

Black Lives Matter |

An Individual and Independent Intelligence Essay



Contents

Dedication: 4

Introduction 5

Let’s Begin 9

Advocacy 9

 A Bit of History 10

Activism 11

Conclusions and Critiques 13

Value 13

 Economically 14

 Education 14

 Politically 15

 Socially 15

Dear Black People 15

 So Called Black American Communities 16

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Dedication:

To the people of the United States; America's greatest days are ahead of us, not behind us. This of course is contingent on how we choose to move forward as a nation.

Introduction

Many people believe we are living in a post racial United States. Ironically some who make and / or support this claim would cite the back to back elections of Barack Obama, the first Black president of the United States as an excellent example of this supposed post racial era in US history. The irony is that President Obama's two terms in office are actually near perfect examples of how the United States is absolutely not in some post racial period.

In fact, race in regard to President Obama's two terms in office seem to be more apparent than ever before in U.S. history. To elaborate, firstly there's the allegation that some citizens, specifically Black Americans voted for Barack Obama merely because he is Black. To suggest that people who voted for Barack Obama casted their ballots based on the candidate's skin color as opposed to his political views is insulting to many American citizens. Secondly, some argue that conditions for Black Americans have not improved during the presidency of Barack Obama. Some go so far as to suggest that conditions for Black Americans have actually gotten worse during the two terms of President Obama when considering unemployment of Blacks in America, poverty for Blacks in America as well as income inequality for Blacks as well.

While thorough investigation and analyses of any statistical data used to make these claims is required, the realization is such that regardless of the race of the president of the United States this nation and society has much more deeply rooted and systemic issues with which to deal. Before we as an American society and specifically Black Americans can

make any claims that we are living in some post racial environment, we must at least agree that very deeply rooted issues exist.

To make this point abundantly clear, while considering race as a social construct also realize money is a product of social construction. Money is not real. Think about that. Money is only valuable because people give it value. Through social construction people have agreed that a currency is the acceptable medium of exchange for goods and services.

A dollar is only valuable to a person because that person knows he or she can exchange that dollar for merchandise and / or products. It matters not if we are speaking about 1 dollar, 2 dollars or 3 billion dollars; money is only valuable because people give it value. Money is not real. This statement is true regardless of inflation, and deflation, monetary, economical or fiscal policy. Money is a social construct.

Drawing a parallel between the two social constructs of money and race helps us to understand and appreciate the incredible challenges involved with dealing with these two concepts.

Understanding that money is a product of social construction, if a person were to go shopping in a grocery store, acquires their groceries and then decides to forgo the register and cashier to simply bagging their items and then walking out of the store without paying, this scenario will most likely not end well for our person in question.

While money just as race maybe considered a product of social construction, living in this day and age we do not have to be numismatics, economist or even historians to realize the history, power and influence of money in the world as well as in our daily lives.

Money isn't real however anyone attempting to live especially in the United States without money is going to have some very challenging struggles. Simply denying that money exists will not allow a person to shop and make transactions without the power to purchase. Believing that we are living in a post money environment will not work out well for us as we are submersed within a society that is not only powered by money but was built upon money, greed and the love of money.

Similarly, as our society is submersed in a culture of race, simply saying we are living in a post racial society will not bring about justice or even real change to heal the ills of the society in which we live. Ignoring race will not end racism. Just as with the social construct of money, our society was built on the idea of race, racial injustice and improper education.

These bad ingredients are baked into the American pie so to speak. We've all been eating this poison for far too long and are too sick to simply wish the sickness away or ignore that our nation is ill. Too many people have suffered and died, too many people are frustrated, fed up and angry. Too many people feel hopeless and are depressed.

While surely anger is a healthier state to be in than depression, anger needs direction else it turns inwards and becomes a tool which can facilitate self destruction.

While depression, anger and frustration are branches of trees in the forest of Black American pain in the United States, at the root of these trees are racism, greed, injustice and improper education.

Throughout Black American history including the survivors of U.S. slave industry, America has never truly addressed the issues of Black Americans. These issues have transformed into “Black on Black crime”, a disproportionate number of police brutality cases in Black American neighborhoods, a school to privatized prison industry pipeline and several other chronic problem that are plaguing not just Black Americans, all Americans.

Likewise, Black Americans have yet to collectively address our own issues in this country. However the effects of so much anger and frustration have been culminating over centuries and generations of pain and inequality. American society is seeing the manifestation of this build up in cities such as Ferguson and Baltimore where frustration and injustice is giving way to civil unrest and social uprising.

Now is the time to begin channeling the energy of the masses of the people to create and construct positive change to bring about justice. While by any means necessary justice will be obtained, to acquire justice without bloodshed, without anarchy through diplomacy would be good.

Too openly, officially and collectively discuss the issues of injustice faced by Americans is a good thing.

Let's Begin

Speaking as an individual who is not associated or affiliated with any "Black Lives Matter" group, my understanding is that BLM was brought into existence as an advocacy and activist resource for Black Americans.

Advocacy

As an advocacy resource, BLM is a voice that speaks directly to and about police brutality and excessive force that takes place in so called Black American communities and neighborhoods. Black Lives Matter is an attempt to address matters and issues of disconcert that exist between police organizations as well as municipalities and inner city neighborhoods that are predominately populated by Black Americans. As these matters have been captured far too frequently partly due to access to mobile technology, many of these issues have also been brought to public illumination due to social media platforms. It should be noted while the number of these issues and occurrences of police brutality and excessive force have always been high, what has changed in recent years is the ability and technology to capture, record and expose so many instances of the problem. From my perspective, BLM exists as an advocate to speak and act for Black Americans who live and reside in so called Black American communities and inner city neighborhoods. Many advocacy organizations have been created to address and deal with injustice faced by different groups of people. For example; MALDEF (Mexican American Legal Defense Fund), GLAD (GLBTQ Legal Advocates & Defenders) and AJC (Global Jewish Advocacy). These organizations and many more have been established

to bring illumination and justice to issues that are disconcerting to particular segments of the United States population.

A Bit of History

Black Lives Matter is in its infancy stage. As such, the movement if you will, is screaming, kicking and crying and desperately requires the right type of attention to grow and be raised properly. Speaking as one who has his fair share of criticism for protesting that has been associated with BLM, I believe that Black Americans need to support Black Lives Matter.

Whether we like it or not, BLM is birthing new Black American leaders. It's important that we understand, after the civil rights movement the two foremost Black American leaders, Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. and Malcolm X were assassinated. Their assassinations left an enormous void in Black American leadership.

Dr. King was moving his followers to implement a Black American economic strategy as demonstrated via his last speech. Malcolm X had realized the issues of Black Americans had progressed beyond civil rights and had become matters of Human rights. As such, Malcolm was preparing to officially bring illumination to the plight of Black Americans to the global stage via the United Nations.

Black Lives Matter potentially represents the culmination of these two great leaders and possibly where we may see two different ideologies, two diverse philosophies, to points if you will, intercept and converge.

Of course this is contingent on many things. One of which is how we as an American society deal with BLM. Black Lives Matter is an advocacy

resource for Black Americans to speak and voice very real issues that exist in so called Black American communities. BLM is not anti cop, it's not anti-police and it is not a terrorist organization. To my knowledge, no person or persons have committed any acts of terror and then claimed to be affiliated, associated or in allegiance with Black Lives Matter. That simply hasn't happened.

To and for those of us who are concerned about crime that does exist in so called Black American communities, we should become familiar with organizations and groups that have been established to directly deal with crime in these areas and environments. Faith based organizations such as the Nation of Islam, Cease Fire in Chicago as well as the 300 men movement in Baltimore just to name a few have all been brought into existence to specifically deal with crime in so called Black American communities. Again as an advocacy resource, BLM brings to illumination that when a person within a so Black American community commits a crime that person is usually brought to justice. Conversely, there have been several cases involving police brutality and excessive force where the police officers involved weren't even indicted or investigated. Black Lives Matter was brought into existence to specifically address this issue.

Activism

In regard to bringing awareness to police brutality and excessive force in so called Black American communities, protests and campaigns that have been associated with Black Lives Matter have been effected tools of activism. The protests and protesters have been peaceful. Persons

associated with BLM have shown no signs or tendencies of aggression. The anger that is directed toward BLM appears to be a very clear indication of lack of communication, improper education and false or inaccurate information being proliferated across media outlets. Protests that have been and are associated with Black Lives Matter represent the primary step of bringing some Black American issues to the global stage. Through the BLM resource of activism, Black Americans are connecting with many other groups of people worldwide and learning that while our set of circumstances are unique, we can form and build alliances to better our environments and situations. Regardless of whether or not people support Black Live Matter, it is undeniable that BLM has had an effect on American society as well as Black American Identity.

Conclusions and Critiques

Value

American citizens have successfully created and archived video records of two Black American men, Philando Castile and Alton Sterling being killed by United States law enforcement agencies.

From the first record involving Mr. Alton Sterling it appears that Mr. Sterling was illegally executed in the street by an officer of the law. In a legal context, the killing of Mr. Sterling will be determined a murder or otherwise via the courts of the United States. A court ruling of course is contingent on the facts of case actually yielding an indictment from elected officials.

The second record involving Philando Castile appears to capture a collection of inappropriate steps taken by police officers on the scene. The scenario ended with Mr. Castile being killed by a police officer. Again, the case of Mr. Castile will have to unfold in the courts. However, to many who have seen the video record, it appears that Mr. Castile's killing was unwarranted.

Mr. Sterling and Mr. Castile are dead. Freddie Gray and Trayvon Martin are dead. Tamir Rice, Sandra Bland, Eric Garner and others are dead. It is important that we particularly as Black Americans recognize the reality of these individual's lives and their deaths. To elaborate, with respect to anyone's religious beliefs or faith, these persons are dead and no amount of protesting or praying, marching or even saying their names will physically restore these persons back to us. Not coming to terms with the finality of Human death devalues Human life.

The value of Human life cannot be calculated. The value of human history is the ability to apply the lessons learned from history to present day circumstances and scenarios.

If we are protesting, our protests should be structured to bring about change to the environments in which we live and exist. Really at this point in Human existence, the only factual certainty in Human life is Human death. So while we live and breathe, our agenda should be improving the living conditions of our environments and bettering the environments for our children and coming generations. That is the focus.

Economically

Black Americans will have to exercise economic withdrawal. As Dr. Martin Luther King noted in his last speech, “We need to redistribute the pain”. Minister Farrakhan echoed this message leading up to his Justice or Else address. The minister continued to stress economic withdrawal during his address. While a short turn plan is relatively simple, in many cases Black Americans will need to strategically plan a long term economic withdrawal course of action.

Education

We are responsible for properly educating ourselves, our children and the coming generations. Black Americans cannot depend or rely on anyone but Black Americans to educate Black Americans. Proper education includes K-12.

Politically

Black Americans must vote. As Black Americans are submersed within and have been integrated into what is identified as American culture, not actively participating in the political process and exercising our voting rights can and have had detrimental effects to Black American identity and culture. If Black Americans choose to abstain from voting for the presidential race, I encourage us all too still visit the polling booths to cast our ballots for the other offices. That is important. Black Americans have to be ready and willing to take an active participatory role in the voting process thus we can continue restructuring American society and affirming Black American identity.

It is critical that I mention, building a Black American economy is essential in acquiring and exercising power to completely actively participate in and engage with the American political process.

Socially

We must continue building alliances between our groups, our business channels, organizations, etc. This will be a challenging task. It will take persistence and action.

Dear Black People

As I mentioned earlier in this document, Black Lives Matter is in its infancy. In order and in chaos for BLM to grow properly and effectively the emerging Black American leaders of these times must be supported and consulted.

To borrow a few lines from one of my favorite performers (Mos Def), “Black Americans speak about the real Black American community as if

it's some mysterious creature living on a hillside that comes down and visits the townsfolk every once and a while ". That's not the case. Black Americans, we are the real Black American community. Black folk ask me all the time, what's going on with the Black American community. I tell them, "you are the Black American community". So the real question is what's going on with you.

Subsequently, what are you involved in, what are you engaged with, what television programs are you watching, who and what are you supporting, what are you teaching you children, what are you and friends, colleagues and family discussing and talking about, what's on your Facebook timeline, what's on your Instagram, what are you snap chatting. Are you taking and creating opportunities to better Black American society and identity? If we are aware of issues and problems in Black American communities and persistently creating and building solutions than the Black American community is doing better. If we who reside in inner city so called Black American communities are taking steps and creating solutions to better our environments and build a Black American economy, the Black American community is moving forward.

So Called Black American Communities

A community holds wealth for its residents i.e. home ownership, banks and businesses. There is wealth in so called Black American inner city communities however typically that wealth is not owned and / or controlled by the residents of those communities. As Dr. Claud Anderson described, these so called Black American communities are

like a bucket with a hole in it. As the wealth of the residents come into the so called communities that money and wealth flows right out.

As Black Americans we must begin supporting strategies of a Black American economy. However that may look to you. Whether it's the Nation of Islam's Economic Blueprint, Dr. Umar Johnson's education facility, supporting Black banks and businesses, purchasing the works of Black American authors (clears throat), supporting Black American producers of movies, art and other productions, etc. These strategies go hand and hand with strategies of economic withdrawal.

Within so called Black American communities, Black Americans must make moves and take steps to take ownership of these communities. We've got some cleaning up and building to do. We must exercise self-assertiveness as well as self-expression.

Moving forward with these strategies is not an easy task. However, it must take place. Ultimately, we as Black Americans are responsible for ensuring that Black Lives Matter.

I challenge us all to think.

Thank you,

William Danney