

Vilma Nieminen 18v  
Not enrolled in an IB high school  
Hasn't lived in an English-speaking country  
Kauhavan lukio  
instructor: Päivi Pieti-Granath  
[paivi.granath@hotmail.com](mailto:paivi.granath@hotmail.com)

## 1. Freedom of expression

The Black Lives Matter movement was started a few years ago, when the killing of unarmed black men started to surface in the mainstream media. This racial divide had been brewing under the surface for some time. Huge protest began in Charleston. Since then, names such as Tamir Rice, Ahmaud Arbury, Breonna Taylor and George Floyd have been engraved in the minds of Americans.

I'd compare the Black Lives Matter movement to the 1960's Civil Rights movement lead by none other than Martin Luther King Junior. Back then, black people were trying to break themselves out of the shackles of the Jim Crow laws, which created nation-wide racial segregation. What many American people don't get nowadays, is the deep generational pain stemming from slavery and Jim Crow laws.

The Black Lives Matter movement is being characterized as a terrorist organisation. This broad generalization causes a deeper divide in the country ruled by the two-party system. Calling looters and rioters "hooligans" and "thugs" isn't helping the problem either. The violence occurring in these protests is a sign of true hurt experienced by black people in America. And we should look below the surface and try to understand what is the catalyst for this kind of behavior.

Of course, the looting and rioting are some of the biggest challenges of this movement, since in a capitalist society where one has to fend for himself, property is valued over human lives. As the fear of communism is so deeply rooted in American society, this kind of movement shouting for equal rights is seen as marxist and socialist. People don't seem to understand what the movement is about – or they don't want to acknowledge the downfalls of the great "American dream". Therefore, people are trying to explain the movement to people with anecdotes, such as the popular "house on fire" -anecdote.

As for the accomplishments of the movement, it already has some. The Breonna Law was put in place. This law stems from the no-knock warrant that eventually killed Breonna Taylor. The Breonna Law bans the usage of no-knock warrants. Of course, one of the biggest things BLM has accomplished is the public discourse on racism and the racial disparities in police training, incarceration rates and the judicial system. Changes in these systems may be accomplished by this movement.

I feel that inequality is going to be inevitable in America until there is proper representation in higher branches of government. Of course, there are strides being made with people like Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez and Ilhan Omar in office, but there are still long ways to go. Martin Luther King had a dream and that dream is still prevalent in black Americans today.