography), a new generation still urgently needs to confront racism in many forms, especially in the police. The US movement has inspired a response in Black communities in other countries with a legacy of discrimination and vulnerability to police prejudice and varied forms of police violence. Campaigns have been launched in France, the UK, Canada, and Australia and also in Brazil.

The Black Lives Matter movement started taking shape in 2013 in the US in response to the shooting of 17-year old Trayvon Martin by neighborhood watch volunteer George Zimmerman, in Miami Garden, Florida in 2012. After Zimmerman was acquitted of murder by a jury, online exchanges between Alicia Garza, Patrisse Cullors and Opal Tometi – three radical Black organizers – culminated in #BlackLivesMatter as a political slogan and the name of a new movement.

The 'Black Lives Matter Global Network' aims to build local power and to intervene in violence inflicted on Black communities by the state and vigilantes. The main affirmative traits of the movement, in the words of the creators of it, are as follows:

"We are expansive. We are a collective of liberators who believe in an inclusive and spacious movement. We also believe that in order to win and bring as many people with us along the way, we must move beyond the narrow nationalism that is all too prevalent in Black communities.

We must ensure we are building a movement that brings all of us to the front.

We affirm the lives of Black queers and Trans folks, disabled folks, undocumented folks, folks with records, women, and all Black lives along the gender spectrum. Our network centers those who have been marginalized within Black liberation movements.

We are working for a world where Black lives are no longer systematically targeted for demise.

We affirm our humanity, our contributions to this society, and our resilience in the face of deadly oppression.

The call for Black lives to matter is a rallying cry for all Black lives striving for liberation."



The project developed into a member-led network of more than 40 chapters, established in 40 different cities in the United States founded on a group-centered model of leadership. The decentralised structure of the movement enables its chapters to organise in a manner best suited to each local area, whilst also allowing them to act in concert, as when the founders publicly declared their decision not to support any of the candidates in the run-up to the US Presidential election in 2016. Modes of protest include Internet and social media activism, demonstrations and rallies, and the occupation and blocking of highways.

Since 2013 protests have been taking place every year in response to the killing of Black people by police, with few admissions of responsibility by, and prosecution of, law enforcement officers. The police shooting of unarmed 18-year-old Mike Brown in Ferguson, Missouri, on 9 August 2014 led to weeks of angry protest, joined by many from across the USA; the mass response helped to promote an organised movement. Some other notorious cases that fuelled the development and reinforcement of the movement were: the death in July 2014 of 43 year-old Eric Garner held down in the street by New York City police – a video of his death and final words 'I can't breath' was publicised around the world; the shooting in Cleveland, Ohio, of 12 year-old Tamir Rice, who was throwing snowballs and holding a toy gun, in November 2014; and the death of Walter Scott, Freddie Gray and Jamar Clark in 2015. Although not related to police shootings, another case that sparked rage amongst Black communities and Black Lives Matter supporters was the murder of nine African Americans on 17 June 2015 at Emanuel African Methodist Episcopal Church in Charleston, South Carolina, by 21 year-old Dylan Roof. Besides the timing of the killings, this case also resonates in the building up of the BLM movement because Dylan Roof declared in its aftermath that he was hoping it would spark a race war.

As #BlackLivesMatter developed over the years, the hashtag has been utilized as a platform and organizing tool. Other groups, organizations, and individuals have started using it to expose anti-Black racism across the US. In fact, other campaigns intersected with #BlackLivesMatter, such as #SayHerName, a nationwide protest against the killing of Black women and girls by the police.

The social movement aimed at protecting Black lives has expanded to include several other organisations and activists. This network is still referred to as 'Black Lives Matter' and includes initiatives such as Campaign Zero, The Movement For Black Lives and #Vision4BlackLives initiated in 2015. The relevance of Campaign Zero to the Black Lives Matter movement is encapsulated in a ten-point political agenda set by Brittany Packnett, appointed by President Obama as a member of the Obama 21st Century Policing Task Force together with Samuel Sinyangwe, DeRay Mckesson, and Johnetta Elzie. The purpose of the agenda is to reform police practices related to the use of force, police training, recruitment and oversight; to secure independent investigations and prosecutions of police members, and ensure community representation within these contexts, as well as in relation to other goals that are specifically related to the BLM movement. To have an overview of the detailed project see <https://www.joincampaignzero.org/solutions/#solutionsoverview> [3].

The Movement for Black Lives (M4BL) entered a new phase when it released its six-point policy agenda at the end of July 2016 (immediately after both the Republican and Democrat national conventions), in order to have a voice in the electoral debate, but also to mark their independence from both political parties and presidential candidates. The agenda for legal, political, social and economic reform adopted by the Movement's over 50 constituent organizations is organised under six headings. These encapsulate the key goals to be achieved by a wide range of measures:

- 'Ending the War' against Black people, which includes proposals to 'demilitarize' law enforcement, end criminalisation of Black youth, halt dehumanising practices in the justice system and stop mass surveillance of Black communities;
- 'Reparations' for the heritage of slavery and continuing systematic discrimination, for example in education, the economy and housing;
- 'Invest-Divest', i.e. reallocation of government funds at all levels away from criminalisation of Black people and towards their education, employment and welfare;
- 'Economic Justice' for Black workers and communities including tax changes to redistribute wealth, state and federal job programmes, trade union rights - especially in the 'On Demand Economy', and support for autonomous economic institutions,
- 'Community Control' over laws and policies directly affecting Black people, including participatory budgeting;
- 'Political Power' for Black people, for example by reforming electoral laws that tend to disenfranchise them,



and promoting democratic control.

The programme outlined is both radical and ambitious, and combines, as the M4BL 'Platform' explains, a vision for the future with immediate policy steps that are needed. Therefore under 'Economic Justice' it includes far-reaching goals, such as ending exploitative multinational trade agreements, e.g. the Trans-Pacific Partnership, as well as financial support for local cooperatives and legislative backing for local credit unions and insurance services. Under each of the six goals the policy agenda elaborates on the kinds of legislation or policy change required at the local district or city level (where Black Lives activists had already had some legislative successes), state level and federal government level, the targets for campaigning (e.g. Congress or federal agencies), suggests model legislation, and lists existing bodies which may provide resources for campaigns. Although the movement springs out of Black communities, it recognizes 'a shared struggle with all oppressed communities' and appeals to 'those who claim to be our allies' to help create a new world. Goals such as promoting worker rights and ending privatisation of services (especially of police and other criminal justice related services, but also education), ending capital punishment, or reducing military expenditure, clearly imply the need for such alliances.

Black Lives Matter is focused on policy change in the US, but the Platform expresses solidarity with those around the world experiencing 'the ravages of global capitalism and anti-Black racism, human-made climate change, war, and exploitation', and includes international goals. Sometimes global aspirations and proposals relating to local communities coincide, as in the call for divestment from multinational industries producing fossil fuels and investing in community-based renewable energy supplies, both a contribution to reducing climate change. The B4LM policy programme is available in several languages including French, Spanish, Chinese and Arabic.

The 'Platform' in full can be accessed at the address <https://policy.m4bl.org/> [4]).

Some questions about the commitment of BlackLivesMatter to nonviolence followed two events in July 2016. On 7th July 2016, five police officers were killed, and seven injured in Dallas, Texas, by Micah Xavier Johnson who allegedly stated that he was upset by the killing of Black people. And on 17th July 2016 six police officers were killed following the shooting of Alton Sterling, which led to street protests by BlackLivesMatter supporters. Despite harsh anti-white statements by some individuals and right-wing critiques of the movement as racist, the BlackLivesMatter movement has not been designated a hate group. Several declarations by the founders clarified the fact that BlackLivesMatter's commitment to nonviolence is not an absolute amongst the movement's participants. It is generally accepted as a preferred policy, but it is modified by explicit statements recognising the need to use any appropriate tactics or forms of direct action that would further the aim of eradicating racism and institutional repression. (For the view on nonviolence as a central principle of direct action, see the interview with Patrisse Cullors, one of the BLM founders, at <http://www.latimes.com/nation/la-na-patrisse-cullors-black-lives-matter-2017-htmlstory.html> [5]).

From 2013 to 2019 Black Lives Matter was primarily a US-based movement, though it had international repercussions, and prompted a response in Britain, Australia and Brazil in particular, countries which each had their own forms of historic racial discrimination and background of struggles for racial justice. A few of the references below relate to this international dimension, although most are focused on the US experience.

New development in 2020

Black Lives Matter exploded into a national mass movement and the media headlines again in the USA in May 2020 following the killing of George Floyd, a 46-year old security guard and family man, in Minneapolis, Minnesota by Derek Chauvin, a white police officer. The mass US demonstrations immediately prompted major and continuing acts of solidarity in Britain, where the spotlight was also turned on its own embedded forms of racial discrimination. There was a strong public response also in Australia, Brazil, Canada, many European cities, and parts of Africa. A mural dedicated to Mr. Floyd was even created in the last remaining part of Syria held by the opposition to Assad, Idlib.

Black Lives Matter was still at the beginning of 2020 a significant organizational force in the USA at a local and communal level in many areas, especially in Washington, Chicago and Los Angeles, where they closely scrutinized the police. But BLM seemed to have lost its national dimension and media profile. (Reasons for this included the impact of the Trump presidency and diversion of political energies to other causes, and the inherent difficulties of maintaining a national movement over a long period of time.)



The spark, which ignited a revived, and potentially even stronger, national movement was very similar to its origins in 2014 - the totally unjustifiable killing by a white police officer of an African American. Floyd died on a street in Minneapolis on 25 May, when - after he was cuffed and lying on the ground - Chauvin knelt on his neck for 8 minutes and 46 seconds despite his pleas: 'I can't breathe'. His words and the whole incident were caught on video and went viral, resulting in demonstrations across the USA on 27 May. Demonstrations continued, despite curfews imposed for 30-31 May, and carried on well into June. Spontaneous anger led in the first days to attacks on police cars and buildings (the local Minneapolis police precinct was burnt down) and some looting. The vast majority of protests thereafter, however, were totally peaceful, with an emphasis on going down on one knee in memory of George Floyd.

Commentators, including the veteran Civil Rights activist James Lawson, noted that one very positive sign was that many white Americans, especially the young, joined in the protests. Some of the grassroots groups that organized the Women's March in 2017 soon after Trump's inauguration helped to promote the Black Lives Matter demonstrations. Many protests in small towns have been the result of friends and neighbours joining forces. One reported tally of two weeks' of protest in the US estimated that there had been demonstrations in 1,280 different places. There was an immediate political response from the Democratic Party, which introduced a reform bill into the House of Representatives on June 8 with a package of measures designed to monitor and record police misconduct nationally, make prosecution of the police easier, and to ban use of chokeholds by federal officers. Most policing is controlled at state and local levels, so the bill also requires federal grants to policing at these levels to be conditional on adopting such measures. The sole Black Republican Senator in Congress also made proposals for police reform, which he had been urging in the past. State and city authorities also began to initiate reforms to policing and to its supervision. The very extensive media coverage also allowed many spokespersons for African Americans to formulate their demands, in a context where polls suggested public opinion was shifting to greater recognition of the need for change.

Responses by police and police authorities were mixed. All four policemen involved in Floyd's arrest were fired from the force the next day. Derek Chauvin, the officer who killed Floyd (who clearly expected total immunity for his actions) was charged with second degree murder and manslaughter, whilst the other three officers - J. Alexander Kueng, Tou Thao and Thomas Lane - were charged with second degree aiding and abetting murder and second degree aiding and abetting manslaughter a week after. Many police chiefs, and even police unions often reluctant to criticize their members, condemned Floyd's killing. There had been a degree of success in reorganizing and changing the culture of violence in some local police forces since 2014 - for example in Los Angeles, Chicago, Baltimore and Denver. However, there were, after Floyd's death, more reports of Black men being killed by police, notably in Atlanta, Georgia, where a policeman shot Rayshard Brooks in the back on 12 June. Policing of the Black Lives Matter demonstrations was sometimes restrained, and senior officers even joined in some protests, as in Camden, New Jersey and Flint, Michigan. But many police forces across the US reacted brutally, using baton charges and tear gas against peaceful BLM protesters, and hurling individuals to the ground or pepper-spraying them; about 250 journalists were reportedly assaulted by police in the first week of protests.

The police display of violence and aggression encouraged many politicians to back reforms to policing. But President Trump, despite occasionally recognizing the need for reform (he announced a ban on use of chokeholds), tended to encourage violent confrontation. He did so through his numerous tweets attacking the demonstrators, through his order to clear protesters forcibly out of Lafayette Square in front of the White House so that he could pose with a bible in front of St John's Episcopal Church, and through his early threat to call in the military to quell 'domestic terror'. Several prominent military men responded by speaking out publicly against the President.

Policing and treatment of people of colour in the justice system is also a major issue for Black Lives Matter protesters in Britain. Even though most police do not carry guns, statistics show that unarmed Black men are more liable to being shot - the death of Mark Duggan in Tottenham, London, in August 2011 sparked local anger - or to be killed during arrest. Black prisoners are also more likely to die in custody, as a campaign group founded over 20 years ago by families of Black prisoners (now the multiracial United Friends and Families) testifies. The tendency of police to 'stop and search' disproportionate numbers of young Black people has been a long-running issue (evoking varied responses from different governments). There have been serious attempts to tackle racial prejudice in the police since the McPherson Report in 1999 (resulting from police failure to pursue effectively the racist murder in London of a Black teenager, Stephen Lawrence) found that the force was 'institutionally racist'. A parliamentary enquiry, set up to examine police performance in the 20 years since the Report, was closed down as a matter of parliamentary procedure due to the December, 2019 general election.



The disproportionately high numbers of deaths in Britain due to the Covid-19 virus among Black, Asian and other minority ethnic communities had, although medical conditions were obviously also relevant, already intensified debate about the links between race and poverty and social disadvantage. The 'Windrush scandal' had earlier revealed the deeply unjust deportations of men and women of West Indian origin, who had legally come to the country many decades earlier (often as children). Others lost their financial and social entitlements unless they could provide an impossible amount of documentary evidence of continuous residence and work in the country. The marked under-representation of Black students at prestigious British universities and problems of underachievement at school had also been an issue for some years. The multiracial Black Lives Matter protests in May/June 2020 therefore encouraged immediate public debate about many of these issues.

Prime Minister Boris Johnson responded in June 2020 by promising a government enquiry to report back (with unprecedented speed for such enquiries) by the end of the year. Opposition parties, however, pointed out that there had already been a spate of recent enquiries and reports into forms of racial discrimination, whose recommendations were yet to be implemented. These included a review of the Windrush scandal with 30 recommendations, a review of deaths in custody with 10 recommendations and a report into workplace discrimination with 26 recommendations. The Black Labour MP, David Lammy, author of the 2017 Report on outcomes for Black, Asian and other minority ethnic groups within the criminal justice system in England and Wales, where they were 12% of the prison population (but only 3% of the total population) had made 35 recommendations. He urged the Prime Minister to implement the recommendations of the previous reports, not to set up yet another enquiry.

The British BLM protests began to demand removal of statues of historical figures linked to racism and oppression, for example of Cecil Rhodes in front of Oriel College, Oxford, reviving earlier campaigns. (In the US Black Lives activists also revived 2017 protests about statues in Southern states of Confederate leaders in the Civil War and extended their demands to contentious statues in Washington.) British demonstrations focused particularly on Bristol, a city whose wealth owed much to slave trading, and on the statue to Edward Colston, honoured by the Victorians as a major philanthropist, who made his money trading slaves from West Africa and was a leading figure in the Royal African Company which promoted the shipping of tens of thousands of slaves, many of whom died during the journey and were thrown overboard. The city authorities had been debating what to do about the statue; demonstrators in June took direct action, dragged the statue from its plinth and dumped it in the harbour. Some BLM supporters suggested controversial statues could be placed in museums and presented in their full historical context.

Statues are a convenient focus for protest, but demands to remove major national figures, such as Scouts founder Baden-Powell, or ardent supporter of the British empire, but symbol and leader of British military resistance to Hitler, Winston Churchill, prompted anger and opposition from others. Statues also provided a focus for the extreme right: a coalition of these groups mobilized in Parliament Square on 12 June 2020 to 'defend' Churchill and to confront BLM. Black Lives organizers discouraged major violent conflict by asking many of their supporters to demonstrate elsewhere, although some did go to the venue.

The campaign against particular statues was broadened into calls for a revision of history education in both schools and at university level, not only to cover topics such as the slave trade and imperialism (often already on syllabuses) but to change the emphasis and underlying interpretation of such histories so as to challenge embedded 'white' and 'western' assumptions.

A Year after George Floyd's Death

The anniversary of George Floyd's death, 25 May 2021, was commemorated by gatherings and demonstrations across the US as well as in Britain, and it was widely covered by the news media. It also provided an opportunity to assess the impact of Black Lives Matter in the preceding year in the US, Britain and other countries, including debates about the teaching of history (especially the slave trade and empire), representation of Black people and Black experience in culture (literature, drama, films and TV and museums), as well as the issue of controversial statues. Since Floyd's death about 170 memorials to the Confederacy in the US South (including street names) have been removed or changed, though over 2,000 remained. In the UK the Johnson government adopted a populist stance on opposing 'woke' culture, introducing legal penalties for demonstrators removing statues and imposing rules on museums. There have been significant challenges to racism in UK sport, especially football, though lifting of pandemic rules to allow spectators back into football grounds in early June 2021 revealed a section of supporters vocally hostile to footballers who were still 'taking the knee' in memory of Floyd.



In the US a key role for the Black Lives Matter movement in 2020 was in both local politics, addressing in particular the issue of policing, and in national politics in relation to the State, Congressional and Presidential elections in November 2020. The movement played an important role within the Democratic Party and significantly assisted the policy of getting out the vote, which proved crucial to Joe Biden's victory. President Biden showed symbolically the difference between his Administration and that of Donald Trump by meeting personally with the family of George Floyd.

Given the impact of Floyd's death, one important landmark was the trial in April 2021 of the responsible police officer Derek Chauvin, on charges of manslaughter and second-degree murder. The jury surprised many by finding Chauvin guilty on all counts. The Black crowd outside the courthouse expressed their relief at the verdict, and there was a much wider awareness that at last a court had convicted a police officer for causing a Black death.

Another anniversary dramatized both the depths of past racial oppression, and a greater willingness in the political culture of the US and Britain to recognize past abuses. There was widespread coverage of the May 31/1 June 2021 Tulsa, Oklahoma, race riots, when a white mob - incited by false reports of a Black man assaulting a white girl in a lift - attacked and burned down the prosperous Black area of Greenwood, destroying about 1,200 homes and businesses and killing about 300 people. No police or legal action was taken against the rioters and memory of the event was virtually erased. Joe Biden visited Tulsa to commemorate the white race riot and express sorrow for past racial injustice.

The Black Lives Matter movement continued to have repercussions in Latin America, with its own history under colonialism of importing African slaves, creating Black minorities who subsequently suffered varying forms of racial exclusion and discrimination. Black Lives Matter had particular resonance in Brazil with its significant Black population and experience of police violence. The election of a former military officer, the far-right Jair Bolsonaro, to the Presidency in 2018 intensified a political culture supporting state violence in Black neighbourhoods and promoted a sense of impunity.

[The Race Issue. Black and White](#) [6], [April 2018], National Geographic, 2018, pp. 79-149

In this special issue on race in the US, Michele Morris recounts how demographic changes across the US are challenging white Americans' perception of their majority status. She also discusses attempts to re-create a narrative that could reflect more than white Christian ethnicity as the only identity framework of US history. Michael A. Fletcher reports the personal stories of people of colour who had suffered traumatic experiences of stop-and-search by police officers on the basis of their racial profile. Clint Smith examines two major and prestigious colleges that have experienced a recent surge in enrolment of black youth and the rise of new forms of Black activism. Finally, Maurice Bergers reports on the work by photographer Omar Victor Dopi on slave revolts, independence movements, social justice quests. The events represented range from 18th century's Queen Nanny of the Maroons, known for her ability to lead Jamaican slaves to liberation from British colonialism, to 21st century's 12 year-old Trayvon Martin, whose shooting by a white neighborhood watch volunteer inspired the birth of the Black Lives Matter movement.

[The Big Story: Black Lives Matter](#) [7], [March 2018], New Internationalist, 2018, pp. 12-25

Introductory article by Amy Hall summarises the growth of BLM in the USA, discusses its global potential and spread to other countries, and notes the relevance of BLM in the UK. Jamilah King comments on the US movement, both on its strengths and the divisions within it. Other articles examine how BLM relates to a history of 'a policy of black extermination' in Brazil, and to the struggle by Aboriginal people in Australia.

[Indigenous deaths in custody: Why Australians are seizing on US protests](#) [8], BBC, 05/06/2020,

Explores the rise of Black Lives Matter protests in Australia in solidarity with the international response to the death of George Floyd, and also to highlight the long running tragedy of Aboriginal deaths in custody.

See also: Allam, Lorena and Nick Evershed, 'The killing times: the massacres of Aboriginal people Australia must



confront', *The Guardian*, 3 March 2019.

<https://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/2019/mar/04/the-killing-times-the-massacres-of-aboriginal-people-australia-must-confront> [9]

Special report on the killing, incarceration and forced removal from their land of Indigenous Australians over 140 years. The article offers an interactive map that shows the locations and date of massacres between 1794 and 1928.

See also: Dovey, Ceridwen, 'The mapping of massacres' *The New Yorker*, 7 December 2017.

<https://www.newyorker.com/culture/culture-desk/mapping-massacres> [10]

The article reports on how historians and artists turned to cartography to record the widespread killing of Indigenous people in Australia.

[Opinion Special. The George Floyd Protests](#) [11], *Guardian Weekly*, 12/06/2020, pp. 7-16

Six brief commentaries on key issues relating to the resurgence of Black Lives Matter in both the US and Britain. Philip V. McHarris, 'Property damage is not real violence'; Malaika Jaball, 'Police brutality is ingrained in America'; Jericho Brown, 'We need the rage that abolished slavery'; Kojo Koram, 'Systemic racism is a British problem too'; David Olusoga, 'Toppling a slave trader's statue is history being made'; Patricia J. Williams, 'The corrupt language used to describe black pain'.

See also: 'The Big Story: Black Lives Matter: Do Look Now', *Guardian Weekly*, 19 June, pp. 7-14.

Covers protests in the UK against statues honouring slave traders and imperialists; anti-racist demonstrations in Belgium and a petition to remove all statues of King Leopold, who presided over a particularly brutal colonial rule in the Congo; protests against police violence and racism against indigenous and black citizens in Canada; and demonstrations in the Dominican Republic about racist discrimination against those of Haitian descent. There is also an article reflecting on lessons to be learned from how Germany has confronted its Nazi past.

[Black Lives Matter in Brazil](#) [12], YouTube Video, UCLA Latin American Institute, 20203

In Brazil, which has the second largest Black population in the world, Brazilian police kill at least six times more people annually than the US police, and most of those dying are young Black men. In the video an interdisciplinary panels of Brazilian and US scholars examine the development of Black Brazilian mobilization against police violence, and compare police violence in Brazil with the position in the US and South Africa. The video then focuses on how Black LGBTQ+ Brazilians are affected by police violence.

See also: <https://www.thedialogue.org/events/online-event-race-and-policing-in-the-us-and-brazil/> [13]

Reports on Inter-American Dialogue event 'Race and Policing in the US and Brazil' examining what recent cases of police violence revealed about systemic racism in both countries.

Akuno, Kali, [Pillars of Change](#) [14], [Feb/Mar 2018], Red Pepper, 2018, pp. 34-35

Describes the movement behind the 2017 election (by 93 per cent of the vote) of Chokwe Antar Lumumba as Mayor of Jackson, Mississippi. He is committed to implement the 'Jackson Plan' for participatory democracy, promotion of public services and a local economy based on cooperatives and other forms of popular organization. The Plan, which is promoted by the Jackson People's Assembly and the Malcolm X Grassroots Movement (MXGM), represents the kind of participatory local initiatives envisaged in the Black Lives Matter 2016 Platform. A longer version of this article is available in Akuno, Kali and Ajamu Nangwaya, *Jackson Rising: The Struggle for Economic Democracy and Black Self-Determination*, Daraja Press, 2017, and at: www.mxgm.org [15]

Anderson, Carol, [White Rage: The Unspoken Truth Of Our Racial Divide](#) [16], New York, Bllomsbury, 2016, pp.



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White Rage, by Professor of African American Studies Carol Anderson, centres on a discussion on race, more specifically on the foregrounding of whiteness and the continuing threat that structural racism poses to US democratic aspirations. She provides an historical account of landmark moments in US history, namely the end of the Civil War and the Reconstruction; the reaction to the Supreme Court decision *Brown v. Board of Education* in 1954; the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Voting Rights Act of 1965; the disenfranchisement of Black communities in the aftermath of Reagan's War on Drugs; and the mass protests in Ferguson, Missouri, triggered by the shooting of Mike Brown in 2014. Through her analysis, Anderson argues that white rage erupts as a backlash at a moment of Black progress and therefore needs to be placed at the centre of US's national history. In this light, *White Rage* is an attempt to illustrate how whiteness is positioned at the core of state power, and how it permits the reinforcement of a system that systematically disadvantages African Americans.

Bitterly, Jennifer, [How Latin American Activists are Harnessing the Black Lives Matter Movement](#) [17], *The Progressive*, 16/07/2020,

The article starts with protests about police killing of an Afro-Columbian man in Bogota the same week George Floyd was killed, noting the general impact of the BLM movement on anti-racist and Afro-Latino organizations. The author also sketches in the historical background of the Spanish colonies enslaving millions of Africans, and subsequent treatment of racial issues, including the 'myth' of multiculturalism.

See also:

Valencia, Jorge, 'Black Lives Matter Protests Renew Parallel Debates in Brazil, Columbia', *The World*, 15 June 2020

<https://www.pri.org/stories/2020-06-15/black-lives-matter-protests-renew-parallel-debates-brazil-colombia> [18]

Across the Americas police violence disproportionately targets young Black men. The protests sparked by Floyd's death in Minneapolis shone a light on police brutality in South America and led to demonstrations in Brazil and other countries.

Bloch, Nadine ; Olagbaju, Folabi, [A Protest Master Class: A look inside the US struggle to defund the police](#) [19], Edited version of article on Waging Nonviolence Website: wagingnonviolence.org, Peace News, issue 2642-2643, 2020, pp. 9-8

The authors comment on the impressive revival of Black LivesMatter in May/June 2020, reforms to policing already agreed in some cities and the new prominence of the demand to 'defund the police'. They also discuss the importance of combining a range of approaches and tactics to complement direct action: doing research; making the 'invisible visible'; using symbolic ritual (for example turning the fence around the White House into a shrine); and encouraging artistic creativity to promote joy and healing.

Camp, Jordan T. ; Heatherthon, Christina, [Policing The Planet: Why the Policing Crisis Led to Black Lives Matter](#) [20], London and New York, Verso , 2016, pp. 320

Policing the Planet examines the policy of 'broken windows policing': prosecuting vigorously minor crimes as a means of preventing major offences. The book argues that this policy is at the heart of a broader neoliberal approach to social order, and examines how the way it is applied enhances the array of punitive and discriminatory measures available to the state. Several chapters compare US policies of domestic control over the 'racialised and criminalised' with the 'war on terror' and use of drones and surveillance abroad. The book also elaborates on the Black Lives Matter movement's attempts to promote global support and develop links with other struggles, for example with Palestinians under seige in Gaza in 2014.

Davis, Angela Y., [Freedom Is A Constant Struggle: Ferguson, Palestine And The Foundation Of A Movement](#) [21], Chicago, IL, Haymarket Books, 2016, pp. 180



In this series of interviews conducted by Frank Barat - activist for human rights and Palestinian rights -, Angela Davis reflects on the importance of Black feminism, intersectionality, and prison abolitionism for today's struggles. She discusses the legacies of previous liberation struggles and makes connection between the Black Freedom Movement and the South African anti-apartheid movement, as well as between the events in Ferguson and Palestine. The core message of the book is the emphasis on the importance of establishing transnational networks of solidarity and activism.

Angela Y. Davis is a political activist (who supported the Black Panthers in the late 1960s and became widely known in 1971 when arrested on false charges), scholar, author, and speaker. She is an outspoken advocate for the oppressed and exploited, writing on Black liberation, prison abolition, the intersections of race, gender, and class, and international solidarity with Palestine.

Garrett, Brianne, [Black Lives Matter cofounder Patrisse Cullors on her activism—and art—beyond hashtags](#) [22], Forbes, 02/11/2020,

Interview with Patrisse Cullors on the growth and further development of Black Lives Matter Global Network into its two most important complementing movements: #DefundPolice and #InvestInCommunities.

See also: <https://theconversation.com/black-lives-matter-is-a-revolutionary-peace-movement-85449> [23]

See also: <https://www.aclu.org/blog/racial-justice/race-and-criminal-justice/how-black-lives-matter-changed-way-americans-fight> [24]

Garza, Alicia, [The Purpose of Power: How We Come Together When We Fall Apart](#) [25], New York, Penguin/Random House, 2020, pp. 336

One of the co-founders of the hashtag Black Lives Matter in 2013, Garza outlines in this book a long term strategy for social change. It is based on her own years of experience in community organizing. She has moved on from the Black Lives Matter organization (although still close to the other co-founders) to create the Black Futures Lab. She has developed a policy platform (based on a major cross-party survey of Black people in the US in 2018) that focuses on central, widely supported demands. These include raising the minimum wage to \$15 an hour, broadening opportunities for Black home ownership, and removing the police presence from schools that often leads to pupils being jailed. She has campaigned in the 2020 US election on her agenda. Her book also argues the need to abandon outdated models of individual leadership from the Civil Rights Movement, as well as cautioning against over-reliance on celebrity activists and the role of the internet.

See also: Mahdawi, Arwa, 'Move Fast and Fix Things', *Guardian Weekly*, 23 Oct. 2020, pp. 34-7.

An extended interview with Alicia Garza.

Hartigan, Rachel, [She co-founded Black Lives Matter. Here's why she's so hopeful for the future](#) [26], The Nation, 08/07/2020,

Activist Alicia Garcia discusses the history of the BLM movement and its future in light of the 2020 protests for racial justice in many countries in the world.

Hill, Marc Lamont, [Nobody: Casualties Of America's War On The Vulnerable, From Ferguson To Flint And Beyond](#) [27], New York, Atria , 2016, pp. 273

African-American Studies scholar and policy analyst Marc Lamont Hill examines the interlocking mechanisms of unregulated capitalism, public policy, and social practice in the US. His work starts recounting one of the most salient event that gave birth to the Black Lives Matter movement: the shooting of Michael Brown in Ferguson, Missouri, in 2014. More precisely, the narration spans different periods of time, starting with the grand jury



testimony of Darren Wilson, the officer who killed Michael Brown, and then looks back at the 1939 World's Fair and Le Corbusier's lofty ideas about urban renewal. It moves forward in time again to the development of the Pruitt-Igoe public housing projects in St. Louis, completed in 1955 and demolished twenty years later, with many of the displaced residents having to move to Ferguson and face a climate of socio-cultural deprivation. Hill terminates his narration in Flint, Michigan, where the American city's population ended up being poisoned by lead in the water.

Hill's work is an account of the systematically disadvantaged identities - "those marked as poor, black, brown, immigrant, queer, or trans" – by a system that treats them as nobody, and makes them disposable, vulnerable and invisible. This work has been praised for enriching the contemporary canon of US civil rights literature not only because it captures the systemic nature of inequality in US society, but also because of his positive conclusion on the transformative power of organising, the most recent version of which lies in the Black Lives Matter movement.

Hooker, Juliet, [Black and indigenous resistance in the Americas: from multiculturalism to racist Backlash](#) [28], Lanham, U.S., Lexington Books, 2020, pp. 340

This book is the outcome of long term research by the Antiracist Research and Action Network of the Americas into rising racial intolerance, but also increasing resistance by both Black and indigenous people throughout the Americas. It covers six Latin American countries - Brazil, Bolivia, Chile, Colombia, Guatemala and Mexico - as well as the US, and discusses the backlash against earlier gains in rights within nation states. The book argues that this nation-based strategy, pursued in a neo-liberal capitalist context, was inadequate and that the focus should now be on resisting 'racial capitalism' which bolsters white supremacy. The rise of militant anti-racial activism in the US and around the world in 2020 makes the book especially relevant.

Kehinde, Andres, [Back to Black: Retelling Black Radicalism for the 21st Century](#) [29], London, Zed Books, 2018, pp. 360 (pb)

Kehinde sees blackness as a unifying factor for people of African descent across different continents. He examines different political approaches adopted in the past, such as pan-Africanism, black nationalism, Marxism and liberalism, and argues for black radicalism as the best strategy today - to resist racism by embracing African descent. The focus of the book is on the UK, but it covers the US, Caribbean and Africa and other parts of the world.

Khan-Cullors, Patrisse ; Bandele, Asha, [When They Call You a Terrorist: A Black Lives Matter Memoir](#) [30], New York, NY, St. Martin Press, 2018, pp. 257

When They Call You A Terrorist is the story of Patrisse Khan-Cullors, one of the co-founders of the Black Lives Matter movement. It collects her reflections on humanity, on her life and activism since early age, her brother's first-hand experience with police brutality, and on the founding of a movement for racial justice and its development during the Trump era.

King, Maya, [Inside Black Lives Matter's push for power](#) [31], Politico, 17/11/2020,

This article explores how the protests against racial injustice and police violence brought millions to the streets under the banner of Black Lives Matter, giving the international movement significant corporate and political muscle, which US leaders used to launch a nationwide voter mobilization effort. It also briefly explores the initiatives the movement proposed towards police reform.

Lebron, Christopher J., [The Making Of Black Lives Matter](#) [32], New York, NY, Oxford University Press, 2017, pp. 216

Lebron explores the rhetoric and activism that laid the foundations for the Black Lives Matter movement, drawing on earlier Black intellectuals such as Fredrick Douglass, Ida B. Wells, Langston Hughes, Zora Neal Hurston, Anna Julia Cooper, Audre Lourde, James Baldwin and Martin Luther King Jr. His aim is to convey the ideas, demands and emotions of African Americans to illuminate their activism, and to show how the history of Black thought



influences resistance to anti-Black law enforcement today.

Lowery, Wesley, [They Can't Kill Us All: The Story Of Black Lives Matter](#) [33], London, Penguin, 2017, pp. 256

A front-line account of the police killings and the Black, young activism that sparked the birth of the racial justice movement Black Lives Matter. Lowery, a *Washington Post* reporter, provides the narration of the shooting of Michael Brown in Ferguson, Missouri, in August 2014, and the weeks of protests and rioting that broke out in the aftermath. He also challenges readers with the question of why so little progress has been made on the racial front during Barack Obama's presidency, despite its promise and potential for such a transformative advancement.

Wesley Lowery became renowned, together with other of his colleagues at *The Washington Post*, for establishing an informal database that collects information about the shooting of Black people by police officers in 2014 and 2015, in the absence of a comprehensive federal government database.

Lowery, Wesley, 'The Birth of a Movement', *Guardian* (17 Jan 2017), pp. 23-25.

This *Guardian* 'Long Read' article is an adapted extract from Lowery's book *They Can't Kill Us All*, London, Penguin, 2017. The article is available (free) at <https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2017/jan/17/black-lives-matter-birth-of-a-movement> [34]

Lyons, Kim, [Count every vote got its power from the Black Lives Matter movement](#) [35], The Verge, 09/11/2020,

An exploration of how digital tools contribute to mobilizing people to vote in the 2020 U.S. election, particularly in the aftermath of George Floyd killing.

Morris, Monique W., [Black Stats: African-Americans By The Numbers In The Twenty-First Century](#) [36], New York and London, The New Press, 2014, pp. 240, p.b.

In this work, Monique Morris provides a statistical account on the lives of African Americans in the U.S. related to the field of education, environment, sport, health and justice system, military, politics, voting and civic engagement in order to highlight the disparity between racial communities.

Munoz, Sofia ; Pinto, Marian Hernandez, [The *Black Lives Matter Movement in Brazil and the Organizations at the Forefront](#) [37], Latina Republic, 16/06/2020,

The authors provide a detailed account of the developing protests after Joao Pedro Matos Pinto, a fourteen year-old Black teenager, was shot 72 times by a police officer whilst playing in his cousin's backyard. The article also examines the organizational initiatives that support victims of state violence.

See also: <https://www.opendemocracy.net/en/democraciaabierta/black-lives-matter-battle-cry-against-brazils-extermiation-policy/> [38]

This May 2019 *Open Democracy* article explains the political context of President Jair Bolsonaro's security policy in Rio de Janeiro, especially in the favelas, where 25 per cent of the Black deaths were due to the security forces.

Norwood, Candice, [This is how you change politics': How black activism is shaping 2020](#) [39], PBS, 10/03/2020,

Norwood explores the influence of Black Lives Matter in informing and driving policy within the Democratic Party, especially on key issues, such as economic equality, education and criminal justice.

See also: Remnick, David, 'After George Floyd and Juneteenth', *The New Yorker*, 20 June 2020.

<https://www.newyorker.com/news/daily-comment/after-juneteenth> [40]



Omontra-Otekanmi, Rebecca, [In Britain we have our George Floyds too](#) [41], New Statesman, 06/06/2020,

The author begins by recalling the death of 20 year-old Rashan Charles in a London shop in July 2017 whilst he was being violently restrained by two police officers, who were cleared of misconduct. She argues that though the scale of police violence may be smaller in the UK, it is not very different. The cause is structural racism.

Rai, Milan ; Elliot-Cooper, Adam, [Black Lives Matter UK](#) [42], Peace News, issue 2652-2653, 2021, pp. 16-17

An informative interview with one of the co-founders of UKBLM explaining the group's history and policy. It emerged from solidarity demonstrations with the US movement in 2014-15, and an international conference in Nottingham in 2016 which included US anti-racist activists and theorists. UKBLM were set up in Nottingham, Manchester, Birmingham and London and during 2016 challenged deportations, the police and prisons through a series of shutdowns of transport linked to airports. From 2017-19 UKBLM turned to work in local communities, schools and colleges. The organisation did not take part in the BLM demonstrations from May 2019, cautious about promoting crowd activism during Covid restrictions, but did provide legal aid to demonstrators.

Ransby, Barbara, [Making All Black Lives Matter: Reimagining Freedom In The Twenty-First Century](#) [43], Oakland, CA, University of California Press, 2018, pp. 148

Historian and activist, Barbara Ransby, explores the birth of the hashtag and social media platform #BlackLivesMatter by three Black activist women following the shooting of unarmed 17 year-old Trayvon Martin in Sanford, Florida, in 2012, and the acquittal of his killer, George Zimmerman. Through a series of interviews with its principal organisers, Ransby's narration contextualizes the origin of the Black Lives Matter movement in prison reform and anti-police violence reform policies, the establishment of Black youth movements, and radical mobilizations across the country dating back for at least a decade.

Rogers, Jamala, [Ferguson is America. Roots of Rebellion](#) [44], St. Louis, MO, Jamala Rogers, 2015, pp. 135

This work is collection of articles and essays exploring the roots and development of the fight for racial justice and human rights in Ferguson, USA. Political activist Jamala Rogers narrates the history of systemic racism and police violence in St. Louis and of the development of the Black Lives Matter movement in the region.

Seelye, Katharine, [John Lewis, towering figure of Civil Rights era dies at 80](#) [45], New York Times, 17/07/2020,

John Lewis represented the links between the Civil Rights struggle of the 1950s-60s and Black Rights Matter in 2020. Elected to Congress in 1986, he continued to campaign in Washington for racial and social justice (including organizing nonviolent direct action) until his death. His last political act was to view a Black Lives Matter mural. His obituaries elaborate on the details of his lifelong political activism. (See also details of his memoir under [Vol.1.A.3](#) [46].)

See also: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-us-canada-53454169> [47]

Stephens, Robert, [The Fire Next Time](#) [48], [Oct/Nov 2014], Red Pepper, 2014, pp. 29-31

Uses interviews with Black organisers to discuss disagreements about the best strategy to build on the mobilization resulting from the 2014 Ferguson 'rebellion' triggered by the shooting of Mike Brown. Notes in particular conflict between those working through the electoral process and seeking reform, and those focusing on resistance to the white power structure.

Taibbi, Matt, [I Can't Breathe: The Killing That Started a Movement](#) [49], London, WH Allen, 2017, pp. 336

Matt Taibbi discusses Eric Garner's life and work as a cigarettes dealer, and his subsequent killing by the police of



New York that strengthened the Black Lives Matter movement and protest. He reports on how he become targeted by the police, and allegedly mistaken by police officers on the day of his death. He touches upon his problematic personal and health conditions, within the wider context of the criminalisation of drugs policies in the United States of America. The work expands on Garner's life and killing, contextualising its narration on the 2008 Bloomberg's policy of tax increase on cigarettes of 400% per pack, which – Taibbi argues – motivated Eric Garner to sell cigarettes to people who couldn't afford them. Additional contextualising elements to the analysis that Taibbi offers are the 'broken windows' policing, computerised policing and statistical analyses on crime rate and the inherently racialized imposition of order that stems from them.

Taylor, Keeanga-Yamahtta, [From #BlackLivesMatter To Black Liberation](#) [50], Chicago, IL, Haymarket Books, 2016, pp. 180

In this analysis, activist and scholar Keeanga-Yamahtta Taylor offers a concise history of the Black Lives Matter movement, and an account of how the eight years of Barack Obama's presidency led to a state of uprising against the constant killing of Black people. Writing from a Black radical, feminist and socialist perspective, Keeanga-Yamahtta Taylor argues against persisting forms of structural racism, such as mass incarceration, Black unemployment and police violence. While connecting the fight against cultural and structural racism to a broader anti-capitalist project, she provides a rationale that depicts how this scenario has the potential to reignite the advancement for Black liberation.

Watson, Katy, [Brazil's racial reckoning: 'Black lives matter here too'](#) [51], BBC, 25/07/2020,

Reports that 14 year old Pedro Mattos Pinto, when playing in the street, was seized and later killed in a botched police operation in a Rio de Janeiro favela, a week before George Floyd's death. His body was later found dumped. Brazilians demonstrated chanting 'Black lives matter here too'. Notes that in 2019 police in Brazil killed nearly six times as many as in the US, and most of them were black.

See also: Libardi, Manuella, 'Racial cleansing in Brazil: a 21st century genocide?', *OpenDemocracy*, 27 September 2019.

<https://www.opendemocracy.net/en/democraciaabierta/limpieza-racial-en-brasil-genocidio-versi%C3%B3n-siglo-xxi-en/> [52]

Investigates the indiscriminate killing of blacks and the poor and argues that it is a historical and institutionalized event in Brazil: the perpetuation of an attempt at racial cleansing engrained in the history of the country.

See also: 'Brazil: 80% killed by police in Rio de Janeiro in 2019 were Black', *TeleSur*, 8 February 2020.

<http://civilresistance.info/biblio-item/1998/walking-wind-memoir-movement> [46]

Wiener, Jon ; Sense, Start Making, [Naomi Klein: Pandemic Capitalism and the Black Lives Matter Protests](#) [53], *The Nation*, 23/07/2020,

Records a 40-minute conversation with respected theorist of contemporary capitalism, Naomi Klein, about the impact of Covid-19. She argues that it has encouraged greater empathy and solidarity with the BLM movement, but that it also creates the potential for powerful corporations to exploit the pandemic.

Yogatnathan, Nimalan, [Black Lives Matter movement uses creative tactics to confront systemic racism](#) [54], *The Conversation*, 30/07/2020,

The article discusses how the BLM protesters tactics have changed the way the demands of the movement have been put forward, thus shifting the public discourse on the fight against institutional injustice.

See also: Rivas, Josué, *The Nation* and Magnum Foundation, 'Black Liberation and Indigenous Sovereignty Are Interconnected', *The Nation*, 29 June 2020.



<https://www.thenation.com/article/politics/black-liberation-indigenous-sovereignty/> [55]

Rivas, an indigenous film-maker, responds to parallels between the indigenous movement and Black Lives Matter, and offers his photographs as a contribution to the BLM movement

Young, Gary, [Black lives mattered](#) [56], Chatham House, 01/12/2020,

Younge assesses the impact of protests over police shootings on the US presidential election. He makes comparison with the political gains achieved in 1963, following the March on Washington and he also compares 2020 with the 2016 elections.

See also: Tavernise, Sabrina and John Eligon, 'Voters say Black Lives Matter protests were important. They disagree on why', *The New York Times*, 7 November 2020.

<https://www.nytimes.com/2020/11/07/us/black-lives-matter-protests.html> [57]

See also: Corbould, Clare, 'What now for Black Lives Matter? Whatever happens under Biden, the role of African American women will be vital', *The Conversation*, 11 November 2020.

<https://theconversation.com/what-now-for-black-lives-matter-whatever-happens-under-biden-the-role-of-african-american-women-will-be-vital-148248> [58]

Younge, Gary, [What black America means to Europe](#) [59], *The New York Review Of Books*, 06/06/2020,

In this 'Long Read' article Younge discusses how protests for racial justice in the US from the Civil Rights Movement to Black Lives Matter have prompted expressions of European solidarity, but argues that the European continent must face its own predominant role in the history of slavery. (Also available on *The Guardian*, 11 June 2020. <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/jun/11/what-black-america-means-to-europe-protests-racism-george-floyd> [60])

For an overview on how the BLM 2020 protests have erupted across the African continent see also: O'Dowd, Peter and Allison Hagan, 'Black Lives Matter Movement Resonates Across Africa', *WBUR*, 12 June 2020

(<https://www.thenation.com/article/society/kkk-all-black-baseball-monrovia/> [61]) and

Wallace, Julia, 'Africa Declares Black Lives Matter', *Left Voice*, 26 June 2020.

(<https://www.leftvoice.org/africa-declares-black-lives-matter> [62])

See also:

James Baldwin, [The Fire Next Time](#) [63], ([A. 3.b. Evolution of Resistance](#) [64])

Ian Neubauer, [Catching the Cops](#) [65], ([B.1.a. Australia](#) [66])

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