

Please try to remember that what they believe, as well as what they do and cause you to endure does not testify to your inferiority but to their inhumanity. – James A. Baldwin

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Issue 2

‘Daddy Changed the World’

By Leandra Young

What is anti-blackness? This is the term used to describe the disdain, disregard and/or disgust for the existence of black people. Slavery is a major form of anti-blackness, even though it ended 150 years ago, it arguably has a massive impact of how black people are perceived, especially by racists themselves. It is said that the ancestors of modern police officers are the slave patrols who would find and return enslaved people who had escaped. There are very modern forms of anti-blackness, for example, schools punishing black students for wearing their natural hair, using the N word when referring to a black person, denying someone a job because they are black- the list continues. One thing I don’t understand is why is ending racism a debate? The only thing that should be separated by colour is laundry. For years racism has been a rather large issue in modern society, even after 400 years of slavery, but it seems as though many are to their senses now due to the current events of the world and will soon forget about it again until another black person is killed.

8 minutes and 46 seconds. On the 25th of May 2020 46-year-old George Floyd was killed at the knee of police officer Derek Chauvin. This sparked a lot of attention on social media as we all saw George gasping for air repeatedly saying, ‘I can’t breathe’. Many black people are happy that finally we have jumped one hurdle closer to end systemic racism as Derek has been recently charged with second degree murder and the other officers charged for assisting second degree murder. Although also fear support from non-black backgrounds will soon stop and die down due to thinking the BLM movement is just a ‘trend’. You shouldn’t stop fighting for us. There have been a lot of responses on social media platforms that stand out a lot, on the 2nd of June over 29 million people posted a black screen on Instagram and Snapchat under the hashtag black out Tuesday (#blackouttuesday). However, many believe this was to give Instagram the chance to delete police brutality videos that have been surfing through the internet following George’s murder raising awareness about police brutality murders that haven’t been broadcasted on the news. In addition, music artist, Kanye West gave Floyd’s daughter, Gianna, \$2 million so she has money to go to college in the future. There have also been negative responses to the unlawful murder of George Floyd, Donald Trump, president of the United States, sent out military to limit protests from happening.

Many British people have argued that these problems faced by black people are only apparent in America and ask why black people are so angry suddenly. The United Kingdom isn’t innocent. August 4th, 2011, Mark Duggan was killed at the hands of the MET police in Tottenham, North London. His death angered the black community and so rioted for justice for Mark. I remember being 7 years old and seeing the riots on the news and walking through Brixton, South-west London, seeing shop windows smashed and even Foot locker burnt – that is only one murder I have elaborated on, the list goes on and on. I wondered to myself, why do these people need to fight? Why can’t they just have a peaceful conversation with the police and agree this never happens again? Then George’s murder made me realise this is the only way we can be heard and enable change to happen- through violence. Non blacks love to use this as an excuse to create stereotypes about black people and violence. Black people aren’t even asking for revenge, they’re asking for change. No mother wants to explain to their son one day they might be killed by an officer because of the colour of their skin. No one should be scared to leave their house in fear of prosecution because of the melanin in their skin. As black individuals, we shouldn’t have to use our skin to defend our human rights, but instead use it to educate others on our roots and culture- especially in schools in the UK. Our message is prevalent in the world as many countries have protested for black lives, change needs to happen and George’s murder is only the beginning. As his daughter said, ‘Daddy changed the world’.

As a teenager growing up, it is common to come across people who make racist comments or do something that is offensive towards someone’s race or religion and because we are all sheep and want to be accepted in society, we often join in or turn a blind eye. During quarantine there has been a twitter scandal where social media influencers, such as Nella Rose, have been constantly slandered because of racist and offensive remarks from their old tweets.

As someone who watches Nella Rose on YouTube it honestly shocked me as Nella is a very big advocate in empowering young black women- such as myself. She explained in her apology video how when she was in secondary school, she was often made fun of for her appearance and to shed the attention away from herself she used to join in and bully people of a different ethnicity from her to fit in. I understand why people have grown to dislike her, but the questions that popped up in my head were, Why did you feel like this Nella? What type of people were making racist comments like this? What could've been done to stop you from self-hating? I feel like the smallest comment anyone can make can stick to a person for such a long time and people need to be cautious and smart with their words because they don't know what effect they could have on that person.

I also feel like many teenagers go through a phase in their teenage years where they basically hate themselves because of the media's 'beauty standard'. Have you noticed as young children we've been playing with white barbie dolls with blonde hair and blue eyes? Where were the black dolls? I came across a video on my explore page on Instagram with a little child crying to her mother about how she's ugly. It genuinely so sad to see specific races of people being praised on social media, why can't every skin colour and complexion be praised? Everyone is beautiful in their own way, right? This is one of the main reasons why black culture should be spoken about more often in schools in the UK, black culture isn't appreciated enough in modern society. The same non-black people who literally adapt their lives around black culture, for example getting box braids with extensions, are the same people who remain silent when people like George Floyd are murdered for being black. Do these people even know the partings in braids once represented escape routes in plantations during slavery? I thought not. As John Agard said ' [They] bandage up me eye with me own history'. Figuratively, our vision is being restricted by euro-centric teaching. Let's be real, who cares that Henry VIII had six wives. Do these young black people know that Queen Nzinga and Angolans fought Portuguese travellers off with machetes and other weapons whilst the Portuguese used guns? I thought not. Do they learn enough about the triangular trade and how black people were sexually abused? I thought not. Do they know how Jim Crow used to performance black face and literally mock black features? I thought not. Do they know a black woman invented the hair curler? I thought not. If people had a better understanding of where they came from I feel like negative and racist comments wouldn't affect them as much as they would be able to recognise how far their culture has come and how their ancestors were treated and instead of being a sheep and join in or turn a blind eye. They would be able to stand up for themselves and educate people about how once their people were prosecuted for the colour of their skin and their unique and beautiful features.

So many of you are probably wondering, what can I do to help? Well, the short and easy answer is to sign petitions that have been all over social media. If you feel disgusted by what you have heard and seen on social media, especially if you are of non-black decent, help us. Help the black community. You don't have to be the president, or an important figure. It can be as little as educating yourself on black culture and raising awareness to your family members or colleagues. It doesn't matter what it is as long as you recognise change needs to happen. As black people we don't want revenge, we want change, and this is only the beginning.

Click the links below to sign the following petitions:

'Justice for George Floyd' Petition: <https://www.change.org/p/mayor-jacob-frey-justice-for-george-floyd>

'Justice for Shurki Abdi': <https://www.change.org/p/manchester-police-justice-for-shukri-abdi>

Diversify the Education system and curriculum: <https://www.change.org/p/secretary-of-state-education-anti-racism-education-to-be-compulsory-in-u-k-schools-c27ddfe2-0ae9-4d7f-b168-f23ef32200f8> and <https://www.change.org/p/departement-of-education-battle-racism-by-updating-reading-lists-at-gcse>

Want to get involved in creating next week's BAME Newsletter?

Please email:

Nadia.harrak@oasisouthbank.org

Remember you don't have to be an amazing writer to get involved. You're always more than welcome to share ideas/thoughts/feeling and even design skills- all of which can be contributed to the weekly writings.