



Black Lives Matter: Revolutionaries, Not Reformers

Black Lives Matter, a radical national organization funded by progressives such as George Soros and the Ford Foundation, seeks to do more than defending black lives from alleged racist cops in the U.S. It seeks to transform the whole nation. Black Lives Matter (BLM) should be seen for what it is: a well-organized revolutionary movement. Its agenda is anti-capitalist, anti-“white privilege,” anti-family and anti-Israel. BLM’s program calls for a massive redistribution of wealth, free college education, reparations to people of color, open borders and a guaranteed income for minorities. Founded by three militant feminists, Alicia Garza, Patrisse Cullors and Opal Tometi, BLM has organized a powerful social movement involving an extensive network of radical political groups, social media organizations and community organizers.

Make no mistake about this: BLM is more than a movement that inspires some fanatics to attack police protecting our streets and communities; it is a revolutionary movement funded by the rich and powerful. The obvious question is why are Soros and his network, the Ford Foundation and progressive millionaires funding BLM, which despises class privilege and wealth? Is the economic elite trying to buy peace by donating to BLM? No. Funds are being lavished on BLM and its affiliated organizations without strings attached.

The Radical Roots of BLM

BLM emerged out of the Trayvon Martin shooting in 2012. The incident, which led to a national protest movement, occurred on the evening of February 25, 2012 in Sanford, Florida when George Zimmerman, a 28-year-old man of Hispanic, white and black ancestry fatally shot a 17-year-old African American high school student during an altercation. Zimmerman was acting as his neighborhood watch coordinator when he encountered Martin. The police arrived on the scene within two minutes of the shooting, and Zimmerman,

after being taken into custody and questioned for five hours, was released by the police because there was no evidence to refute Zimmerman’s claim he was acting in self-defense. His release caused thousands of protesters to call for Zimmerman’s arrest.

President Barack Obama helped fuel the protests when he said that Martin looked like a son he might have had. Six weeks after the shooting, amid extensive media coverage and protests across the country, Zimmerman was charged with murder by a special prosecutor appointed by the governor of Florida. On July 13, 2013, Zimmerman was acquitted by a jury. In February 2015, Obama’s Department of Justice announced there was not enough evidence to prosecute Zimmerman’s actions as a “federal hate crime.”

Stepping into the media-fanned outrage of Zimmerman’s acquittal was Alicia Garza, a 34-year-old activist from Oakland, California. Following the July 2013 acquittal she posted on Facebook, “Black people. I love you. I love us. Our lives matter, Black Lives Matter.” Patrisse Cullors, a long-time Los Angeles activist, shared the posting under the hashtag #BlackLivesMatter. Joining the two was Opal Tometi, a Nigerian immigrant involved in Black Alliance for Just Immigration.

The three activists shared a belief in grassroots organizing to transform America, a nation they believed was racist, xenophobic, imperialist, misogynist and homophobic. The backgrounds of these three women tell us about the nature of BLM. These women were born after the death of the 1960s New Left and black radicalism, but 1960s revolutionaries managed to stir the hearts of a new generation of left-wing activists.

Alicia Garza brought to the movement a long record as an activist. She is gay, married to a biracial transgender spouse. Prior to organizing BLM, she was an activist for health care reform, a union organizer for domestic

workers, and an organizer against violence toward “transgender and gender people of color.” She served as director of People Organized to Win Employment Rights in the San Francisco Bay area, winning the right for youth to use public transportation for free in San Francisco. She mobilized community groups against gentrification in San Francisco and alleged police brutality in the city. She was appointed to the board of directors of Forward Together, an organization that trains grassroots “people of color” community organizers. She won community and national awards from gay activist groups. She appeared often in the left-wing publications *The Guardian* and *The Nation* proclaiming, among other things, gay black women as the vanguard of social change.¹

Patrisse Cullors emerged as an activist early in life. At age 15 she left her home in Los Angeles at the request of her parents when she revealed she was gay. She rejected her religious upbringing as a Jehovah’s Witness and became interested in the Nigerian religious tradition of Ifá, a divination religion in which prophesies are revealed through palm or kola nuts. While earning a degree in religion and philosophy from UCLA, she won a Fulbright scholarship to pursue her study of religion. She became the executive director of the Coalition to End Sheriff Violence in Los Angeles jails and played a critical but unsuccessful role in the campaign to elect a new Los Angeles sheriff in 2014.²

A Disciple of Liberation Theology

Opal Tometi, a New York-based activist, is the third member of this triumvirate. The daughter of Nigerian immigrants, she grew up in Phoenix and completed her B.A. in history and an M.A. degree in “communications and advocacy” at the University of Arizona. While in college she began working for the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU). Her activism led her to become the executive director for the Black Alliance for Just Immigration, an organization that collaborates with immigration activists in Los Angeles, Phoenix, New York, Oakland and Washington, DC. She proclaims herself as a follower of liberation theology, a Marxist-informed worldview.

Like the other founders of BLM, Tometi speaks frequently on college campuses and has spoken at the United Nations. She served on the United Nations Global Forum on Migration and Development and the UN Commission on the Status of Women. She has been to the White House, where she met Heather Foster, Obama’s liaison for the African American community.³

A Murderous Role Model

From the outset BLM was more than just a protest movement intent on organizing around alleged police brutality and shootings of black males. BLM grew directly out of black liberation terrorism of the 1970s. The three women who founded BLM see themselves as revolutionaries following in the tradition of Assata Shakur. Garza describes Shakur as her inspiration. Shakur, the nom de guerre of Deborah Chesimard, is a radical feminist and Marxist revolutionary who escaped from prison in 1979 while serving a sentence for the brutal murder of New Jersey state trooper Werner Foerster. The murder was vicious, a culmination of anti-police bombings and assassinations throughout the 1970s which claimed the lives of 13 police officers.⁴

Shakur, born in 1947, became a revolutionary celebrity in the 1970s. After graduating from City College of New York, where she had been arrested as an activist, she joined the Black Panther Party, but left the party because it was not violent enough to suit her. Changing her name to Assata Shakur, she joined the Black Liberation Army, an overt revolutionary organization seeking self-determination for “Afrikan” people in the United States. After her arrest in an armed robbery at the Statler Hotel, where she was shot in a struggle, she was released on bail in April 1971.

Four months later, in August 1971, she was identified as a possible suspect in a bank robbery in Queens. She was not finished, however. On December 21, 1971, Shakur was named as one of four suspects by the New York City police in a hand grenade attack that destroyed a police car and injured two patrolmen. Following this she was identified in connection with wounding a police officer attempting to serve a traffic summons in Brooklyn, 1972, and a series of other robberies, including an armed robbery at Our Lady of Presentation Church in Brooklyn.

The FBI launched a nationwide manhunt for this mad dog. The FBI described her as the “revolutionary mother hen” of a Black Liberation Army cell involved in execution-style murders of four policemen in two separate incidents in late 1971 and early 1972. In February 1972, she was named as a suspect in the ambushing of four other policemen. On the morning of May 2, 1973, she was stopped on the New Jersey turnpike by two state troopers. A shootout occurred that left Trooper Foerster shot twice in the head with his own gun, and another state trooper and Shakur wounded. Apprehended while fleeing the scene, she was charged

with bank robberies, the kidnapping of a Brooklyn heroin dealer, attempted murder, murder and seven other felonies relating to the turnpike shootout.

A series of trials and mistrials followed, many of which made her into a victim and a hero to self-proclaimed revolutionaries. She was defended by William Kunstler and a team of other radical lawyers. Shakur was sentenced to 26 to 33 years in the state prison. The trial judge was later threatened with assassination. The revolutionary left launched a campaign, headed by Angela Davis, claiming that Shakur was a political prisoner.

On November 2, 1979, three members of the Black Liberation Army seized two prison guards at the Clinton Correctional Facility for Women in New Jersey, commandeered a prison van and escaped with Shakur. She later turned up in Castro's Cuba, where she sought political asylum. Today she remains on the FBI's Ten Most Wanted list. Pleas for the Obama administration to demand extradition of Shakur from Cuba, with which the United States opened relations in July 2015, have fallen on deaf ears.

Shakur remains a political refugee in Castro's one-party dictatorship and a revolutionary hero for the founders of BLM. Her status as a hero tells us everything about the revolutionary intent of BLM.

Revolution Under the Guise of Reform

BLM gained national attention following the Ferguson, Missouri riot in 2014 in the aftermath of the police shooting of Michael Brown in the St. Louis suburb. BLM sent dozens of activists to Ferguson to rally marchers under the slogan "Hands Up, Don't Shoot," the alleged last words of Michael Brown, a black youth who was stopped by a Ferguson policeman following a robbery of a convenience store. A full investigation of Brown's shooting revealed that the shooting by the police officer was self-defense after Brown had struck him and threatened further violence. Eyewitnesses, despite great intimidation, testified that Brown did not have his hands up and had threatened the officer.

Since the Ferguson incident, BLM has organized more than a thousand demonstrations across the country. BLM organizers have been involved in protests, often leading to violence, in Brooklyn, Newark, Boston, Chicago, Columbus, Miami, Detroit, Houston, Oakland, San Francisco, Los Angeles, Nashville, Portland, Tucson and Washington DC. The movement spread to Toronto, Canada.

In 2015, BLM expanded its activism to college campuses, including the University of Missouri, where students protested against an alleged racist and hostile atmosphere for minority students at the university. In July 2016, BLM-led protests followed the death of a black prisoner, Freddie Gray, being transported to jail in Baltimore. Three days of rioting ensued. Later three police officers indicted in the death of Freddie Gray were found not guilty of the charges.

Democratic Politicians Are Intimidated

Democratic Party politicians, university administrators and the media have been intimidated by BLM. Sentiments such as "All Lives Matter" have been denounced as racist by BLM. Socialist Bernie Sanders, running for the Democratic presidential nomination, found himself under attack in rallies and online by BLM for his apparent equivocation over "Black Lives Matter." He quickly fell into line. So did his sophist rival, Hillary Clinton, who saw which way the winds were blowing and started intoning that "Black Lives Matter" in her speeches.

On the surface, BLM appeared to be a reform movement for better police-community relations. It called for basic police reforms, such as body cameras for police, ending stop-and-frisk policies, community involvement in policing, and retraining police on de-escalation measures. Such calls for reform drew support from hundreds of white and black demonstrators who joined the BLM movement. Politicians, the media, university administrators, academics and media pundits all took up the call for better police-community relations. When BLM-led demonstrations turned violent, these well-meaning liberals called for more dialogue between the races and the need to address the scars of slavery.

BLM appeared militant in its actions to undertake police reforms, but the media and BLM defenders were quick to disassociate the organization from violence and police assassinations. By midsummer 2016, police deaths across the U.S. had totaled 26, up 44 percent from the previous year.⁵ In Dallas, the deadliest attack occurred when a black terrorist opened fire on police protecting BLM-inspired demonstrators, killing five police officers. The media denounced the violence and portrayed BLM as a broad coalition of 30-plus organizations which should not be held responsible for deranged nuts.

Any link between BLM language and subsequent violence has been dismissed by the liberal media. Yet BLM language and actions are inflammatory. The press should hold BLM accountable for hosting

in Ferguson a pig roast with a policeman's cap on top of the roast. It should be held accountable for protesters in BLM-sponsored marches in Brooklyn where demonstrators chanted "Off the pigs."

BLM's Radical Platform

BLM is not a reformist organization. This was made clear in August 2016, when BLM joined dozens of radical groups to issue a "platform." It declared that "America is an empire that uses war to expand territory and power." BLM condemned Israel as an "apartheid state" and branded it as guilty of "genocide" against Palestinians. The platform called on black Americans to tie themselves to "liberation movements around the world." It demanded free tuition and open admission to all black people at every American public university and free "housing, transportation, childcare, healthcare, and food" for all students.

BLM insists on an end to "white supremacy, imperialism, and patriarchy" through a universal basic income for all citizens, with bonus dollars for black Americans. The nuclear family is to be broken up and the borders opened to all those wanting to immigrate to the United States.⁶ (Why people would want to immigrate to a perceived racist, imperialist and class-ridden society was left unanswered.)

The left-wing media have left BLM off the hook, but most shocking is the gusher of financial support left-wing foundations and corporate progressives are giving to BLM. The next *Mindszenty Report* will detail this support, but

in the meantime note that the Ford Foundation and other corporate donors awarded BLM a \$100 million grant this summer. George Soros, the Hungarian-born left-wing billionaire, donated at least \$33 million in the last year to activist groups associated with BLM, and \$650,000 directly to BLM.

A movement that proclaims Assata Shakur as its inspiration and issues a platform calling for a radical transformation of the American economy and destruction of basic institutions is not a reform-minded movement, but a radical movement operating under the guise of social justice, a typical ploy of revolutionaries to beguile soft-minded reformers and apologists. The common folk are not so easily taken in by such rhetoric, but many are afraid to speak out.

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- 1 Alicia Garza, "Where the Leadership of Black Women Can Take Us," *The Nation*, February 26, 2015.
 - 2 Jessica Guynn, "Meet the Women Who Coined #BlackLivesMatter," *USA Today*, March 4, 2015.
 - 3 "Opal Tometi," *The Huffington Post*, retrieved August 21, 2008.
 - 4 Bryan Burrough, *Days of Rage* (2015).
 - 5 Greg Zoraya, "26 Police Killed So Far in 2016, Up 44 percent from 2015," *USA Today*, July 9, 2015.
 - 6 David French, "Black Lives Matter Keeps Getting More Radical—Will the Media Care?" *National Review*, August 5, 2016; and "What Black Lives Matter Really is About," *Power Line*, posted August 6, 2016.
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