

2013 Paper 2

Theme 4 – Metropolitan Movements Towards Emancipation

7. Write a speech that you will deliver as an abolitionist participating in a debate on slavery in the British parliament. Speak against any five of the arguments put forward by your opponents.

My opponents have argued that because slavery exists in Africa that it is perfectly justifiable to keep slaves in the colonies and will even go so far to say that they treat the slaves better in the colonies than the slaves would've been treated in Africa. But understand that slavery in Africa is completely different. Slaves there are only slaves because they are criminals or prisoners of war. They only have to be slaves for a few years then they are set free. They do not have to worry about their children being born automatic slaves out of the womb. And the fact that my opponents can actually say they treat slaves better in the colonies is absolutely ridiculous to me. Slaves are beaten, punished, whipped, humiliated, they aren't given proper clothes, food, shelter, medical care. Slaves in the colonies are dying from diseases they ought not to die from but my opponents say they are being treated better here than in Africa. Another argument my opponents have made is that slave labour is more economically viable than free labour. But this is false. Planters have to provide for their slaves in every aspect: food, clothing, shelter, medical care. But if these slaves were freed, they would have to financially provide for themselves and their families. In order to do this, they will have to work. And where else can they work for wages than on the plantations? No one is saying they should get paid a fortune, but you would have a guaranteed labour force even with slavery abolished because the ex-slaves will have to work to live.

Additionally, it has been said that slavery provided an opportunity for slaves to be converted to Christianity, thus giving them a chance of saving their souls, a privilege not afforded in Africa. However, the colonies and planters have adamantly neglected the religious education of these slaves. Even the missionaries were discouraged from working with the slaves and teaching them about Christianity. So even if the slaves weren't given this privilege in Africa, that privilege is being denied to them here too. "Slavery provided the basis for a superior culture". Why did there need to be a superior culture? Why could everyone not live in harmony with one another and be accepted equally regardless of race? The whites want to sit and do nothing but make laws that only benefitted them but force the blacks to do all the hard labour and menial tasks. And even so the blacks aren't even compensated for their work, only humiliated by their owners. "Slaves in the Caribbean could learn from whites how to live a Christian life". However, Christianity urges its followers to live a life of love and acceptance whereas slavery encourages hate and segregation. How can you want the slaves to emulate you as Christians if you aren't being good Christians yourselves?