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Student Commentator: Abolition and Emancipation

Afigbo: The Growth and Character of European Influence

The Power of Abolition Opposition

Many people supported the abolition movement of the slave trade at the time. Various groups such as humanitarians, Evangelicals, and somewhat Britain, were part of this supporting group. However, in Afigbo's article, I felt that the opposers of abolition overshadows the abolitionists. With the life style and conditions the world was in at the time, the slave trade was needed to maintain society's ability to operate successfully. Not saying that I believe slavery is a good thing, just that the countries involved let the slave trade evolve into a system that they heavily depended on and couldn't survive comfortably otherwise. The slave trade provided Britain with laborers to operate their machinery during the industrial revolution, as well as raw materials to keep the machines itself occupied for productions. In return, Africans also did not want to give up the slave trade; it was accepted and a part of their culture and traditions, slaves had the role of their primary currency, and the African middlemen did not want to ruin business. With this said, I don't think that the world could survive without the slave trade because without it, the economies of the involved countries would plummet, which would act as a domino effect for the rest of the world. Now, if the countries had another system they could abide by besides the slave trade that would sustain the economy and interrelations in an effective way, then I think that abolitionists would have gotten more support during this era. However, it isn't until later in the 18th and 19th century where social reforms will occur in order to back away from a slave running to a legitimate commerce system, which at first will have results of decreasing profits for most but would soon flourish in moments time.

This relates immensely to **politics**, along with **race** and **labor**. Politics are involved due to Britain's want to abolish the slave trade not for humanitarian reasons, but to gain economic and political power through diplomacy. If they persuaded other countries to back out of the slave trade, then they would have have an advantage over all

from getting more raw materials from Africans for their mass productions during the industrial rev. Race of course is involved since this is about keeping or abolishing the African slave trade. The US felt free blacks were troublesome to their institution of slavery. South wanted to force all blacks to become slaves. Also, labor is taken into consideration since every labor workforce were worked by slaves at this time (plantations and Britain's machinery). The dispute was, if the slave trade stops, how will the economy keep up to par.