

The Economist's Very Balanced Article on Black Lives Matter

According to an editorial in *The Economist*, the Black Lives Matter campaign has some legitimate complaints, but hints that their excessive rhetoric may work against resolutions.

The article – [“What the Black Lives Matter campaign gets wrong”](#) – presents one of the more balanced (I’ll let you judge whether “balanced” means “correct”) views of the movement I have yet seen.

Based on visibility and face-time with candidates, the article grants that “the Black Lives Matters campaign is plainly getting results.” But at the same time, it cautions that “looking at the Black Lives Matter campaign in detail raises some worrying queries.”

One of these “worrying queries” is in regard to BLM’s claim that “every 28 hours a black man, woman, or child is murdered by police or vigilante law enforcement.” As the Economist writes,

“That is a deeply questionable claim. According to the Washington Post, [which is running a tally](#), 155 black people have been killed by police so far this year—out of 607 total. That is not quite one every 28 hours—but no matter. What is important, however, is that less than a tenth of this total was unarmed, 24 of whom were black. So to state that every black person killed by a police officer in a country as violent as America is “murdered” is inaccurate. Sure, 155 people killed by police is too many, and 607 is a problem, but of those who were black 85% were armed.”

Another of BLM’s demands is for scaling back spending on law enforcement and reinvesting it in black communities. While the

Economist grants that there are problems to be hashed out with the culture of local police departments, it also writes,

“But it bears mentioning that many of these same poor, black people desperately need the police, too. It should not be considered a right-wing talking point to note that far more black people are killed by other black people than by police officers. Baltimore alone has had [over 200 murders so far](#) this year—almost all of young black men. What black people in cities such as Baltimore and St Louis need isn’t less policing. It is [better, less institutionally-racist, less thuggish policing](#) that actually solves crimes. If so many murders didn’t [go unsolved](#), then perhaps there would be fewer of them.”

And then the mature conclusion:

“Unfortunately, America’s criminal-justice problems are deep and systemic, and there is indeed troubling evidence of racism. But it is inaccurate to present these problems as the result of an organised conspiracy by all white people to hold down blacks. That is something that Barack Obama, [whose speeches](#) on race this year have been thoughtful and brilliantly articulated, appears to understand. Those who wish to succeed him ought to bear this in mind.”

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