

## The Liberty Party platform, 1844

.. Resolved, That the party ... will demand the absolute and unqualified divorce of the General Government from slavery, and also the restoration of equality of rights, among men, in every State where the party exists, or may exist.

Resolved, That the ... Party has not been organized for any temporary purpose by interested, politicians, but has arisen from among the people in consequence of a conviction, hourly gaining ground, that no other party in the country represents the true principles of American liberty, or the true spirit of the Constitution of the United States.

...Resolved, That it was understood in the times of the Declaration and the Constitution, that the existence of slavery in some of the States, was in derogation of the principles of American Liberty, and a deep stain upon the character of the country, and the implied faith of the States and the Nation was pledged, that slavery should never be extended beyond its then existing limits, but should be gradually, and yet, at no distant day, wholly abolished by State authority.

...Resolved, That the faith of the States and the Nation thus pledged, was most nobly redeemed by the voluntary Abolition of Slavery in several of the States, and by the adoption of the Ordinance of 1787, for the government of the Territory northwest of the river Ohio, then the only Territory in the United States, and consequently the only territory subject in this respect to the control of Congress by which Ordinance Slavery was forever excluded from the vast regions which now compose the States of Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, Michigan, and the Territory of Wisconsin, and an incapacity to bear up any other than freemen, was impressed on the soil itself.

Resolved, That the faith of the States and Nation thus pledged, has been shamefully violated by the omission on the part of many of the States, to take any measures whatever; for the Abolition of slavery within their respective limits; by the continuance of Slavery in the District of Columbia, and in the Territories of Louisiana and Florida; by the Legislation of Congress; by the protection afforded by national legislation and negotiation to slaveholding in American vessels, on the high seas, employed in the coastwise Slave Traffic; and by the extension of slavery far beyond its original limits, by acts of Congress, admitting new Slave States into the Union.

...Resolved, That we recognize as sound, the doctrine maintained by slaveholding jurists, that slavery is against natural rights, and strictly local, and that its existence and continuance rests on no other support than State Legislation, and not on any authority of Congress.

Resolved, That the General Government has, under the Constitution, no power to establish or continue Slavery anywhere, and therefore that all treaties and acts of Congress establishing, continuing or favoring Slavery in the District of Columbia, in the Territory of Florida, or on the high seas, are unconstitutional, and all attempts to hold

men as property within the limits of exclusive national jurisdiction, ought to be prohibited by law.

Resolved, That the provision of the Constitution of the United States, which confers extraordinary political powers on the owners of slaves, and thereby constituting the two hundred and fifty thousand slaveholders in the Slave States, a privileged aristocracy; ...

...Whereas, The third clause of the second section of the fourth article of the Constitution of the United States, when construed as providing for the surrender of a Fugitive Slave, does "rest upon such a basis," in that it is a contract to rob a man of a natural right — namely, his natural right to his own liberty, and is, therefore, absolutely void. Therefore

Resolved, That we hereby give it to be distinctly understood by this nation and the world, that, as abolitionists, considering that the strength of our cause lies in its righteousness, and our hope for it in our conformity to the laws of God, and our respect for the RIGHTS OF MAN, we owe it to the Sovereign Ruler of the universe, as a proof of our allegiance to him, in all our civil relations and offices, whether as private citizens or as public functionaries sworn to support the Constitution of the United States, to regard and to treat the third clause of the fourth article of that instrument, whenever applied to the case of a fugitive slave, as utterly null and void, and consequently as forming no part of the Constitution of the United States, whenever we are called upon or sworn to support it.