

2a – By Any Means Necessary

No anti-slavery publication inspired more fear in Southern slaveholders than a 76-page pamphlet known as "Walker's Appeal." Penned by Black abolitionist David Walker in 1829; the powerful treatise called for the violent overthrow of slavery.

Walker, a used clothing merchant in Boston, found ways to secretly circulate his Pamphlet among slaves, Southern leaders responded by passing stricter laws against teaching slaves to read. It also became a crime, punishable by death, to distribute the pamphlet in some states. The governor of Georgia offered a reward to anyone who could deliver Walker to him ----dead or alive.

In his "Appeal," Walker condemned Blacks for their passivity in submitting to the yoke of slavery and Whites for their hypocrisy in proclaiming their love of liberty while enslaving millions of men, women and children of African descent.

Just nine months after "Walker's Appeal" was published, its author was found dead in the doorway of his clothing shop. The cause of David Walker's death was never determined, but some suspected he was poisoned.

Are we MEN!! – I ask you, O my brethren! are we *MEN*? Did our Creator make us to be slaves to dust and ashes like ourselves? Are they not dying worms as well as we? ... How we could be so submissive to a gang of men, whom we cannot tell whether they are as good as ourselves or not, I never could conceive, ...

Remember Americans; that we must and shall be free and enlightened as you are, will you wait until we shall, under God, obtain our liberty by the crushing arm of power? Will it not be dreadful for you? I speak Americans for your good. ... You may do your best to keep us in wretchedness and misery, to enrich you and your children, but God will deliver us from under you. And wo, wo, will be to you if we have to obtain our freedom by fighting. Throw away your fears and prejudices then, and enlighten us and treat us like men, and we will like you more than we do now hate you. ... America is as much our country, as it is yours.

Treat us like men, and there is no danger but we will all live in peace and happiness together, ... But Americans; I declare to you, while you keep us and our children in bondage; and treat us like brutes, to make us support you and your families, we cannot be your friends. ... Treat us then like men ... [a]nd there is not a doubt in my mind, but that the whole of the past will be sunk into oblivion, and we yet, under God, will become a united and happy people.

*This article is reprinted by from the Teaching Tolerance curriculum kit
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