

Abraham lincoln, charleston debate

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Abraham Lincoln Charleston Debate The Lincoln and Douglas debates of 1858 came at a time when slavery and social equality were contentious issues in the country. At the time of the debate, the country was divided into two parts; the north that opposed slavery and the south that opposed any measures to abolish it. Lincoln devotes his speech to the threat of expansion of slavery in the United States. He is concerned that the southern states continue to use slaves whereas the Constitution guarantees their freedom. He is concerned by the fact that Douglas wants slavery laws to rest with state legislatures.

From the excerpt, Lincoln desists from encouraging equality in the country. In fact, he supports that fact that races are not equal, and the white race should reign supreme. In essence, Lincoln says that equality cannot be attained without upsetting the social balance, which could have more adverse effects. He asserts that the ethnic differences between whites and black is enough hindrance for these people not to be equal. Lincoln argues that a stable society must have people to take up superior places and others to take inferior places. He claims that although Negroes cannot be denied everything, they should not take up leadership positions and reign over the white people (“ Fourth Joint Debate at Charleston” para. 2).

Despite his stance on race and equality, Lincoln is opposed to the expansion of slavery in the country. The northwestern states had abolished slavery and were agitating for abolishment of slavery throughout the country. Lincoln argued that although Negroes could not have equal rights, it was improper to discriminate them when the constitution had granted their citizenship (Lincoln n. p).

The debate in the excerpt closely resembles current political rhetoric. Lincoln <https://assignbuster.com/abraham-lincoln-charleston-debate/>

and Douglas used the ethos, pathos and logos to attract support from the electorate. The use of rhetoric in the then politics and today's politics was to humiliate the opponents and pose them as against the people. In the excerpt, Lincoln uses rhetoric to attack Douglas on the issue of slavery and how he altered the law to allow Kansas choose the fate of slaves in the state (" Fourth Joint Debate at Charleston" para. 3). The rhetoric in the debate is manifest in today's politics where politicians use issues of concern to the electorate to attack opponents.

Political rhetoric in 1858 concentrated on finding fault in the system and proposing the way forward. Lincoln attacked Douglas as a person who could not be trusted because he had changed the contents of a senatorial bill.

Lincoln used most of the time in the fourth debate to discredit Douglas based on the allegations. The situation closely compares to today's politics where politicians divert attention to failing policies of opponents in areas that are most sensitive such as security, foreign policy and employment.

In conclusion, Lincoln's speech shows that slavery was a sensitive issue in the country in the 19th century. The debate comes at a time when northern states has abolished slavery and the southern states advocating to maintain the rights to decide on slavery. Although Lincoln lost the senatorial election, the debates exposed him as a statesman who could unite the country on the brink of collapse.

Works Cited

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