

## Colonization = Exploitation



**Colonialism** is the process in which the European exploring nations began the process of taking over other parts of the world and the indigenous people that were living there. A colony is an area serviced, supplied and controlled by a "mother country" whose resources are then shipped back to the "mother country". During the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries, European countries sought new sources of raw materials and new territories in which to control. Often this process would harm local **indigenous** populations. The Portuguese and the Spanish were the two countries that really kicked off the age of Colonialism, but other European nations were quick to follow, and it would be the British who perfected the process.

### Colonies as Money Makers

Prince Henry "The Navigator" of Portugal recognized the opportunity of creating Portuguese settlements or colonies during his explorations of Africa. By establishing Portuguese African outposts along the coast of West Africa, he provided ports for his ships to replenish and protected places to accumulate local resources and trade goods that could then be shipped back to Portugal. They would also use these colonies to create **plantations** that could mass produce tropical and semi-tropical crops that were in demand in Europe. Sugar and Tea will have a large part in the European colonization of Africa, Asia, and the Americas.

Soon other European countries would follow Spain and Portugal's example. Not content to watch these two countries become rich by exploring and exploiting other parts of the world, the British, French, Dutch and others would soon follow. Britain in particular would set up colonies throughout the world and some of those colonies, like Canada, Australia, New Zealand and others, would eventually become countries of their own, but would always retain ties to Britain. Regardless of which country started a colony, in almost all instances they started as a way for a "mother country" to exploit another part of the world. Resources were taken from the colonies to further enrich the European "mother country", and in this way Europe became home to some of the richest and most powerful countries in the world up until the 20<sup>th</sup> Century.

### Colonization Was Trouble for Indigenous Peoples

The term "indigenous" is used to describe those people who are native to a particular region that was then later occupied by Europeans. Indigenous people exist all over the world and in most cases the relationship between the indigenous people and the Europeans was a one-sided affair. Disease, slavery and the taking of land were some of the problems that indigenous people faced when the Europeans came.

**Colonialism** - the practice of a "mother country" taking over another part of the world and the people living there and then exploiting its resources.

**Indigenous** - the universal term given to describe groups of people who were native to a particular region. First Nations, Inuit and Maori are all examples of indigenous peoples.

**Plantations** - large scale farms that used to use slave labour, mostly from Africa.

The Spanish and Portuguese **Conquistadors** are good examples of early European colonial interference in the lives of indigenous peoples. The Conquistadors were soldiers that were sent by Spain with the specific purpose to subdue and enslave the local populations. When Spain began colonizing the Americas, it discovered vast amounts of gold and silver and needed a large labour force to extract or mine these valuable resources. The Conquistadors would be the soldiers who would not only enslave local people but defend the mines and plantations that used that slave labour. Eventually, the diseases that the Europeans brought to the Americas and the harsh working conditions on the **plantations** and in the mines would decimate the local indigenous populations. For the Europeans to continue to exploit the resources in and around their colonies another source of slaves had to be found. That source was Africa, and the colonization of the Americas would eventually see the largest forced migration of a group of people in human history.

### Sugar and Slaves

After the riches of gold and silver were extracted from the Americas, sugar became one of the biggest cash crops for colonizing countries. Sugar and the vast profits that could be made would eventually lead to a race to colonize not only the West Coast of Africa, but the tropical Caribbean islands of the Americas. Growing sugar cane is highly labour intensive, meaning that in order to bring in a large crop, you needed lots of people. Without large numbers of indigenous people around, the Portuguese were soon using slave labour from Africa and this practice quickly spread to other European **Caribbean** colonies as well.

**Conquistadors** - Spanish or Portuguese soldiers used to divide and conquer indigenous peoples of the Americas.

**Caribbean** - the islands and seas that are found in between the northern tip of South America and the Gulf of Mexico.

The Caribbean islands of the Americas were ideal for sugar plantations and the islands were quickly divided amongst the major colonial European powers of England, France, Holland and Spain. In almost all instances, these colonial powers had to import slave labour from Africa to work the sugar plantations. Eventually, slavery would expand and be extended to the continental colonies, but not after over 4 million slaves had been taken to the Caribbean islands just to service the sugar trade.

Colonialism will spread European populations, ideas and traditions around the globe and would create some of the most wealthy and powerful countries in the world. In almost all cases though, colonialism will exploit and harm indigenous populations. It is difficult to imagine a world today without colonialism, but in many parts of the world, some of the wrongs that were committed by the process of colonialism are only now trying to be addressed.



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**Directions:** READ the handout entitled; "Colonization = Exploitation" and then answer the following questions.

1. Use your handout to provide definitions for the following terms: (1 mark each)

Colonialism                  Indigenous                  Conquistadors  
Plantations                  Caribbean

2. On a separate piece of paper, answer the following questions using **COMPLETE SENTENCE**:

- a. In your own words, describe why the European countries were interested in starting up colonies overseas? Who were the first two European countries to really kick start colonialism? (2 marks for quality of response and inclusion of details)
- b. In your own words describe why the Spanish needed to enslave the local indigenous populations of Central and South America? What happened to those peoples and how were they replaced? (2 marks for the quality of your response and evidence of thought and effort)
- c. In your own words, describe what cash crop was used to create massive wealth for European countries in the Caribbean. Identify four specific European countries who created plantation colonies in the Caribbean. (2 marks for quality of response and evidence of insight)

3. Map - Use the information provided on in your readings to **COLOR AND LABEL** the blank map provided.

You will be marked out of 5 for correct labelling and evidence of effort.

Total \_\_\_/16

**Directions:** Colour and Label the following map.

