

# The Rise of the “African-American Police State”

By [Garikai Chengu](#)

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*Black people in America live in a police-state-within-a-state. The African American police state exercises its authority over the Black minority through an oppressive array of modern day lynchings by the police, increasing for-profit mass incarceration and the government sanctioned surveillance and assassination of Black leaders. The African American police state is unquestionably a modern day crime against humanity.*

The first modern police forces in America were Slave Patrols and Night Watches, which were both designed to control the behaviors of African Americans.

Historian Victor Kappeler notes that in 1704, the colony of Carolina developed the nation's first Slave Patrol. Historical literature is clear that prior to the Civil War a legally sanctioned police force existed for the sole purpose of oppressing the slave population and protecting the property and interests of white slave owners. The glaring similarities between the eighteenth century Slave Patrols and modern American police brutality in the Black community are too salient to dismiss or ignore.

America was founded as a slave holding republic and slaves did not take too kindly to being enslaved and they often rebelled, becoming enemy's of the state. Slave Patrols were created in order to interrogate and persecute Blacks, who were out and about, without any due process or formal investigation. To this day, police do not serve and protect the Black community, they treat Blacks as inherently criminal and sub-human.

Ever since the first police forces were established in America, lynchings have been the linchpin of the African American police state.

The majority of Americans believe that lynchings are an outdated form of racial terrorism, which blighted American society up until the end of the era of Jim Crow laws; however, America's proclivity towards the unbridled slaughter of African Americans has only worsened over time. The Guardian newspaper recently noted that historians believe that during the late nineteenth and early twentieth century on average two African-Americans were lynched every week.

Compare this with incomplete data compiled by the FBI that shows that a Black person is killed by a white police officer more than twice a week, and it's clear that police brutality in Black communities is getting worse, not better.

Racial terrorism gave birth to America. It should come as no surprise that the state's law enforcement agents routinely engage in the terrorism of modern day lynchings.

Traditional lynchings were not preceded by judge, jury or trial and were often for the most trivial of reasons such as talking to a white woman, failing to remove a hat or making a sarcastic grin. Modern day lynchings are also not preceded by due process. Numerous Black

children like Tamir Rice have been slaughtered by police for trivialities like playing with a toy gun in public.

Lynching does not necessarily mean hanging. It often included humiliation, torture, burning, dismemberment and castration. A lynching was a quintessential American public ritual that often took place in front of large crowds that sometimes numbered in the thousands. Historian Mark Gado notes that, “onlookers sometimes fired rifles and handguns hundreds of times into the corpse while people cheered and children played during the festivities”.

Sensational American journalism, spared the public no detail no matter how horrible, and in 1899 the Springfield Weekly described a lynching by chronicling how,

“the Negro was deprived of his ears, fingers and genital parts of his body. He pleaded pitifully for his life while the mutilation was going on...before the body was cool, it was cut to pieces, the bones crushed into small bits...the Negro’s heart was cut into several pieces, as was also his liver...small pieces of bones went for 25 cents...”.

Such graphic accounts were the norm in the South, and photos, were regularly taken of the lynched bodies on display and made into postcards that were sent all over the country.

Nowadays, the broader American public participates in modern day lynchings by sharing videos that go viral of police officers slaying Black men, women and children. By opting not to censor the graphic content of police killing Blacks, today’s videos in the media serve the same purpose as the detailed written accounts of yesteryear by adding to the psychological suffering of the African American. Such viral graphic accounts also desensitize the white community to such an extent that empowers white policemen to do more.

A hallmark of twentieth century fascist police states, such as Italy under Mussolini or Franco’s Spain, is the lack of police accountability for their crimes. In spite of extremely egregious circumstances surrounding all lynchings and many police killings, police are rarely held liable.

The United Nations Human Rights Committee recently issued a report on human rights abuses in the United States which roundly condemned the epidemic of police brutality. It stated: “The Committee is concerned about the still high number of fatal shootings by police which has a disparate impact on African Americans”.

In modern America, the African American police state assassinates the Black victim twice. Once by way of lynching and again to assassinate the victim’s character so as to justify the public execution. All too often a Black victim’s school record, employment status and social media presence are dragged by the media into the court of public opinion, as if any of it has any bearing on whether an agent of the state has the right to lynch a Black U.S. citizen.

Arbitrary arrest and mass incarceration have been quintessential elements of police states from East Germany to Augusto Pinochet’s Chile.

The United States right now incarcerates more African-Americans as a percentage than South Africa did at the height of Apartheid.

A Senate hearing on the Federal Bureau of Prisons reported that the American prison population hovered around 25,000 throughout the 1900s, until the 1980's when America suddenly experienced a massive increase in the inmate population to over a quarter million. The cause was Ronald Reagan's War on Drugs which intentionally, and disproportionately targeted Blacks. The War on Drugs is now the African America police state's main propaganda justification for police brutality and judicial discrimination against Blacks.

One out of three African American males will be arrested and go through the American injustice system at some point in their lives, primarily for nonviolent drug charges, despite studies revealing that white youth use drugs at higher rates than their Black counterparts.

For decades, the African-American crime rate has been falling but Black imprisonment rates have consistently soared. Aside from the War on Drugs, the rise in prison population may have another less publicized cause: gradual privatization of the prison industry, with its profits-over-justice motives. If the beds aren't filled, states are required to pay the prison companies for the empty space, which means taxpayers are largely left to deal with the bill that might come from lower crime and imprisonment rates.

Private prisons were designed by the rich and for the rich. The for-profit prison system depends on imprisoning Blacks for its survival. Much in the same way the United States was designed.

After all, more Black men are in prison or jail, on probation or parole than were enslaved in 1850 before the Civil War began.

The history of Nazi Germany's Gestapo has many parallels to what U.S. law enforcement in the Black community has become.

The infamous "stop-and-frisk" policies that allow the New York Police Department to stop you based on suspicion are Nazi-like. Latinos and Blacks make up 84 percent of all those stopped, although they make up respectively 29 and 23 percent of New York City's population. Furthermore, statistics show that NYPD officers are far more likely to use physical force against Blacks and Latinos during stops.

The Gestapo operated without any judicial review by state imposed law, putting them above the law.

The FBI's counterintelligence programs (COINTELPRO) of the 1950's, 60s, and 70s formed one of the most infamous domestic initiatives in U.S. history, targeting Black organizations and individuals whom the FBI saw as threatening the racist, capitalist status quo.

COINTELPRO was a series of covert, and often illegal, government projects aimed at surveying, infiltrating, discrediting, and brutalizing Black communities.

After COINTELPRO director William C. Sullivan concluded in a 1963 memo that Martin Luther King, Jr. was "the most dangerous Negro in the future of this nation," he wrote: "it may be unrealistic to limit [our actions against King] to legalistic proofs that would stand up in court or before Congressional Committees."

The FBI waged an intense war against Martin Luther King Jr. The African American police state's law enforcement agents bugged his hotel rooms, tried to provoke IRS investigations

against him, and harassed magazines that published articles about him. In 1999, a civil trial concluded that United States law enforcement agents were responsible for Martin Luther King Jr's assassination.

The perpetuation of the African American police state is a modern day crime against humanity. The ongoing protests and uprisings in Black communities are a direct and just response to centuries of worsening incarceration, modern day lynchings and systematic second class citizenship. Far from being a "post-racial" nation, American race relations are at a new low. Simmering discontent in Black communities will continue to rise towards a dangerous boiling point unless and until the African American police state is exposed and completely dismantled.

*Garikai Chengu is a scholar at Harvard University. Contact him on [garikai.chengu@gmail.com](mailto:garikai.chengu@gmail.com)*

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