

# Why “Black Lives Matter” Should Include Canadians

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The terms “black” and “white” in reference to human skin colours are used in rather general and imprecise ways. There are many skin shades which range between black and white and often skin colour is determined by the cultures and customs in the particular geographic area of one's residence. For example, in Spain a person who is slightly dark white may be thought of as white. But if the same person moved to New York that person may be regarded as black or at least as a person of colour. The skin colour “white” is not descriptive of most flesh coloured people of Canada. To be really pure white would give us a very sickly ghost-like appearance.

In democratic societies, people of all different skin shades ideally should be regarded as equals. We are all part of the total family of human beings. In North America, particularly in the United States and to a lesser degree in Canada, including Ontario and Quebec, slavery is a shameful but not widely known part of our history. (For further information on slavery in Canada read *Canada's Forgotten Slaves: Two Centuries of Bondage* by Marcel Trudel, translated to English by George Tombs, 2013, Vehicule Press, Montreal). All citizens including white supremacists owe it to black citizens to help blacks have the same opportunities as whites in education, health care, job opportunities and equality in matters of policing and in decisions in law courts. Whites may owe blacks more than these rights but the items listed above are at least a good beginning.

Worldwide, most people are not white skinned. Whites make up approximately 25 to 30 percent of the total population of over 7 billion people. Asians and other non-white people including blacks make up the remaining approximately 70%. Non-white skinned people far outnumber whites. There is no numerical reason for white supremacists to regard themselves as the norm in the worldwide picture of humanity.

In spite of the great disadvantages of slavery, many blacks have excelled in sports, music and other attributes of social cohesiveness. Perhaps slavery is connected with physical toughness and endurance, although many slaves died because of cruel physical mistreatment. Those who were survivors were among slaves whose natural physical fitness served them well in spite of cruel and inhumane treatment.

In Canada blacks make up only a small per cent of our total population. There should not be any reason to fear that blacks would overturn our governments, our laws. our democratic voting systems, our legal systems or our educational and health care facilities. If we are proud of our democratic ways of government, we ought to help non-whites succeed within Canada. In the Canadian census of 2016 approximately 3.5% of Canadians were listed as black.

In Canada approximately three per cent of our total population are aboriginal or First Nations citizens. They are also regarded as non-white. Although they have not been treated as slaves, nonetheless our Canadian government has been involved for more than one hundred fifty years in considering how aboriginals have been mistreated and are presently seeking remedies. Discussions are often centred on land claims, hunting and fishing rights and religious abuses and educational abuses. In matters of education, discussions of past abuses include children being taken from their parents to attend schools where English and French were the normal languages of instruction and historical perspectives were taught from European points of view. Inclusion of native history or native traditions were the exception and not the rule. In education aboriginal languages were not used and children speaking their birth languages were often subjected to punishments.