

2c – Declaration of Resistance

Many Northern communities, Black and White, vowed to defy the detested Fugitive Slave Law. In October of 1850, African Americans meeting in Philadelphia adopted the following resolution.

Whereas, the Declaration of American Independence declares it to be a self-evident truth, "that all men are created equal, and are endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable rights, among which are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness"; and whereas, the Constitution of the United States, Art. 1, sect. 9, declares that "the privilege of the writ of habeas corpus shall not be suspended"; and in Art. 5 of the Amendments, that "no person shall be deprived of life, liberty, or property, without due process of law"; and whereas, the late Fugitive Slave Bill, recently enacted by the Congress of the United States, is in clear, palpable violation of these several provisions; therefore,

1. Resolved, That while we have heretofore yielded obedience to the laws of our country, however hard some of them have borne upon us, we deem this law so wicked, so atrocious, so utterly at variance with the principles of the Constitution; so subversive of the objects of all law, the protection of the lives, liberty, and property of the governed; so repugnant to the highest attributes of God, justice and mercy; and so horribly cruel in its clearly expressed mode of operation, that we deem it our sacred duty, a duty that we owe to ourselves, our wives, our children, and to our common nature, as well as to the panting fugitive from oppression, to resist this law at any cost and at all hazards; and we hereby pledge our lives, our fortunes, and our sacred honor so to do.

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