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Fourth of You Lie in Brooklyn, N.Y.

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Inez Barron and Charles Barron. SLL photo: Stephen Millies

July 4 — Frederick Douglass knew the Fourth of July was phony. So does the

December 12th Movement.

D12 held an outdoor rally today in the Bedford-Stuyvesant neighborhood of Brooklyn, N.Y., for Black liberation and the liberation of all oppressed people. Banners reading “Health care is a right! Fight! Fight! Fight!” lined the street.

People gathered in front of Sistas’ Place at Frederick Douglass Square. D12 members renamed the corners of two streets named after slave owners—Jefferson and Nostrand—for Douglass.

The program started with a recording of James Earl Jones reciting the famous 1852 speech of Douglass in his resonant voice:

“What, to the American slave, is your Fourth 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. To him, 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 denunciation 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, mere bombast, fraud, deception, impiety, and hypocrisy.”

International human rights attorney Roger Wareham demanded a \$50 billion down payment on reparations from the Biden administration. Wareham emphasized that this money is desperately needed to right inequality in health care. Black, Indigenous and Latinx people have died of the coronavirus at twice the rate of whites.

Another D12 leader, Omowale Clay, pointed out the genocidal character of the mass graves of Indigenous children found in Canada.

New York City Council Member Inez Barron and New York State Assembly Member Charles Barron spoke of the ongoing struggle for reparations in New York state.

Over 140 members of the State Assembly voted for a bill sponsored by Charles Barron establishing a reparations commission. The commission will have representatives from community organizations, including the December 12th Movement.

As Frederick Douglass said, “If there is no struggle, there is no progress.”

