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## The Policy of Doom that Led to the Trail of Tears

The Indian Removal Act was a law that was passed by Congress and signed by former President at the time, Andrew Jackson on May 28th, 1830, demanding Native Americans including--- Cherokee, Choctaw, Chickasaw, and the Creek tribes to be removed from the Southern States, their ancestral homelands, to further the expansion of the United States.

The Indian Removal Act authorizes access for Jackson to expand the U.S. westward and drive out the Native Americans to other existing lands in the U.S. . Approximately 4,000 Native Americans died on their path to new lands notably called "The Trail of Tears". President Jackson then had been put on trial for whether he's guilty for the mass death that occurred when the Indian Removal Act was put in place. When looking into the policies the U.S had towards the Native Americans, it's plain to see that the policies were just filled with lies and broken promises.

In the trial, Andrew Jackson was on trial for the unconstitutional law that preceded the Trail of Tears and resulted in the death of many Native Americans. The prosecution had went first and each testified against President Jackson. Each testifying about their history during these dark times and how they were somehow involved in the whole case. The lawyers asked each witness questions and interrogated the defense side when their own group of witnesses testifying their history and support of Jackson. The jurors had watched the entire trial and will have to come to the decision on whether Jackson will be ruled guilty or innocent.

The policies the U.S had towards the Native Americans had only wished for their destruction from the start by first trying to relentlessly take their lands. The policies that had been put into place was the "The Northwest Ordinance" and "Cherokee v. Georgia". The Northwest Ordinance of 1787 states that " Indians were to be treated with the "utmost good faith" and specified that "their lands and property shall never be taken away from them without their consent.

This unfortunately wasn't a very solid policy because Europeans still tried to take lands from the Natives. In the Cherokee v. Georgia case of 1819, the Cherokees filed a court case against Georgia claiming that Cherokee lands and people are an independent government. The Cherokees had won the case but that victory was cut short with the Indian Removal Act.

The Natives were notably known as very peaceful people but will go to war if absolutely necessary. From Document E which contains a quote from Chief Joseph from a newspaper called "Harper's Weekly", Chief Joseph declares " If the white man wants to live in peace

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with the Indian....we can live in peace. There need be no trouble. Treat all men alike.... give them all the same law. Give them all an even chance to live and grow. You might as well expect the rivers to run backward as that any man who is born a free man should be contented when penned up and denied liberty to go where he pleases. We only ask an even chance to live as other men live. We ask to be recognized as men. Let me be a free man.... ” But trying to make peace with the Europeans came with a price.

In the trial, when a witness from the defense side of the case, named “George Custer” testified that he fought with his 210 troops in the battle of Little Bighorn, a war that broke out over the intrusion of Europeans, but then he lost and died. He stated that he didn’t look up to Jackson for his ideals but he has had contact with him. He also testifies that “he was picked to fight in the war due to his caliber unit and unions.” He felt that winning the war against the Natives was going to be too easy for him and was overconfident in his nonexistent victory. He fought the Sioux and Cheyenne warriors with only 210 men when the Natives had 2,000 warriors. Then he died along with his men.

With all of these policies promising that Natives will be left alone, it wasn’t bearing any fruit. The next policy that didn’t help was the infamous Dawes Act that was established in 1887. The Dawes Act is a U.S policy to forcibly make Natives assimilate to the European society and promises to grant U.S citizenship to the Natives. The Europeans promised to the Natives that this was for their own good due to a more than blatant cultural/religious/racial superiority.

The Europeans had forced the tribes to get rid of their tribal clothes for tribal dances, their gods and/or goddesses, to cut their long hair short, and their land all while forcing their children to assimilate by making them attend boarding schools. One notable incident was in Carlisle Indian Industrial School in Pennsylvania.”

However, some may say that the Indian Removal Act, along with other U.S policies towards Native Americans had benefitted both the Natives and the Europeans. They may bring up how you can’t blame one man, President Jackson, for these horrible crimes against humanity. It’s understandable that in order to expand, you’re going to have to get past certain obstacles.

But when you sign a law into place, violate human rights of another group, and then ship them off off of their homelands which has been homes to their ancestors who were here longer than you have, try to defend why your European citizens can constantly intrude on lands that the Supreme Court has ruled as their (Natives) own but then cry wolf when they realize that they will retaliate, and then say that you’ll help them by forcibly removing them from their rightful lands. That just shows that there’s a major cognitive dissonance in these circumstances.

Overall, the U.S has not been kind to the Natives at all. They have made them promises that

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they either went back on or wouldn't keep. They constantly delude themselves into thinking that they're helping the Natives when they're actually driving them closing to their demise. When you consider and analyze all the policies the Natives has been exposed to from the U.S., one could see very clearly that U.S. doesn't care for Native Americans.

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