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Example Student Essay: *What was the social, economic, and political impact of the Atlantic Slave Trade?*

The Atlantic slave trade impacted social, economic, political relations between white and black people because whites didn't want to lose their privileges so they forced black people into submission. This all started when black people were taken from their countries and made into slaves. Europeans, including British, French, and Portuguese people took the enslaved people to Mexico and Brazil. 200,000 people were sent to Mexico and 3.6 million were sent to Brazil, and forced to do work for these white people. They had to walk 50-350 miles to the coast after being captured and then put into a holding cell. Not to mention they were on a boat for 3-6 months with no bathroom or clothes and chained up. They would sit in their own waste and lots of people would die from the diseases being caused; they were only fed just enough to stay alive. Most importantly, some of the brutalities of slavery was that when the slaves were working on the plantations, a lot of them would get hurt from chopping down the sugar cane and when they would run away or escape they were whipped which caused disgusting welts and sores on their backs. The lasting impact of slavery was the creation of white fear of Black freedom, the establishment of laws, and ensuring that economic power remains in the hands of white people.

One example of white people profiting off of Black people is the Whitney plantation. The Whitney plantation was a labor camp in Louisiana and black people were forced to harvest sugar there from 1752 to 1975. Working on the sugar plantation was very dangerous for blacks because they had to use a huge machete knife to cut down the sugar cane. According to Khalil Gibran Muhammad's "Sugar" essay, sugar houses operated night and day. People would lose an arm to the grinding rollers or be flayed for failing to keep up. And resistance was met with "sadistic cruelty." A formerly enslaved black woman named Mrs. Webb was reported describing one of the torture chambers. She stated that one of the owners' cruelties was "to place a disobedient slave, standing in a box, in which there were nails placed in such a manner that the poor creature was unable to move." Louisiana led the nation in destroying the lives of black people in economic efficiency. I say this because in the document it said that the sugar parishes there "had a pattern of deaths exceeding births." Also working on the sugar plantation was backbreaking labor and the enslaved people were already having a hard time trying to resist the life threatening diseases of dirt and poverty. Their life expectancy was only about seven years while being overworked and abused brutally by white people (NYTimes.com). This impacted slavery in more economic ways when the rebellions happened, causing whites to lose money.

The Atlantic slave trade was impacted greatly when the three rebellions happened. But one of the most successful rebellions that happened during that time was the Haitian Revolution. The Haitian revolution was from 1791 to 1804 and when that happened white people were scared and worried about losing their money. In the letter from Charles Pinckney to George Washington, Pinckney was the governor of South Carolina. And in his letter he talked about the

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sugar estates being attacked and he was worried about the rebellion spreading. Saying, “I am afraid if not checked in time it is a flame which will extend to all the neighbouring islands” (Document 1). This quote shows that white people and our founding fathers were worried that if Black people here in the United States heard about the people in the Haiti rebellion then they would try to fight back too. The sugar plantations were also losing money and that affected whites economically. And our founding fathers didn’t even believe in half of the things they wrote in the declaration of independence and they had slaves. The Haitian revolution was the beginning of white fear that still goes on today. After the revolution, whites made sure that Black people couldn’t do almost anything.

Slavery was politically impacted when the government passed laws so that whites could remain in power. According to the “Act For the Better Ordering and Governing Negroes” document, many laws were made for Black people in 1740. Some of the laws stated that no enslaved person could go off the plantation or out of city limits without a letter or a ticket. And that they could not travel in groups of seven or more people and that no enslaved person should be taught to read and write or learn anything for that matter. These laws were unfair and beyond unnecessary, Black people basically couldn’t even live their lives without being beaten or abused for “breaking the law.” Whites let power and their fear take control over them, causing all of this chaos and torture. Creating laws that blacks couldn’t meet at night or attend gatherings together is just ridiculous. And the worst part is that if they break any of the laws they would be whipped on their backs or have worse consequences.

All of this white fear has been going on for years and years and is still going on in our present day. Not all whites are afraid of blacks but a good amount are and that’s what causes so many young Black people to lose their lives for no reason at all. Slavery was a terrible 200 years for Black people because of white people and their hunger for power and privilege. It was never okay to take innocent free people from their country and brand them and force them to do free labor. It was never okay to make laws stating that Black people couldn’t attend funerals and be in groups or leave without a pass from their “owner.” Slavery may not technically exist in today’s world, but it does exist in many different forms. Our world has to change for the better because Black people don’t make our country worse, we make it better. We influence some of the most amazing and socially popular things, certain people just don’t think we are worthy enough to do anything with our lives. They think that we are all disgusting and ghetto and loud and wild and crazy, but I can surely prove to you that we are not. We are proud kings and queens, and we are changing the world one day at a time.