

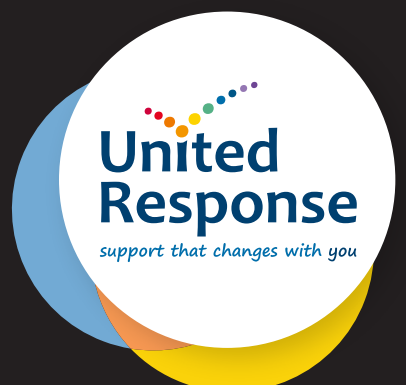


easy news

Issue 42



Black Lives Matter - Special Edition



Murder of George Floyd



On 25th May 2020, a 46 year-old-man called George Floyd was killed by a policeman in a city called Minneapolis, in America. George Floyd was a black African-American. The policeman was white.



George Floyd was arrested because they thought he had used a 20 dollar note that was fake. That is worth £16.20.



George Floyd was handcuffed and one policeman pointed a gun at him. Another policeman called Derek Chauvin put Floyd onto the floor and put his knee on his neck. 2 other policemen were there and did not help. They blocked other people from helping.



George Floyd told the policeman "I can't breathe" 11 times and asked him to get off, but he did not.



Cameras from a local shop and people nearby caught what happened on video. The videos were shown around the world on social media. People became very angry at what they saw.



People around the USA were angry that the policemen were sacked, but not arrested. There is anger that black people are treated badly by the police.



4 days after George Floyd's death, the policeman who killed him - Derek Chauvin - was arrested. He has now been charged with murder and three other policemen have been charged with aiding and abetting – which means helping a crime to be committed.



At George Floyd's funeral, people stayed silent for 8 minutes and 46 seconds, which is how long the policeman knelt on his neck before he passed out and died.

Black Lives Matter protests



The murder of George Floyd made lots of people of all races angry. They began to protest in the streets to show they want things to change.



A group called Black Lives Matter (BLM) asked for support to stop black people being treated unfairly, especially by the police.



They are asking for changes in the police system in the USA. George Floyd is one of many black people to die there because of **police brutality**, which is when the police use violence.



On 23rd February 2020, a 25-year-old black called Ahmaud Arbery was shot dead when out running. He was shot by a retired police officer and his son, who thought he was a robber.



On 13th March 2020, a 26-year-old black woman called Breonna Taylor was shot 8 times in her own home. The police were looking for drugs. They did not find any.



BLM protests began in the USA, then in the UK and other countries. Most of the protests have been peaceful, but in some places there has been some damage to shops and buildings and some fighting with police.



People are asking for changes in governments and the running of some countries. In the USA and in the UK someone is more likely to be unemployed, poor and be at risk of sickness if they are black.

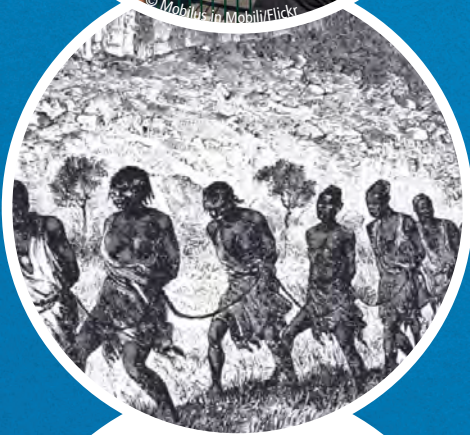


Famous people and athletes have given their support to BLM. When the Premier League returned after the coronavirus break, players wore special BLM shirts and knelt down as a mark of respect.

Historical statues and Black Lives Matter



As part of the Black Lives Matter protests, people have asked for some statues and monuments to be taken down. Some were pulled down or damaged by protesters.



Many of the statues are of people who made a lot of money from the **slave trade** between the 16th and 18th centuries. This was where black African people were forced to work for white people without pay, often sent to other countries around the world, living in terrible conditions.



Protesters think that these traders should not be remembered as heroes. Other people believe that the statues should be kept, as the traders made a lot of money in the past and used it to help build the cities that they lived in.



On 7th June 2020, 10,000 BLM protesters were out in Bristol. A statue of a 17th Century slave trader called Edward Colston was pulled down, dragged through the streets and thrown into the harbour.



Colston was part of the Royal African Company, which sent about 80,000 slaves from Africa to the Americas. The slaves were often in chains, treated badly, ill and hungry.



The removal of Colston's statue in Bristol was criticised by some British politicians, including the Prime Minister, Boris Johnson, whose office described it as an "act of criminal damage".



A statue of another slave trader, Robert Milligan, was taken down by authorities in London, while statues of historical figures like Winston Churchill and Mahatma Gandhi were boarded up to protect them from protesters.



On 13th June 2020, in London, there was violence between protesters, police and some groups who do not support BLM. 12 people were arrested and 8 police officers were hurt.

Struggle for equality in history



The slave trade, where African slaves were sent to the Americas, began in 1532. It was made illegal in the British Empire in 1833. Over 12 million Africans were taken to the Americas. At least 4 million of them were in British ships.



In 1919, after the end of World War 1, there were violent race riots in some cities in the UK. These riots were started by white people against black people.



South Africa had a period of **apartheid**, separating white and black people from 1948 until 1994. Nelson Mandela led a campaign to end the white minority rule and became president.



Slavery in the USA ended in 1865, but black Americans did not have equality. In the 1950s and 1960s the Civil Rights Movement, led by Martin Luther King, challenged **white supremacy**, a racist belief that white people are better. He believed in peaceful protest and won the Nobel Peace Prize for challenging inequality. He was shot dead in 1964.



Before the Civil Rights Movement in the USA, black people had to sit at the back of buses and leave the seats at the front for white people. On 1st December 1955, a black woman called Rosa Parks sat at the front of the bus and refused to give up her seat. She was arrested. This was the start of the Montgomery Bus Boycott.



In 1963, the Government-owned Bristol Omnibus Company in the UK refused to employ any black or asian workers. There was a **boycott**, where people stopped using the buses to support black and Asian workers. This led to the Race Relations Acts of 1965 and 1968.



In 1948, a ship called Empire Windrush brought 500 people from Jamaica to the UK to work. Many experienced racism and had low paid and dangerous jobs. 1000s more people from Jamaica and other Caribbean countries came to the UK between 1948 and 1971. They are known as the Windrush generation.



In 2017, many people became angry as people from the Windrush generation were threatened with **deportation**, which is when you are sent back to the country you were born in. Many people were stopped from working and refused benefits. The Home Office had to apologise for how they treated these people.

More information



If you would like to understand more about the topics in this Easy News special, here are some websites that might help.



For more information about Black Lives Matter, go to:
www.blacklivesmatter.com



For more information about cases of police brutality in America, go to:
<https://mappingpoliceviolence.org>

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