

What to Black People is the 4th of July

Written by Brother Salim Adofo ID2773

Friday, 23 June 2006 10:24 -

What to Black People is the 4th of July? By Brother Salim Adofo

On July 5, 1852, in a meeting sponsored by the anti-lynching society, Frederick Douglass gave the speech "What to the slave is the 4th of July?" In his speech, he illustrated the terrible conditions that Black people face living in America. He showed the contradiction of white America celebrating freedom, but at the same time denying it to Black people.

During the time of Frederick Douglass, white America was enjoying the "good life," and Black people were working from can't see to can't see in order to make white people rich. Black people were victims of lynching, bad health care and lack of education.

White supremacist gangs would terrorize Black people and take their land. Black people were not allowed to engage in politics or own businesses, which would have helped Blacks gain control of their communities and become self sufficient. Also, according to the Supreme Court of the United States, in what became known as the Dred Scott Decision, Black people did not have any rights that a white person was bound to respect.

Now, over 150 years later, we must ask the question, "What to Black People is the 4th of July?" Do Black people have a reason to celebrate the freedom and independence of America?

In 2006, Blacks may no longer face "Jim Crow"; however, Blacks are confronted with "James Crow II." Overt acts of white supremacy have been replaced, in some cases, with INSTITUTIONAL WHITE SUPREMACY.

For example, Black people are disproportionately denied home loans which are essential to building wealth. Gentrification is a tool that is used to lower the property value in Black neighborhoods. The land is then purchased by white-owned corporations who raise the cost so that Blacks can no longer buy property or live in the area, because the price and or the taxes are too high.

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In the area of politics, 150 years ago Black people were not allowed to vote. Today Blacks are allowed to vote; however, based on the last presidential election, the votes of Black women and men are not even counted. Many Black communities have been gerrymandered to reduce the voting power of the Black community.

In the arena of law enforcement, Blacks still have no rights that white people are bound to respect. An example of this can be seen in the case of Amadou Diallo. An unarmed, innocent Black man, shot at 41 times by four white cops who were found not guilty of any crime.

Law enforcement officials in the state of New Jersey have admitted to racial profiling, which is a violation of one's civil and human rights. Police officers are caught on video beating Black men, in some cases to death, with sticks, flashlights and plungers.

Black people in America have no reason to celebrate the 4th of July. Black people are less than 20 percent of the U.S. population but over 40 percent of the prison population.

Black people still have yet to receive full and complete reparations for slavery and the vestiges of it. Blacks cannot even go into restaurants such as Denny's and Cracker Barrel and expect to get service.

Blacks are still people suffering political oppression, economic exploitation and social degradation because of the white supremacist policies of the United States government and its economic institutions. The only difference between then and now is Black people knew then who their enemy was.

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