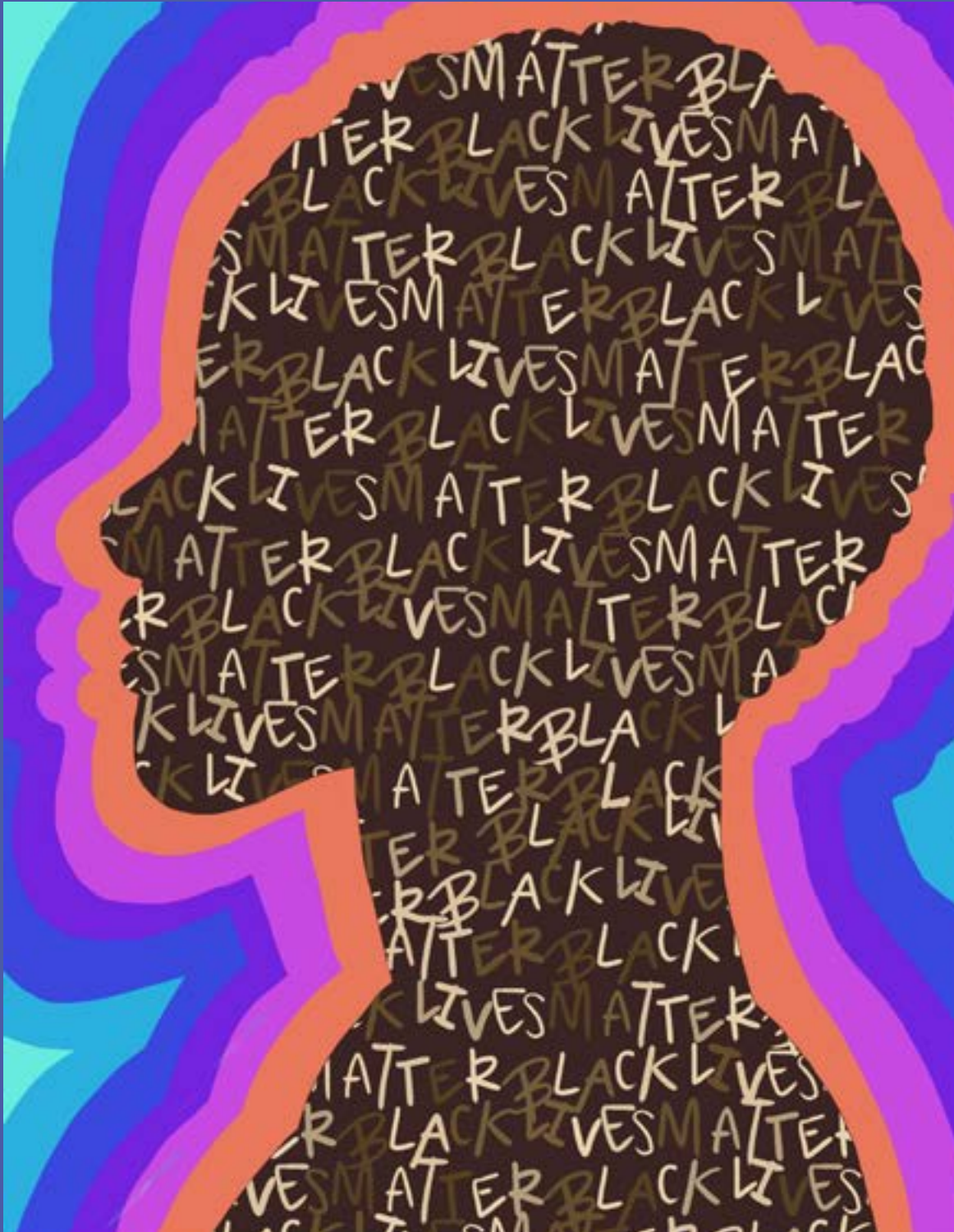


GIRLTALK



SUMMER 2020

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LETTER FROM THE EDITORS

Dear Readers,

Welcome back! Since we last came to you in early Spring, the world as we knew it has irrevocably changed. 2020 has proven to be a year of seismic shifts and tragedies, and it's still only July. As such, we have decided to delay our previously planned Summer issue and have created a special edition solely focused on the looming global issues currently at hand: the COVID-19 pandemic and the Black Lives Matter Movement, both of which have swept not just this country, but the world. The previously planned issue - which was Charlotte, Sierra, and Sophie's final as Co-Editors-in-Chief - will now come out in August. After that, we are humbled to be granted the responsibility of being the new Co-Editors-in-Chief of The GirlTalk Magazine, and, before then, to have been able to produce this special BLM issue during these tumultuous times. Inside this issue, you will find a collection of viewpoints and creative works from young women grappling with the uncertainty of these new times. For all of us, the opportunity to write about the matters we're passionate about in this magazine is an incredible honor. The honor is especially significant during these difficult times, when moments that keep people connected and that elevate people's voices are more important than ever. As such, it is our hope that—in some small way—we can use our platform to uplift one another, amplifying the voices of our generation through these pages. We look forward to the possibilities ahead—both at the magazine and in the world.

"You may not always have a comfortable life and you will not always be able to solve all of the world's problems at once, but don't ever underestimate the importance you can have. Because history has shown us that courage can be contagious and hope can take on a life of its own."

Michelle Obama

Yours in service,

Monie Choi, Olivia Weiner, Charlotte Kramon,
Sierra Stern, and Sophie Friedberg



LAND OF THE PRIVILEGED

BY EVE KAPLAN

According to the Oxford Dictionary, white privilege is defined as the “inherent advantages possessed by a white person on the basis of their race in a society characterized by racial inequality and injustice.” But advantage isn’t a strong enough word to describe white privilege in our society. Every aspect of a white American’s life is different than that of a person of color, and if you think that isn’t true, keep reading:

Cory Batey, a 19-year-old college football player, raped an unconscious woman. He was charged with 3 felonies and was sentenced to a minimum of 15-25 years in federal prison. Brock Turner, a 19-year-old college swimmer, raped an unconscious woman. Turner was found guilty of multiple felony rape charges. He was sentenced to 6 months in jail or 3 months for “good

behavior”. The reason for leniency given by the judge in Brock’s case was that he didn’t want “to ruin his life” with a longer sentence. Guess which one of these two men is black?

Two almost identical cases. Two college athletes. Two white judges. Both took place in 2016. But only Brock Turner had white privilege on his side. This privilege is so much more than just an advantage, it offers some members in our society an entirely different playing field. White privilege is not subjective, it’s not an issue created by the press or exasperated by social media or liberal agendas. White privilege is a systemic flaw in our society. The color of someone’s skin can, literally, be the difference between 25 years or 3 months in jail.

Another example: Amy Cooper called the police

accusing a black man of “attacking” her in Central Park. The man, Christian Cooper, (not related), was birdwatching and had requested that Amy put her dog on a leash. Amy refused. Amy Cooper became extremely angry and warned him that she was going to call the police and tell them, “... there’s an African American threatening my life.” Christian Cooper had not harmed her nor broken any laws, but what he did do was record their altercation. That video went viral, being viewed over a million times, and Amy was shamed worldwide. The most horrifying part of watching this video is seeing how Amy Cooper is so clearly aware of her white privilege, so much so that she threatens to use the police against an innocent black man. Today, Amy Cooper insists that she is not a racist. She is clearly blind to her own inherent racism and prejudice. In order for there to be change, it is essential that each of us confront our own prejudices. For many white people, this is easy to ignore since it is not a burden we bear in our day-to-day lives. We are never confronted with demeaning stereotypes based on the color of their skin. We never worry that our children or loved ones will be called

“illegal” or “terrorists” or disparaged over the origins of a worldwide pandemic.

White people are, quite simply, afforded different advantages than people of color in this country. This problem is not new, but what is new is the awareness and actions that are being taken on the streets right now in order to enact change... signing petitions, attending protests, raising awareness, making phone calls, and more. Recently, at a march for justice for George Floyd, white protesters formed a protective circle around their fellow black protesters to shield them from potential violence by the police. This is a perfect example of using our privilege in a positive way. Fueling stereotypes and ignoring inequities in our communities of color only makes the problem worse. There is an extreme unbalance in American society and now is not the time to stand on the sidelines, waiting to see how it unfolds and hoping for the best. Now is the time for each of us to use our privilege to create change. Everyone’s journey to that change will be different, but it all begins with the same first step: checking our privilege and owning our part in this racially charged climate. ✱

NONBLACK POC & THE BLM MOVEMENT

BY KIANA MAHANIAN

Living in a country where the color of your skin will affect your place in education, healthcare, housing, the criminal justice system, and overall American society, there is no doubt that the entire BIPOC community endure experiences of racial profiling and discrimination. However, the experiences of non black people of color and the black community cannot be assumed to share the same deep-rooted, systemic racism that America has yet to recognize and be held

accountable for. It is just as quintessential for the two communities to empathize with each other’s experiences as it is for them to understand the clear difference between the two. The non black POC of America, while their traumatic experiences with bigotry and prejudice are not to be discounted, will always hold a certain privilege due to skin color.

The concept of privilege due to the color of one’s skin in the United States is one that has



been silenced, debunked, and ignored among the non black community. While there is a fair amount of privilege in living in a country where freedom of expression and a great deal of opportunity remains a prominent part of society, it is crucial to understand who that privilege applies to. Among the recent uprising and amplification of the voices of the black, indigenous, and people of color community, there is a demand for the conversation of racial privilege as well as the recognition of systemic and institutionalized racism that has been long awaited. This conversation is one of many that are necessary in order for America to become the free place in which it prides itself on being. Therefore, while the white community has recently been taking steps to understand their privilege and become educated on their place in society in relation to POC, it is critical that the non black POC community does the same. A generalization that stands in the way of that is the notion that all POC are capable of sharing each other's experiences, and are therefore connected in racial identity. This bias has led to the normalization of racial profiling, as well as further blurring the lines between the way this country views a non black POC and a black person. It is incredibly important for us to understand to the fullest extent that it is possible for the non black POC community to

be privileged and face discrimination.

As a person who identifies as a non black person of color who has attended predominantly white schools my entire life, I have had the chance to understand my own privilege, while also understanding in what ways my race will always affect me. I was lucky enough for my understanding of race not to be conditioned in a way where I would compare my experiences too closely with that of the black community. While I have been given the experiences to understand this, I am aware that not all non black POC communities are. What is most important as a first step is to actively understand how to empathize with the black experience. Empathy, which we are in desperate need of as a country, is being able to understand and share the feelings of another's experience. Empathy in 2020 is the ability to have enough emotional intelligence as well as racial awareness to mourn the deaths of those who have lost their lives to our country's injustice as well as wholeheartedly be affected by the Black Lives Matter movement. Empathy requires immersing yourself in the experience of someone else while understanding that these experiences are not your own. Nevertheless, by empathizing wholeheartedly, generalizing the experiences of all BIPOC will be erased by the understanding of non black POC privilege. ✱

PERFORMATIVE ACTIVISM

BY OLIVIA WEINER

The world changed in the wake of George Floyd's death, but has our collective consciousness really been expanded? As #blackouttuesday rippled through people's social media feeds in a form of virtual activism, I began to wonder if what I was witnessing was profound transformation or a form of performative activism? People were posting black squares by the millions; 24.8 million to be exact. But what difference - other than signaling that poster's virtue - was that black square actually making?

Using social media as a platform for activism can be a great way to spread awareness and show support. But when that support begins and ends on your feed, our activism rings false. And,

in this day and age, are we more concerned with making a difference, or making sure to present the appearance of it?

As Snapchat flooded with images of people protesting, I found myself on the fence about what it all means. Not the protests themselves. The posting. Say, for instance, each of those 24.8 million #blackouttuesday posts were backed up by a single dollar dedicated to organizations who are fighting systemic racism on a daily basis, just think what could be accomplished. It's all well and good, and necessary, to post about the Black Lives Matter movement that is sweeping not just our country, but also the world. However, every time you click and post, be sure to ask yourself - what am I doing to back that post up? How can I, on the ground, not just in the online ether, put in real effort to make change?

Hashtags, tweets, and insta-stories are just one part of a larger puzzle, the first step in educating ourselves about the inequities in our country. The expression "If you're going to walk the walk you have to talk the talk" is more relevant than ever. It's not enough to simply appear "woke." Now, more than ever, we must push ourselves on a daily basis to live that change.

How do we do it? Stay educated. Donate to meaningful causes. Listen carefully to those who are living through injustice. Take a hard look at yourself. And, most importantly, acknowledge your own privilege and prejudice (and if you think you don't have any, it's probably time to take a deeper look.) Be an activist and an ally, not a performance activist. ✱



There is an old saying used to describe economic disparity in America, "When white folks catch a cold, Black folks get pneumonia."

In 2020, the old adage should be updated to say, when white Americans catch coronavirus, Black people die. While the global pandemic poses hardships for many white Americans, Black Americans have suffered disproportionately with higher contraction and death rates from COVID-19. While making up 13% of America's total population, 24% of deaths from COVID-19 are in the Black community.

There are two major reasons typically cited for the disparity in COVID-19 health outcomes between Black and white Americans: (1) differences in quality of working and living conditions, and (2) the existence of certain underlying health conditions and lack of quality health care. Researchers point out that Black Americans are contracting the virus at a higher rate due to working conditions. Specifically, many Black Americans work in industries deemed to be "essential" (for example, meat packers, mail carriers, grocery store clerks, and factory workers) and, as such, they are frequently required to work in places where it is difficult to maintain physical distance -- like in a packed factory. Workers in these jobs often do not have access to proper PPE (personal protective equipment) and are therefore more likely to be exposed to the virus. In addition, because many Black people live in densely populated urban areas, if a worker becomes infected, he or she may be more likely to infect others. Also, according to the CDC Black Americans often live in multi-generational households in which essential workers may expose their elderly family members to the virus, potentially resulting in hospitalization and death. The second reason often cited for the disparate impact of COVID-19 on the Black population is the existence of underlying health conditions due to lack of access to health care. Research has shown that Black Americans are more likely to live in food deserts (areas with a lack of grocery stores or access to fresh fruits



RACISM GONE VIRAL

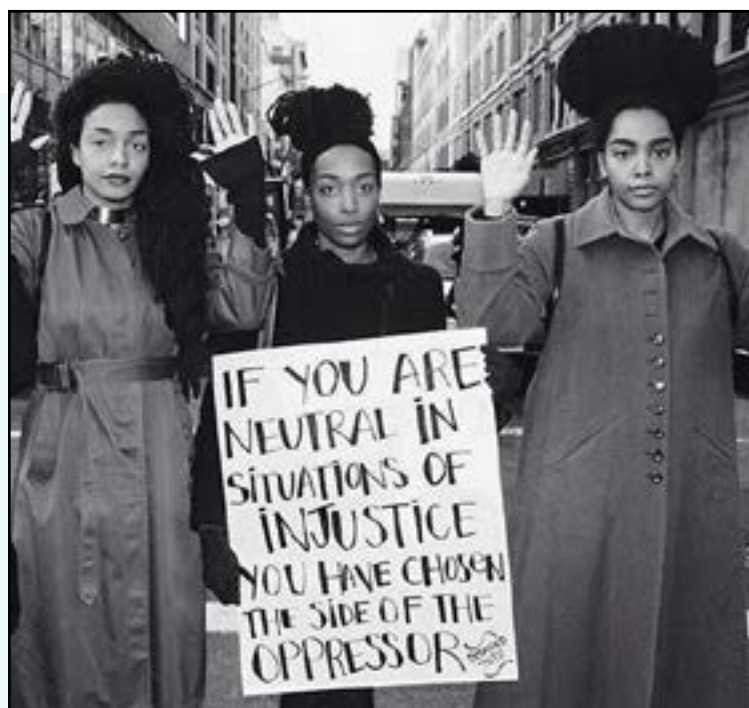
BY ELIZABETH DAVIDS

and vegetables). As a result, they are more likely to develop chronic health conditions, like diabetes, an underlying health condition that, if paired with COVID-19, can be fatal. In addition, NPR revealed that Black Americans are also more likely to live near big factories that emit harmful chemicals which cause conditions such as asthma, another underlying health condition that can prove deadly when paired with COVID-19. Also, since Black Americans are twice as likely to be uninsured as white Americans, those infected with COVID-19 may be less likely to seek medical attention early enough to prevent a deadly outcome.

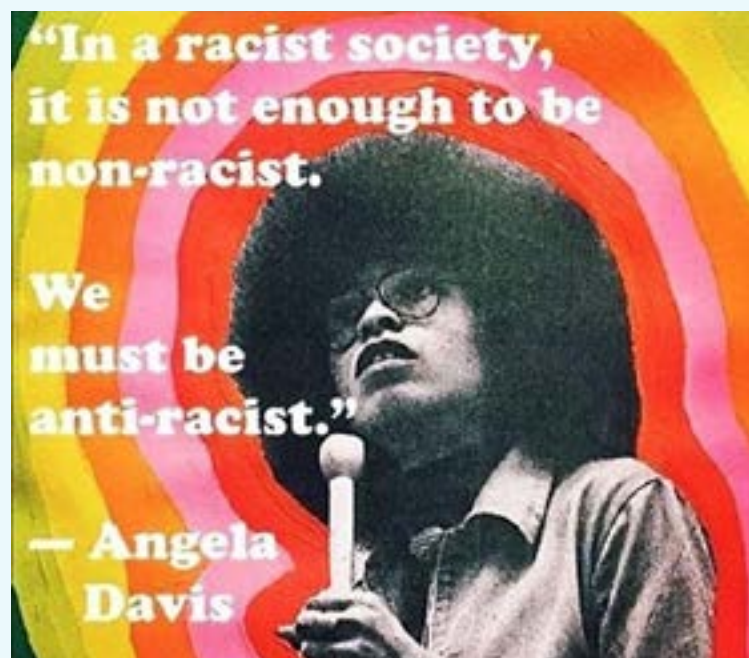
While the quality of working and living

conditions and the existence of underlying health conditions and access to care are important parts of the puzzle in understanding COVID-19's effect on Black Americans, they are not the entire picture. The American Academy of Pediatrics published a policy statement last year arguing that racism is a core cause of health problems in children and adolescents. The paper drove home a crucial point: Racism, not race, affects health, and race should not be used to explain away disparities caused by racism.

The gulf between the health outcomes of white and Black Americans has existed for centuries. COVID-19 is just the latest manifestation of a long-standing and ugly reality. Structural inequalities have kept Black Americans significantly poorer than their white counterparts, and economic inequality results in health inequality, especially during a pandemic. The fact of the matter is that historic and structural racism explains why Black people (and other minority populations) often live in more polluted, densely populated areas, have more people per household, and are overrepresented in settings where people are unable to effectively social distance, like prisons and homeless shelters. They disproportionately work jobs currently considered essential, yet are far less likely to have paid sick leave, enough savings to take time off, or a grocery store nearby enough to stock up easily. On top of creating the Black community's ongoing health crisis, systemic racism is also a barrier to treatment. The cause of health disparities—past and present—have existed since Reconstruction when Black health was no longer a matter of profit for white slave owners. While the effect of racism on health is well-established, progress will take time — and has to occur on a societal level. The silver lining is that COVID 19 and the recent urgency of the Black Lives Matter movement is helping to highlight the gaps in the our healthcare system and draw attention to issues we know have existed for generations but have failed to address. The COVID-19 pandemic has made more people aware of one of the ugliest aspects of inequality in America and hopefully will motivate American's to make a change for the



better. The solution has to involve a wide range of actions, including increasing wages and closing pay gaps, improving access to health insurance, and ensuring more diversity in the healthcare system so that practitioners can provide culturally competent care. In other words, there has to be a systemic change. There is a lot of work ahead of us. But, the time is now. Let's get started - we can do this. ✨



In and out
I breathe in and out
I curse my lungs because
I'm the lucky one

I'm the lucky one
I breathe in and out
Others die as they shout
Why am I the lucky one?

People flood the street and my neighbor-
hood is trashed
I wake up to see where my feet met the
ground as a child
Burned and graffiti on the tiles
Yet I am still the lucky one

How do I describe privilege when I it's sewn
into my framework
When I can't see it, that's when I fall short
Violence isn't the answer
Yet it's used everytime
My silence is a contributing factor
We all have a cross to bear
That's mine

I drive along a desolate highway
My mother in the seat beside me
I look through my rearview mirror
The cop car mumbles behind me
I breathe in and out
My brown skin buckling with white as my
knuckles grasp the wheel

The cop car passes

In and out
I breathe in and out
I curse my lungs because
I'm the lucky one

I'm the lucky one
I breathe in and out
Others die as they shout
Why am I the lucky one?



UNTITLED

A POEM
BY LOLA BODE

COVID-19: SEXISM AGAIN?

BY MONIE CHOI &
GABRIELLE MOSTOW



While the effects of COVID-19 are felt by everyone, women are undoubtedly bearing the brunt of the pandemic at a disproportionate rate.

The period of quarantine due to COVID-19 has reinforced outdated power dynamics which dictate women as the primary caretakers within heterosexual households, eroding decades of progress as women attempt to forge a path into the workforce. As millions of children make the shift from classroom to living room, parents must act as full-time teachers. Detrimentially—although perhaps unsurprisingly—this burden falls disproportionately upon women, with 80% of women reported to spend more time than their spouse assisting their children with online learning, according to a recent New York Times study. This disparity is due to pre-existing gender inequalities surrounding child care, as the patriarchal system perpetually constrains women to the role of “homemaker,” forcing them into a state of dependence upon men. Additionally, the toxicity of such expectations is now exacerbated by a lack of distinction between work and home life, as working women can no longer secure a space free from home responsibilities. The effects of placing household duties upon women are devastating, yet familiar. Women are being pushed out of the professional

sphere as they increasingly scale back their hours (or quit their jobs altogether) in order to fulfill growing household responsibilities. Such a return of women to the role of “homemaker” signifies an eerie retrogression to pre-World War I economic circumscription.

Clearly, when push comes to shove, society is still unwilling to allow women to step out of the role of a homemaker. But, do women who are able to hold on to their jobs fare any better? Marginally, at best. Women disproportionately hold jobs without protections such as paid leave. Mix that with a pandemic and a sprinkle of home care responsibility, the result is an entire population of women who are more likely to be financially unstable during the most trying time of this decade. What’s more, women aren’t just making less money than men, they are also spending more, as there are about 5 single mothers for every single father in the U.S.

Working or not, however, women can expect little to no consideration in the realm of policy-making, as the pandemic has illustrated the extremity of gender imbalances within global leadership. In fact, only 2 out of 27 members of the White House Coronavirus Task Force are women, and only 1 out of 27 members are

women of color. In addition, only 20 percent of the World Health Organization's Emergency Committee on COVID-19 are women. This imbalance in representation means that policymakers are making policies that likely do not consider the needs and circumstances of half of the population they represent. Such a disparity seems illogical since the effects of the pandemic are felt by everyone, men and women alike. Even more surprising is the fact that women make up 70 percent of health care workers globally. This is very significant, as the pandemic has pushed medical workers to the frontline, with doctors and nurses taking on the dangerous brunt work of risking their lives to maintain the public wellbeing. As such, it would seem much more logical that the policymakers who are making decisions that directly impact those on the frontline understand the challenges and the perspectives of those who they represent. A path toward reversing such trends cannot be tread until we see drastically more women—and especially women of color—in policy-making spaces.

So next time, before you start trying another TikTok tutorial for whipped coffee or potato gnocchi, consider taking that time to reexamine your own role in furthering these oppressive patterns. ✱



ABOLISH VS REFORM: THE STRONGEST RESPONSE

BY SOPHIE SAXL



A big issue being addressed right now is that of police abolition vs police reform, and there are many questions that it raises. First of all, what does this mean? What would either of these solutions look like? Is either one possible?

The universal goal that we all have in mind is that of putting an end to police violence and dismantling institutional racism. But, do we accomplish that through advocating for police abolition or police reform?

Reforming the police seems like a step we need to take, but many see it as a band-aid solution to America's deep-rooted problem of police brutality. One of the proposed reforms includes having individual police officers pay for their own misconduct lawsuits instead of funding it with tax dollars. What reasons does America have to reform? Clearly, something needs to be done, but why this way? The main argument in favor of reforms is that more structure within the policing system would check back against the abuse of power that allows police officers to get away with misconduct in the first place. However, there are many reasons that this wouldn't work. First of all, we have already tried to reform. One of many examples of this is the Obama administration's National Initiative for Building Community Trust and Justice, which had one of its test sites in Minneapolis, the same city George Floyd was killed in. The Initiative was an attempt at reform, that evidently, proved insufficient. Why would

this work now when it hadn't before? Creating more rules to regulate police conduct is useless if the policing system allows its officers to violate them. For example, Officer Derek Chauvin, the officer who killed George Floyd, was still allowed to remain an officer despite having 18 complaints prior to the murder. If reforms are not effective, maybe a different solution is needed.

The other main solution that people have come up with calls for the abolition of police. But, how can we completely do away with police when they have had a role in the institution for so many years? Well, police abolition doesn't necessarily mean get rid of all police ever—not right away, at least. Most police make only 1 federal arrest per year, so cutting down the size of the force wouldn't be impossible. If they mostly deal with noncriminal issues, reducing the number of police officers seems like a good plan. Instead of getting rid of the police immediately, abolitionists propose the idea of having only the number of police officers that is absolutely necessary and then decreasing that. Many police officers get high off hurting someone and abusing their power. While they have made white people feel safe at night, black people have had completely different experiences. Fewer police officers, then, in theory, would equal fewer opportunities for them to brutalize and kill black Americans. ✱

THE INTERSECT BETWEEN BLM AND LGBTQ

BY MAYA MAESTAS

Systematic racism has always been a problem in this country, starting with the Founding Fathers. Our country was built on racism, built on racist policies, built on slavery. To any white, cis-gendered, straight males that might be reading this, imagine being scared to go on a jog. Being scared to call the police when you're in trouble. Being scared to get pulled over. Being scared to sleep in your own bed. Breonna Taylor was shot and killed in her own bed by police. Her murderers to this day still walk freely. This is so important to me because I don't understand the struggles black people have to go through every day. And I never will have to understand. But because I will never have first-hand experiences with racism as a white woman, I personally have to do everything I can to help with the things I don't understand. At least 22 transgender people were killed in 2019. Most of them are black. A black transgender woman threw the first brick at the Stonewall Riots, which gave us pride as we know it today. In 1969, members of the LGBTQ community rioted against a police raid at the Stonewall Inn, because gay people were staying there. We have Pride today because of a black trans woman, Marsha P. Johnson. I keep seeing white LGBTQ+ people saying "Well I don't think it's my place to protest or speak out" or "What does BLM have to do with LGBTQ?". Marsha P. Johnson gave us rights. She gave us pride. Black people have always been amazing allies to us, so why aren't we doing the same? Why aren't we helping? Why aren't we protesting, signing petitions, and donating? If you're not educated

on this cause, don't let me as a white woman educate you. Look around. Look at your neighbors, or your peers, or your friends? Ask them about their experiences. Ask them how you can help and educate yourself. Just not being racist isn't enough. Everyone needs to be anti-racist. Anti-homophobes. Anti-sexist. To sum that all up, you have to be anti-xenophobic. Xenophobia is the fear of people who are different than you. Which, a lot of people in this country possess. If I, as a white teenage girl can contribute all I can to the Black Lives Matter movement, so can you. You can sign petitions. You can go to protests. You can hang up signs in your window. You can donate money. And most of all, YOU can make a difference in this country, and the world. So do something.





BEING BIRACIAL IN THE FACE OF A BLACK REVOLUTION

BY SIERRA STERN

There is a way to think about things without knowing them. Someday I will die. George Floyd is dead. George Floyd is dead because he is twice or two-and-a-half or three times more black than me. Part of me wants to keep these secrets from myself forever. I do not feel like the sum of my parts. I feel like an entirely new part, one that requires instructions on what to do in a time like this. Right now the instructions are:

White: Silence is complacency. Be anti-racist.
Black: Mourn. Take that pain and put it somewhere useful. Make sure you're hurting for a reason.

Where are mine?

In my experience, to be multiracial is to embody

an identity crisis, to feel a simultaneous sense of nonbelonging and universality wherever I go. To be multiracial is to feel ashamed of the privilege I am afforded for being light while potentially benefiting from intended racial equalizers like affirmative action. Most of the time, this is not too difficult a cross to bear. Sometimes I even forget, and this too is a privilege.

Right now I am acutely aware of my identity. I hate this country for making blackness synonymous with hurt and hardship. I find myself justifying my black half with the (limited thus far) discrimination I have encountered and have yet to face. I hate that the strength of our community is born of tragedy. I hate that I'm not sure if I'm allowed to say "our community". If white protestors are meant to protect their black counterparts, where

do I stand? Am I an ally or am I the affected? I don't think I have to know yet. I'm hurt, so I'm writing. I'm hurt, so I'm donating. I'm hurt, so I'm angry.

Here are the instructions I made for myself (which, by no means, is any other mixed black and white person obligated to abide by):

Use your whiteness for good. Be sensitive to well-meaning (and potentially misguided) allies. You have stakes in this—to feel black should not be to struggle. In the reality we are rallying for, this is not the status quo.

I do not claim to have processed what happened to George Floyd or Breonna Taylor or the thousands of other black citizens with families and pasts and futures whose lives were taken unlawfully and despicably. If I did, I'm not sure how I'd scrape together the optimism to get up each day. Belonging to a racially disoriented demographic, the easy thing to do would be to lean into my whiteness and be blissfully ignorant of the horrors faced by my more oppressed half, but confusion does not excuse silence. In this instance my voice will lead, and my identity will have to follow. ✖



RESOURCES

In this issue, as we have focused on the current state of the country, many of our writers have highlighted the fact that individual action is key to progress. As such, for readers who may not know where to start, we have compiled some amazing organizations in need of donations and/or volunteers. No act is too small, but inaction is not an option for our generation.

[Black Voters Matter Fund](#) - Black-voter education initiatives.

[Unicorn Riot](#) - Non-profit media organization of artists and journalists.

[Campaign Zero](#) - Police-reform initiatives.

[Village Arms](#) - This organization was created in direct response to the disparate treatment of Black Americans across the child welfare service continuum.

R.E.S.I.S.T.- Rebuilding economic sustainability for black women.

[New Mindsets, New Media, New Leaders, and Narratives \(N4\)](#) - Youth-led organization that applies community mobilization to heal and transform society.

[Know Your Rights Camp](#) - Advancing the liberation and well-being of Black and Brown communities through education, self-empowerment, mass-mobilization, and the creation of new systems that elevate the next generation of leaders.

Bail Project- The Bail Project seeks to end mass incarceration and the racial and economic disparities in the bail system.

[Women for Political Change](#) - Holistically investing in the leadership and political power of young women and trans & non-binary individuals throughout Minnesota.

[NAACP Legal Defense Fund](#) - Legal organization aimed at fighting for racial justice

[American Civil Liberties Union](#) - Non-profit organization aimed at defending and preserving individual rights and liberties. Among many other things, the ACLU has committed itself to providing legal assistance to cases in which civil liberties are threatened.

National Police Accountability Project - Non-profit organization created to protect human and civil rights of individuals, specifically in encounters with law enforcement and detention facility personnel.

[Communities United Against Police Brutality](#) - Twin-Cities based organization created to combat police brutality by providing resources to survivors of injustice.

Black Feminist Project - Organization focused on enriching the lives of Black women through empowering them to tap into their leadership abilities.

[Homeless Black Trans Women Fund](#) - Organization aimed at providing support and funds to Black trans women in Atlanta who are sex workers and homeless.

[Black Table Arts](#) - Organization centered around uplifting Black lives through increasing accessibility to art programs.



ARTWORK

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