

Frederick Douglass Broadside

Date

1964

Primary Maker

Thomas Cornell

Medium

Letterpress with woodcut

Description

Large woodcut print. Portrait of Frederick Douglas . Below his portrait is a reprint of his July 4th, 1852 speech "What, to the American slave, is your 4th of July?"

Dimensions

composition: 15 1/2 x 4 1/4 in. (39.4 x 10.8 cm) sheet: 18 x 5 15/16 in. (45.7 x 15.1 cm)

FREDERICK DOUGLASS

• July 4, 1852 •



What, to the American slave, is your 4th 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 prayers and hymns, your sermons and thanksgivings, with all your religious parade and solemnity, are, to him, mere bombast, fraud, deception, impiety, and hypocrisy—a thin veil to cover up crimes which would disgrace a nation of savages....

You boast of your love of liberty, your superior civilization, and your pure Christianity, while the whole political power of the nation, as embodied in the two great political parties, is solemnly pledged to support and perpetuate the enslavement of millions of your countrymen. You hurl your anathemas at the tyrants of Russia and pride yourselves on your democratic institutions, while you yourselves consent to be the mere tools and bodyguards of the tyrants of Virginia and Carolina. You invite to your shores fugitives of oppression from abroad, honor them with banquets, greet them with ovations, cheer them, toast them, salute them, protect them, and pour out your money to them like water; but the fugitives from your own land you advertise, hunt, arrest, shoot, and kill. You glory in your refinement and your universal education; yet you maintain a system as barbarous and dreadful as ever stained the character of a nation—a system begun in avarice, supported in pride, and perpetuated in cruelty. You shed tears over fallen Hungary, and make the sad story of her wrongs the theme of your poets, statesmen, and orators, till your gallant sons are ready to fly to arms to vindicate her cause against the oppressor; but, in regard to ten thousand wrongs of the American slave, you would enforce the strictest silence, and would hail him as an enemy of the nation who dares to make those wrongs the subject of public discourse!

100 copies of this broadside comprise the 2nd edition of the first work of the Trugos Press, Brunswick, Maine. Hand set by John Welwood for Thomas Cornell. July 31, 1964.