

PERSPECTIVE: A July 4th like never before

by David Bellavia and Dr. Marc Epstein



This 4th of July is like no other that we've ever seen before.

A highly contagious virus courtesy of China has morphed into a worldwide pandemic, leaving over 130,000 Americans dead in its wake.

Social distancing is the watchword of the day, so parades, large gatherings, and the usual assortment of celebrations have been cancelled or curtailed.

Whether by design or happenstance, civil unrest in our cities are another feature of an increasingly surreal American landscape. Some suggest that the protracted lockdown designed to staunch the virus's spread contributed to these riots, while others suspect it was an irresistible opportunity for a class of people who believe America is illegitimate and

irredeemable.

Iconoclasts are toppling statues of our discoverers, founders, and heroes of American history, while educators, politicians, and corporate executives, either cooperate, kowtow, stand idly by, or promote the expunging of our past in their headlong rush to render the United States a tabula rasa in preparation for their own refashioning of it in their image. We can only guess what that “image” might be.

It has been called our “Jacobin” moment after the most radical phase of the French Revolution. Catholicism, the official religion of France, was banned and replaced by the Cult of the Supreme Being. A new calendar was adopted that began with the first day of the revolution. Sunday was eliminated. Labor organizations that protected skilled workers were abolished. Land was confiscated and redistributed. By the time the Reign of Terror, the most radical phase of the Revolution was brought to a violent halt, over 40,000 people had literally lost their heads.

And so on this July 4th, given the time we have to reflect on the greatness of this nation why don't you sit down with your family and read the entire Declaration of Independence.



Ask any American what the Declaration is about and they'll tell you “all people are created equal”, and we have the right to “life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.” Or as Joe Biden said, “We hold these truths to be self-evident, all men and women created by – you know, you know, the thing.” And

that's where it ends. In the Age of FACEBOOK, TWITTER, and TIKTOK clipped messages are supposed to convey ideas, thoughts, and information. But they don't.

The demographic of people who know nothing of their history, the foundation of civil society or how it operates grows inexorably in this "Information Age."

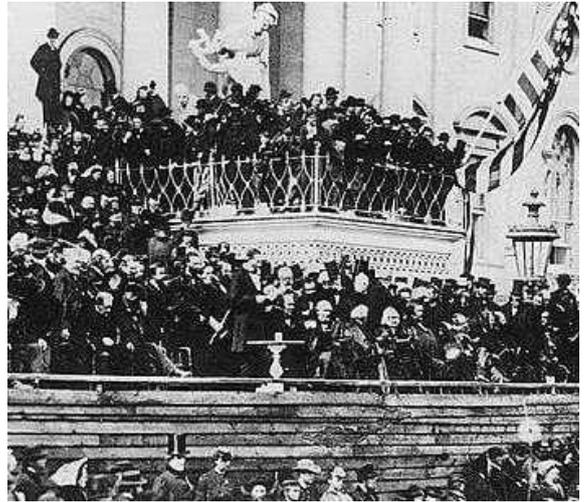
The Greeks called these people idiots.

That was not always the case.

On July 4th 1776 the Declaration of Independence was approved by the Second Continental Congress, signed by John Hancock, the president of the congress, and forwarded to the thirteen original states. The first newspaper to carry the news of the Declaration was the German language Pennsylvanischer Staatsbote, edited by Heinrich Miller, on July 5th. John Dunlap had printed a broadside on the same day, and on July 6, The Pennsylvania Evening Post became the first newspaper to publish it. [revised estimates 750,000 deaths](#) later, the war came to an end.

Lincoln planned for a reconciliation with the rebellious states while ensuring the rights of newly emancipated blacks who resided mostly in the south. It was articulated in the biblical cadences of his second inaugural address, the greatest of inaugural speeches, on March 4, 1865. He concluded, "With malice toward none, with charity for all, with firmness in the right as God gives us to see the right, let us strive on to finish the work we are in, to bind up the nation's wounds, to care for him who shall have borne the battle and for his widow and his orphan, to do all which may achieve and cherish a just and lasting peace among ourselves

and with all nations”



In six weeks he would be dead with a bullet to the head from a Southern Democrat who would have none of that. The response of Radical Republicans was to call for a Draconian peace that would dissolve the southern states and wipe the slate clean. While all southern states that partook in the rebellion were Democrats, not all Democrats were secessionists. Lincoln purposely named Andrew Johnson, a southern Democrat as his vice president.

We all know that recalcitrant elements in the south were determined to return the social fabric of the old Confederacy to the status quo ante, and in many respects they succeeded. It would take more conflict, protests, and litigation to erase the old south. That process would last close to a century.

That's where we are today. Either these events, these sacrifices, the blood that was shed have meaning or not. If not, a far bloodier reckoning awaits us.

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