

Black Resistance
Executive Summary (2023)
(DRAFT)

The theme for 2023 is Black Resistance. This theme is broad enough to address both antiblack violence and how African Americans have resisted the ongoing and historic violence that they have faced from slavery to mass incarceration. Black Resistance has taken many forms from running away from slavery to non-cooperation to poisoning slave holders to destroying property to migration to nonviolent protests to boycotts to armed struggle. Indeed, one of the central themes in the African American history has been resistance to all forms of oppression and violence in the American social, political and economic systems “by any means necessary.”

In the past 120 years American society is replete with the false hopes of cultural transformation and false dreams of Black equality. As controversial issues arose in the American fabric, they were to be resolved not in the streets but through the Vote, democratic processes of elections. We African Americans are constantly reminded of the “double consciousness” spoken of by Paul Laurence Dunbar and W.E. B. DuBois. The United States purports that it respects the inalienable rights and the just application of the law for all citizens. It is important to understand that the United States Constitution allegedly stands as a safeguard of individual freedom and liberty. Yet we of African descent find that the courts and the various police departments established to enforce the law failed to challenge the violations of our and human rights. We have seen the bright moments of hope fade as a result of state sanctioned institutional violence, immoral laws and racist policies that try to control Black Lives.

Black Resistance has been more than necessary because American history has been replete with antiblack violence. From the narratives of the enslaved, such as Frederick Douglass and Harriet Wilson, to the early 20th century racial pogroms and lynchings to the ongoing police violence against African Americans that has shaped the recent history of African Americans in the 21st century, Black Resistance has been a necessary part of the African American experience.

African Americans and other minority groups' ideals and values have been turned into their opposites. Most often the courts have stood silent in the face of racist violence or have turned their wrath against the victims, not the perpetrators. The historical record is clear, the police have protected White mobs, White property, and anything rather than Black Lives. In many cases they were with the attackers who violated and victimized Blacks as well. Institutional victimization is more pernicious than violence in the streets, and nothing is as immoral as violence in the court system and through legislative systems. Now in the 21st century African American citizens have taken it upon themselves to demand the full limits of the Constitution's guarantees. We no longer ask for services, we demand them. Black people are speaking and loud in audible tones- there will not be the violent victimization of our families, sons, and daughters without a visceral Black response. More importantly, however, this is a call to study of the various

responses of Black Americans to anti-Black Violence and it should be the primary focus of those who resided both inside and outside the academy.

Where race is concerned, legislative or judicial action to deal with controversial issues has often come late and been most times partial in nature, while white violence has continued to terrorize Black Americans without hindrance. However, in many cases Black Americans have taken it among themselves to try to protect themselves and their communities. During the last quarter of the twentieth century and continuing today, the plight of persons of African descent to navigate this terrain has become a crucial theme for many interested parties.