

Long-term lessons World's big

AT THE same time as the Christian era began in the Old World, New World hunter-gatherers of the Hopi and Zuni tribes were constructing adobe-walled towns supported by agriculture and operated under a sophisticated political structure that included a formal court system.

Hunting tribes east of the Rocky Mountains lived in villages and periodically moved when game and other available food became depleted. The Algonquin, in the Northeastern part of the continent, were semi-sedentary and agricultural, as well as being fishermen and hunters.

Further south (from Lake

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Champlain to the Genesee River and from the Adirondack Mountains to central Pennsylvania) five other tribes eventually united to form a confederation, the "Iroquois League." Yet, these tribal groups remained "primitive" in terms of political organization and technological knowledge as compared to the Europeans who eventually arrived to compete for control of the hemisphere.

Outside Peru, Mexico, Central America, and the Iroquois country, the Indians were completely decentralized; each tribe controlled but a small territory, lived in a state of permanent hostility with its near neighbors, and knew nothing of what went on elsewhere.¹

Individual groups were essentially exclusive clans, hostile toward the encroachment of others and lacking in a common structural relationship. Their territorial instincts were extremely strong and produced warrior-dominated social structures. These natives existed in a world long disappeared from Europe and were ill-prepared to face the storm rising over the Atlantic.

The die was surely cast much earlier, but without doubt by the mid-18th-century the contest between native and European was largely over. At least one elder chief, Sconooda, of the Oneidas and an Iroquois, sounded a warning in 1752 that if heard might have altered the future of America. Both the French and the English sought support from the

Iroquois in their war against each other. At a council held to discuss the matter, Sconooda spoke to his people:

My children, raise your heads! Open your eyes! Unstop your ears! Can you not see that it makes no difference whether these white men are of the French or the English or any other of the peoples from across the sea? All of them threaten our very existence. All of them! When they came here they had nothing. Now, like a great disease they have spread all over the east until for twelve days' walk from the sea there is no room for an Indian to stay and he is made unwelcome. Yet this was not long ago all Indian land. How has it gone? As these white men have stained the east and the north with their presence, so now they extend themselves to the west and the northwest and the southwest, forcing all Indians to take sides for them or against them, whether they are French or English, but in such a game the Indian cannot win.²

As Sconooda knew would happen, tribe by tribe the natives quickly lost control of their territories. The process of complete takeover required approximately 400 years, beginning with the arrival in the Caribbean in 1492 of Columbus and ending with the surrender of Tatanka Yotanka (the Sitting Bull) and the Sioux tribe. Because of the swiftness of the displacement as well as its absoluteness, one could easily

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access to nature. This access is the first step needed to achieve the individual liberty which is the spirit of the Declaration of Independence. For the Declaration and the inalienable rights of life and liberty were guiding lights for George. In the conclusion of *Progress and Poverty*, he shows us some of the hypocrisy of democracy:

We honor Liberty in name and in form. We set up her statues and sound her praises, but we have not fully trusted her. And with our growth so grow her demands. She will have no half service! Liberty! It is a word to conjure with, not to vex the ear in empty boastings. For Liberty means Justice, and Justice is the natural law - the law of health and symmetry and strength, of fraternity and co-operation.

Association in equality is the rule of human progress. That association in equality is George's dream. It is a beacon which sheds light on a better understanding of man and his relationship to nature.

of injustice in New land-grabs

ignore this period of conquest and the significant contributions made by the native American tribes to the advance of civilization. Most of what is taught as American history is, in fact, a European interpretation and begins with Columbus' "discovery" of the hemisphere.

THE EUROPEAN impact on the New World after Columbus was unrelenting. Five years after his epic voyage, Henry VII of England financed a number of passages across the Atlantic by John Cabot and his son Sebastian. Although England failed to capitalize on these expeditions of discovery until late in the 16th century, they became the basis for her claim to sovereignty over North America.

More than a century passed before Spain was seriously challenged in the New World. With the succession of Philip II to the throne of Spain in 1580, Spain and Portugal united and were at the pinnacle of their power; and, yet, Spain's monopoly in the New World was soon to end.

The causes are to be found in Spain's domestic political economy, with its concentration of landownership between the Catholic Church and the nobility, neither of which were subject to taxation. That unholy circumstance had all but destroyed economic productivity at home so that Spain was required to import much of its food and other necessities.

Military adventures against the Turks and Moslems further destroyed Spain's power by consuming much of the treasure brought from the New World. French and English privateers were also harassing Spanish shipping and

taking from Spain an even larger portion of New World riches.

Still financially poor and surrounded by enemies, England concentrated on the trade of its agricultural and manufactured goods for Spanish and Portuguese treasure. England had, in fact, learned a valuable lesson from the Hundred Years' War; she abandoned ambitions for expansion onto the European continent.

England had also come the greatest distance away from feudalism out of the major European powers. Henry VIII not only broke the hold of the Catholic Church but he started to build a "modern" fighting navy. Indeed, the growing ocean trade and the merchant class produced in the maritime population a degree of social equality previously unknown.

Another step toward the elimination of the vestiges of feudal distinctions was Drake's success in forging England's well-disciplined group of privateers. As a result, England dispatched no conquistadors to the New World. Rather, her merchants went in search of new markets and fought when necessary to protect their investments. These efforts slowly eroded the Spanish monopoly.

War between England and Spain became inevitable. Elizabeth's privateers were taking enormous prizes on the high seas; and then, Elizabeth had executed Mary, the exiled Catholic Queen of Scotland. Spain's King Philip not only declared war but also claimed the English throne as his own and sent the Armada to take England.

The naval battle between the English (directed by Sir Francis Drake) and the Spanish Armada

was a contest between a rising modern state and a dying feudalistic empire. The outcome was total disaster for the Spaniards. The balance of power in Europe shifted almost immediately away from Spain and to northern Europe:

The fate of the Armada demonstrated to all the world that the rule of the seas had passed from the Mediterranean peoples to the Northern folk. This meant not only the survival of the Reformation in Northern Europe to a degree not fully determined, but the world-leadership of the Northerners in the new oceanic era.¹

Elizabeth had given the English people a sense of national identity and pride in a country unique to the times; indeed, the Elizabethan era was England's renaissance period. It was not only the glory achieved by Drake against the Armada, but the intellectual flowering of the likes of St. Thomas More, Francis Bacon, Ben Jonson and William Shakespeare that characterized the emerging England.

At the root of the battles between European states was the right to sovereignty over the New World lands. With papal sanction, Philip II claimed for Spain all the land south of the 44th degree of latitude. France, on the basis of the voyages of Verrazano and Cartier claimed all of the land north of where Philadelphia now stands. England's entry began in 1553 with the formation of the first stock company, the Muscovy Company, under the direction of Sebastian Cabot.

Settlement of North America was attempted by the Spanish in 1570 and by the English at Roanoke Island; both were destroyed by hostile natives. The pace quickened after Elizabeth I set down some new rules for dividing the spoils.

All grants for overseas adven-

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Least exertion - largest rewards!

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tures issued by European monarchs to their subjects, prior to Queen Elizabeth, had been to establish royal sovereignty, or for the avowed purpose of seeking wealth through finding gold, or of extending trade by discovery of a route to the source of the spices. But with the grant by Elizabeth to Sir Humphrey Gilbert in 1578, desire for profiteering by land ownership made its appearance and a quarter of a century later, English settlement in America began.⁴

Armed with a sizable navy, the newly-independent Dutch Republic was becoming a serious nation of traders. Dutch merchants made Amsterdam the financial capital of Europe. The Dutch foothold in the New World was gained by remanning an abandoned French fort on Castle Island (below Albany) and by fortifying Manhattan Island, where they engaged in a lively trade with the natives.

By 1626 there were some 200 Dutch settled in the New World under the leadership of Peter Minuet. Minuet attempted to legitimize Dutch territorial claims by "purchasing" the land from the natives, which set a precedent in the New World only now finding voice in American courts:

Early travelers and settlers in America have repeatedly stated that the Indians had no conception of private ownership, or purchase and sale, of land. It is thus inconceivable that they were, by that transaction, selling their birthright to the land in perpetuity. The prevailing belief that Manhattan Island was bought for \$24 is fallacious, and the later occupancy of it by the white race as an assumption consummated by force. All existing land titles in New York run back to that force.⁵

By what right did the natives charge the newly-arriving Dutch anything at all even for a "privilege of occupancy?" Were the

REFERENCES

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2. Allan W. Eckert: *WILDERNESS EMPIRE* [Boston: Little, Brown & Co., 1969], pp. 219-220.
3. G.M. Trevelyan: *HISTORY OF ENGLAND, VOL. II* [Garden City, NY: Doubleday & Co., 1952, Third Ed.] p. 120.
4. Alfred N. Chandler: *LAND TITLE ORIGINS* [NY: Robert Schalkenbach Foundation, 1945] p. 6.
5. *Ibid.*, p. 168.
6. John Locke: *SECOND TREATISE OF CIVIL GOVERNMENT* [Chicago: Henry Regnery Co., 1955; Originally published 1689], pp. 14-15.

ownership claims of the native tribes of any greater validity than those of the Europeans? From where did the European sovereigns obtain the right to grant land to shareholders in joint stock companies, their favored nobility or privateers?

The arrival of the European to the Western Hemisphere simply accelerated the process of territorial expansion by conquest, force and theft that characterized the entire history of civilization in the Old World.

Signs that the same system was evolving among native tribes were evident as well, even though private ownership of land within the tribes was uncommon.

WHAT WE see is that history is consistent with the first principle of political economy; namely, *MAN SEEKS TO SATISFY DESIRES WITH THE LEAST EXERTION*. The monopolization of resources (land, labor and capital) as well as of militarily-supported political institutions, have long been recognized as the means of acquiring wealth and power over others.

John Locke, one of the West's most enlightened political economists, recognized the universality of this law even as his society's social and political systems were being transplanted in the New World:

... he who attempts to get another man into his absolute power does thereby put himself into a state of war with him; it being to be understood as a declaration of a design upon his

life. For I have reason to conclude that he who would get me into his power without my consent, would use me as he pleased when he had got me there, and destroy me too, when he had a fancy to it; for nobody can desire to have me in his absolute power unless it be to compel me by force to that which is against the right of my freedom, i.e. make me a slave.

He that in the state of nature would take away the freedom that belongs to any one in that state, must necessarily be supposed to have a design to take away everything else, that freedom being the foundation of all the rest; as he that in the state of society would take away the freedom belonging to those of that society for commonwealth, must be supposed to design to take away from them everything else, and so be looked on as in a state of war.⁶

For Locke, the state that does not protect the rights and liberties of the citizens from the aggressions of the monopolists has been corrupted. As history has shown, those who have gained power have consistently used that power to enslave, where possible, the vast majority of others - through confiscation of individually-produced wealth (by means of taxation, demanded tribute, or outright force) or by chattel slavery.

The earth, as the source of all wealth, has been both battleground and prize. Settlement of the earth has itself produced a concentration of power in the hands of the warrior and priest classes, whose children's children eventually become the landed aristocracy. They inherited most of their nation's property in both land and capital, pushed producers to the bottom of the social hierarchy and perpetuated into the future systems of deep injustice. This lesson of history is one we must not ignore; to do so can only have the gravest effect on the future of mankind.