

## **How did the Montgomery Bus Boycott, Amadou Diallo and the George Floyd protests each act as watershed moments in the fight against systemic racism in the US?**

Efforts to understand race and racial issues in the US must start with historical contexts. Looking at events and movements combating systemic racism reveals the struggle for social justice, equality, and American ideals. This fight against slavery and human bondage must continue to break the persisting challenges. Gender-aware approaches also address racism's harmfulness. Resistance and empathy lead to new thinking that influences socio political action. This section examines key events in racial jurisprudence and activism, shaping future discourse and activism. This edition presents original and new briefs, carefully selecting the biggest moments in the anti-racist movement.

Much of the history of systemic racism in the US has been shaped by laws and attitudes that marginalized African Americans and denied them equal opportunities. These inequalities persisted in schools and neighborhoods, making it difficult for African Americans to find role models. The impact of these events still affects society today. Despite the challenges, progress has been made in combating systemic racism. Historical racial enmity, along with unconscious biases and societal hierarchies, contribute to ongoing racial disparities in income, education, and imprisonment. The US Civil War, rooted in racism, was a significant conflict during the 1800s. White supremacists fought to maintain their dominance, creating a political ideology of white supremacy.

The Montgomery Bus Boycott was driven by deep social and economic division in Montgomery, rooted in the history of racism. Black workers earned less than White workers, voting rights were limited for Black adults, and segregation was pervasive. The mistreatment on city buses caused mistrust towards white bus drivers. Civil disobedience was already popularized by labor leaders and local activists. Several mothers had been prosecuted for refusing to leave the buses, but no rallying point had ignited widespread resistance. However, the growing number of local organizations and churches changed the landscape, making the boycott a real threat to the status quo.

Many city officials, leaders, pastors, and community organizers participated in the bus boycott. Martin Luther King Jr.'s assassination inspired others to join the movement. Rosa Parks chose to support local organizers fighting for dignity and respect. The Montgomery Bus Boycott marked a turning point in the African American freedom struggle, bringing new individuals into the fight. The Montgomery Improvement Association formed in response to Parks' case. In September 1956, the Supreme Court ruled against segregated seating, allowing desegregated buses to transport individuals to downtown Montgomery. The primary credit for the boycott victory should go to grassroots organizers like Jo Ann Gibson Robinson, E.D. Nixon, and Rosa Parks. They were collectively responsible for its existence. Other participants were involved in mobilizing and coordinating the boycott through various programs. It was the African American women and men in the MIA who provided the racial consciousness and collective action that incubated and gave birth to the boycott and MIA as we know them today.

The protest initially emerged in response to one woman, but then quickly expanded beyond her to address longer-term struggles toward human dignity, self-respect, respect for others, and justice. This was an encounter between Parks as an individual and a driver and also had to do with both personal and collective factors. The protest again shifted its focus, in a sense, and became about Parks and her refusal to get up from her seat. There is an entire organizational level as well as an arena of local political space that was mobilized when large numbers of boycotters in Montgomery refused to get up from their bus seats.

Throughout the yearlong boycott, various tactics were employed to keep the boycott in citizens' minds, while maintaining organization and order. This included mass communication and education, visits to white churches, and engaging drivers at roadside stops. Martin Luther King Jr. and other civil rights leaders promoted non-violent protest. The African American citizens of Montgomery were emboldened to take action. The boycott started with a mass meeting at Holt Street Baptist Church and continued for seven days. Their strategy was total non-participation on public buses.

In February 1999, Amadou Diallo, an unarmed West African immigrant, was fatally shot by four plainclothes New York City police officers, who mistook an object in his hand for a weapon. The officers had been looking for a different suspect and Diallo's death raised broader concerns about police conduct and brutality in disadvantaged communities. The incident took place during a time when the New York City Police Department operated under the 'broken windows' theory, justifying aggressive policing in poor and minority neighborhoods. The shooting sparked a political debate on violence and police abuse in the United States.

The killing of Diallo was seen as a trend of police brutality towards Black men. Mayor Giuliani vowed to ensure justice and threatened to resign. The trial highlighted the challenges of addressing police violence and favored law enforcement officers. The case was a catalyst for police reform, focusing on the legal repercussions rather than societal factors. The officers involved were acquitted, leading to nationwide protests and a push for legislative reform against police brutality targeting Black communities.

The Diallo case sparked a wave of protest and public sentiment not seen in New York City since the Crown Heights incident nearly a decade earlier—testifying to the fact that many were not ready to forget about the entrenchedness of systemic racism in the city and the ferocity of the continued marginalization of its communities. Women from the community went about performing the traditional Islamic pre-burial rituals on Diallo's body, insisting on having him dressed in appropriate religious attire in preparation for the final washing of his battered body. The African American community did not stand alone in enduring this nightmare. During the weeks after February 4th, groups worked together in the streets and in council chambers.

The substantial local coverage of the Diallo case that continued well beyond his funerary services illustrates that the advocates were not alone in rallying New Yorkers to the cause. Nationally, civil rights groups, grassroots organizations, and individual activists organized and attended protests, teach-ins, and educational forums about Diallo. Media outlets continued to tell the tragic tale of a young man standing in the vestibule of his apartment, close to his front

door. The case reignited a timely national dialogue on the need for police reforms and increased accountability to the affected communities. The street theater troupe devoted a turn to sing and perform accompanying choreography that drew enthusiastic applause and laughter. The youth, in particular, were drawn to the world premiere of their video.

The events around George Floyd's murder and the Black Lives Matter protests have revealed underlying fury over systemic racism in the US. The police force is seen as biased and oppressive, targeting marginalized groups. The killings of Breonna Taylor and George Floyd have forced America to confront this extreme form of racism. Since the murder of Michael Brown in Ferguson, civil rights movements have gained momentum through grassroots collectives nationwide. Black Lives Matter has grown from social media activism to collective challenges against injustice.

This article questions the significance of George Floyd's death and its impact on the Black freedom struggle. It explores the events in Minneapolis and the subsequent protests that spread nationwide. Police and the government responded with force, leading to widespread condemnation. Floyd died at 38th Street and Chicago Avenue, and the video highlighted the inaction of many. Minneapolis residents quickly created a memorial at the intersection with chalk writings.

The protests in the aftermath of George Floyd's death in the United States had a powerful impact on the global community. In countries around the world, these events also triggered protests that called attention to experiences of systemic racism and discrimination within their national contexts. Individuals and organizations protested and organized around calls for racial justice and police reform. As part of these global discussions, policymakers in various countries called for a renewed examination of policies and practices that have contributed to the marginalization and exclusion of minority populations. Attention has been drawn to the need for systemic change to address racial inequality in society by society and community by community.

While these discussions are deeply grounded in national and local contexts, the events of the past year have highlighted the fundamental interconnectedness of these struggles and the common experiences of oppression and marginalization that communities around the world face. Since the start of the uprisings in the US, anti-racism groups and campaigns around the world have turned their attention to solidarity work to push their governments to change policy in areas such as immigration, housing, and employment, and to combat discrimination in educational settings and healthcare. Not just solo fights in individual countries but an ongoing dialogue among groups and peoples around the world, in their shared struggle for basic human rights of equity and justice. It has been argued that racial justice impacted every part of the world and that attempts to fight for justice had to be larger and more coordinated, an argument that aligned with the rhetoric used by the protesters in the US. Government officials have spoken about the importance of rooting out discrimination with the idea that racial justice is a basic human right. A similar argument about shared racial justice can be found in statements by leaders in various countries. These countries have expressed international support in transnational forums and advocated within those forums for changes in line with the discussions happening both within their countries and in solidarity with the US.

In conclusion, many various moments in the long fight against systemic racism in the United States have permanently altered American culture, society, and politics. Given their significance, it is necessary to remember them in the correct order, in relation to different steps toward a U.S. that lives up to its stated rights and principles of equality. By doing so, these events expand outward: from hard-won civil rights law to broader campaigns for justice and the eradication of racism still present; from personal transactions rooted in discrimination to employment systems and legal structures, and into unequal media representation and access. In no way is the United States a fully changed place. The hope of an equal society, nevertheless, continues generation after generation. The injustice of systemic racism elicits varied responses through different methods of social change; silence and inaction maintain structures of discrimination.

Racism is neither a thing of the past nor indeed around us. Not all actions and failures are equal; some historical moments more than others represent potential evolution in the fight against systemic racism. Certain historical events in the United States are thought of as lasting national turning points for social justice: the Montgomery Bus Boycott, the desegregation of Central High School in Little Rock, Arkansas, the Los Angeles Rebellion of 1992, and the George Floyd protests that began in May 2020. Together, these events symbolize what structural sociologists would term “quasi-events,” as they are historical ruptures from previous stasis with the potential to more widely transform the social context at large. They were vastly covered in national news media and had the power to evoke deeply personal emotional responses in those with personal experience of racial discrimination. These events signaled a wider invasion of the public consciousness as pictures of Rosa Parks and the March on Washington were publicized throughout the world.

A historical recounting of this kind demonstrates just how long systemic racism has been entrenched in the fabric of the United States. In doing so, this type of exploration points to some key lessons learned from these historical struggles. First, it tells us that most, if not all, of the advocacy efforts that took place only did so after years or even decades of organizing that stretched across vast communities in order to slow or reverse the consolidation of repression that existed systemwide in courts, legislatures, and generally within U.S. society. It also reveals the nature of how we were able to prevail over systemic injustices, emphasizing various strategies of resilience against the workings of racial capitalism as opposed to relying on approaches to prompt meaningful reform by those in power. Finally, such a reflection shows just how adaptable and ever-evolving movements for justice and freedom had to be in order to survive for so long. This sub-section is meant only to give a brief exploration of key events that many believe have shaped the present moment. In doing so, these key takeaways neglect many other instances of resistance that were and continue to be led by activists and organizers. We believe that all struggles must be intersectional and hold as their North Star the idea of building beyond struggle, to a new society based on healing. For this reason, it is important to educate and organize those most directly impacted by systemic oppressions to help them defend themselves and their right to thrive.