Essay # 9

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# Question: If you were a White southern in the 1850s, would you have encouraged or discouraged by U. S government policies?

In the Southern states, the Americans were dependent on agricultural production for their economy. Farmers used to yield cash crops that were harvested early and were brought heavy sums of cash in return. Since during this gilded, no modern means of farming were adopted, therefore the farmers relied on human input to help ends meet. To meet the gap, modern machinery could have filled, farmers used slaved African labour. The massive use of slaved labour helped grow more and more crops. They were made to work for eighteen hours and were paid the negligible amount for their services, as a result, a large yield of crops was produced, which as a result was dumped into the American market. With time, the agricultural production grew to a much large extent and the buyers had no options other than to purchase at minor costs. However, during these times another issue got the attention of Americans, which was Henry clay’s compromise of 1850 (“1861: ‘The Cause’ | Season 1 Episode 1 | The Civil War | PBS,” n.d.).

During the later decades of the eighteenth century, slavery started expanding. The prime reason for slave expansion was the invention of the cotton gin. The cotton gin helped to expand the business more rapidly and the Southern started employing more saves to run the cotton gins. Around five to seven thousands lbs. of cotton were being produced during these times. The Southern started expanding the slave import and focused on getting more and more production. However, with the start of the new century in the 1830s, the abolitionist movement started. There was a concern among Americans whether the new states in the federation will be free or slave state. John Brown who added religious zealotry to this debate remained failed in his attempt of 1859. The southern states, however, were genuinely concerned that the abrupt abolishment of slavery will cause the unforeseen downfall of the crop production. Since cotton production was based on the employment of slave population, therefore the Southern feared that the end of slavery might turn the business opportunities down.

Another reason for the Southern emanated from the fact that out of nine million people in Southern states, four million were comprised of the slave population. Later on, the election of 1860 turned as a referendum for slavery. The southern reacted to this and turned down the candidature of Lincoln, and before his inauguration, at least seven southern states get separated from the union. The war clouds which were hanging over already busted with the attack on Fort Sumter. Both sides started massive recruitments to turn down the plans of the other side. The Southern started the war with a military edge over the Northern. This was how the rift between the Southern and Northern went to the highest in all times. The first episode ‘The Cause’ is based on such facts which shed light on the reason of war eruption between the Northern and Southern. The later developments however proved conciliatory for both the Southern and the Northern.

The compromise of 1850, offered concessions to both the northern and the Southern states, by offering a general ban over the slave trade. It also offered stricter fugitive slave law. The proposed ban on the slave trade created a row between the Southern and the Northern residents of the states. Some historians believe that the compromise of 1850 and the election of 1860 had a conceptual linkage, however, it was not right. The Northern and the Southern states disagreed on slavery and on issues about the entry of new states into the confederation. The compromise of 1850, lastly provided a temporary solution to the row between the Northern and the Southern (Hine, Hine, & Harrold, 2004). Though the conflict between the states went over until the eruption of the civil war the small conflicts remain prevalent throughout this time.

Talking about the times of 1850, one must need to keep certain things in mind. For example, the world of that time was not sober, graceful and moderate. Neither the values were seen as we see them today. The only advantage people cared for was the economics of a certain degree of political influence. If I was a Southern citizen of that time, I had to care for the economics which was associated with agriculture. If I had to ensure maximum output from my land, I had to be as cruel as it’s possible. Since I am not a superhuman, neither I have a contrary nature, therefore, I had wished for what a Southern from that time could have. However, my political ideas could have been different. I would have taken a systematic approach toward reaching a compromise.

Being a White Southern of the 1850s, I also had to ensure that my land is producing more crops compared to those of my competitors. I had to see how the politics of that time is influencing me, or what it has to offer to me. Since, being a dweller of that time, I had to think alike the manner people from that time used to the think, therefore I can never be different. I will oppose the laws which I felt threatens my well- being, and also I had to accept the changes which can ensure my economic boost. The compromise of 1850, I believed had threatened the lifestyle and economic dealings of the people from that time, therefore I would have also opposed such political narratives. I would have been of this nature because I had to struggle to keep myself a part of that civilization.

# References:

1861: “The Cause” | Season 1 Episode 1 | The Civil War | PBS. (n.d.). Retrieved October 8, 2019, from https://www.pbs.org/video/the-civil-war-the-cause/

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