

The 4th of July 2021

The 4th of July Independence Day, "**Really;**" ***Independence Day for whom?*** Frederick Douglass, in his July 5, 1852 speech title, THE MEANING OF THE FOURTH OF JULY FOR THE NEGRO, Douglass states: "This, for the purpose of this celebration, is the 4th of July. It is the birthday of **your** National Independence and of **your** political freedom. It carries **your** mind back to the day, into the Act of **your** great deliverance. This celebration also marks the beginning of another year of **your** national life; and reminds **you** that the Republic of America is now 76 years old. I am glad, fellow-citizens, that **your** nation is so young. You are, even now, only in the beginning of **your** national career, still lingering in the period of childhood. ***Douglass uses "your" seven times at the start of his speech; it is clear he wants the audience to know that Independence Day is their's and their's to celebrate! He makes this very clear later on in his speech.***

"I repeat, I am glad this is so. There is hope in the thought, and hope is much needed; under the dark clouds which lower above the horizon."

How could these words be written in 1852, be so relevant in 2021; for Black, Brown, LGBTQ, API, Religious communities, "hope is still needed;" we are still under dark clouds," which continue to "lower above the horizon."

Inequalities: Housing, Wealth, Jobs, Board Representation, Education, Financial, Property ownership; "all dark clouds Lowery above the horizon" throughout Brown and Black communities.

1776 Declaration of Independence – ***Not inclusive of all Humans!***

1863 Emancipation Proclamation – ***Not inclusive of all Humans- did not apply to the Union States!***

1865 13th Amendment abolished slavery – ***Not totally!***

1865 June 19 through General Order #3 "all slaves are now free." – ***Juneteenth is African Americans Independence realized through celebration! All Humans are free!***

1941 FDR'S Four Freedoms "four freedoms" Speech and Expression, Worship, Want, Fear – ***Not inclusive of all Humans!***

1948 Eleanor Roosevelt introduces the Universal Declaration Of Human Rights: Article 1. All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights. They are endowed with reason and conscience and should act towards one another in a spirit of brotherhood. Article 2. Everyone is entitled to all the rights and freedoms set forth in this Declaration, without distinction of any kind, such as race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status. ***Today, many in our society do not accept that Articles 1 & 2 apply to all Humans – because, sad to say, many still don't see African Americans as Humans – they still see them as less than Human! Dougless addresses this in his 1852 speech!***

1964 Civil Rights Act: prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color, religion, sex or national origin. Provisions of this civil rights act forbade discrimination on the basis of sex, as well as, race in

hiring, promoting, and firing. The Act prohibited discrimination in public accommodations and federally funded programs. ***Laws made, not enforced!***

1965 Voting Rights Act: Designed to enforce the voting rights guaranteed by the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Amendments to the United States Constitution, the Act sought to secure the right to vote for racial minorities throughout the country, especially in the South. ***This "Right" is in jeopardy in several states which are passing laws to oppress the Black and other marginalized groups in this country, especially in the Southern States.***

Douglass: "What, to the American slave, is your 4th of July? I answer: a day that reveals to him, more than all other days in the year, the gross injustice and cruelty to which he is the constant victim.

These words spoken by Douglass in 1852 are so relevant in 2021. Blacks in America today are still the slave; slaves to their skin color, which defines their threat; who cannot enjoy the freedom of jogging; the privilege of sleeping in their beds, the liberty of visiting their girlfriend; the right to protest. Douglass spoke of anti-slavery; we talk of anti-racism, anti-semitism, anti-homophobia, Islamic phobia!

Douglass: "There is not a nation on the earth guilty of practices, more shocking and bloody, than are the people of these United States, at this very hour. Go where you may, search where you will, come rolling through all the monarchies and despotisms of the old world, search out every abuse, and when you have found the last, weigh your facts by the side of the everyday practices of this nation, and you will say with me, that, for revolting barbarity

and shameless hypocrisy, America reigns without a rival."

I say to all celebrate July 4 by going to the link provided by the Eagle, and read his entire speech, then weigh your facts by the side of then and now! Then ask yourself what can I do other than talk – what action must I take to make life better for all Humans!

Happy Juneteenth!

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