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"Politics, Markets, Theories of Capitalism"

EUROPE AND THE PEOPLE WITHOUT HISTORY

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Pacific. In 1580 the Spanish king succeeded to the Portuguese throne as well, tying Portugal to Spain until 1640.

The Dutch, then fighting their prolonged war against Spain, thus found an excuse and an opportunity to oust the Portuguese from their holdings in Asia and America. The Dutch East India Company was
1602
founded in 1602 in order to break the Portuguese monopoly over the
1621
spice trade. In 1621 a Dutch West India Company was created as well. Twenty years later, the Dutch had taken most of the Portuguese strongholds along the Atlantic coast of Africa, seized Brazil, occupied Curaçao and several other Caribbean islands, and established settlements in North America at New Amsterdam, on Long Island, and in Delaware. But while the Dutch seizure of the East Indies proved successful, they were unable to hold most of their new western possessions. Brazil rose in rebellion, ousting the Dutch in 1654; the Portuguese regained many of their African strongholds; and the English captured New Amsterdam in 1644.

The English expansion overseas was at first in the shadow of Dutch power. The English East India Company had been chartered in 1600, but it took second place to the Dutch Company until the latter part of the seventeenth century. While the English had raided in the Americas during their struggle with Spain in the sixteenth century, they established themselves in the Spanish Caribbean only in 1624, with the settlement of Barbados, followed by the seizure of Jamaica in 1655. They had founded a number of settlements along the North American coast in Virginia, Maryland, and New England, consolidating these in the face of Dutch competition; in the course of the global struggle between the English and the Dutch in the second half of the seventeenth century, these English possessions in America gained as Dutch power receded. The organization of a new English company to trade in Africa in 1660 allowed England to make further inroads on Dutch trade.

Yet as the Dutch threat receded, the English found themselves face to face with French competition in North America. French colonization had begun there early in the sixteenth century. In 1608 Quebec was founded; in 1642, Montreal. As the fur trade expanded westward along the St. Lawrence River into the Great Lakes, it gave rise to a prolonged struggle in which the English strove to choke off the French advance. This struggle would end only the capture of Canada by Britain in 1763. On the other side of the globe, the English East India Company would face the fierce competition of the French India Company (founded in
1664
1664). This competition, too, was resolved in favor of England, when ruinous war debts drove the French Company into bankruptcy in 1769.

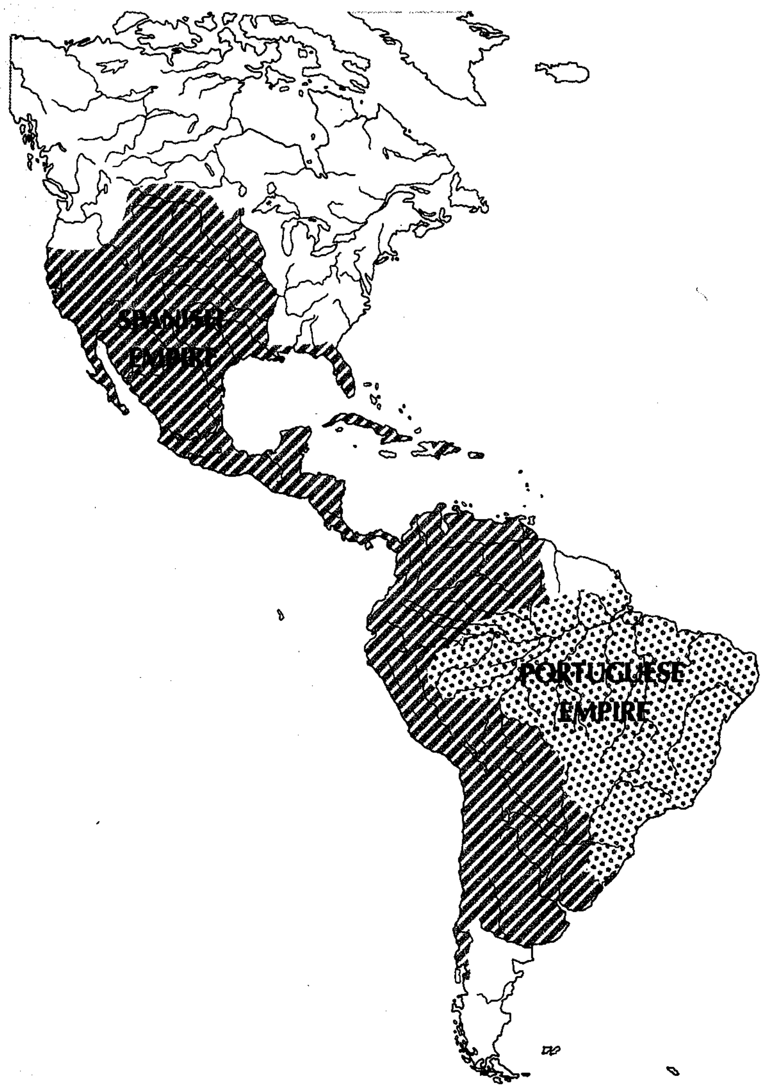
In less than two centuries, therefore, the European powers expanded the scope of their trading activities to all the continents and made the world their battleground. The quest for American silver, the fur trade, the trade in slaves, and the search for Asian spices drew people into new and unforeseen interdependencies and profoundly changed their lives.

5 Iberians in America

In 1493 Columbus returned from his first voyage to the Caribbean, in the belief—which he maintained until his death—that he had reached islands lying off the eastern coast of Asia. A year later, Castile-Aragón and Portugal signed a treaty at Tordesillas staking out their claims to the newly found lands. They drew a dividing line 370 leagues west of the Cape Verde Islands. Castile, believing that it now controlled a direct route to the Orient, claimed all lands west of the line—and thereby acquired the major part of the Western Hemisphere. Portugal, intent mainly upon keeping the Spaniards out of the South Atlantic, took all lands to the east of the line and thus came into possession of Brazil. Portugal, occupied with establishing its hegemony over the South Atlantic and Monsoon Asia, was slow to consolidate its claims in the New World. Castile-Aragón, however, moved rapidly to secure the fabled treasures of the "Indies."

Two decades after the discovery of the Americas, the Castilians had already consolidated their bases in the Great Antilles and along the Isthmus of Panama. Cortés's conquest of Mexico was completed in 1521 with the destruction of the Mexica capital of Tenochtitlán. Pizarro captured the Inca capital of Cuzco in 1533. By 1541 the Castilians had laid the foundations of the new city of Santiago in Chile. These Indies belonged to the Crown of Castile and were administered by direct representatives of the Castilian king sitting in Mexico City, center of the Viceroyalty of New Spain, and in Lima, center of the Viceroyalty of Peru.
Cortés 1521
Pizarro 1533

In this realm created by conquest, the prizes of victory were fame and fortune—both dependent, it was thought, on the labor of the native populations. The new society thus came to be divided from the outset into "the natives of the land" (*naturales de la tierra*) and Spaniards. The natives were categorized together under the cover term *Indian*, in spite of marked differences in their languages and cultures. Above the natives stood the Spaniards—the conquerors, their descendants, and all the later arrivals who aspired to their status—who came to define themselves as "men of reason" (*gente de razón*). Not that these men of reason



Spain and Portugal in the New World.

were all of one kind. The conquerors included nobles and commoners, rich and poor. After the conquest they rapidly divided further into various and often antagonistic layers: the captains of real wealth and power; the men of moderate means, skill and influence; an array of hungry followers who depended upon others for their "bread and water" (*paniaguados*); and hosts of vagrants, who lived along the margins of the developing networks of social relations. Yet they all shared an interest in maintaining their common superiority as conquerors over the conquered. They formed the dominant element in the towns, which enmeshed the conquered countryside in a network of Spanish control, constituting the foundation of Spanish power in the Indies. These towns were all laid out along the same grid-pattern plan, pivoted upon a central square containing mayoralty and church, site at once of the regular market and the emergency call-up of military forces. Each town, with its oligarchic *cabildo* (town council) of *vecinos* (citizens eligible to attend council meetings), represented a microcosm of Spanish control in a sea of "Indians."

It was ultimately these Indians whom the colonists hoped to control. Yet this basic resource underwent an immediate and catastrophic decline.

The Great Dying

The "great dying" first affected the islands of the Caribbean. It then spread to the mainland shores and to the Middle and South American lowlands in general. Finally, it made inroads into the highlands, which had supported the great polities of the Aztec, Chibcha, and Inca. Thus, Española (Santa Domingo) had about a million inhabitants in 1492, when first contacted by Columbus; by the end of the 1520s only insignificant numbers survived (Sauer 1966: 65–69, 200–204). A primary cause of the population decline was the spread of Old World pathogenic organisms to which New World populations were not immune. The impact of smallpox and measles, often complicated by respiratory ailments, was perhaps decisive over wide areas. There were as many as fourteen major epidemics in Mesoamerica and perhaps as many as seventeen in the Andean region between 1520 and 1600 (Gibson 1964: 448–451; Dobyns 1963: 494). Other illnesses had more localized effects. On the Mesoamerican coast, malaria—probably introduced by Spanish merchants and soldiers from Italy—caused regional havoc and then spread through the tropical lowlands.

The advent of pathogens, however, does not in itself furnish an adequate explanation of what happened. One must ask also about the social and political conditions that permitted the pathogens to proliferate at so rapid a rate. On the islands and in the borderlands of the Caribbean, these conditions clearly included the profligate use of Indian labor in the search for gold, and (after 1494) the massive intensification

200,000

of slave raiding and slavery. Nicaragua alone lost, in the first half of the sixteenth century, an estimated 200,000 inhabitants to slave raiders, who sold their prey in the Caribbean islands, Panama, and Peru (MacLeod 1973: 52). Portuguese settlement in Brazil also brought large-scale Indian slavery. By the 1560s there were 40,000 native Americans laboring as slaves in the Brazilian Northeast (Hemming 1978: 143). During the last third of the sixteenth century, native social relations had grown sufficiently deranged to cause the Indians of Bahia to rise up in a great millenarian movement, the *Santidade*, in which people ceased to grow food for themselves in the hope that God would free them from slavery and make the Europeans their slaves instead. In all, the slave-raiding *bandeirantes* of São Paulo are thought to have furnished the Brazilian Northeast with 350,000 native American slaves during the period of Brazilian slavery. Since most of the populations of the lowlands were organized according to kin-ordered modes, such massive drains of manpower severely curtailed their ability to enforce and reproduce the rights to people that made their survival possible.

40,000

350,000

In Mesoamerica and in the Andean areas, large-scale populations had supported complex tributary systems, such as the Aztec confederation and the Inca domain. In these areas the catastrophic population decline contributed to the fragmentation of existing polities. The pre-Hispanic population of Mesoamerica has been estimated at 25 million, that of the Inca domain at anywhere between 6 million (Rowe) and 30 million (Dobyns). Whatever the baseline figure, the decline decimated the population. In Mesoamerica the population count fell to a low point of 1.5 million by 1650, recovering slowly thereafter. The number of inhabitants of the Spanish audiencias of Lima and Charcas, in Lower and Upper Peru respectively, declined from 5 million at the time of the Conquest to less than 300,000 in the 1780s and 1790s (Kubler 1946: 340).

In these highland areas malnutrition probably increased the virulence of the new diseases (see Feinman 1978). Food supplies both in Mesoamerica and the Andes depended, in the first instance, on highly organized and intensive systems of land use. Any dislocation of these systems—through warfare, foreign encroachment, or death by illness of some part of the labor force—threatened the survival of the remaining population. The disruption of hydraulic works and the interruption of exchanges between zones specializing in different products set off ramifying consequences. Both regions were also dependent on a finely calibrated system of food transfers—through the concentration and redistribution of tribute in the Andes, through both tribute redistribution and marketing arrangements in Mesoamerica. When these mechanisms were destroyed, available surpluses could not reach populations in need; many undoubtedly died as a result. Finally, these ordering mechanisms depended, in turn, on the political and ideological role of the ruling classes; the dislocation of the native elite and the imposition

of Spanish norms of government and religion severely undermined this role.

Within a short time the Europeans also began to appropriate land and water for their own farms, mills, and pasture grounds, and to draft native populations for work. In many parts of Mesoamerica, as in Spain, sheep began to "eat" men. In the Andes the parallel development of European agriculture on the coast and mining in the interior highlands upset the synchronized ecological relationships between coast, piedmont, highland, and puna (see chapter 2). The new agriculture and pastoralism made use of crops brought in from the Old World—such as wheat—in addition to the native crops of maize or potatoes, and introduced herd animals that had not existed in the Americas before the Conquest, such as horses, cattle, sheep, goats, and pigs. Yet the new system of food production was not as intensive as the hydraulic horticulture of the pre-Hispanic populations, even where dams were built, canals dug, and land irrigated. Decreased intensity and integration of cultivation required a smaller labor force, and thus the decline in population could be weathered. An agriculture of clean-tilled fields and open pasture range replaced a horticulture based on the meticulous cultivation, drainage, and terracing of small plots.

The Wealth of Spanish America

The Search for Silver

What the Iberians sought in the New World was, above all else, treasure in the form of bullion. At first this meant gold. Placer gold was found in the Antilles, but "the productive districts were few, of small extent, and slight depth" (Sauer 1966: 198). The native population was soon sacrificed in its extraction. The auriferous deposits of the Central American isthmus proved ephemeral. Only Colombia—"Castilla de oro," as it was soon called—became a significant gold producer. It contributed most of the 185,000 kilograms of gold shipped to Seville between 1503 and 1660, an amount that increased European gold supplies by a fifth (Elliott 1966: 180). Yet it was silver production that finally became the mainstay of Spanish wealth, and thus the major indicator of the strength or debility of royal control.

Silver deposits were first discovered by the Spaniards in 1545, when an Indian prospector located the 2,000-foot-high silver mountain of San Luis Potosí, in what is now Bolivia. This was followed by a succession of strikes in the western mountain chains of Mexico: at Zacatecas in 1546, Guanajuato in 1548, Taxco in 1549, Pachuca in 1551, Sombrerete and Durango in 1555, Fresnillo in 1569. Potosí, especially, became synonymous with the notion of wealth beyond the dreams of avarice. Its coat of arms proclaimed it to be "treasure of the world, king of all the mountains, envy of all the kings." By 1611 it was the largest and wealthiest city of the Americas, with a population of 160,000 inhabitants. It was Silver 1545 1611 located in a high-altitude environment (13,000 feet) so inhospitable that all food had to be imported, and the wives of Spaniards had to move to lower-lying valleys to raise their children. To mine the ores of the magic mountain, the lords of the mines called on the native American population. At Potosí in 1603, there were 58,800 Indian workers. Most of these, 43,200, were free day laborers; 10,500 were *mingas*, or contract laborers. The remainder, 5,100, were *mitayos*, or labor draftees, most of whom were employed in the perilous work of carrying the baskets of ore over treacherous ladders to the mouth of the mine. A rotational, obligatory labor draft (*mita*) had existed in Inca times; the Spaniards extended it to service in the mines. Institutionalized in 1570, it required every village to make available annually a seventh of its adult male population for work in the mines or on public projects. The laborers were suppose to work for no more than eighteen weeks every seven years and be paid wages, working under conditions to be supervised by royal inspectors. The wages received would also allow the miners to pay their tribute, now rendered payable in silver.

Actual practice, however, proved rather harsher than theory. At the end of the sixteenth century, for instance, the province of Chuicuito on the shores of Lake Titicaca sent 2,200 adult males each year to the mines of Potosí. Since these draft laborers went accompanied by their families, the 300-mile, two-month-long journey was negotiated by 7,000 people in all, as well as by 30,000 to 50,000 llamas to carry their belongings and provide sustenance on the way. In Potosí the mitayo spent four months in the mines and two months in additional compulsory service. If he survived the six months of arduous labor, the return to Chuicuito would require another two months. Once back home, he had to depend on his neighbors until he could again harvest his own crops and raise a new herd of llamas. At the same time, he was subject in his home village to other mitas for domestic work, transportation, mail service, innkeeping (*tambos*), and road work (Kubler 1946: 372–373). In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, moreover, villagers could be forced to produce artisan goods and to supply food, fodder, and wood to the cities (Villamarín and Villamarín 1975: 73). Resident villagers (*hatunrunas*) also had to pay tribute.

During the period of sharp population decrease, service and tribute quotas remained constant. Local authorities thus had to impress men into service more often than stipulated by law, exact higher contributions from those remaining in the villages, or hire contract laborers (*mingas*) to stand in for absentees. Many labor draftees refused to return to their communities when they had completed their turn of duty, attempting in this way to avoid further tribute and mita obligation. Some remained in the mining centers, swelling the number of free laborers. Others took service with Spaniards as serfs, or *yanaconas*, until there were nearly as many serfs as tribute-paying villagers (Villamarín and Villamarín 1975: 76; Kubler 1946: 377–378). Still other mitayos

Wooden beaker (kero) *of pre-Conquest style, Cuzco region, depicting a hunting scene with Spanish riders. (Photograph courtesy Museum of the American Indian, Heye Foundation)*

became migrants, *forasteros*. Although the colonial records do not always distinguish between village-affiliated cultivators, who migrated regularly between various ecological zones in traditional Andean fashion, and nonaffiliated migrants, outright movement was frequent and extensive (Rowe 1957: 180; Santamaría 1977: 255–257). Finally, some highlanders simply fled into the tropical forest (Rowe 1957: 175).

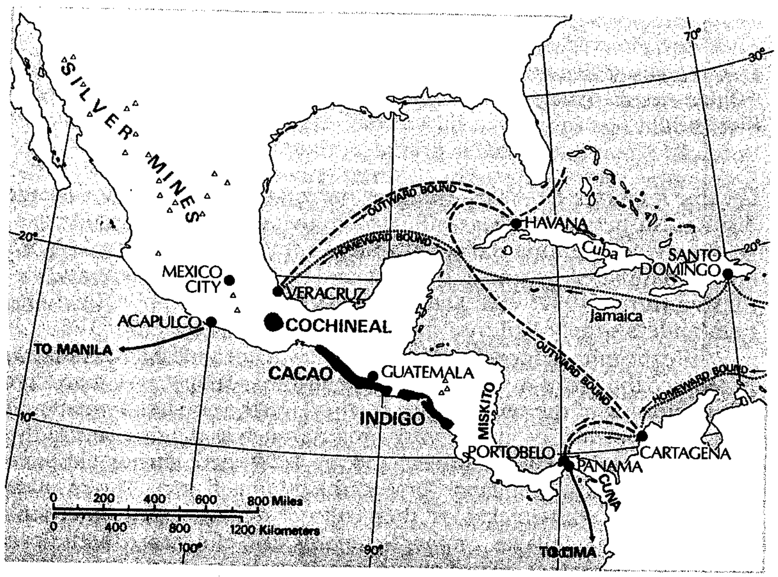
While the mita in Potosí and Upper Peru was not abolished until 1823, in Mexico the use of rotational labor in the mines disappeared soon after the beginning of the seventeenth century. On the one hand, rotational labor was needed for public work projects, such as the drainage of the Valley of Mexico. On the other hand, by 1600 there already existed a sizable free, wage-paid labor force in the mining districts. It was made up of Indians, who quickly lost their cultural and linguistic connections with their home villages, or poor Spaniards, and of Africans, both slave and free. Mining was carried out on a basis analogous to sharecropping. The mine owner would contract with an independent miner (a *buscón*,

owner
prospector

or prospector), who either worked on his own behalf or hired others to dig for him. The owner furnished the prospector with implements and powder, receiving one-half of the product in return. The prospector paid for lighting in the shaft and for transporting the ore to the mouth of the mine, receiving thereupon the other half of the product. This he could sell either to the owner of the mine or directly to the smelter. But, the extraction of silver ore with mercury, a process entailing the hazards of mercury poisoning and silicosis, was usually assigned to slaves, first Indians and later Africans. This labor system—combining free labor in mining and slave labor in processing—served the Mexican mines until the very end of the eighteenth century, when the great mines at Guanajuato more than made up for the decline of silver output in Potosí.

The Flow of Silver

To channel the flow of silver to Spain, the Crown turned travel and trade with the Indies into a royal monopoly. The agency created by the Crown to control the flow of specie, commodities, and people was the House of Trade (*Casa de Contratación*) in Seville. The Casa licensed both ships and merchants for the trade, issued permits to move passengers and goods, and received the precious silver from the Indies. In the second half of the sixteenth century, a system of regular annual sailings



The maritime approaches to the Spanish dominions in the New World.

by massed fleets was organized to safeguard the Atlantic crossing against external attack. After 1560 two fleets left each year from Cadiz or Seville to sail to the Americas. The first, the New Spanish fleet, landed at Veracruz in Mexico. The second, the Peruvian fleet, sailed for Cartagena in Colombia or for Portobelo on the Isthmus of Panama. From Cartagena mule trains carried the European goods across Andean paths to Upper Peru. From Portobelo other mule trains took their cargoes to the Pacific coast, for coastwise transshipment to Lima. On their return trips, the mule trains carried silver and American goods to the fleets wintering in their American ports before the voyage home. The new Spanish fleet loaded again at Veracruz, the Peruvian fleet at the Colombian and Panamanian ports. The two fleets converged at Havana, stopping at Antillean ports on the way, and then set sail for the mouth of the Guadalquivir in Spain.

Between 1503 and 1660 more than seven million pounds of silver reached Seville from America, tripling the European supply of the metal (Elliott 1966: 180). The Crown received about 40 percent of this amount, either in settlement of American taxes or in payment of the royal fifth levied on all silver production. Even so, all the silver of the Americas could not stave off the bankruptcy of the Spanish Crown, so heavily was it overextended in its military pursuits in Europe and all around the globe. Until the 1550s the Emperor Charles V received 200,000 to 300,000 ducats of American silver a year, but he spent about a million, and in thirty-seven years he ran up a debt of 39 million ducats, mostly to foreign creditors. Philip II, more parsimonious than his father, received about 2 million ducats of silver from America by the 1590s, in addition to almost 8 million in taxes raised from Castilian and ecclesiastical revenues. Yet by that time he was spending over 21 million ducats a year (Elliott 1966: 203, 282–283). Simultaneously, the inflow of silver drove up prices in a home economy already weakened by a decline in domestic food production, by a rise in wood exports to pay for cheaper foreign imports, and by a heavy increase in the importation of foreign manufactured goods for use both in Spain and in the Indies. The advent of American silver thus did little to relieve the financial problems of the Crown, while it did much to exacerbate the decline of Spanish industry in favor of Spain's competitors.

Spain witnessed a massive, general rise in prices, which increased the costs of commodities both to the Crown and to the people. Contemporary witnesses of this "price revolution" and later economic historians alike saw its primary cause in the heavy influx of bullion. A greater supply of money may certainly have played a significant role, but it cannot account for the economic crisis in its entirety. Increased demand for European goods in the Americas may have driven up prices in the sixteenth century; there was also an increased demand for goods at home. When the American dependencies grew more self-sufficient in goods and services, this perhaps had an adverse effect on the home country. Most silver, however, did not stay in Spain: at the end of the sixteenth century, for instance, three-fifths of all the bullion that entered Spain went abroad in settlement of royal and private debts. Again, as the American traffic developed, it absorbed ever larger sums in ships, supplies, and protection. Spanish reliance on the export of primary products such as wool, wine, and olive oil in order to acquire naval stores, tin, linen, fish, and cereals created a balance of payments problem, which was met, in turn, by larger exports of silver.

Secondary Exports: Dyestuffs and Cocoa

Silver was the main export of the Spanish Americas, but cochineal, indigo, and cacao all assumed a measure of importance. Cochineal is a red dye produced from an insect that feeds on cactuses. As many as 70,000 dried insects are required to produce one pound of cochineal dye. Native American communities, especially in the province of Oaxaca (Mexico), were pressured into gathering and processing these insects by *encomenderos* and royal *corregidores*. Cochineal grew in importance as an export in the second half of the sixteenth century, becoming, after silver, the most significant export of New Spain. Indigo, another dyestuff, produces a blue dye of great natural fastness. It is obtained by steeping the leaves of a shrub and allowing the resulting sludge to settle into cakes. It was first produced through the use of seasonal native labor, on the same Pacific coast of Central America that had first produced cacao. In the seventeenth century, increased transportation costs favored the relocation of the indigo industry to the Mexican lowlands, where Yucatan in particular remained a significant producer until the nineteenth century.

transportation costs + relocation

Cacao had been grown in pre-Hispanic times along the Pacific vertient of Central America. Under the Spanish, the native American population was forced to pay cacao in tribute and to settle advances in goods extended by royal officials. Officials and encomenderos even demanded cacao deliveries from highland cultivators, who had to descend to the coast to labor in the cacao stands in order to pay their tribute. High mortality rates, however, limited the production of cacao, and Central America increasingly yielded priority in its production to slave plantations of the tropical shorelands of Ecuador and Venezuela.

The Siphon of External Trade

Spain took silver, gold, cacao, cochineal, and indigo from the New World, and returned high-priced manufactured and luxury goods. A large share—perhaps most—of these goods originated outside Spain, mainly in northwestern Europe; they were priced to yield taxes and customs duties to the state, as well as to produce monopolistic profits for the sellers. Exchange was in the hands of merchants who were organized at the European end in the merchant guild, or *consulado*, of Seville and at the American end in the twin guilds of New Spain and Lima. On

the European side the guild dovetailed with the royal House of Trade, the major government agency charged with supervising ships, people, and goods traveling to and from the Indies and with collecting taxes and customs for the royal coffers. The trade was purposefully confined to narrow channels, intended to be carried on exclusively by monopolistic agencies using Spanish ships and Castilian agents. It was not created by the free working principles of demand and supply; it was rather—in Carmagnani's phrase—"constrained trade," constrained by demand on the European side (1975: 31).

This constrained trade involved, in fact, two different cycles of transactions. One was transatlantic, the other intra-American. To activate the transatlantic cycle, European merchants bought commodities with money and sent them to their factors or agents (*habilitadores*) in the New World, in the hope of getting repaid with American commodities that could be sold at high monetary profits. There was an investment of money at the European start of the cycle of transaction, and a conversion of commodities into money and profits in Europe at the end of the cycle. Within the Americas, however, there was no exchange of money for money, but only an exchange of commodities for commodities. The American factors advanced European commodities to mine owners or cochineal entrepreneurs, who had to settle their accounts with their factors by delivering American commodities. As prices for manufactured goods rose in Europe, the exchange values of American silver and other commodities declined. This disproportion then put pressure on American producers to keep down or to reduce the costs of production. We shall see how this cycle contributed to the resurgence of tributary domination in New World agriculture and livestock ranching. It also led to a great deal of fraud and coercion in the putting-out systems through which cochineal and indigo were obtained from the native producers.

New Systems of Supply

As silver mining assumed a pivotal role in the economy of the Castilian Indies, it came to dominate and reshape the structure of the Castilian domains of the New World. Reliance on mining shifted the key economic areas of the realm away from the zones of intensive pre-Hispanic horticulture and settlement to the silver veins of the arid Sierra Madre of New Spain and of the forbidding Bolivian *altiplano*. It produced major changes in the production of foodstuffs and raw materials. It entailed a shift in government policies from an initial concern with ensuring royal control of both conquerors and conquered to policies aimed primarily at maximizing mining and securing its supplies. These shifts created a new geography and altered the ecological, economic, and political conditions of the conquered populations.

These changes were closely interconnected. The diminution of the native American population and the destruction of the political controls basic to intensive native horticulture called for new ways of producing foodstuffs and livestock products for the mines and towns. Mining created a heavy demand for food and drink to supply men and working animals, skins and hides for ropes and containers, tallow for candles and fatwood torches to light the mine shafts, mercury for the extraction of silver from ore, blasting powder, wood to fuel smelters, and large numbers of draft animals for work and transportation. The new agricultural economy also had to feed the Spanish towns, which supported the grid of Spanish control, the ecclesiastical establishments in towns and countryside, and the stopping places along the traffic routes linking mining locations, towns, and ports of call. The needs of the mines and the requirements of urban conspicuous consumption demanded, moreover, that products be made available as cheaply as possible.

The Crown assisted the growth of this support system in a number of ways. Since mercury was an essential ingredient in the processing of silver ore, and constituted a major cost in mining, the Crown strove to guarantee the supply of the metallic element at low prices. Mercury production and sale was a royal monopoly; Peruvian miners received it from the royal mine at Huancavelica, the miners of New Spain from the Spanish mine at Almadén. The Crown also pursued a policy of ensuring food supplies to the mines and towns at regulated prices through public granaries. Above all, royal policy increasingly transferred both land and labor to agricultural entrepreneurs, thus abandoning early attempts by the Crown to maintain its own sovereign control of the Indian population.

It had been the initial intention of the Crown to deny the incoming conquerors any direct control of land and of Indian hands to work it. It wanted to inhibit the development of an independent class of tributary overlords in the Indies, and thus insisted at first on granting the services of native Americans only on its own terms. This was done by the issuing of temporary grants of trusteeship (*encomienda*). An encomienda permitted the recipient to employ stipulated amounts of Indian tribute and labor in his own service, in return for Christianizing their pagan souls. A grant of encomienda did not, however, bestow on the *encomendero* (trustee) rights over Indian land or unlimited rights to Indian services. These rights the Crown reserved to itself. The Crown hoped for the emergence of a society dichotomized into a sector of conquerors and a separate Indian sector. Thus, it strove to interpose its royal officials between Spanish employers of Indian labor power and the Indians themselves.

After 1542 encomenderos were required to petition a royal official if they wanted to have native laborers assigned to them for specific tasks. The official was supposed to receive such petitions, establish priorities among them, assign laborers on a rotational basis, and ensure that they be paid wages at a stipulated rate. This mode of labor allotment came to be known officially as the *repartimiento*. In Mesoamerica, however, it continued to be referred to by the Aztec word for obligatory labor on

public works, *cuatequitl*, and in the Andes it continued to be called by the Quechua term *mita*.

Another means used to cut off the Spaniards from the Indian population was the formal abolition of Indian slavery in 1542. Indian slavery was declared illegal everywhere, except in frontier zones where rebellious populations refused to accept Spanish sovereignty. This meant that Araucanians from southern Chile could be taken prisoner and enslaved until the 1680s. This was also true on the northwestern frontiers of Mexico, where Apache, Navaho, and Shoshoni continued to be enslaved well into the nineteenth century (Bailey 1966). Yet in the core areas of Spanish occupation, Indian slavery was abolished, or at least significantly curtailed. This prohibition of slavery did not extend, however, to Africans, who were imported in large numbers to replace the declining native American population, particularly in the lowlands.

Abolition of Slavery 1542
1680s
19th Century
not for Africans

The Hacienda

Gradually the trusteeships were superseded by *haciendas*, landed estates worked by laborers settled upon them and directly dependent upon the estate owners. The Crown did not possess enough personnel or resources to stem their growth, while agrarian entrepreneurs in full control of land and labor were better able than trustees, dependent on royal officialdom, to respond to the demands of town and mine. Yet the development of haciendas did not everywhere take the same form or follow the same rhythm. They appeared earlier in underpopulated areas where livestock could be raised with few hands. They developed later where either native villages or royal corregidores interested in native labor and tribute opposed hacienda claims to land and manpower. Thus, in the Peruvian highlands hacienda building appears to have been a phenomenon of the eighteenth century, not before. Elsewhere, encomenderos who obtained their grants in the sixteenth century became owners of haciendas only a century later. Legally, a grant to an encomienda could not produce a hacienda: encomienda grants were royal donations that neither gave rights to land nor permitted the grantee to set the terms of native labor services or tribute. The hacienda, in contrast, rested squarely on the legal ownership of land, and upon the ability of the owner to negotiate the terms of the laboring contract directly.

Most of the hacienda workers were recruited among native Americans. Sometimes hacienda owners obtained workers by depriving native settlements of their land. At other times they attracted migrants who had left their tribute-laden villages to settle elsewhere. The hacienda owners also offered to pay the tribute on their workers' behalf, or to extend credit in other forms. Outright enserfment through debt, including the establishment of heritable debt, seems to have developed in later centuries.

Usually the worker was given access to a portion of hacienda land in return for stipulated services and crop deliveries to the owner. The owner reserved for himself the *casco* (center) with the processing machinery, the strategic supply of water, and the land most suitable for growing the major commodity crop, leaving to his laborer-tenants the poorer and more peripheral lands of his estate. The hacienda thus came to be based on a dual structure of commercial crop farming and predial servitude by serf-tenants. Over time there was an alternation between direct management by the owner and cash cropping by serf-tenants. An enlargement of the market favored expansion of the owner's sector at the expense of the serf-tenants; a decline of the market favored the tenants.

Haciendas could serve different purposes. Those held by owners of mines or workshops provided the necessary products for these operations at little or no cost. Other haciendas produced for a regional market created by the demand of nearby towns, mining centers, or ports. Some geographical zones became specialized in producing food for such markets. The Central Valley of Chile grew wheat for Peru; the agricultural valleys of Cochabamba and Sucre fed Upper Peru (Bolivia); the Valley of Mexico and the Bajío region provided Mexico City and the mining centers with grain. The dry Mexican northland raised cattle for towns and mines, as did the drainage of the Rio de la Plata. Some lowland zones specialized in the production of sugar and distilled liquor for internal markets; the Mexican uplands grew century plants and manufactured agave beer (*pulque*); the tropical vertient of the Andes produced coca leaf. Everywhere there were also haciendas that were owned by ecclesiastical establishments or upper-class family clusters, which included clients and dependents. Sometimes haciendas changed their function, shifting from supplying a town granary to supplying a mine, or changing from a marketing orientation to subsistence. They were also responsive to changing markets and could grow or contract their operations as demand fluctuated.

Despite the adaptability of the haciendas, their potential growth was limited by the size of effective demand as much as by difficulties of transport. They seemed to function most profitably where they could sell in a secure but restricted local or regional market, in which relative scarcity guaranteed price levels. This was true, for instance, of haciendas producing a European staple like wheat, for which there was a small but secure market of European consumers. It was also the case in those situations where obligatory sales to the public granary forestalled price competition from native American communities that could often produce more cheaply.

In general, haciendas were not very profitable enterprises. Most of them incurred debts and then often passed into the hands of new owners, among whom ecclesiastical organizations were the most frequent and the most successful. David Brading probably described

general conditions in the Hispanic Americas when he characterized the Mexican hacienda as

> a sink through which drained without stop the surplus capital accumulated in the export economy. The fortunes created in mining and commerce were invested in land, there to be slowly dissipated or to be gradually transferred into the coffers of the Church. In consequence, a continuous replacement in the hacendado class occurred. [1977: 140]

Indian Communities

Towns and mines came to be ringed about by haciendas; the haciendas were in turn surrounded by settlements of the surviving native populations. This settlement pattern was oriented toward the mines; yet it was not merely geographic or ecological. It was organized by the political economy it embodied, in which each lower level yielded surplus to the level above it. Miners sold to merchants, who extracted high prices for European manufactured goods. Mine owners then pressed upon hacienda owners or managers to supply them with foodstuffs and raw materials at low prices. Hacienda owners and managers pressed upon the native communities, drawing their members either into dependent serf-tenancy on the estates or into seasonal employment at low wages. Within this hierarchy, the emerging Indian communities came to occupy the lowest rung.

These *repúblicas de indios*, as the Spaniards called them, have often been treated by anthropologists as if they were repositories of a pre-Hispanic past untouched by three centuries of Castilian domination. Yet these communities were given organizational form by the colonial bureaucracy, as integral components of the Hispanic state and its economic system. In setting up these units, the Crown followed a double purpose: to break up the pre-Conquest apparatus of power, and to ensure the separation and fragmentation of the resulting jurisdictions. While the destruction of the overarching Inca, Mexica, or Chibcha polities permitted the re-emergence of some older claims to rule and loyalty, in general the outcome was the replacement of pre-Conquest states by small tributary lordships and local communities.

The higher Indian nobility was formally assimilated into the Spanish nobility and confirmed in their claims to tribute, property, and pensions, but they were deprived of any access to the commanding levers of power. Conversion of this stratum to Christianity also ensured its severance from pre-Conquest sources of ideological influence and integrated it into the ongoing activities of the Church. The lower orders of the Indian nobility—*principales* in Mesoamerica, *kurakas* in the Andes—were charged with the supervision of local communities. Like the African chiefs installed three centuries later by the British to rule over African populations in "indirect rule," this local nobility came to mediate between conquerors and conquered. They represented their constituencies to the external authorities, while striving to maintain their jurisdiction internally through the exercise of traditional claims and loyalties.

The communities over which they were installed were not the same as those that had existed before the Conquest. Many pre-Conquest communities had been nearly wiped out by the ravages of the Great Dying, and new communities were formed through the aggregation of population remnants brought together for closer administrative and ecclesiastical control. This general Spanish policy of resettlement and concentration redefined the nature of local constituencies not only demographically but also economically and administratively. Each new community was given legal identity, with its own administrative local council, or *cabildo*, and ecclesiastical identity, with its local chapel or church dedicated to a patron saint. It was also redefined economically, receiving rights over village lands and resources, as well as obligations to furnish tribute. These exactions included tribute in specie to the Crown, tribute in goods and services to the Spanish trustee, or encomendero, tribute to the recognized Indian lord, and obligatory labor on government projects, such as the construction of dams or roads.

Royal officials, *corregidores de indios*, watched over the Indian administrative sector made up of these communities. Special Indian courts were set up to attend to legal cases brought by local representatives. This administrative structure was inspired by the original intention of the Crown to keep Indians and Spaniards separate. Yet the Indian courts were soon swamped by complaints against Spanish conquerors and entrepreneurs who strove to incorporate native lands and water courses into their haciendas. Moreover, the local Indian elite of principales or kurakas, charged with managing community resources and obligations, often enlarged the scope of their own power in the villages by entering into collusion with outside Spanish power holders. The corregidores, in turn, were in a privileged position to benefit commercially from their administrative offices. They could, as in Peru, collect tribute, sell it at auction, buy it back at half its market value up to the amount due for tribute, and then resell it at the market rate (Rowe 1957: 163). They could buy goods cheaply from merchants in town and force their Indians to buy them at high prices., or they could buy products from the Indians to sell more dearly elsewhere. They could, finally, become entrepreneurs in their own right. Thus, in western Guatemala a corregidor could buy raw cotton on the coast, force Indian women in his district to spin and weave it, and then sell the cloth back to the Indians or to colonists at a handsome profit (see MacLeod 1973: 316).

Such Indian leaders and royal officials rallied to the defense of the native communities if they saw their own sources of power and profit threatened by outside interests. At the same time, confronted with an increasing demand for labor by industrial and agricultural entrepreneurs in the face of a decreasing native population, many were persuaded to reduce the level of their zeal as public defenders. The Crown, too, discovered that its interest in maximizing monetary returns through taxes or emoluments often ran counter to its role of protecting the native Americans. If a colonist used labor and resources in some combination that promised to yield surplus for the Crown, political or moral considerations were frequently set aside. This was especially true as entrepreneurs shifted from stocking up the goods that were valued in the pre-Hispanic past—such as cacao, precious feathers, and cotton textiles—to rearranging land and labor in order to grow wheat, mine silver, produce woolen cloth, collect cochineal, or raise sheep for wool. When money began to talk, it spoke Spanish rather than Nahuatl or Quechua.

Finally, this rearrangement of resources to produce goods for mines and towns gave rise to new groups who were not part of Indian communities. These included artisans, laborers, and servants who worked in or about the new settlements, and middlemen who moved goods from one location to another. This growing population of Indians and *mestizos* soon filled the social and economic interstices between the communities and the formal tributary pyramid, and began to connect people in localities with activities and interests beyond. Repeated complaints by royal officials that outsiders were entering Indian communities in pursuit of their own interests, and that members of Indian communities were leaving their assigned jurisdictions to join the mestizo or *cholo* outsiders, demonstrate that community boundaries were often permeable and negotiable.

The communities, moreover, were not internally unitary and undifferentiated. At one point in time, a community might unite under a principal of its own against the encroachment of Spanish hacienda owners or entrepreneurs. At another time, that principal—having become like a hacienda owner or entrepreneur himself in his dealings with the people entrusted to him—might join the Spaniards or be accused of doing so by his followers. Elsewhere, merchants and cultivators grown well-to-do within a community might enter into conflict with superordinate authorities, including their own Indian overlord, and represent themselves as spokesmen for their community against tyranny. These same merchants and cultivators, drawn into the market through the production of cochineal or cotton cloth, might then close off the community against the outside, in order to maintain an internal monopoly of jurisdiction over labor.

In both viceroyalties communities were allowed and expected to manage their internal affairs through a hierarchy of local officials, endowed with Spanish titles and based on Hispanic prototypes. At the same time, the Church installed ecclesiastical organizations, on the pattern of Spanish sodalities, to stage the rituals connected with the annual Catholic calendar. In the larger Spanish and Hispanicizing settlements these two sets of organizations, civil and religious, remained quite distinct, but in the Indian communities they were generally merged into common civil-religious hierarchies, in which tenure of a secular political office alternated with sponsorship of a religious event. Such sponsorship usually involved large outlays for fireworks, decorations, incense and candles, musicians, and for food and drink to be distributed among the participants. This usually meant that only the better-off members of a community could advance to the higher and more costly positions of religious and political authority, which demanded a great deal of economic redistribution. Conversely, such redistribution came to play an important part in the economy of recipient households, rendering them economically as well as politically and religiously dependent on the operations of the sacralized officialdom. The civil-religious hierarchies thus installed a system of elite domination within the communities, while at the same time allowing that elite to represent the community as a whole before external power holders and authorities.

The hierarchy also carried on the rituals relating the community to the supernatural. These rituals characteristically came to bear a dual character, part Christian and part pagan. Christianity is less concerned with defining sacred space than sacred time; while it takes cognizance of sacred sites, such as Jerusalem, Rome, Assisi, or Lourdes, it places central emphasis upon the cumulation of time through the Fall, Redemption, Judgment, and Resurrection. In contrast, the pre-Hispanic religions were strongly organized in spatial terms, using segments of space to demarcate segments of time, attributes of social groups, aspects of nature, and cohorts of supernaturals. The fusion of the Christian liturgical calendar with pre-Hispanic devotions connected the time frame of Christian salvation with the ecological referents of pre-Christian traditions. In pre-Hispanic times these local ecological referents formed part of an encompassing ideological organization of sacred space, organized and maintained by the overarching Inca, Mexica, or Chibcha polity. The Conquest destroyed this larger ideological framework and substituted the Christian economy of salvation for it. At the same time, this dominant liturgy was joined to local belief and practice by missionaries attempting to anchor it in local understandings and by local practitioners striving to render it expressive of local interests. The outcome was the development of religious structures that varied from community to community and that paralleled in their ideological localocentrism the political separateness of communities.

The Indian communities were thus dependent parts of a larger political and economic system, and changed as that system changed. They constituted neither "tribal" remnants of the pre-Hispanic past, nor a static type of peasant community characterized by a set of fixed attributes. They grew up in the tug of war between conquerors and conquered, and were subject to the interplay of external and internal

interests. The Hispanic state granted them rights to land and revenue, yet obliged them to deliver tribute and labor as part of their political obligations. Often they proved defenseless against predatory landowners, officials, and churchmen. At times, heavy exactions drove them to rebellion, noncooperation, or flight. The communities were allowed to govern themselves through their civil-religious hierarchies. These local officials might defend the community against external authorities and competitors, but they might also aggrandize themselves at the expense of their fellow villagers or betray their interests to outside power holders.

From the perspective of the larger Hispanic colonial order, the Indian communities did not constitute its primary foundations but rather its secondary, lateral supports. The center of the order consisted of the mining economy and the activities that supplied it. The Indian communities, in turn, acted as reservoirs of labor and as sources of cheap agricultural and craft products. Where the Indians had to pay tribute in money, they had to hire themselves out for wages or produce for a market. Alternatively they worked off tribute obligations through payments in kind. Subject to labor drafts by the public authorities, moreover, they could be made to work on public-works projects or for private interests that the royal corregidores deemed of public importance. They thus paid with their poverty for the system of imperial extraction.

Brazil and the Caribbean

While the Spaniards were erecting their realm of the Indies upon a highland base of silver, the Portuguese initiated the production of ~~sugar~~ on plantations set up in the tropical lowlands of the Brazilian littoral. Hispanic agriculture in New Spain and Peru was geared to supplying the internal needs of the colonies, but the new Portuguese enterprises were organized from the start to raise a crop for export. What silver was to Spanish America, sugar would long to be to Brazil and Portugal. Yet in the course of the seventeenth century, sugar growing also spread to the islands of the Caribbean, and the Dutch, English, and French came to rival Portuguese production of the crop. Whereas the agriculture of the Hispanic mainland faced away from Europe toward the towns and mining camps of the interior, the developing plantation belt of tropical America was linked directly to European markets. Sugar

In planting sugar on the clayey black soil (*massapé*) of the Brazilian Northeast, the Portuguese transferred to the New World an agricultural complex of long standing in the European Mediterranean, where the Arabs had introduced it toward the end of the first millennium A.D. During the centuries preceding the conquest of the New World, sugar growing had diffused steadily westward across the Mediterranean islands. In the last quarter of the fifteenth century, the Portuguese began to grow sugar on Madeira, and soon afterward on São Tomé in the Gulf of Guinea, using slaves purchased on the nearby West African coast. In 1500 an India-bound Portuguese fleet first sighted The Land of 1500 the True Cross—soon to be called Brazil after the red dyewood that grew along its shores. A quarter-century later, duty was being paid on Brazilian sugar at the Lisbon customs house. Portuguese plans to expand sugar production in Africa were thwarted by African resistance, which restricted the Portuguese to the coast; instead, they intensified production in Brazil. By 1570 there were already sixty mills in Brazil producing 180,000 *arrobas* of sugar a year, and in that same year production in the Brazilian regions of Pernambuco, Bahia, and Rio de Janeiro matched the levels of Madeira and São Tomé. After 1570 Brazilian sugar production increased exponentially, reaching more than a million arrobas after 1627 (see Barrett and Schwartz 1975: 541).

The focus of production in the Brazilian countryside was the grinding mill, the *engenho*. It ground both sugar produced on its own land and sugar raised on freeholds by *lavradores de cana*, the latter accounting for perhaps half the crop. Slave labor, first by Brazilian Indians and later by Africans, was important, but free wage labor was also significant. The largest mill in Brazil in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, Sergipe do Conde in Bahia with a grinding capacity of about 180 tons of cane, owned 259 workers in 1600, but it also paid wages to 270 laborers. It is estimated that the 20 freeholders delivering cane to Sergipe may have owned another 200 slaves (Barrett and Schwarts 1975: 547).

While production was in Portuguese hands, processing and financing came to be controlled by Flemings and Dutchmen. From the beginning, much of the sugar produced by the Portuguese was shipped to the Low Countries. First Antwerp, and after 1590 Amsterdam, became the main center for sugar refining as well as for financing of the Portuguese sugar trade. Even during the period from 1580 to 1640, when the kingdom of Portugal was joined to the Crown of Castile, the Dutch managed to retain their Portuguese contacts through Portuguese intermediaries. The Dutch made an abortive attempt in 1624–1625 to seize Bahia outright; simultaneously they moved in central Africa, to take hold of the profitable source of slaves in Luanda. In 1629 they invaded Pernambuco, occupying the sugar districts for fifteen years. In 1645, however, the population of Dutch Brazil, led by the debt-ridden Luso-Brazilian planters, rose against their overlords. Although the Dutch had native American allies in some groups of Potiguar and Gê-speaking Tapuia, other Potiguar and the Maranhao Tobajara backed the Portuguese. In the ensuing guerilla warfare, the Luso-Brazilians came to control the countryside, and the Dutch were increasingly forced into the coastal cities. They held on to Recife until 1654, when they were forced 1654 to capitulate there, too. The guerilla tactics used against them had taken their toll. At the same time, the Netherlands had become embroiled in their first commercial war with England. The decisive factors, however, were that much of the sugar industry of Brazil had been physically

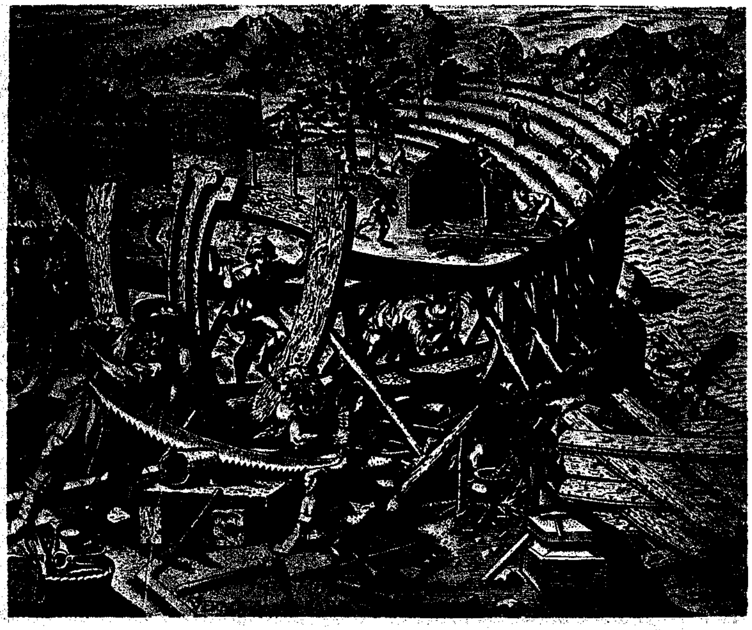
destroyed, that the effort of founding an enduring Dutch sugar colony in Brazil had cost too much, and that the stockholders of the Dutch West Indies Company were beginning to grumble about costs and losses.

Beset by difficulties in Brazil, the Dutch shifted their activities to the Caribbean. English-owned islands like St. Kitts, Nevis, and Barbados had begun to grow tobacco on small farms in the second quarter of the seventeenth century. By 1639 the European markets were glutted with the leaf, and many islanders migrated elsewhere in search of better opportunities. In the early 1640s, Dutch from Brazil introduced English settlers in Barbados to the raising of sugar cane. They extended the English credit so they could acquire African slaves, as well as the boiling pans and cooling pots needed to transform cane juice into sugar, and they offered to sell the product in Europe. Sugar quickly transformed the economic and political scene of the islands. The tobacco-raising small holders became "poor whites" and, rapidly displaced by the large plantations worked by African slaves, they migrated elsewhere. In 1655 the English invaded Jamaica, driving out the last Spaniards five years later.

Cane cultivation in the islands grew rapidly thereafter. It soon surpassed in scale the Luso-Brazilian sugar industry and proved able to accumulate capital even in the face of ever-declining world sugar prices. The rate of profits on known sugar plantations was continuously positive—perhaps as much as 20 percent on capital invested before 1700, at least 10 percent between 1750 and 1775, and about 7.5 percent around 1790 (Craton 1974: 139). Much of the life of Bristol and Liverpool in England came to depend on Jamaica and Barbados; at the end of the eighteenth century, William Pitt the Younger estimated that four-fifths of the British incomes drawn from overseas derived from the West Indies. Nantes and Bordeaux in France were similarly supported by the productivity of French-held Saint Domingue (Haiti). When the Haitian slaves rose in rebellion against their overlords in 1791, they demolished a structure that had absorbed two-thirds of French foreign commercial interests.

Contraband

One of the consequences of the spread of sugar cultivation to the Caribbean islands was to create a series of advance bases for the European Atlantic powers at the very gates of entry into the Castilian realm of the Indies. This Dutch, English, and French advance came at a time when Spanish power was on the decline. While the remittances of silver to Spain rose steadily throughout the sixteenth century, they peaked in the century's last decade and declined thereafter. Yet although the amount of silver shipped to Spain decreased, the production of silver in the New World did not fall appreciably. The silver now stayed in the Americas, or it sought outlets through other channels. Some of it paid for better defenses against foreign encroachment and



Europeans building a caravel on the Caribbean shore of Panama (Veragua). Copper engraving by Theodor de Bry, 1590. (Courtesy of the Rare Books and Manuscript Division, The New York Public Library. Astor, Lenox, and Tilden Foundations)

competition. Much of it, however, went into contraband dealings with the enemies of the Spanish Crown—the Dutch West Indies Company and the English sea traders.

As Spanish power grew weaker, these competitors and antagonists increasingly sought access to the riches of the Spanish possessions in the New World. Growing numbers of foreigners bought the privileges of naturalization, which allowed them to trade with the Indies. The number of foreign vessels taking part in the transatlantic fleets rose, until they comprised one-third of all craft crossing the Atlantic in 1630. From then on, contraband increased to unprecedented heights.

Cut off from access to Iberian salt by Spain's occupation of Portugal and by the Spanish seizure of Setúbal, the Dutch initiated regular voyages into the Caribbean in 1594, seizing the salt island of Araya in 1599. They began to trade directly with the Spanish colonists of the Venezuelan and Colombian coast, exchanging North European merchandise and African slaves first for salt, later for tobacco and hides, and then for ever larger quantities of cacao. The English seizure of Jamaica opened another lucrative trade in slaves and European contraband with

the Spanish possessions. As Venezuela increased its production of cacao, it also began to exchange cacao for Spanish silver from Mexico. The Dutch and the English were thus able to tap the flow of Spanish silver through the open veins of the Caribbean. At the end of the seventeenth century, the amount of Spanish silver drawn off through the Jamaican trade alone is estimated at 200,000 pounds sterling a year, or about half the amount of bullion exported annually to the Far East by the British East India Company (Lang 1975: 57). Goods from northwestern Europe also entered the Western Hemisphere through Brazil, where the Portuguese traded overland with the Spanish holdings in Potosí and Upper Peru. To pay for these goods the Spaniards used silver, and it is estimated that this Brazilian trade succeeded in drawing off as much as a quarter of Potosí's silver production during the seventeenth century (Lang 1975: 56). When England gained the right to supply the Spanish colonies with African slaves as a result of the Treaty of Utrecht in 1730, the flow of contraband to the Spanish Caribbean increased along with the sale of slaves.

Pacific

Yet Spanish silver did not go only toward Europe; it also moved westward, across the Pacific. In the second part of the sixteenth century, a multilateral trade network—much of it in contraband—grew up around the main commercial axis connecting Acapulco in Mexico with Manila in the Philippines. In 1564 the Spaniards—taking advantage of diminishing Portuguese strength in the South Asia seas—had initiated their conquest of the Philippine Islands. Yet even after Portugal lost its claim to the islands, the Portuguese merchants of Macao on the China coast continued to trade at Manila. In 1573 the first Manila galleon carried Chinese silks, satins, porcelain, and Far Eastern spices to Acapulco, returning to Manila with Spanish silver from the New World. From then on, Manila became the hub of a trade network that drew the Chinese into the Philippine orbit and that created a commercial circuit in which Chinese textiles were exchanged for New World silver. Manila became not only a Spanish city but a Chinese one as well. In the last two decades of the sixteenth century, the Chinese became so numerous in Manila that a special quarter (*Parian*, i.e., market) was created for them. By the middle of the seventeenth century, Manila boasted 42,000 inhabitants, supported by rice, timber, and labor furnished as tribute by the inhabitants of neighboring Luzon and Pampanga through the intermediation of native *principales*.

Manila

1573

At Acapulco goods were loaded on muleback for transshipment to Mexico City. Peruvian merchants, however, also arrived in large numbers, bringing Peruvian silver to exchange for Chinese goods. This illegal Peruvian trade in Acapulco and along the coast of Nicaragua soon became a source of great concern to the Spanish Crown, which tried to limit it. Yet the trade continued, despite governmental prohibitions and despite increased Dutch raiding in the South Asian seas; in the eighteenth century it attracted not only increasing participation of the Chinese through Canton but also Indian traders via Manila (Chaunu

Acapulco. Copper engraving by Theodor de Bry, 1590. (Courtesy of the New York Public Library, New York)

1960; Bertin et al. 1966). In the course of the eighteenth century, in fact, there developed two circuits of Chinese trade: one moving in a westerly direction and exchanging Chinese tea for Indian opium, and another in the opposite direction, exchanging Chinese textiles for American silver. This Chinese–South American trade lasted until the end of Spanish rule in South America (Cheong 1965).

China tea for Indian opium

Far

Chinese textiles for Am. silver

The scale of this commerce was large indeed. In 1597, admittedly an exceptional year, the bullion sent from Acapulco to Manila reached 12 million pesos, a sum larger than all that involved in transatlantic shipments. In the last decades of the sixteenth century, bullion exports usually ran between 3 and 5 million pesos, of which two-thirds probably came from Peru (Parry 1973: 119). Between 1570 and 1780 an estimated 4,000 to 5,000 tons of silver were exported to the Far East (Konetzke 1971: 310).

Pirates, "Colonial Tribes," and Maroons

In the wake of contraband, slave raiding, and slaving, there grew up—in the borderlands of the Caribbean—a number of populations that inhabited the margins of constituted society and lived off the flotsam

and jetsam of its resources. The mountainous and dissected Caribbean environment, its many islands and inlets, and the density of cover provided by its tropical vegetation furnished hide-outs for smugglers and runaway slaves, and commercial or military opportunities for the allies of both.

Buccaneer

One element in this unstable world were the buccaneers. The majority were French; some were English. They began as hunters of feral cattle left behind by the Spaniards on Santo Domingo, taking their name from the *boucan*, the wooden grill used to dry meat by smoking; they sold meat and hides to the crews of passing ships. Ejected by the Spaniards, they began to combine their hunting with piracy. When the Spaniards attempted to stop their activities, they expanded their freebooting, allying themselves alternately with the English governor of Jamaica and the French governor of Saint Domingue, first against the Spaniards, later against the Dutch. Half pirates, half mercenaries, they launched attacks on major Spanish towns and ports, while trading with people along the coast and in the hinterland. In the last quarter of the seventeenth century, their activities became so threatening to the growth of commerce in the area that the major European powers in the Caribbean took serious steps to oust them from the region. Some of them thereupon took up slaving and logwood cutting along the coast of British Honduras. Others moved their base of operation to Sierra Leone in West Africa, and from there to Madagascar. In Madagascar they set up the Pirate Republic of Libertalia, a veritable "market of the Jolly Roger" (Toussaint 1966: p.146). Dispersed by a powerful French fleet, they then sought refuge with the slave-trading state of the Betsimisaraka on the eastern coast of Madagascar, continuing their piracy in alliance with the native population until the beginning of the nineteenth century.

A second element in the circum-Caribbean mix were the groups that Mary Helms has dubbed "colonial tribes." The best known of these are the Miskito of the Mosquito shore in Honduras and Nicaragua, and the Cuna of Panama and Colombia. The Miskito were a kin-ordered native American population that absorbed large numbers of runaway African slaves and buccaneers. Equipped by the buccaneers with guns and ammunition, the Miskito began to raid and trade with their neighbors inland. They obtained cacao, gold, tobacco, indigo, and—later—cattle from the inland producers and then traded these goods, along with their own canoes, paddles, tortoise shells, skins, gum, and hammocks, to the incoming English for manufactured goods. The Miskito also raided for slaves, and they were used by the English to hunt down the rebellious maroons in Jamaica (Campbell 1977: 395, 411–412).

"colonial tribes"

The Cuna were a Chibchan-speaking population that had sustained, before the advent of the Europeans, a much more complex technology and organization than the Miskito. The Cuna were organized into class-divided tributary polities with ruling dynasties, and they were known for their elaborate metallurgy and for their specialization in long-distance trade. In the wake of the conquest, they lost their complex

miskito Cuna

social and political organization, gave up metalwork, and turned increasingly to food collecting for subsistence, thus becoming one of Steward and Faron's classic cases of "historic deculturation." Like the Miskito, they proved hospitable to runaway slaves and allied themselves with the buccaneers, from whom they received guns and ammunition. Using their newly acquired weaponry, they began in the seventeenth century a fierce expansion across the Atrato River into Colombia, burning Montería on the Sinú River in 1779 and forcing the Spaniards to secure passage on the Sinú with flotillas of dugouts (Fals Borda 1976: 18). They were not brought under Colombian control until the nineteenth century.

The prominence of runaway slaves among the Miskito and Cuna calls attention to a third population element in the circum-Caribbean vortex, the runaway slaves, or maroons. The term *maroon* comes from the Spanish *cimarrón*, initially applied to escaped feral Spanish livestock, then to runaway Indian slaves, and finally—in the 1530s—to African runaways. Frequently the runaways joined together for mutual support, defense, and raiding. They formed bands and, where environmental conditions aided them, more enduring communities. *Marronage*, as the French called this phenomenon of escape, proved to be a constant and significant feature of plantation life, a kind of slow and ongoing hemorrhage of the plantation system. Rebel communities of runaway slaves sprang up everywhere. One of the first was the rebel community formed at the Bursia mines near Barquisimeto (Colombia). Other early ones appeared in Cuba in the 1530s. Eventually there were many such groups in out-of-the-way recesses of the Caribbean and Isthmian littorals, along the Pacific coast of Colombia and Ecuador, and in the mountain fastnesses of some Caribbean islands. Such groups frequently engaged in smuggling and piracy to supplement their subsistence agriculture, and they often lent their support to armed raiders probing the defenses of the Spanish Main.

Thus, the "inland sea" of the Caribbean constituted the soft underbelly of the Spanish dominions in the New World. Here passed the strategic lines of transport connecting the dominions with the metropolis in Spain, but it was an area of military vulnerability, the point of entry for the enemies of Spain. It was also a region of political and economic weakness, where contrabandists, cash-cropping plantation owners, and free-lancing entrepreneurs of violence penetrated the monopolistic structure of the Spanish empire and drained its strength to the benefit of the external international economy.

The beginning of the sixteenth century saw the expansion of the two Iberian kingdoms into the Americas, the Spanish conquering Nuclear America and consolidating their hold over the mainland, while Portugal occupied the Atlantic littoral of Brazil.

In the highlands of Hispanic America, the Castilian Crown erected a new colonial order upon the ruins of the pre-Hispanic tributary polities. That order was based upon the extraction of precious metals, and a new European-run system of food production was called into being to furnish the mining enterprises with needed supplies. Lines of constrained trade linked the silver economy with the outside world, but the system supplying foodstuffs and raw materials faced inward, away from the sea, toward the mining locations of the hinterland. To control the native American populations, the new order fashioned their communities into institutions of indirect rule, their autonomy always determined by the workings of the Spanish sector. To that sector the Indians supplied cheap labor and commodities, and from it they purchased goods, often under duress. Within their own communities, the Indian populations were permitted to build up their own hierarchies of officeholders. These officials represented the communities to the outside, while ordering their internal affairs through the operations of civil-religious ranking, through economic redistribution, and through the management of religious symbols that combined Christian and local cultural forms. Within the larger Hispanic system, the Indian sector—broken up into a multitude of local entities—constituted a reserve of labor and products.

In the plantation belt of the lowland littorals and islands, European planters and their descendants broke the resistance of the pre-existing kin-ordered and tributary societies and replaced them with platoons of African slaves working under a system of forced regimented agriculture. The system operated to produce a cash crop for export, but it also cordoned off the plantation frontiers against native American intruders from the interior and against escape to the frontier by laborers on the littoral. The production of export crops tied the zone firmly to European markets, while the constant need for new slaves integrated Plantation America directly with the expanding tricontinental commerce in slaves. Thus, African slaves and their descendants became the dominant population along the Atlantic coast of Brazil, on the Caribbean isles and littoral, and along the coast of Colombia, Ecuador, and Peru. Here they wrought, on the plantations and in the redoubts of runaway slaves, their own modes of adaptation and rebellion, in a history that is just beginning to be explored.