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AP European History

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LEQ #2: Analyze the various effects of the expansion of the Atlantic slave trade on the economy of Western Europe in the period circa 1450-1700. (*causation*)

Funnel Introduction:

During the period of exploration, explorers particularly from Spain and Portugal began to discover places like the coast of Africa, India and the New World. Patrons such as Prince Henry the Navigator and the king and queen of Spain sponsored various expeditions. As explorers went on expeditions they established colonies and pursued their goals which were God(converting others to Catholicism), glory (establishing a name for themselves and their country) and gold(seeking wealth and prosperity). In places such as present day Mexico, the european colonists forced the Native American and African slaves to work and contribute to the European economy. The slaves were heavily involved in the relationship of dependence between the New World and European economy. (contextualization) The expansion of the Atlantic slave trade contributed to the economy of Western Europe in the period 1450-1700 by providing goods and adding wealth to the countries (restatement). The expansion of the Atlantic slave trade provided the Europeans an improved economy and diverse variety of products from the new World (X). Consequently, the slave trade brought negative effects to the economy by weakening the the traditional society and the economy. (Y).

Body Paragraph #1:

Slaves were forced under cruel conditions to produce commodities. Colonizers used slave labor in order to produce goods in order to benefit the economy of Western Europe.

Evidence:

* Silver was one of the major precious metals that was produced in the New World and sent to the Spanish king and queen.
* Slaves worked as miners; in the middle of the sixteenth century silver mining provided a large portion of metallic wealth.
* Natives were forced to mine for silver in Peru and other smaller sites in Northern Mexico for the benefit of the Spanish.

Analysis:

A portion of the silver was shipped to Spain, and the Spanish crown enjoyed the silver as well as the approximately one fifth of the revenue earned from mining the silver. The crown maintained the production of silver in order to benefit their profitt.

Evidence:

* Slaves worked on the sugar cane plantations in the West Indies in order to fulfil the high demand of sugar in Europe.

Analysis:

There was a insatiable demand for sugar in Europe. Therefore, colonizers used slave labor in order to fulfill the demand for spices like sugar. Sugar was a frequently traded item and became a profitable item which stimulated the economies of Europe.

Evidence:

* New wealth sprung up with the slave trade which allowed people to sponsor other industries.

Analysis:

Governments and private entrepreneurs sponsored research and expansion in industries such as printing, mining, shipping and weapons. This then allowed those industries to flourish and in essence more wealth was created which contribute to the growth of the economy. With government planning industries such as the French silk industry evolved in Western Europe.

Body Paragraph #2:

The expansion of the Atlantic slave trade contributed to negative aspects of the economy and in turn it affected the social divisions in Western Europe’s society.

Evidence:

* As people like the Medicis of Florence and the Fuggers became wealthier and capitalistic, social problems affected Western Europe.

Analysis:

The new wealth that arose heightened the expectations of the poor people.

With the poor people’s expectations increasing, the amount of goods produced would have to increase and the traditional society became aggravated. The wealthy people became reactionary. Therefore the social divisions in society became complicated.

Evidence:

* The influx of commodities and goods caused inflation in Western Europe.

Analysis:

The influx of spices and metals steadily increased prices during the sixteenth century. The inflation rate was about 2 percent over a period of time. Additionally, bullion from the Americas increased the amount of coinage which contributed even more to inflation. Wages and rent however did not increase with the rise of prices.

Conclusion (restatement of thesis): With the Atlantic slave trade the influx of products from the New World was a mixed blessing for Western European society. The economy benefitted through various goods brought to Western Europe such as sugar and precious metals. People also expanded various industries such as printing. On the other hand, the economy suffered from effects such as inflation and social aspects of the social classes.

Synthesis: The effect of the economy in Europe left an impression of the future of the country and affected the outcomes of slave labor. In the future, slave labor would be used in other European colonies such as the United States. Slavery is still prevalent today in some countries and contributes to the economy today. Labor costs are cheaper in some countries and therefore the price of the product is less.