# The Move to Abolish Slavery

Abolition was the reform movement that sought to end the slave trade and emancipate the slaves. Slavery was an economic institution that benefited slave masters at the expense of the slaves. The slaves were believed to lack a soul and, therefore, their ill treatment was justifiable. Several events led to the emergence of the movement. The Quakers questioned whether slavery was really right and this move led many others to start having public discussions about the issue. The philosophy of all human beings being equal also helped push the abolition agenda forward. American society was affected in various ways. First, the division of the North and South is still felt today. Race relations took a turn for the negative with the Jim Crow era that followed. The benefit of the movement was the eventual freedom that the slaves got. Abolitionism was a culmination of several events and factors, but its impact on the American society was great.

The abolitionism movement had a big impact on American society. Decades of the slave trade had taken African natives far away from their homeland to foreign lands to provide labor. As the atrocities of the slave trade started to grab public attention among citizens in Great Britain and the American continent, the trade started seeming unfavorable in public opinion. Calls arose to have the trade abolished. The main aim of the reform movement was to stop the Atlantic Slave Trade and give the slaves their freedom. This reform had the most profound impact on American society because of the events that followed. States started ratifying their constitutions upholding the equality of human beings. The opposition of the Southern states to let go of their slaves greatly contributed to the American Civil War that lasted four years from 1861 up to1865 which divided the United States with the Southern states pushing for secession wanting to form a Confederacy instead (Feagin 2014). The American civil war led to the Reconstruction era in the south which set the pace for racial relations which are still visible in today’s society. The abolitionism reform movement allowed the African American community to live their lives free. Despite the negative events that followed, the movement had a positive impact in that the United States addressed the unjust treatment of the slaves.

Religion and philosophy contributed to the reform. Religion had been used for a long time to justify the existence and use of slavery by slave masters. The lack of condemnation of slavery in the Bible was their justification for the fact that God allowed them to own slaves. However, it also became the catalyst for the abolitionism movement. Quakers had started to question whether slavery was moral. The experiences that slaves had made several individuals question if holding people against their will under such harsh conditions was really the moral step taken (Harrold 2014). Philosophy was used to push for the abolitionism reform. For a long time, the slaves were deemed as inferior, and, therefore, it was not a crime to hold them against their will. However, humanitarians started to argue that the slaves were human beings just like their masters. Several states in the north started acknowledging the equality of all human beings including slaves in their constitution. Such moves laid the foundation for the states to constitutionally end slavery. Therefore, when Abraham Lincoln tried to make such a move on the national constitution, the southern states were aware that their power to hold slaves was in jeopardy.

The abolitionist movement had several effects on American society. The first effect was the eventual emancipation of slaves all over the United States. After losing the Civil War, the reluctant southern states had to end slave trade and practicing slavery. The Great Migration ensued where many African Americans moved to the North in search better opportunities for their families; carrying their cultural practices with them. The second impact of the abolitionist movement was the division of the United States into the North and the South. Despite the loss of the Confederacy to the Union, the United States would continue to be divided with some members from the South constantly pushing for calls for secession (Feagin 2014). The country moved to being divided along racial lines with people of color living in the same towns with the white people but using different and often inferior facilities and amenities. Many of the African Americans struggled to get financial stability with some even saying that it was better when they were slaves since they were often provided for. The Jim Crow laws and era was a very difficult period for the African Americans leading activism which is still being practiced to this present day so as to improve life for African Americans through advocacy.

In conclusion, abolitionism was a movement that sought to end the brutal slave trade and institution of slavery. Despite the great financial benefits that the Americans enjoyed, the human cost was too high for them to ignore. Religion and philosophy were used to justify the cause for the abolitionists. The movement exposed the divisions in American society; however, the nation moved forward after overcoming that hurdle. The movement was eventually successful leading to the emancipation of African slaves. With their freedom, the slaves were free to do whatever they wanted. There are many events that took place within the United States in the 1800s. However, the abolitionist reform movement had a great impact on the society and its effects are still present in the modern day.

## Bibliography

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