

# *Workers Honor Douglas, Negro Revolutionist*

By OTTO HALL.

On February 20, 1895, Negroes lost by the death of Frederick Douglas one of their greatest revolutionary fighters. Later in the same year another figure rose, one, Booker T. Washington, who became one of the most efficient tools of the capitalist class and was foisted upon the Negro masses by them as the new Negro leader.

Frederick Douglas represented a Negro race which was not yet broken up into class lines, while Booker T. Washington represented the newly rising Negro petty-bourgeoisie and as representative of this rising Negro petty-bourgeoisie he insisted that in order to establish themselves as a class they must necessarily sacrifice political and social advantages for economic development.

Frederick Douglas was a worker. Born in slavery he finally escaped after having failed in several attempts. He worked as a day laborer for three years in New Bedford before he could get an opportunity to work at his trade. He was a ship caulker.

Douglas was born on February 12, 1817, in Tuckahoe, Md. He early learned to read and write, buying books from his earnings as a boot-black. He attacked slavery with all the fiery passion of which he was capable and with arguments none could refute.

His experience with the slave system taught him that "Men are whipped oftenest who are whipped easiest." In his autobiography he relates how those slaves who defended themselves would be brutally beaten up for the time, but would never again be whipped. "Experi-

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# WORKERS HONOR DOUGLAS, NEGRO REVOLUTIONIST

## Uncompromising Rebel Fighter

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ence proves that those are most abused who can be abused with the greatest impunity. Men are whipped oftenest who are whipped easiest."

Frederick Douglas became one of the foremost Abolitionists of his day and all of his life fought for the liberation of the Negro masses. With his uncompromising stand on any question involving the advancement of his race Douglas stands head and shoulders above the present-day, hand-picked, middle-class Negro misleaders, tools of the white capitalists, who follow the leadership of Booker T. Washington.

These present-day misleaders, in order to deceive the Negro masses, hold up Lincoln instead of Douglas as the fighter for the emancipation of the Negro race. To fight against this the Negro workers should celebrate Douglass' birthday instead of Lincoln's. These Negro traitors conveniently forget the revolutionary role of Douglass, and as a means to mislead the Negro workers, they utilize the fact that he supported the Republican Party which was a "progressive party" in 1860, but which today is the principal instrument of the oppression of the Negro masses by the white ruling class of this country.

Frederick Douglass hated all forms of hypocrisy and fiercely exposed the hypocritical role of the church in condoning slavery. In a conversation with Henry Ward Beecher, a famous religious bunk-shooter of that period, he stated:

"I am done with your church, your christianity and its hypocrisy. They have given your country over to slave catchers and your church sanctions it as a devine institution."

Douglass was never afraid under any circumstances to speak his opinion of the white bourgeois leaders. In giving an estimate of Lincoln upon the occasion of the unveiling of the Freeman's Monument to Lincoln on April 14, 1876, he said:

"He (Lincoln) pre-eminently the white man's president, entirely devoted to the welfare of the white man. He was ready and willing at any time during the first years of his administration to deny, postpone and sacrifice the rights of humanity in the colored people and promote the welfare of the white people of this country. . . . To protect, defend and perpetuate slavery in the states where it existed. Abraham Lincoln was not less ready than any other president to draw the sword of the nation. He was ready to execute all the supposed constitutional guarantees of the United States Constitution in favor of the slave system anywhere inside the slave states. He was willing to pursue, recapture and send back the fugitive slave to his master, and to suppress a slave rising for liberty, though his guilty masters were already in arms "against the government."

Douglass apparently believed Lincoln devoted to the interests of the white race as a whole. Whereas, the fact is that while entirely devoted to the interests of the Northern capitalists and Southern slave holders, Lincoln did not give a tinker's damn about the interests of the white industrial wrokers of the North or the poor white population of the South.

Lincoln was the president of the white industrialists and slave holders, until the conflicting interests of the former finally forced him reluctantly to abandon the slave holders.

One of the first tasks facing the new Negro industrial proletariat, which is today increasingly taking over the leadership of the masses from the treacherous intellectuals and stock promoters, is the fight against these illusions and against the Lincoln myth and for the reviving of the revolutionary traditions of the race and the honoring of its revolutionary heroes.