

No, Mr. O'Rourke, America Was Not Founded on White Supremacy

Modern Socialist Democrats love to claim that America was founded on racism and white supremacy. The problem with their argument is that the concept of race is nowhere to be found in America's founding documents. The Declaration of Independence and the U.S. Constitution are racially inclusive documents.

If a foreign visitor had read the Constitution at the time of its enactment, they would not have known slavery existed in America. There is no mention of slaves or slavery. There is no reference to individuals on the basis of race, ethnicity or skin color. Instead of using race classifications, the Constitution speak of "citizens," "persons" and "other persons."

Dr. King and Frederick Douglas Understood This

There is nothing in the Declaration of Independence and the United States Constitution to indicate that the freedoms guaranteed therein do not apply to every individual. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. understood this, and in his stirring "I Have a Dream" speech, he challenged America, not to dispense with its founding documents, but instead, to live up to them. Speaking from the steps of the Lincoln Memorial, he declared his hope,

That one day this nation will rise up and live out the true meaning of its creed: "We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal."

Showing he understood these guaranteed freedoms to be rooted in the country's Christian origins, Dr. King, who was a devout Christian, went on to say that he had a dream that one day all

Americans—regardless of their skin color—would be able to sing together the words of that Christian, patriotic hymn,

My country 'tis of Thee/ Sweet land of liberty, of Thee I sing.

Land where my fathers died/ Land of the Pilgrim's pride,

From every mountainside/ Let freedom ring!

Yes, America's founding principles are colorblind, even if her history has not been. The famous abolitionist Frederick Douglas understood this and argued that the language of the founding documents must be understood as applying to everyone. "Any one of these provisions in the hands of abolition statesmen, and backed by a right moral sentiment," he declared, "would put an end to slavery in America" (Hyatt, *Pilgrims and Patriots*, 159).

Understanding the Three-Fifths Clause

One of the most misunderstood sections of the Constitution is the "three-fifths clause" in which only three-fifths of the slave population of southern states would be counted for representation. This had nothing to do with assigning value based on race. This was related to keeping the southern states from gaining too much power in the new Congress where the number of representatives from each state would be tied to the population of that state.

The southern states wanted to include their slave populations to gain more representatives and more power, even though slaves could not vote. The three-fifths compromise was a way of diminishing their influence in the new Congress in that it counted only three-fifths of the slave population for purposes of representation.

Even here, the founders did not use the word "slaves" or slavery," but "other persons." Abraham Lincoln described this

refusal of the founders to acknowledge slavery in the Constitution as being like a man who hides an ugly, cancerous growth until the time comes that it can be eradicated from his body.

That the three-fifths clause had nothing to do with assigning value based on race is confirmed by the fact that, at the time of the Constitutional Convention, there were at least 60,000 free blacks in northern and southern states who counted the same as whites when it came to determining the number of representatives to Congress. Additionally, it is important to note that there were as many as 10 states where blacks had full voting privileges.

The “Moral Outrage” Against Slavery

By the time of the Constitutional Convention of 1787, virtually all the founders agreed with John Adams, who said, “Every measure of prudence ... ought to be assumed for the eventual total extirpation of slavery from the United States. I have throughout my whole life held the practice of slavery in abhorrence.”

The brilliant historian Dr. Thomas Sowell, who happens to be black, has confirmed this, saying, “Among those who turned against slavery in the 18th century were George Washington, Thomas Jefferson, Patrick Henry and other American leaders.”

Nonetheless, at the Constitutional Convention, concessions were made toward the southern states out of concern that a union could not succeed if all Thirteen Colonies were not included. Sowell has said, “But don’t pretend that it was an easy answer—or that those who grappled with the dilemma in the 18th century were some special villains when most leaders and most people around the world saw nothing wrong with slavery.”

In formulating the Constitution, the founders were both careful and precise in the use of language. Unlike modern progressive socialists who see everything through the prism of

race, they purposely avoided classifications based on race and skin color. Though not banning slavery in the South at the time, they put in place the legal mines that would eventually blow it up.

The Constitution is a Racially Inclusive Document

Yes, modern Socialist Democrats love to insist that America was founded on racist principles. They are wrong. David Azerrad was correct when he said, "The argument that the Constitution is racist suffers from one fatal flaw: the concept of race does not exist in the Constitution" (Hyatt, *Pilgrims and Patriots*, 161-62).

The founders did not invent slavery. They were born into a world where slavery already existed. They were not perfect, and it can be argued that they conceded too much at the time. Nonetheless, they did an admirable job of formulating founding documents that would eventually eradicate that horrendous institution and make America "the land of the free and home of the brave," with people of every race and ethnicity wanting to live here. {eoa}

This article was derived from the book, Pilgrims and Patriots, by Dr. Eddie L. Hyatt. Dr. Hyatt has a passion to see America return to her founding principles of faith and freedom. He has written extensively on America's Christian founding and has created a PowerPoint presentation entitled "America's Reawakening" that he presents throughout the nation. His website is .