



**MYTHOLOGICAL AMERICA'S 250 YEARS OF HYPOCRISY AND HYPE:
OUR 407 YEARS OF RIGHTEOUS AND
REALITY-RESHAPING RESISTANCE**

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DR. MAULANA KARENGA

Whatever other conclusions we might come to after all the fireworks, fanfare, flag waving, and the White House carnival barker's big white tent and low-life talk about the country's 250th anniversary, we must concede we are no closer to ridding ourselves of the mythological and self-deceiving and unjust foundation on which the country was built and continues to function, fragmenting, fracturing and destroying people's lives and futures. And burning and banning all the books in Black Studies and Ethnic Studies or any other studies critical of official and personal lies and illusions will not alter or hide this history nor lead to a just and good society of any serious measure.

Yes, we can claim a measure of progress in achieving respect for human rights we shouldn't even had to fight for. But we must also concede that this was not due to White America's self-inspired moral recognition of and repentance from its wicked and roguish ways. Indeed, we must accept the fact that every inch and iota of progress, as Nana Frederick Douglas taught, "have been born of earnest struggle", righteous and reality-reshaping resistance by the oppressed. And we must understand that this constant interruption and disruption of the established order and its business as usual, and our compelling a radical reordering of things continues to be the way to change current conditions and open the way to a new future

of shared and inclusive good for everyone.

It is not by accident or error of judgment that in his classic Fourth of July speech, Nana Frederick Douglas cited as one of the main characteristics of American society as hypocrisy. He notes that Whites may rejoice in the celebrations because they are celebrating their founders achievements for them, but we, as a people, especially our enslaved sisters and brothers could not. For us, he says, the 4th is a special day of reminding the enslaved and oppressed "the gross injustice and cruelty to which he is the constant victim". Thus, to the enslaved, the oppressed, the excluded and devalued "your celebration is a sham; your boasted liberty, an unholy license; your national greatness, swelling vanity; your sounds of rejoicing are empty and heartless; your denunciations of tyrants, brass fronted impudence; your shouts of liberty and equality, hollow mockery; your prayers and hymns, your sermons and thanksgivings, with all your religious parade, and solemnity, are, to him, mere bombast, fraud, deception, impiety, and hypocrisy".

From its conception and insertion in the world, the US has been plagued with a corrosive contradiction between its professed humanistic ideas and its lived racist and imperialistic practices. Thus, there is an urgent need to set aside self-medicating illusions concerning this, to stop pretending that America, the USA, was simply founded as a democratic republic

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when it was also constructed as an expanding empire, and accept that it was a land of freedom to some and a killing ground of conquest and genocide for others. And it was likewise a harbor of welcome for some immigrants and a hellish Holocaust of enslavement for those who are not immigrants but were kidnapped and captured and made objects of labor, sex and entertainment for the ruling race/class. As Nana Martin Luther King noted, ever since the country's founding, "America has been something of a schizophrenic personality,... proudly profess(ing) the noble principles of democracy" on one hand and then "sadly practice(ing) the very antithesis of those principles". And it is this dual Jekyll and Hyde character, this particular pathology of oppression, that must be faced and treated, and critically and clinically cured.

Nana Fannie Lou Hamer tells and teaches us that if we are ever to rebuild a new and good society, we must stop lying, lying about America, about what it actually is and what it has done and is doing to us, others and the world. And we must radically confront and question America, dare to walk off plantations of all kinds and struggle to achieve the freedom we deserve and have fought for so long and courageously throughout our presence here.

Nana Haji Malcolm also called out, criticized and condemned America's hypocrisy and accompanying self-deceptive hype. He states defiantly that he will not be a part of fake freedom narratives and flag waving and saluting by those "who are blinded by childlike patriotism". Nor

will he support or fail to resist a hypocritical and victimizing democracy. Indeed, he says, he is not a beneficiary of such a hypocritical and herrenvolk democracy, but rather "one of those Black people who are... the victims of Americanism (and) democracy, nothing but disguised hypocrisy", nightmarish and needing radical reconstruction.

Our task is to seriously and self-consciously engage in courageous questioning and constant struggle, not to make America "more perfect", for it never was, but to make it more humane, moral, just, free, caring and beneficial for everyone. It is in this way we deal with the real challenge of living and dying in America and confronting unfreedom, inequities and injustices that interrupt, mar and destroy lives, hopes and futures. We speak here of sites of inequities, injustices and insufficiencies in housing and health care, employment and ownership, education and professional possibilities, political power and representation, immigration policies and brutal and deadly police and systemic violence.

Clearly, America is not going to be saved by false prophets, fake news, AI or reinforced regimens of hypocrisy and hype. It can only save itself by moving beyond self-congratulatory and diversionary discussions to craft an inclusive moral vision and concrete program of doing justice and supporting freedom and shared good for all the people.

Nana Dr. Mary McLeod Bethune also fought to move the country beyond hypocrisy and hype and the savage oppression that accompanies it. And she

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asks is American democracy “to be a democracy of the lynching mob and flouted law? Of intimidation and threat and fear? Or is it to be the democracy of law and order, of the 14th Amendment really enforced, of the sanctity of the individual, and of the protection of person and home against brute strength and fear?”

This requires, she states, embracing “the up-hill road that leads to democracy of equality for all men (and women),” and rejecting “the downhill road where there is a way of life for only

him that hath, for the chosen few, for those of high birth, for the select, for those of the ‘right’ religion or the ‘right’ race?” And she urges us to think in both particular and world-encompassing ways in our struggle. Indeed, she says we must dare create an inclusive good, not only for ourselves and this country, but also for the world. “It is our obligation now to do it for the world,” she tells us. Indeed, “we must remake the world. The task is nothing less than that.”▲

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