

FREEDOM IS A CONSTANT STRUGGLE
JULY 4, 1992 (for many voices)



What is July the 4th to me
Hoopla and hypocrisy
An independent state declared
But what about nations already there?
The Iroquois confederation
The Seminole, Lakota nations
Choctaw, Diné, Possawatomi
Pomo, Paiute, Cherokee
As even today in New York harbor
They salute Columbus, that old robber,
Smallpoxed blankets and cavalry
What is July the fourth to me?

INSERT ~~Buffie~~ Sainte Marie == ~~My Country Tis of~~
~~Thy People You're Dying~~ *Now Buffalo's Gone*

In his magnificent book that is MUST reading for everyone who relates to the river of resistance that flows through this country's past, Howard Zinn, beginning his People's History of the United States, describes the genocide against the Arawak or Taino people in the Caribbean, then continues:

To emphasize the heroism of Columbus and his successors as navigators and discoverers, and to de-emphasize their genocide, is...an ideological choice. The easy acceptance of atrocities as a deplorable but necessary price to pay for progress (Hiroshima and Vietnam, to save Western civilization) is still with us. One reason these atrocities are still with us is that we have learned to bury them in a mass of other facts, as radioactive wastes are buried in containers in the earth. The treatment of "heroes" (Columbus) and their victims (the Arawaks)--the quiet acceptance of conquest and murder in the name of progress--is only one aspect of a certain approach to history, in which the past is told from the point of view of governments, conquerors, diplomats, leaders. It is as if they, like Columbus, deserve universal acceptance, as if they--the Founding Fathers, Jackson, Lincoln, Wilson, Roosevelt, Kennedy, the leading members of Congress, the famous Justices of the Supreme Court--represent the nation as a whole. The pretense is there really is such a thing as "the United States," subject to occasional conflicts and quarrels, but fundamentally a community of people with common interests...My viewpoint, in telling the history of the United States, is different...the history of any country conceals fierce conflicts of interest (sometimes exploding, most often repressed) between conquerors and conquered, masters and slaves, capitalists and workers, dominators and dominated in race and sex. And in such a world of conflict, a world of victims and executioners, it is the job of thinking people, as Albert Camus suggested, not to be on the side of the executioners. ~~Thus, in that inevitable taking of sides which comes from selection and emphasis in history,~~ I prefer to try to tell the story of the discovery of America from the viewpoint of the Arawaks, of the Constitution from the standpoint of the slaves, of Andrew Jackson as seen by the Cherokees, of the Civil War as seen by the New York Irish, of the rise of industrialism as seen by the young women in the Lowell textile mills, of the Spanish American war as seen by the Cubans, the conquest of the Philippines as seen by Black soldiers on Luzon, the Gilded Age as seen by southern farmers, the First World War as seen by socialists, the Second World War as seen by pacifists, the New Deal as seen by Blacks in Harlem, the postwar American empire as seen by peasants in Latin America...and so on...I will try not to overlook cruelties that victims inflict on one another as they are jammed together in the boxcars of the system. I don't want to romanticize them. But I do remember a statement I once read: "The cry of the poor is not always just, but if you don't listen to it, you will never know what Justice is."

I don't want to invent victories for people's movements. But to think that history-writing must aim simply to recapitulate the failures that dominate the past is to make historians collaborators in an endless cycle of defeat. If history is to be creative, to anticipate a possible future without denying the past, it should, I believe emphasize new possibilities by disclosing those hidden episodes of the past, when, even if in brief flashes, people showed their ability to resist, to join together, occasionally to win. I am supposing, or perhaps only hoping, that our future may be found in the past's fugitive moments of compassion rather than its solid centuries of warfare....that from Howard Zinn's book A Peoples History of the United States, on this July 4th special of Freedom Is A Constant Struggle....

What is July the 4th to me
Hoopla and Hypocrisy
If we could travel back in time
When Declaration first was signed
What would we say to them, just men, *all that*
About ~~what~~ they did NOT do then?

Barbara reads excerpt from time travel story/essay.

What is July the 4th to me
Hoopla and Hypocrisy
The words belied Equality
Amidst the scourge of Slavery
Yet spirituals contained a code
Directions on the Freedom Road
Harriet Tubman, Sojourner Truth
Teach their lives to every youth
Slaves rebelled from the very first day
Constructed the Underground Railway
Resistance to oppression is the key
To the best in our his- and her-story

INSERT TAPE/Ossie Davis:Frederick Douglass

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Frederick Douglass who also said:

Let me give you a word on the philosophy of reforms. The whole history of the progress of human liberty shows that all concessions yet made to her august claims have been born of struggle...If there is no struggle, there is no progress. Those who profess to favor freedom and yet deprecate agitation, are those who want crops without plowing up the ground. They want rain without thunder and lightning. They want the ocean without the awful roar of its many waters. The struggle may be a moral one; or it may be a physical one; or it may be both moral and physical, but it must be a struggle. Power concedes nothing without a demand. It never did and it never will.

start jazz music_____ fade it

low and under record:

AND THE WOMEN ROSE UP--

Sojourner Truth Side 2 Band 3 2:40

(bring jazz up afterward.....)

What is July the 4th to me
Women denied equality
Yet from Susan B. to Emma G.
Rising always to be free
All the unsung valiant ones
Whose stirring stories yet to come
From suffragettes to sisterhood
A force to fight for greater good
Meanwhile a woman's right to choose
Is beaten, battered, torn, and bruised,
By a Court some call Supreme
Injustice rising to a Scream
Yet rising forth for self-determination
The spark of women's liberation:

Insert Song Rosa Parks/Aaron Neville **CD**

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What is July the 4th to me
Hoopla and hypocrisy
The rich landholders then held sway
In many ways still do today
Unemployment on the rise
As is the volume of their lies
1 out of 10 in California alone
More and more without a home
They blithely say "recovery"
Midst rising tide of misery
Race, sex, and class -- the lines are drawn
And yet resistance still lives on
Some think it faded long ago
But all the past just goes to show
That tyranny at last is spurned
With working hands the wheels are turned
On this 4th of July I will
Remember people like Joe Hill:

Insert Record Paul Robeson Joe Hill

What is July the 4th to me
A time to learn from used to be
Recall repression's raging whip
'Gainst liberty and comradeship
From Reconstruction's harsh betrayal
Leaders murdered, beatings, jail
As today, Duke, Helms and Quayle,
Wag their bigotry like tails

McCarthyism's icy blast
Lessons learned from bitter past
Back back go back to times back then
Resist- so they won't come again.

Nina: the Lolita Lebron 1950s poem
7: 30

Music: *In the Spirit of HUAC Blues*

What is July the 4th to me
The people's held down need to be
Fulfilled by full equality
The search for real community
Diversity and harmony
A multiculture symphony
People in their complexity.
What is July the 4th to me
The things they didn't teach at all
The people who just would not fall
Here's just a few, make your own list
Of other learnings we may miss:

Fast Drum Music...maybe Planet Drum way

underneath, but setting a beat.... (all voices back and forth)

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The Iroquis contribution to the confederation of the colonies and the US Constitution

The slaveholdings and slave children of many of the Founding "Fathers"

Shay's Rebellion of farmers in Massachusetts, an attempt to further democratize the newly independent USA, later the Kansas Corn Rebellion, the Farmer Labor movement...

Denmark Vesey, Nat Turner, the men and women who led the early slave rebellions that were the real prelude to emancipation

Harriet Tubman's generalship in the Civil War, her and Frederick Douglass's alliance with John Brown, and the ties of the Abolitionists and the early women's movement

The bringing of Irish and Chinese labor to build the railroads...the vicious exclusionary racism of early unions against Chinese in California



Labor's Untold Story: from general strikes, the Haymarket struggle for the 8 hour day, the women textile and garment workers, Centralia Washington commune, the Industrial Workers of the World, IWW, organizing drives of the CIO...Mother Jones and Gurley Flynn...the role of the Communist Party and others in fighting racism in the South in the 30s and 40s. Labor's untold story.

The Bonus Army march of the unemployed to Washington DC at the depths of the depression.

The recurrent surges of strong anti-imperialism, from Mark Twain and many others opposition to the Spanish American war and its conquests, to US labor's solidarity with Mexico's Pancho Villa, the movement in the 1920s against the US intervention in Nicaragua, the rarely-noted courageous resistance against the Korean war, then the millions who marched and organized against the war in Vietnam and all of Indochina... solidarity with Central America and Palestine... and all those who continue to resist the iron fist of the New World DisOrder.

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The imprisonment of Japanese Americans in concentration camps and confiscation of their property during World War II...the atomic bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, its continuing genocidal toll, and the current rise of anti-Asian prejudice...

Paul Robeson, WEB DuBois, Langston Hughes, Margaret Walker, the Harlem Renaissance...The foot soldiers of the civil rights and Black liberation movements, from the Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee and the Montgomery Bus boycott, to Medgar Evers, the Deacons for Defense and Justice, Robert Williams, the Black Panther Party, all the rebellions, James Baldwin, Lorraine Hansberry, and the prophetic voice of Malcolm X, now echoing so powerfully over and over again.

The rise of new movements, consciousness and cultural vision from Latin American and Asian American communities.

The united farmworkers movement...

The Cuban Revolution...the numerous U.S. invasions of Latin America...in Nicaragua past and present, in Panama and Grenada, the bloody Chilean coup, the overthrow of Arbenz in Guatemala, mistreatment of immigrant workers, refusal to grant asylum to Haitian and other refugees from tyrannies...

Give us your tired, your poor, your huddled masses, yearning to breathe free
What is July the 4th to me?

So many murdered and maimed, named and unnamed...Emmet Till, Joe Hill, Sacco and Vanzetti, Ethel and Julius Rosenberg, Martin and Malcolm, Fred Hampton, Viola Liuzzo, Cheney, Schwerner, and Goodman, the lynchings, the backstreet abortions, the assassinations and covert conspiracies..

The prison rebellions, from Attica to San Quention...the political prisoners of today, Geronimo Pratt...Leonard Peletier...movements against capital punishment.

The Stonewall Rebellion and the powerful rise of gay and lesbian liberation, the battle against AIDS, new attitudes toward sexuality and family and the right wing vicious reaction.

The growing worldwide movement and awareness of the environmental emergency and the need to live in harmony with Mother Earth if we and all living things are to live at all.

Coming full circle, from the original beginnings of these continents, the resurgence of Native American wisdom, vision, and resistance from Alcatraz to Wounded Knee, struggles for treaty rights and sovereignty, and to speak the truth about the Quincentennial.

What is July the 4th to me
A time to share a prophecy
A time, as sixties songs did tell
To teach our children, teach them well
As Howard Zinn said, in closing his People's
History of the United States:

"People might create a new, diversified, nonviolent culture, in which all forms of personal and group expression would be possible. People...could then cherish their differences as positive attributes, not as reasons for domination. New values of cooperation and freedom might then show up in the relations of people, the upbringing of children.

To do all that, in the complex conditions of control in the United States, would require combining the energy of all previous movements in American history--of labor insurgents, Black rebels, Native Americans, women, young people--along with the new energy of an angry middle class. People would need to begin to transform their immediate environments--the workplace, the family, the school, the community--in a series of struggles against absentee authority, to give control of these places to the people who live and work there.

These struggles would involve all the tactics used at various times in the past by people's movements: demonstrations, marches, civil disobedience, strikes and boycotts and general strikes, direct action to redistribute wealth, to reconstruct institutions, to revamp relationships; creating -- in music, literature, drama, all the arts, and all the areas of work and play in everyday life, a new culture of sharing, of respect, a new joy in the collaboration of people to help themselves and one another."

MUSIC: ~~Men~~ Will We Be Paid / *Staple Songs record*

You have been listening
To Freedom Is A Constant Struggle
Tonight featuring a special
Fourth of July program
Presented by Lincoln Bergman, Barbara
Lubinski ~~Barbara Lubinski~~ and Nina Serrano,
with Kent Yeglin as engineer....tune in next week
at 6:30 for another edition of Freedom Is A
Constant Struggle...

Heber, Kii lu,

[scribble]

But don't leave yet
We're not quite done
We ~~leave you with~~ a Ballad song
Sung by Paul Robeson
~~Written by Earl Robinson~~

now present

*Created by John
Latham +
the late great
Earl Robinson*

To ~~and~~ leave you with
This one last thought
Before the final bell has rung--
The greatest songs are still unsung:

Ballad for Americans: Record