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## **‘ The Long Sixties: From 1960 to Barack Obama’**

The Long Sixties: From 1960 to Barack Obama is a book set in the current historical setting but dating its foundation in the 1960. The book is a political satire that displays the origin and growth of democracy in terms of division and selection of ruling parties. Hayden creates a political picture that may shape the political perception of the current generation. In his book he challenges the current generation to appreciate the political struggles in the 1960's and recognize the advantages of these efforts. Hayden also displays an old political picture that was never aware of democracy and free will. He then creates an evolution theory that denotes the faces the political scene in America to the current Barack Obama government. In his analysis of the political journey, he recognizes the impact and importance of some political figures in the United States history. Each political leader highlighted is analyzed on their importance to the journey towards complete democracy and free will.

Apart from the political journey, the author recognizes the growth of the social class and environment. According to Hayden the growth of social factors greatly depends on the growth of a nation's political scope (211). This means that a stalemate on the political scene would results into a stalemate on the social environment. The author further argues that the social independence the United States enjoys today is a process that dates back to the 1960's. The social environment in the sixties did not have pomp and color as the 21 century social environment. All these advantages are products of the revolution that began in the 1960 (108).

The Barack Obama project would have never been successful minus the

sixties (44). Hayden argues that the Barack Obama project is more than 50 years old. The platform set for Barack Obama dates back to the sixties. It was an era in the American political history where people realized the importance and significance of proper representation in the government. However, this was not an issue that was openly addressed and fought for. It was an era where the killing of both the Blacks and the whites was rampant across the nation. Scenes of death corpses due to political instability were not a new scenario. This made people more afraid of political activism and challenging bad leadership of the land. However, the sixties came with its own heroes that championed the fight towards achieving a Barack Obama. The assassination of Martin Luther King and J. F. Kennedy was proof enough of how much the sixties had tense political moments (98). These two political figures remain some of the adored figures in the political history of the United States. The death of Martin Luther King is however, viewed as good part of the political history. It was after this assassination that Americans realized how important free will and activism may be important to the society. Martin Luther King empowered people to fight for what belonged to them, which in this case is the power. In the sixties power to the people was not an achievable dream as leadership entailed of the chosen few. Hayden praises these moments by terming them as landmark changes to the political scene of the United States. Minus the two significance political assassination cases the society would not have been empowered towards the revolution that led to the freedom of expression the American people enjoy today (111). In his argument people needed a propelling factor that would make them realize their position as citizens and whether it was right

for them to be placed at that position.

The social movement activism in the sixties was remarkable. The people realized how much they had on how well they could put it into good use. It was this factor that led to the rise of Martin Luther King and J. F. Kennedy struggle for power. The rising of these two figures was the epitome of the whole struggle. The people felt like they had influence and power over the ruling factors. However, the assassination of the two social leaders denied the sixties the gift they had fought for by sacrificing their all. According to Hayden the political assassinations of Martin Luther King and J. F. Kennedy was the only thing that denied the sixties to have the eventual goal of propelling a president into power through social movement activism (176). Regardless of this setback the sixties left a landmark era in the American history. There were significant enactment of civil right laws and the creation of the environment movement that was significant in opening up political processes to people of color and women. While laying down this argument Hayden points out the sixties initiated radical populism that initiated Barack Obama to the presidential seat.

Hayden also highlights the Obama victory celebration in 2008. The event was staged at Chicago's Grant Park which was a symbolic location that symbolizes the winning of the war to fight the damage caused on the American idealism forty years back. Hayden accepts and approves of the election of Obama to the top seat and he puts it in writing by arguing that his tenure will ensure the American Idealism will be fully realized. Additionally, the author argues that the Obama government will continue the achieved radical idealism that was initiated in the sixties (78). He further argues that

this idealism is the only way to realize economic recovery, health care promises and the creation of green jobs.

In his analysis of this history since the sixties, Hayden deeply and critically analyzed journalists, activists and political milestones that shaped the current political state in the United States. In his analysis Hayden points out that Reagan's and Bush's political leadership were enemies to the American idealism. These two eras are viewed as the most challenging to the quest launched in the sixties. The power was taken from the people and the government became greater than the rule of law. It was after this leadership that the American people decided to fulfill the sixties goal to create a government that has been pushed by social activism.

The general outlook of this book by Hayden is the achieving of the American idealism through the sixties to the Obama regime. The book creates an image that needs the American people to appreciate the journey towards the Obama project. According to Hayden the journey to have Barack Obama on the top seat involved a lot of sacrifice and society heroes played a great deal in ensuring the American people feel represented and not be undermined by the rule of governance (123).

## **Works cited**

Hayden, Tom. *The Long Sixties: From 1960 to Barack Obama*. New York: Paradigm Publishers. 2008. Print.