

On Black History Month

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The month of February has been set aside to celebrate the struggles and achievements of African-Americans in the form of Black History Month. While I, as an African-American, take pride in this month, there are some issues that need to be brought up such as the problem many have with their even being a Black History Month.

There are those who argue that Black History Month should be abolished on the grounds that black history is a part of American history. I will not tread around the fact that many such people happen to be white. However, it may also be due to the fact that many whites dislike being lumped into a category of evil, being lumped with racists, slaveowners, and segregationists. However, what such people do not understand is that BHM is not an attempt to demonized whites, but rather to acknowledge and understand the experience of a marginalized group of people whose oppression continues to this day.

I acknowledge that black history is a part of American history. Yet at the exact same time, I think that if we are going to abolish Black History Month, then we need to readily incorporate the accomplishments of black America into the overall historical narrative. The knowledge of black history also needs to be expanded to other events, figures, and movements rather than just learning the same basic things about slavery, the Civil Rights Movement, and Martin Luther King, Jr. (Not that those things are bad.) We [need to remember](#) that Black History Month is:

not a subgenre of history. Nor does it stand apart from other histories. It makes no more or less sense than American history, Jewish history or Tudor history. Nor is it any more or less diverse - black historians don't agree on everything just because they're black. Partial, interconnected, necessary, it is simply the world's history told either about or through the prism of a particular group of people.

We need to realize that the teaching of what occurred to *all* oppressed peoples (such as Native Americans, blacks, and Jews) is important to learn about and those also need to be much more incorporated into the history books. It could make students more open to different narratives of history and increase their analytical and thinking skills as they would be more able to examine situations in history and the present day from other people's perspectives.

To go back to matter of expanding history, a knowledge and awareness of radical and revolutionary movements and figures should be *greatly* increased in schools. I am tired of the demonization of such groups as the Black Panthers and revolutionary intellectuals such

as Malcolm X. These people are regularly ignored. If they are discussed, the focus is only on a certain part of their life, making it seem as they are evil racists, while ignoring the overall life of these groups and individuals.

We need to encourage the learning of radical groups in general such as the Black Panthers, the American Indian Movement, and the Feminist Revolution as without these we do not have a fuller understanding of our nation and what occurred, but rather more patriotic indoctrination that doesn't teach people how to critically look at history and our society but rather to blindly support their country.

Overall, we need a fuller view of history that acknowledges the faults and mistakes of other because if we have a history that encourages us to, as WEB DuBois [describes it](#), "not remember that Daniel Webster got drunk but only that he was a splendid constitutional lawyer" and "forget that George Washington was a slave owner ... and simply remember the things we regard as creditable and inspiring," we will end up lying to ourselves about our history and *that* will make American history meaningless.

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