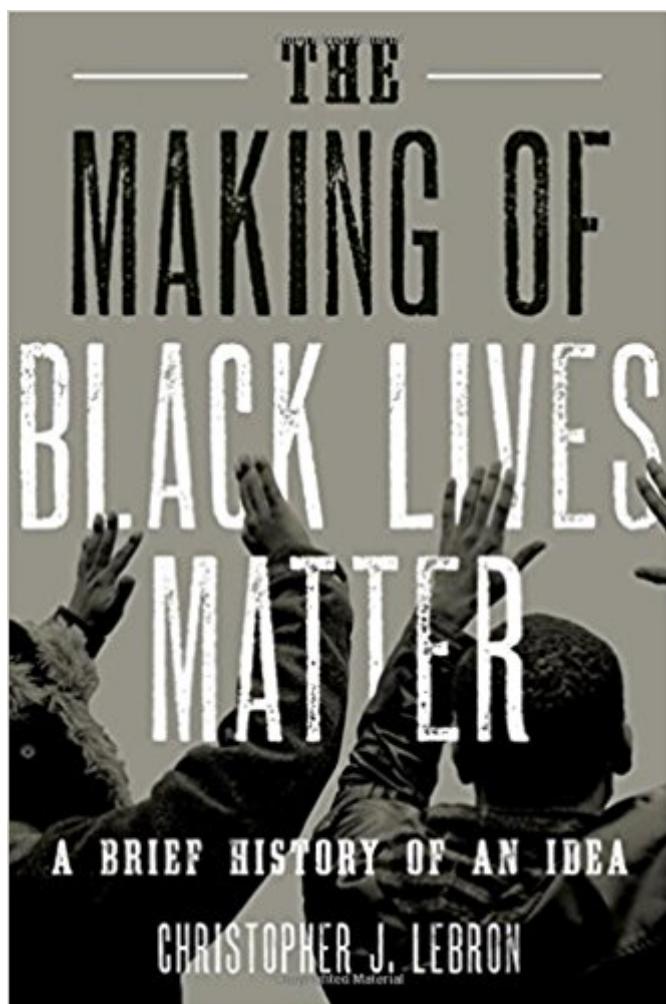


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The Making Of Black Lives Matter: A Brief History Of An Idea



Synopsis

Started in the wake of George Zimmerman's 2013 acquittal in the death of Trayvon Martin, the #BlackLivesMatter movement has become a powerful and uncompromising campaign demanding redress for the brutal and unjustified treatment of black bodies by law enforcement in the United States. The movement is only a few years old, but as Christopher J. Lebron argues in this book, the sentiment behind it is not; the plea and demand that "Black Lives Matter" comes out of a much older and richer tradition arguing for the equal dignity - and not just equal rights - of black people. The Making of Black Lives Matter presents a condensed and accessible intellectual history that traces the genesis of the ideas that have built into the #BlackLivesMatter movement. Drawing on the work of revolutionary black public intellectuals, including Frederick Douglass, Ida B. Wells, Langston Hughes, Zora Neal Hurston, Anna Julia Cooper, Audre Lorde, James Baldwin, and Martin Luther King Jr., Lebron clarifies what it means to assert that "Black Lives Matter" when faced with contemporary instances of anti-black law enforcement. He also illuminates the crucial difference between the problem signaled by the social media hashtag and how we think that we ought to address the problem. As Lebron states, police body cameras, or even the exhortation for civil rights mean nothing in the absence of equality and dignity. To upset dominant practices of abuse, oppression and disregard, we must reach instead for radical sensibility. Radical sensibility requires that we become cognizant of the history of black thought and activism in order to make sense of the emotions, demands, and argument of present-day activists and public thinkers. Only in this way can we truly embrace and pursue the idea of racial progress in America.

Book Information

Hardcover: 216 pages

Publisher: Oxford University Press; 1 edition (June 1, 2017)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0190601345

ISBN-13: 978-0190601348

Product Dimensions: 8.4 x 0.8 x 5.7 inches

Shipping Weight: 12 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 5.0 out of 5 stars 1 customer review

Best Sellers Rank: #59,520 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #39 in Books > Textbooks > Social Sciences > Political Science > Civil Rights #53 in Books > Politics & Social Sciences > Politics & Government > Elections & Political Process > Political Advocacy #58 in Books > Law >

Customer Reviews

"Injecting historical and philosophical perspective into the country's contemporary racial quagmire, Lebron offers readers a glimpse of the intellectual roots of African American's continual fight for respect and equality. His call to join a historically momentous generational force demanding change also offers readers direction on how to become part of a solution." -Library Journal "If you want to understand the urgency of #BlackLivesMatter you need Christopher J. Lebron's excellent *The Making of Black Lives Matter: A Brief History of an Idea*, a nimble, passionate, and far-ranging intellectual history. Through testimony in art and in letters, Lebron presents radical political philosophy for our times." -Nell Irvin Painter, author of *The History of White People* "The Making of Black Lives Matter offers a powerful, timely, and necessary intellectual meditation on the roots of the most important social movement of the 21st century. Christopher Lebron's cri de coeur challenges activists, institutions, and Americans of all backgrounds to reimagine the contours and possibilities of racial justice from antebellum slavery to the streets of Ferguson, Missouri." -Peniel E. Joseph, author of *Stokely: A Life*

Christopher J. Lebron is Assistant Professor of African American Studies and Philosophy at Yale University. He is the author of *The Color of Our Shame: Race and Justice in Our Time*, which won the APSA Foundations of Political Theory Best First Book Award.

An excellent and timely work on the foundations of the Black Lives Matter movement grounded in the earlier thoughts of some of America's finest Black thinkers. There is an unfortunate, and I'm sure unintentional, editorial mistake on page 3 of the first chapter where Andrew Jackson is referred to as the U.S. president during reconstruction instead of Andrew Johnson. Hopefully it will be corrected in subsequent printings.

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