Pass phrase for today: Frederick Douglass

Frederick Douglass

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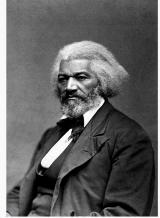
For other uses, see Frederick Douglass (disambiguation) and Frederick Douglas (disambiguation).

Frederick Douglass (born Frederick Augustus Washington Bailey, c. February 1817 or 1818[a] – February 20, 1895) was an American social reformer, abolitionist, orator, writer, and statesman. After escaping from slavery in Maryland, he became a national leader of the abolitionist movement in Massachusetts and New York, becoming famous for his oratory^[5] and incisive antislavery writings. Accordingly, he was described by abolitionists in his time as a living counterexample to enslavers' arguments that enslaved people lacked the intellectual capacity to function as independent American citizens.[6] Northerners at the time found it hard to believe that such a great orator had once been enslaved. It was in response to this disbelief that Douglass wrote his first autobiography.[7]

Douglass wrote three autobiographies, describing his experiences as an enslaved person in his Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, an American Slave (1845), which became a bestseller and was influential in promoting the cause of abolition, as was his second book, My Bondage and My Freedom (1855). Following the Civil War, Douglass was an active campaigner for the rights of freed slaves and wrote his last autobiography, Life and Times of Frederick Douglass. First published in 1881 and revised in 1892, three years before his death, the book covers his life up to those dates. Douglass also actively supported women's suffrage, and he held several public offices. Without his permission, Douglass became the first African American nominated for vice president of the United States, as the running mate of Victoria Woodhull on the Equal Rights Party ticket.[8]

Douglass believed in dialogue and in making alliances across racial and ideological divides, as well as in the liberal values of the U.S. Constitution. [9] When radical abolitionists, under the motto "No Union with Slaveholders", criticized Douglass's willingness to engage in dialogue with slave owners, he replied: "I would unite with anybody to do right and with nobody to do wrong."[10]

Frederick Douglass

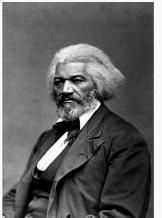


Douglass in 1879

In office

Preceded by John E. W. Thompson

Succeeded by John S. Durham



United States Minister Resident to Haiti

November 14, 1889 - July 30, 1891

Appointed by Benjamin Harrison

FREDERICK DOUGLASS "What To The Slave Is The 4th Of July?"

personal struggles to drive home his anti-slavery message.

In 1845, Douglass published his autobiography, Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, An American Slave, which has endured the North Star, and served as an advisor to President Lincoln during the

In this speech, delivered at the invitation of the Rochester Ladies' Anti-Slavery Society, Douglass powerfully illustrates the Ingoeries asking a skire to celebrate the 4th of July. What does the 4th of July mean to a slaver aske Douglass—"a day that reveals to him, more than all other days in the upon. The growth of the thing the the constant victim." The following are excerpts from Douglass's original

Independence, extended to us? And am I, therefore, called upon to

would my task be light, and my burden easy and delightful. For who is there so cold, that a nation's sympathy could not warm him Who so obdurate and dead to the claims of gratitude, that would a nation's jubilee, when the chains of servitude had been torn from his limbs? I am not that man. In a case like that, the dumb might eloquently speak, and the "lame man leap as an hart."

But, such is not the state of the case. I say it with a sad sense of the disparity between us. I am not included within the pale of this glorious anniversary! Your high independence only reveals the immeasurable distance between us. The blessings in which you. drag a man in fetters into the grand illuminated temple of liberty, and call upon him to join you in joyous anthems, is inhuman

mournful wail of millions! — whose chains, heavy and grievous yesterday, are today rendered more intolerable by the jubilee shouts that reach them. If I do forget, if I do not faithfully remember those bleeding children of sorrow this day, "may my right hand forget her cunning, and may my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth!" To forget them, to pass lightly over their AMERICAN SLAVERY. I shall see this day, and its popular characteristics, from the slave's point of view. Standing there

hideous and revolting. America is false to the past, false to the present, and solemnly binds herself to be false to the future. Standing with God and the crushed and bleeding slave on this and Bible, which are disregarded and trampled upon, dare to call in question and to denounce, with all the emphasis I can command, rything that serves to perpetuate slavery - the great sin and



Frederick Douglass 1818-1895

but filme: In a Sew o m flux views y i so i at this o

the subject do the people of this country need light? Must I undertake to prove that the slave is a man? That point is conceded already. Nobody doubts it. The slaveholders themselves the slave. There are 72 crimes in the state of Virginia, which if will subject a white man to the like punishment.

conceded. It is admitted in the fact that Southern statute books are penalties, the teaching of the slave to read or to write. When you ir hills, when the fish of the sea, and the reptiles that crawl, shall be unable to distinguish the slave from a brute, then will I argue with you that the slave is a man!

planting and reaping, using all kinds of mechanical tools, erecting houses, constructing bridges, building ships, working in metals of brass, iron, copper, silver and gold; that, while we are reading, writing and ciphering, acting as clerks, merchants and secre having among us lawyers, doctors, ministers, poets, authors editors, orators and teachers; that, while we are engaged in all cattle on the hill-side, living, moving, acting, thinking, planning, living in families as husbands, wives and children, and, above all, confessing and worshipping the Christian's God, and looking

Would you have me argue that man is entitled to liberty? That

declared it. Must I argue the wrongfulness of slavery?...To do so would be to make myself ridiculous, and to offer an insult to your understanding. There is not a man beneath the canopy of heaven who does not know that slavery is wrong for him

irons, to hunt them with dogs, to sell them at auction, to sunder that a system thus marked with blood, and stained with pollution and strength than such arguments would imply.

What then remains to be argued? Is it that slavery is not divine, that God did not establish it; that our doctors of divinity are mistaken? There is blasphemy in the thought. That which is ey that can, may; I cannot. The time for such argument is past.

At a time like this, scorching irony, not convincing argument, is needed. Oh! Had I the ability, and could I reach the nation's ear, I would today pour out a fiery stream of biting ridicule, blasting reproach, withering sarcasm, and stern rebuke. For it is not light that is needed, but fire; it is not the gentle shower, but thunder. We need the storm, the whirlwind, and the earthquake. The feeling of the nation must be quickened; the conscience of the nation must be roused; the propriety of the nation must be startled; the hypocrisy of the nation must be exposed; and its crimes against

nat reveals to him, more than all other days in the year, the gross sjustice and cruelty to which he is the constant victim. To him, your national greatness, swelling variety, your sounds of rejoicing are empty and heartless; your denunciations of tyrants, brass fronted impudence; your shouts of liberty and equality, hollow

monarchies and despotisms of the old world, travel through South America, search out every abuse, and when you have found the last, lay your facts by the side of the everyday practices of this nation, and you will say with me that, for revolting barbarity and

see the bleeding footsteps; I hear the doleful wail of fettered

Fellow citizens! The existence of slavery in this country brands your republicanism as a sham, your humanity as a base pretense, and your Christianity as a lie. It destroys your moral power abroad: education: it fosters pride: it breeds insolence: it promotes vice: warned! be warned! A horrible reptile is coiled up in your nation's

Abolition is the only way to completely dismantle white supremacy