



Conflict and Compromise: The Political Economy of Slavery, Emancipation and the American Civil War

Roger L. Ransom

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No series of events had a more dramatic impact on the course of American history than the Civil War and the emancipation of four million slaves. This book examines the economic and political factors that led to the attempt by Southerners to dissolve the Union in 1860 and the equally determined effort of Northerners to preserve it. A central thesis of the book is that slavery not only "caused" the Civil War by producing tensions that could not be resolved by compromise; the slave system also played a crucial role in the outcome of the war by crippling the Southern war effort at the same time that emancipation became a unifying cause for the North. The author looks at a century of sectional conflict over slavery and reveals a great irony of the American Civil War. The South suffered a bitter defeat in a war to protect the institution of slavery, even though it is likely that the Constitution of the United States offered the best protection for a slave system. And, despite the abolition of slavery in the United States, equality for Black Americans remained a distant dream.

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