

Slavery in america



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Slavery in America African slavery in America had a great impact on economic, social and political life of the nation and its consolidation.

Formation of American nation was influenced by cultural mix, by racial inequalities and economic implications connected with African slavery. The economic causes of slavery include rapid growth of agriculture and demand for cheap labor, decline of European labor in America, industrial development and new trade patterns.

New agricultural patterns were the main economic basis for slavery in America. The strength of the agriculture was that it remained the core of the economy and wealth accumulation. In the 1850s, the main advantage of the South was its developing agriculture, which supported the rapid economic growth of the country. Owners of the cotton plantations were interested in cheap labor in order to extend their crop areas. African slaves were the only source of cheap labor supply meeting the needs of growing economy.

Africans were strong and able to work long days in the plantations. Also, "Tobacco, cotton, and rice, which require many hands to tend, stimulated slavery" (Chronology on the History of Slavery and Racism, 1999).

Another economic cause of slavery was decline in immigrants labor supply connected with changing economic situation and urbanization. Many European immigrants settled in the North or returned to Europe where the processes of urbanization and distribution of wealth were faster than in the South. The North economic development and new wave of industrialization was higher and more stable attracting white immigrants and poor from the South. Industrial development and new production modes required cheap labor supplied from Africa.

Another economic factor was importance of trade between Europe and

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America which demanded rapid industrial and agricultural growth of the Southern and Northern states, and transatlantic slave trade which became the important source of power and wealth accumulation for European and American slave traders. These factors of economic growth were closely connected with industrialization in Europe depended upon American cotton production, During the 18th - 19th centuries, transatlantic trade between America and Europe increased greatly becoming an integral part of capitalist relations (Stamp, 1992).

Slavery in America was one of the main factors which led to the Civil War and liberation movement. The main causes of the Civil War were connected with social and economic differences between the North and South arisen from slavery and industrial development of the states. The Dred Scott decision (1857) unveiled ambiguity of the American Constitution and proved that slave population had no rights and freedom. Frederick Douglass and W. L. Garrison were leaders of the anti-slavery movement demanded abolition of slavery in all territories. Two decision approved by A. Lincoln shaped the rights of slaves and gave rise to the idea of national unity. It is possible to say that slavery had a negative impact on the emerging American nation divided society on two " different nations" and cultural groups. On the other hand, African slavery became an engine of consolidation of the nation based on cross-national values and traditions. For more than a century, American nation has suffered from racial and ethical inequalities forcing Americans to cope with a difficult historical inheritance. Racial differences were seen as a silent factor which prevented consolidation of the nation and resulted in racial and national diversity. Cultural difference was irreducible, and it revealed the ambivalence and hybrid nature of national modernity in the

state (Stampp, 1992). These factors are important because American culture is based on ideals and heritage. In concrete terms, the great influx of African slaves and fight between whites and blacks eroded American nation and its social unity (Stampp, 1992).

References

1. Chronology on the History of Slavery and Racism. (1999). Retrieved from <http://innercity.org/holt/slavechron.html> (accessed 15 August 2006)
2. Stampp, K. (1992). *The Causes of the Civil War: Revised Edition*. Touchstone; 3rd edn.