**The Conflict between the White Colonizers and Native Americans**

Task 1

# “What were the sources of conflict between white colonizers in the New World and Native inhabitants. What do these conflicts tell us about these divergent cultures?”

The first time European people arrived in North America was on October 12, in 1492 on the island called San Salvador, which already has been inhabited by Native Americans for the millennia. (The Gilder Lehrman, The Institute of American History u.d.) Toanswer the question above, we can say that the primary reason for the conflicts between these two “races”, were their individual interests, which again consisted of several significant factors which contributed to the outbreak of many bloody battles. There are many explanations for white settlers’ success in America. The starting point could be a combination of good economy and technology, which resulted in greed and brutality of Europeans. (Vern Cleary u.d.). Other relevant factors like nationalism, commerce and motivation for the colonization, thus a strong desire for expansion of it, but also social and cultural factors – such as religion and spread of epidemics. (Academy, khanacademy.org/humanities/us-history 2018). These elements contributed to their success with conquest of the New World. Based on the mentioned elements below it is quite easy to assume that white settlers had a very high thoughts of themselves, while the indigenous people of America were often oppressed when they were taken under the leadership of the European colonizers. In the passages below, it has been written some answers and suggestions about historical relations between people from the New and Old World, thus how their communication escalated further, but also what the consequences of their brutal conflicts tell us about their contradictory cultures.

The continent of North-America was discovered much earlier than the arrival of the white colonizers from the Old World - even though they thought they were the first one to explore it. The first people on the continent were Native Americans, such as Anasazi, Cahokia and Aztec. They spread southward and eastward, where they started to evolve their own complex societies. (Boyer 2012, 3,4,5). Each of them had their own languages, cultures, as well as they had their own religious and traditional practices, thus the source of livelihood in general was very different from tribe to tribe. (The arrival of Europeans in late 1400’s was quite unexpected for the local inhabitants, and therefore, they had a little reason to suspect that horrible things were waiting for them. (owlcation.com 2016). The arrival of Europeans resulted in big challenges for both parts of the conflict. Natives developed communities where they built pueblos, crafted jewelry and rested a living from the arid soil. (Boyer 2012, 1-2)*.* In other words, they developed their societies in a calm and harmonious pace. Meanwhile the situation in the Old World was more characterized by urban and industrial developments, already at this very point, it indicated a cultural crash between those two. A combination of good economy and technology, but also religious and political motives were the main reasons why white colonizers wanted to explore new corners of the world. It should be mentioned that the continent of North America was accidentally discovered by Christopher Columbus. (Stephens 2018). He had various ulterior motives when he went on his voyages to “India”, even though the gold was primary reason for his adventure. (Academy, Khanacademy.org u.d.). Commerce, profit and wealth were not the only factors for his travel, but Columbus and his companions had a strong desire, more like an urge to convert the Native Indians to Christianity. By that time, vast majority of the European population was characterized by strong Christian beliefs, so Columbus saw his voyages as decent fulfillments of biblical prophecies. (Boyer 2012, 3-4). The Spanish monarchs, Ferdinand and Isabella, who chose to finance his travel into the unknown had ulterior motives as well as Columbus himself. They sought to extend their domains, thus obtain and achieve the wealth they have dreamed of for a long time. (Boyer 2012, 3). This was an early sign of corruption and typical European greed of not having enough. Out of this passage it is obvious to comprehend that Spaniards were the first one to arrive in the New World, thus settle down in Florida, New Mexico and several other island in the Caribbean. As they arrived, their ships were full of Spanish-speaking soldiers, Catholic missionaries, priests and colonial administrators. (Boyer 2012, 3)*.* Each of them hoped to realize their own and their country’s government dreams - about gaining more wealth and become richer. It took a whole decade before the Dutch and the British adventurers followed in footprints of the Spanish explorers, which resulted in Dutch establishment of Nieuw Amsterdam in the north and British settlement in the state of Virginia and Massachusetts, where historic Jamestown and Plymouth were established. (Americaslibrary.gov u.d.) (Boyer 2012, 4). As the population in Europe was growing, more and more Europeans arrived at the continent. With their invasion they brought various diseases – such as measles and smallpox, where the latter eradicated thousands of the local inhabitants. Biggest part of the natives was extinct, while another one was forced to be slaves. (Ostler 2015). Europeans started to colonize the natives in order to create new farmlands and jobs for the growing population in their home countries. Since the communication between these two “nations” was none-existing, as well as none of them could speak a common language - they had no opportunity to compromise. Because of the strong nationalism, many of the Native Americans resisted to be enslaved, but somehow, they were forced to surrender and live as peasants and laborers. (Vaughan 1982, 952-953). The Spanish colonizers seemed to be much more aggressive and more brutal compared to the colonizers who came from France and England. The first Spanish colonizers were quite harsh in the way they treated the native inhabitants. With their first settlement they established a Spanish fort in Florida, where it served as the center of efforts. Spanish priests and missionaries worked hard on converting natives to the Roman Catholicism. (u-s-history.com u.d.) Later in the development, Spanish settlers also invaded southern parts of the continent. For instance, they occupied one of the Pueblo villages in today’s Mexico, where they invented a labor system in addition to enslavement, which resulted in that Natives were required to pay tributes in form of labor and crops to Spaniards. If the Indians resist or failed, they were sentenced to death penalty. (Pauls, Elizabeth Prine 2018). The combination of living under bad conditions, the suppression of their tribe’s religion and culture, various epidemics, thus the invasion of their villages and enforced loyalty to foreign monarch led to many bloody conflicts and high mortality rate. (Pauls, Elizabeth Prine 2018). Those who survived were forced to accept Christianity. (u-s-history.com u.d.). Somehow, the relationship between these two rivals improved when they finally started to cooperate in livestock rising. Later in the process of colonization new restrictions were approved, and milder regime followed, although many conflicts still appeared. (Stephens 2018)

The only things the Europeans knew about New World is that they needed to find a way how to survive there, as well as the dealing with the locals who they knew little about. Based on the rumors, white colonizers just assumed that Native Americans unlike themselves – were quite “primitive” people in their way of life. European way of thinking can indicate that the colonizers were very biased and xenophobic. They had a quite mixed perception of the indigenous people of America. From one aspect, they knew that Indians could be very helpful and that they were interested in trading, but at the same time colonizers knew that it could be a propaganda of their country’s government and the trading companies who had a strong desire for promotion of European colonies. The stock companies such as Virginia Company and Somers Isles Company, which were financed by rich and wealthy Englishmen understood the economic potential of the new world. (contributors 2015). For instance, later in the process, it was a lot of corruption in Spanish colonies, among the local administrators, etc. which again linked it to the government back in Spain. This factor did not only worsen the condition of Indians, but also made it harder for Spanish soldiers to defend their territories where they had their colonies. (owlcation.com/humanities u.d.). One common thing which often bothered Europeans before their arrival in New World, is that they knew they needed to find a way to survive in the bushes. Even though they had a high level of technology and solid tools, they could not use them in the same way as they did it at home. Because of the cultural differences, but also not knowing how to communicate - usually, vast majority of Europeans thought of Natives as very degrading, which often formed a basis for pessimism and racism. The situation deteriorated when one of Indian tribes attacked the first arrivals of Spaniards and made landfall. (Pauls, Elizabeth Prine 2018). In general, the process did not start very well and not how the white colonizers really expected it to be. They became quite suspicious of the Natives, while Indians, perhaps felt the same way for white settlers, even though they had their own ulterior motives for the communication with them. For instance, the colonizers from England knew that their level of technology and weapons were at least as good as Spanish, therefore, they were always sure of that they could defeat the Natives in the fight, just as the Spanish did before them. With such approach and attitude white colonizers always thought of themselves as much smarter and more advanced compared to their potential enemies, exactly because of their high-developed technology and army. The communication between the colonizers and the natives depended on which region they came from, but also what kind of interests each of them had. The European colonizers is just a general term for white settlers who came from the Old World hoping to become even richer. Usually, they came from the high-developed nations with strong navy powers. When the Europeans began their settlement, it was very complicated, and therefore they needed help from the Natives. This meant that one of the parts needed to adapt to the culture of another, in addition finding a common way of communication. Like any other nations, many of the native tribes were characterized by a strong nationalism, which meant that they did not want to adapt to the culture of the newcomers. The indigenous inhabitants quickly became enemies, but also allied with some of the European settlers. (Boyer 2012, 13,14)

In addition to strong nationalism, there were also some cultural differences which provided a fundamental basis for vast majority of the conflicts between these two “nations”. Newcomers who came to the New World argued that they were the first one to arrive at the continent, simply because of their high-developed marine, advanced weapons and the urban society they were living in, therefore they also thought that they could rule the continent after their own restrictions and regimes. Each successive wave of newcomers judged Native population for their standards of civilization, thus based their prejudices on these arguments and therefore, also assumed that they were much more intelligent and sophisticated compared to the Native inhabitants. (Alvarrez 2011). White colonizers had also a visionary of that Christianity was the right religion for everybody. It was God self who helped them through the difficult periods on their voyages. Exactly same thoughts they wanted to convey to the natives. They believed that spreading of their education, religious beliefs and traditions was superior and that their way of life was the most efficient than the native one. (Christine Leigh Heyrman u.d.). The life of Indian people was very different. They were not used to communicate with others, apart their own tribes on the continent. Unlike the European settlers, Indians did not distinguish between the natural and the supernatural, therefore they based their religion on the pure spirituality and animism. Animism was a spiritual idea of that every single object and element on the Planet Earth had a soul and spirit. (Alchin 2012). In their view, plants, animals and humans partook of divinity through close connection with “guardian spirits”. Protestants and Catholics were more about the gulf that distinguished between the pure, the angels, the saints, the God and sinful profane world which was filled with temptations and evil. (Christine Leigh Heyrman u.d.). According to Christian beliefs and traditions, the idea of spirituality was away too primitive for white colonizers.

To summarize this up, it can be found that both “nations” have played an important part in the history of America. From the very beginning, Indian people were very oppressed, which ended with the death of many and their national situation became even worse than it was. The arrival of Europeans, thus their treatment of the native inhabitants, but also their competition for political and military alliances with Native tribes through nation-to-nation treaties was far away from acceptable – today it is a basis for U.S Indian Law. (Alvarrez 2011). Even though the discrimination and racism towards them is not pervasive as it was in the past - it does not help much against their current problems. Today, the situation is not as good as it should be, considered that the Federal Government has a special obligation to care for its Native American population. Most of the Indians today continue to live on tribal lands, where their living conditions are equivalent to the Third World. (Boxer 2009). The development on reservations is quite slow and therefore many of them are still suffering as the consequence of bad health, environmental destructions, social challenges and exploitation. (Nativepartnership.org 2015).

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