

Investigation will reveal the fact that settlement has not only flowed around physical obstacles, following the lines of least resistance, but that the location of the Indian tribes has been influential in determining the lines and character of the advance. The student of aboriginal conditions learns also that the buffalo trail became the Indian trail, that these lines were followed by the white hunter and trader, that the trails widened into roads, the roads into turnpikes, and these in turn were transformed into railroads. [Frederick Jackson Turner]¹⁷⁶

CHAPTER 7

CIVILIZATIONS UNDER SIEGE: THE EUROPEAN CONQUEST OF THE AMERICAS

NOT QUITE ALL QUIET ON THE WESTERN FRONT

A substantial body of physical evidence uncovered during this century has confirmed the migration of Eurasian tribal groups westward across the Atlantic Ocean to the Americas. Archaeologists and other scientists working together during the last few decades have discovered inscriptions of ancient origin throughout the northern and

southern hemispheres, written in what some experts believe are “*European and Mediterranean languages in alphabets that date from 2,500 years ago.*”¹⁷⁷ Such findings are interpreted by some scientists as evidence of the presence and permanent settlement by “*Celts, Basques, Libyans, and even Egyptians*”¹⁷⁸ in the Western hemisphere. Other evidence pointed to in support of this conclusion includes, for example, a resemblance in physical appearance of members of the Algonquian-speaking tribes of North America to that of southern European and Mediterranean peoples. Tales of migration across the ocean in their distant past has been integral to the oral history of the Algonquians.

Findings throughout the coastal areas of the Americas continue to add to the body of evidence; the scientific community as a whole, however, remains somewhat divided and skeptical. One archaeologist who has remained unconvinced is Brian Fagan:

A small group of archaeologists is devoting their careers to the search [for the origins...of the first Americans]. Many are cautious scholars. Others are gripped by profound convictions that cause them to espouse extravagant viewpoints in the face of overwhelming evidence to the contrary. A gathering of scholars studying the first Americans is never dull, for controversy invariably erupts, sometimes veiled in carefully studied politeness and firm dogma, sometimes dissolving into academic shouting matches. Very often the arguments are more remarkable for their vehemence than their scientific substance.¹⁷⁹

What is now beyond question is that people of northern European origin established settlements and explored the coastal areas of North America. Norsemen, or Vikings, reached and colonized Iceland, then pushed westward to found new settlements on the coastal regions of Greenland. From these bases, Viking explorers in the eleventh century crossed the Davis Strait to the North American continent, traveled south and eventually founded a small community at the northern tip of Newfoundland. The remains of this settlement were uncovered in the

early 1960s by Norwegian archaeologist and historian Helge Instad. Although the Viking explorers were few in number and had little permanent impact on the history of the Americas or the tribal societies with whom they came in contact, one cannot help but admire their incredible sense of adventure and fearless pursuit of the unknown. Moreover, their journeys may have resulted in the creation of a mixed race of people, known to later European and European-American explorers as the Mandan. At the time of the Viking visits, the Mandan tribe lived in the Great Lakes region and remained there for hundreds of years before being forced to migrate to the northern plains west of the Great Lakes.

Viking expeditions made their way along the eastern coast of North America and also explored the northern waterways of Canada, reaching the western shore of Hudson Bay and continuing inland and southward to Lake Winnipeg. Under circumstances lost to the recorded annals of history, some of these Vikings may have been captured and eventually adopted into the Mandan tribe. European explorers of the seventeenth century described the Mandan as a race unique in the Americas. They were described as having mixed hair colorings and many as fair skinned and blue eyed. The culture and history of the Mandan was later introduced to European-Americans in great detail by the Pennsylvania-born artist George Catlin, who devoted his life to acquiring an understanding of the indigenous peoples of the Americas. Catlin lived among the Mandan for a time during the 1830s, when the tribe was already in decline. Attacks by other tribes, particularly the Sioux, had reduced their numbers considerably. Eventually they would suffer virtual extinction as a result of contracting European diseases against which they had no built-up immunities or resistance. Catlin described them with great affection and left a puzzling account for modern scientists:

The Mandans are not a warlike people. They seldom, if ever, carry war into their enemies' country, but when invaded, show their valor and courage to be equal to that of any people on earth. Being a small tribe, and unable to contend on the wide prairies with the Sioux and other roaming tribes, who are ten times more numerous, they have very judiciously located themselves in a permanent village, which is strongly fortified. By this means they have advanced further in the arts of manufacture; have supplied their lodges more abundantly with the comforts, and even luxuries, of life than any Indian nation I know of.¹⁸⁰

Interestingly, the case of the Mandan illustrates an important principle; namely, that the historical development of groups proceeds along very similar paths, although strongly influenced by the natural environment and the presence of other groups. We see in the Americas the same pattern of conflict between those tribes who are settled in long-term communities and those who continue to live off of game animals and are dominated by warrior-hunter subgroups.

In addition to his observations on how the Mandan were organized as a societal group, Catlin goes on to describe their very European-like appearance:

A stranger in the Mandan village is first struck with the different shades of complexion, and various colors of hair, which he sees in a crowd about him and is at once disposed to exclaim that "these are not Indians." There are a great many of these people whose complexions appear light. Among the women, particularly, there are many whose skins are almost white; with hazel, gray, and blue eyes.

Why this diversity of complexion I cannot tell, nor can they themselves account for it. Their traditions, so far as I have yet learned them, afford us no information of their having had any knowledge of white men before the visit of Lewis and Clark made to their village ...¹⁸¹

Evidence supporting the probable Viking origins of the distinctive Mandan appearance and cultural advances over other indigenous tribes

was unearthed at the end of the nineteenth century. A large stone engraved with Norse writing was discovered in western Minnesota in 1898 that described the fate of a small party of Vikings who ventured into the area in 1362 and were attacked by indigenous warriors.¹⁸² Some members of this Viking group are thought to have been captured and integrated into the Mandan tribe. The details of this story may never be known, but the explanation provided is certainly within the realm of plausibility—and makes for interesting speculation.

At minimum, the intermittent travels by Eurasian groups to the Americas reinforces the idea of history as a continuum, with groups subdividing, migrating and re-subdividing when conditions warranted. This process brought the largest numbers of migrants to the Americas some 20-30,000 years ago by way of the land bridge known to have existed between the Americas and Asia. By 15,000 B.C. various groups had penetrated deep into both the northern and southern hemispheres. Their small numbers and the large land area available to support a nomadic existence forestalled a settled existence and development of a hierarchical socio-political structure until almost 1,000 B.C. Amazingly, as late as the sixteenth century, when the Aztecs of Mexico and the Incas of Peru were overwhelmed by Spanish conquistadors (assisted by indigenous enemies of these powerful empires), neither group apparently had any knowledge of the other's existence. Distance, a mountainous terrain and dense forests certainly contributed to the isolation of these empire-builders of the southern hemisphere.

Hunter-gatherer groups had discovered the grassy uplands of the Peruvian region as early as 15,000 B.C. Although mountainous, they also found abundant sources of water and a wide variety of game animals. The Pacific coast of Peru, on the other hand, receives little rainfall; inland, there is desert. As a consequence, those who settled this part of Peru did so to harvest the sea rather than the soil, and permanent settlements appeared only around 2,500 B.C.

Civilization was advancing in the Americas on the Eurasian model but at a considerably slower pace. Whether or not one accepts the evidence of Atlantic migrations by the Vikings and earlier Eurasian groups, what is certain is that the dynamics of an increasing population and changing environment stimulated within the *indigenous* tribes of the Americas establishment of hierarchical socio-political structures in the same way this occurred in more distant times for their Eurasian ancestors.

Important technological discoveries remained in the Americas for a distant future had they not been introduced by the invading Europeans during the sixteenth century. This was the case even down to the domestication of animals as sources of labor and food. With the exception of the dog, which was domesticated by tribes in the northwestern part of the northern hemisphere around 8,400 B.C., only the Peruvian tribes relied on domesticated work animals; these included the guinea pig (6,000 B.C.) and the llama (3,500 B.C.). Interestingly, the evidence strongly suggests that the knowledge gained by these early Peruvian settlers spread outward to other, less advanced groups. The Aztec, who came to dominate what is now Mexico, apparently acquired at least some of their agricultural practices from the Peruvians. Time and the experience of periodic natural disasters resulted in a re-isolation of these two great civilizations.

Life Before The Europeans Arrived

Prehistoric hunters became increasingly proficient after the development of sharpened stone weapons. A similar result occurred when the domestication of wild plants was facilitated by tools created for harvesting of food crops and grinding of grains into flour. However, not until around 5000 B.C. were maize and beans domesticated by the tribes of the Tehuacan Valley (Mexico), providing them with a balanced

supply of proteins, carbohydrates and amino acids. Surplus crops eventually enabled groups in the southern hemisphere to settle for several years in one location, until their slash and burn form of agriculture depleted the soil of fertility.

As in Eurasia, the earliest settled communities were populated by clans of related families. Leadership generally rested with the eldest productive members of the clan. Administration of the clan's territorial holdings was normally directed by the elders on the basis of communal ownership. Hierarchical structure on the Eurasian model first appeared around 1500 B.C. in the southern hemisphere. As described by historians Swanson, Bray and Farrington, the changes parallel those of earlier Eurasian experiences:

Some tribal communities developed into chiefdoms, characterized by the beginnings of class distinction and by an increasing separation between the rulers and the common people. Certain clans or families gained the power and status at the expense of others, leading eventually to the emergence of a hereditary elite. ...

In Mesoamerica and the central Andes the more advanced chiefdoms were gradually transformed into states. States have populations measured in tens or even hundreds of thousands, with strong centralized government, specialized professions (administrators, priests, craftsmen, traders, lawyers and bureaucrats), and a hierarchy of social classes. The governing class gets more than its fair share of the produce of the community, may control the distribution of goods or land, and has few links with the common people. Class distinctions may be deliberately fostered by government policy through the granting of special insignia or privileges.¹⁸³

The three great examples of these American civilizations were the Aztec of Mexico, the Mayan in Guatemala and the Inca of Peru. The rise of the Aztec civilization in the high Valley of Mexico began somewhat later than that of the Incas in Peru, however. The Aztec decision to settle where they did occurred because of the existence of several large lakes, formed during a prehistoric era of greater rainfall. Their numbers

increased over time, as did their impact on the fragile environment in which they lived, as described here by historian Jonathan Leonard:

...perhaps as much as 2,000 years ago...the population on the shore of these lakes evidently grew to the extent that the farmers began to feel pinched for land, so they encroached on the lakes. Starting in the shallowest places, they drove stakes into the soft bottom and connected them with wickerwork to form small enclosures. Then they scooped up mud and dumped it into the enclosures until they created a scrap of new land rising a foot or so above the water. These always-moist floating gardens proved enormously productive and could be planted to crops several times a year. As the population of the Valley of Mexico continued to increase, more and more of them were built. The islands coalesced into blocks of land separated by canals; trees were planted on them so their maze of roots would stabilize the mushy soil, and silt scooped out of the canals was spread on their surfaces to preserve their fertility.

In their peak period, before the Spanish conquest, the floating gardens were the economic base of the Aztec empire. The gleaming white capital, Tenochtitlan, was itself built mostly on floating gardens, and food for its estimated 300,000 inhabitants was brought in from other floating garden areas by canoes that plied the canals.¹⁸⁴

Necessity had stimulated discovery under societal conditions that apparently fostered experimentation. Thus, Aztec socio-political arrangements were for a relatively long period cooperatively-based; at the same time, their settled existence eventually resulted in the same hierarchical socio-political structure that shaped the destiny of similarly developed civilizations in Eurasia. Yet, the Aztec understanding of the natural environment, the discovery of practical knowledge and conversion of that knowledge into technologies and the pursuit of knowledge for its own sake proceeded at a pace consistent with the internal and external pressures of their civilization. Given sufficient time, this would have led them along a path of technological advance closely resembling that of their European conquerors. The evidence to support this conclusion comes from the tendency of very

divergent groups to find very similar solutions to organizational challenges they face over time. Traditions, rituals, and social mores do differ by degree; however, our ability to visualize and contemplate our actions serves us in a universal fashion and has done so independent of time and place. What differentiates societies from one another is the stage of development, the extent of knowledge accumulation (i.e., of *discoveries*), the pressures from the external environment and the presence of competing groups.

Defying what would seem most logical, the appearance of settled and more highly structured groups in the northern hemisphere of the Americas appeared in much more recent times than in the southern hemisphere and in regions one might not anticipate would have been viewed as hospitable for large-scale human habitation. These tribal groups (primarily the Hopi and Zuni tribes), settling in the southwestern regions of what is now part of the United States, constructed adobe-walled towns and engaged in a highly developed form of agriculture. Their socio-political structure was also highly advanced and included a formal court system within which disputes and the interpretation of law was adjudicated.

Tribes living east of the Rocky Mountains continued at this time to live primarily as hunters, although few were nomadic as that term is normally used. They constructed villages and engaged in horticulture but periodically moved when game and soils became depleted. The Algonquian and other tribes occupying the northeastern part of the Americas were semi-sedentary and depended more extensively on agriculture, while to their immediate south (from Lake Champlain to the Genesee River and from the Adirondack Mountains to central Pennsylvania) five independent tribes had long before the arrival of Europeans united to form a powerful confederation, the *Iroquois League*, to govern this large territory and protect one another from attack by non-member tribes.

By Eurasian standards of the sixteenth century, these American tribal societies were far behind in the several crucial areas that would matter most—population size, systems of agriculture and manufacturing capable of producing large surpluses, the development of weaponry and the technology of warfare. Initial numerical superiority thwarted European incursions but this advantage quickly disappeared as the sixteenth century progressed. Samuel Morison and Henry Commager describe the tribal societies in the Americas as largely independent of one another, not yet reaching the stage in their development were alliances and fixed settlement stimulated the building of walled cities or fortifications:

don't size? 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 neighbors, and knew nothing of what went on elsewhere.¹⁸⁵

The case is certainly overstated, insofar as hostility is concerned. Warfare was frequent, yet most tribes were headed by civil chiefs whose leadership roles dominated until the actual occurrence of war. In most cases, wars between tribes represented long running feuds traced to some distant (or recent) atrocity rather than a desire by one tribe to gain control of the territory of another. Even the Iroquois League was a defensive alliance that, although secured a large territory, was not utilized for territorial expansion. Empire-building remained limited to the southern hemisphere.

The protection of territory held by tribes for many generations and, hence, considered by the individual tribe as its traditional hunting and fishing grounds was, however, a dominant factor in the periodic conflicts that arose. For this reason, even the more peacefully inclined tribes selected warriors as sub-chiefs to lead war parties against their enemies. In other tribes, particularly those who lived in close proximity

to one another and which were larger in population, displayed organizational traits similar to their Eurasian counterparts. At the time of the European migration to the Americas, however, the tribes of North America remained primarily communitarian and without the capacity (or desire) to produce a large surplus of wealth. The arrival of Europeans, who introduced both the horse and more efficient weapons, escalated the destructiveness of warfare and pulled the tribal societies rapidly toward a more warrior-dominated socio-political structure. Unfortunately for these tribes, their relatively low populations and primitive systems of wealth production left them ill-prepared to resist the storm rising over the Atlantic Ocean. One of the early exponents of *modernization* theory, Adam Smith, concluded that in the end the life of the indigenous peoples of the American southern hemisphere (who survived the disease and warfare brought by Europeans) was actually enhanced and their long-term survival assured:

In spite of the cruel destruction of the natives which followed the conquest, these two great empires [Aztec and Inca] are, probably, more populous now than they ever were before: and the people are surely very different; for we must acknowledge, I apprehend, that the Spanish creoles are in many respects superior to the ancient Indians.¹⁸⁶

Smith did not ignore the issue of whether universal principles existed for all members of the human species. However, his analysis was plagued by inconsistency in the application of principle to existing socio-political arrangements and institutions. Out of context, the above passage served the interest of those who would self-righteously suggest that because less technologically advanced societies were inherently inferior, those in the more advanced societies were morally obligated to lead their inferiors out of a primitive state. "*In judging [the] capacity [of the indigenous people] the Spaniards never doubted that their own standards were the logical ones to apply,*" writes Lewis Hanke.¹⁸⁷ This

attitude resulted, conversely to Smith's view, in the decimation of the quality of life for these indigenous people:

Not one of the colonists considered the Indians capable of living in freedom. ...[More than one Spaniard observed] Indian prodigality and considered that, inasmuch as Indians showed no greediness or desire for wealth (these being the principle motives...impelling men to labor and acquire possessions), they would inevitably lack the necessities of life if not supervised by Spaniards. ...[One Spanish colonist in the Americas] conceded that the Indians must have had ability of a sort because they had raised crops, built houses, and made clothes before the Spaniards arrived, [and that the] Indian chieftains, likewise, appeared to him to have a good method of keeping together and protecting the people under their administration, but in all other matters neither Indians nor chieftains manifested sufficient ability to live like Spaniards.¹⁸⁸

To live like Europeans was not in the nature of the indigenous people of the Americas, yet a small number of leaders (recognizing their great disadvantage in numbers and inability to carry on sustained warfare) attempted to secure a degree of protection from European encroachment by seeking peaceful relations and adopting European methods of agriculture, manners of dress and culture. In the end, these efforts failed to preserve tribal independence. Individuals intermarried with Europeans and were absorbed into the majority society. The tribal, communitarian way of life slowly gave way until the few surviving groups were relegated to the status of wards of the State and required to live on lands the Europeans deemed worthless for themselves.

Between the time the Europeans first arrived in the late fifteenth century and the decade of tensions that resulted in the rebellion of colonials in North America against British rule, the conquest of the hemisphere's indigenous people was accompanied by a sincere, if ineffective, debate over the fundamental moral principles underlying the relationship between citizens of the colonies and their government.

The writings of Old World transnationals provided a framework for this debate, as did the classics of Greek and Roman antiquity. The number of true scholars living in the Americas was certainly small, even as late as on the eve of rebellion against Britain. Yet, there was a widespread and pervasive sentiment on the part of the colonials that their socio-political arrangements (and, hence, their lives) were distinctly superior to those of the Old World. It seemed to them that all that was good was being threatened by the actions of small and inept men who had gained high position in the British government. "*They had hated and feared the trends of their own time, and in their writing had contrasted the present with a better past, which they endowed with qualities absent from their own, corrupt era*", writes Bernard Bailyn.¹⁸⁹

To find a period of time in the Old World similar to that which the colonials felt exemplified the same degree of liberty they enjoyed and was now threatened, they looked to pre-Norman, Anglo-Saxon England.¹⁹⁰ These same colonials did not, however, look at themselves as conquerors and usurpers where the indigenous Americans were concerned. A particularly critical assessment of the European-Americans who came to the frontier appears in Richard Drinnon's introduction to the memoirs of John Dunn Hunter, who was captured near the end of the eighteenth century by the Osage tribe and raised to adulthood by these people. Hunter's memoirs spoke in tender and favorable terms of the life led by the Osage and other indigenous tribes, evoking great interest among European and some American intellectuals but resentment from those who felt the sting of Hunter's words:

Europeans in the New World had good reason...for not looking directly at the natives and the wilderness they were destroying. To have looked openly risked revealing that savages...were like niggers: they existed only in the heads of whites. To have *seen* the natives risked discovering that these "ravening wolves" were merely that part of themselves Wasps found abhorrent, necessary to deny, and therefore necessary

to project... Open-eyed scrutiny threatened to disclose that the headlong pursuit of God, Progress, the American Empire, and their own "higher nature" had hurled Wasps along a course of warring against what was natural in themselves and their environment.¹⁹¹

After visiting Thomas Jefferson at Monticello in 1824, Hunter attempted to negotiate with the Mexican government for an *Indian* homeland in Texas that would become a buffer state between Mexico and the United States. In this quest, Hunter made an enemy of Stephen Austin, who first threatened Hunter and then had him murdered. As Richard Drinnon writes, "*American Indian policy had always been genocidal in intent and performance.*"¹⁹² Reading today of the relentless westward movement of European-Americans at the expense of the indigenous peoples, one of the aspects to this engagement that is so remarkable is how the children and grandchildren of landless Old World migrants could have conceived of themselves as rightful masters of such a huge New World. Even William Penn's own family and the settlers who came to Pennsylvania at Penn's invitation failed to appreciate the scale of the atrocities associated with the European conquest of the Americas. Of the peoples indigenous to the Americas, Penn wrote:

Do not abuse them, but *let them have justice, and you win them*. The worst is, that they are the worse for the Christians, who have propagated their vices, and yielded them tradition for ill and not for good things.¹⁹³

Benjamin Franklin displayed a strong interest in treating the Delaware and other tribes justly when he challenged the legitimacy of a land swindle executed by Thomas Penn, referred to as the "*walking-purchase*," because the amount of land acquired was based on the distance walked over a day and a half. Thomas Penn had, however, employed several swift athletes to cover a much larger distance than the

Thomas Penn

Delaware had conceptually agreed to. Working in conjunction with Sir William Johnson, agent of the English crown and adopted chief of the Mohawk tribe, Franklin orchestrated the resale of this tract to the Iroquois—who by right of conquest had gained control over the territory decades before. The Delaware were living in the region by permission from the Iroquois.

Franklin's involvement in this one incident did not, however, prevent him from becoming involved in a land company organized to promote settlement in western Pennsylvania and beyond, knowing full well that this territory was inhabited by countless indigenous tribes. Franklin accepted the treatment of land as a commodity to be bought and sold. And, his overall view of the rights of these people to share the continent is revealed in brief record he made of treaty (and land purchase) negotiations during 1753 in Carlisle, Pennsylvania. In his *Autobiography*, he wrote: “[I]f it be the Design of Providence to extirpate those Savages in order to make room for Cultivators of the Earth, it seems not improbable that Rum may be the appointed Means. It has already annihilated all the Tribes who formerly inhabited the Sea-coast.”¹⁹⁴

There is no reliable record of Jefferson's meeting with John Hunter. Jefferson possessed a keen interest in the history and lives of the indigenous people, but he offered no reasonable solution to a peaceful coexistence with them. By the very nature of the conflict with the European-Americans over control of the continent, there was little possibility of the “Cultivators of the Earth” living in harmony with people who had no concept of individual property in land. To William Henry Harrison, Jefferson wrote: “*In war they will kill some of us; we will destroy all of them.*”¹⁹⁵ In this light, the following observation by Jefferson must be accepted as something of an obituary on the tragedy unfolding during Jefferson's own lifetime:

[T]he proofs of genius given by the Indians of North America place them on a level with whites in the same uncultivated state. ...I have seen some thousands myself, and

conversed much with them, and have found in them a masculine, sound understanding. I have had much information from men who have lived among them, and whose veracity and good sense were so far known to me, as to establish a reliance on their information. They have all agreed in bearing witness in favor of the genius of this people.¹⁹⁶

Only a few European-Americans recognized or were troubled by the irony associated with their annihilation of the indigenous tribes and forcible removal of these people from lands they occupied. After settlements were established in Boston, Philadelphia, New York, Williamsburg and other coastal and tidewater areas, the second and third generation European-Americans (and their contemporary arrivals from Europe) thought of the interior of North America as virgin frontier, unsettled and available for anyone able to clear the land and hold it. If, today, we are troubled by the relativistic morality associated with this migration and its violent character, we should at least consider the following perspective, provided by Theodore Roosevelt not very long after the last of the indigenous tribes surrendered their independence, their territory and much of their dignity:

The Southwest was conquered only after years of hard fighting with the original owners. The way in which this was done bears much less resemblance to the sudden filling up of Australia and California by the practically unopposed overflow from a teeming and civilized mother country, than it does to the original English lone quest of Britain itself.

The warlike borderers who thronged across the Alleghanies, the restless and reckless hunters, the hard, dogged, frontier farmers, by dint of grim tenacity overcame and displaced Indians, French, and Spaniards alike, exactly as, fourteen hundred years before, Saxon and Angle had overcome and displaced the Cymric and Gaelic Celts. They were led by no one commander; they acted under orders from neither king nor congress; they were not carrying out the plans of any far-sighted leader. In obedience

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to the instincts working half blindly within their breasts, spurred ever onward by the fierce desires of their eager hearts, they made in the wilderness homes for their children, and by so doing wrought out the destinies of a continental nation.¹⁹⁷

The people who came to the Americas from Europe were, as Roosevelt suggests, motivated not so much by the promise of empire as by the promise of a freehold and minimal government encroachment on their *freedom*. Accompanying this mass migration of people from Europe to the North American coast and then into the vast interior, a small number of transnationals recognized the incongruity of conquering a less advanced people in the interest of individual liberty. Opportunists and the agents of the State might continue to act out *man's inhumanity to man* in vulgar fashion, but this did not occur without social commentary and condemnation. There were always a few voices crying out from the wilderness against injustice. Beneath the surface there existed among the European arrivals as well as the indigenous tribes that justice demanded a sharing of the earth's bounty. Meeting with the lieutenant governor of Pennsylvania, George Thomas, in 1742, the Iroquois chief Canassatego drove to the heart of the problem between those who controlled the land and the newcomers:

We know our lands are now become more valuable. The white people think we do not know their value; but we are sensible that the land is everlasting, and the few goods we receive for it are soon worn out and gone.¹⁹⁸

The measured response by Thomas reveals the attitude of the European arrivals toward nature as an economic commodity to be exploited and developed:

It is very true that lands are of late becoming more valuable; but what raises their value? Is it not entirely owing to the industry and labor used by the white people in their cultivation and improvement? Had not they come among you, these lands would

have been of no use to you, any further than to maintain you. And is there not, now you have sold so much, enough left for all the purposes of living? What you say of the goods, that they are soon worn out, is applicable to everything; but you know very well that they cost a great deal of money; and the value of land is no more than it is worth in money.¹⁹⁹

What is also clear is the fact that the two civilizations engaged in exchange from two very different frames of reference. America's tribal societies did not possess the knowledge and skills to manufacture the goods offered to them in trade. Competition between French, English and Colonial traders existed, but the barter exchanges were always immensely favorable to the traders. Although the indigenous tribes bartered and relied upon certain commodity standards for money, territory was not generally yielded by occupying tribes until defeated in war and their very existence at risk. A number of the more settled and peaceful tribes attempted to live in close proximity with the European-Americans; and, despite formal treaties that designated tribal territorial borders, encroachment was inevitable and ongoing. The Europeans in the Americas had merely advanced the art of sanctioning criminal license to a more cultivated level. The indigenous people were, however, only the first victims of entrenched privilege carried forward into the Colonial socio-political arrangements and institutions. Independence from British rule changed very little. And, after war between the states more clearly reduced them to subordinate positions to national law and national institutions, the flaws inherent in the laws of the nation gradually became clear, at least to some. Among the vanguard of those warning of worsening conditions was Henry George:

Even if universal history did not teach the lesson, it is in the United States already becoming very evident that political equality can continue to exist only upon a basis of social equality; that where the disparity in the distribution of wealth increases, political democracy only makes easier the concentration of power, and must

inevitably lead to tyranny and anarchy. And it is already evident that there is nothing in political democracy, nothing in popular education, nothing in any of our American institutions, to prevent the most enormous disparity in the distribution of wealth. ...We already have citizens whose wealth can be estimated only in hundreds of millions, and before the end of the century, if present tendencies continue, we are likely to have fortunes estimated in thousands of millions—such monstrous fortunes as the world has never seen since the growth of similar fortunes ate out the heart of Rome.²⁰⁰

After all, what had brought millions of Europeans to the Americas was the hunger for land and a better life. Conditions in Europe were such that “[t]he general productivity of agriculture was still too low [as late as the sixteenth century] that no country could totally guarantee a basic level of subsistence for the whole of its population every year out of its own resources.”²⁰¹ Peasants in every country suffered from heavy taxation and land rents as well as from a denial of political liberty. Along the coastal tidewaters of North America, the descendants of earlier immigrants had by the early eighteenth century accumulated considerable personal wealth; newer arrivals sought to repeat the process by moving to the frontier. Sounding very much like Henry George, Jackson Turner Main found that the North American promise of equality of opportunity was amazingly short-lived:

When the frontier stage had ended, and society became stable, the chance to rise diminished. All the land worth owning was now occupied, and land prices rose, so that the sons of pioneers and the newcomers could not so easily improve their positions. Mobility therefore diminished as the community grew older.²⁰²

Under these pressures, the civilizations of pre-European America had little chance of maintaining a sovereign existence. Their numbers fell to a level by the end of the nineteenth century that prevented them from effective participation in the new republic. Neither heroic

resistance nor alliance with the European-Americans slowed their wholesale displacement. Disease achieved far more effectively than warfare the elimination of the tribes from disputed territory. Only after the new republic was nearly fully settled, with cities dotting the landscape from ocean to ocean, did a serious concern arise for the surviving tribes. *Native American* is today how government agencies and sociologists refer to the descendants of the first Americans, a people who have in some respects assimilated but who continue to declare their sovereignty.

An argument can be made that an equal or even larger portion of the world's population today suffers from oppression and economic deprivation than in the seventeenth or eighteenth centuries. Even in the world's social democracies (a group of societies recently enlarged, one might argue, to include some of the eastern European republics and those formerly within the Soviet Union) power and privilege continue to be concentrated, as is the control over land and natural resources. In some societies this control remains largely private; in others, privilege manifests itself in the hands of bureaucrats and the State. In North America during the period of frontier expansion, control of the land was taken away from the indigenous tribes by people in constant motion along a 1,500 mile front that moved westward from the Atlantic Ocean to the Mississippi River, then converged on the remaining tribes from all sides.

To Divide And Conquer

Countless battles were to be fought between the invading Europeans and the indigenous tribes of the Americas; yet, as early as the middle of the eighteenth century the struggle for control over the vast continent was largely over. Prolonged contact with the Europeans decimated the tribes, who with only a few exceptions never understood that only a

united resistance held out any hope of preserving their civilization and independence.

The earliest to fall victim to the European onslaught were those in the southern hemisphere. The Portuguese explorer Pedro Cabral followed Columbus and Vespucci into the Americas in 1500 to claim Brazil for the Portuguese crown. Within the span of just three decades Cortes conquered the Aztecs and Pizarro the Incas, claiming these lands for Spain. Enslaved Africans would quickly become part of the commercial system brought to the New World once the indigenous populations had been decimated or driven into the mountains. The Catholic Church hierarchy made no effective efforts to oppose slavery. As early as 1511, however, a Dominican friar named Antonio de Montesinos boldly raised the doctrines of Christianity as a moral challenge to Spanish conquests. His sermon, delivered to the Spanish citizens of Hispaniola, puts him in good company with more recent Roman Catholic priests whose calls for justice have been labeled *liberation theology*:

In order to make your sins against the Indians known to you I have come up on this pulpit, I who am a voice of Christ crying in the wilderness of this island... This voice says that you are in mortal sin, that you live and die in it, for the cruelty and tyranny you use in dealing with these innocent people. Tell me, by what right or justice do you keep these Indians in such a cruel and horrible servitude? On what authority have you waged a detestable war against these people, who dwelt quietly and peacefully on their own land? ...Why do you keep them so oppressed and weary, not giving them enough to eat nor taking care of them in their illness? For with the excessive work you demand of them they fall ill and die, or rather you kill them with your desire to extract and acquire gold every day.²⁰³

What casts an even darker shadow on the behavior of the Spanish is the fact that the Spanish vanguard in the Americas was comprised of "*footloose ex-soldiers, broken noblemen, adventurers, or even convicts.*"²⁰⁴

Most of these conquerors were not individuals in whom the true Spanish elite placed much confidence or gave much respect. Nevertheless, the behavior of the Spanish toward indigenous Americans was not unique. Europeans initially sought peaceful relations until they assembled a sufficient fighting capability to subdue the indigenous people, extort tribute from them or enslave them outright for economic benefit.

Despite the dutiful practice of rituals associated with the Protestant and Roman Catholic Churches, the moral sense of right and wrong integral to the true doctrine of Christianity had little or no influence on the actions of Europeans toward one another or toward non-Christians. This was certainly the case where control over nature was concerned. The English imperialists had the guidance of respected moral philosophers, such as John Locke, to provide moral justification to their behavior. Locke told them, for example, that although "*God gave the world to men in common...for their benefit and the greatest convenience of life they were capable to draw from it, it cannot be supposed he meant it should always remain common and uncultivated.*"²⁰⁵ The colonists who initially came to North America (and their colonial descendants) accepted instinctively that the land was provided for "*the use of the industrious and rational*" among themselves, and that "*labour was to be [their] title to it*"²⁰⁶; yet, even the planted fields of the indigenous tribes and the presence of permanent villages established for hundreds of years failed to alter the course of the European-American migration. The pattern of exploitation and annihilation that characterized the settlement of Eurasia was not softened by the immense wilderness they found in the Americas.

Differences between Europeans and indigenous Americans were exaggerated, and similarities reduced in importance in order to justify claims of inherent superiority. A few Europeans would come to recognize that the American tribal societies were going through a pattern of socio-political development similar to that of earlier

Eurasian tribes. Unfortunately, their influence over the actions and policies exercised toward the American tribes made almost no impact on events. In other instances, the nature of the tribal societies was misrepresented to support the socio-political objectives of certain Europeans agitators. Jean-Jacques Rousseau, for example, writing from France and without any first-hand knowledge of the northern tribes in the Americas, offered a rather startling comparison between the American tribal societies and the earliest Eurasians:

The first societies governed themselves aristocratically. The heads of families deliberated among themselves about public affairs. Young people demurred without difficulty to the authority of experience. This is the source of the names *priests, ancients, senate, elders*. The savages of North America still govern themselves in this manner, and are very well governed.²⁰⁷

Rousseau's observation suggests that a society governed by priests and elders takes advantage of tradition and accumulated wisdom to maintain order, which he essentially equates to *the good*. Rousseau had already concluded that European societies had become corrupted by the abandonment of the tribal hierarchy in favor of one established by force and coercion. What he failed to understand is the very natural tendency of societies to evolve in this direction. Communitarian societies exposed to strong external competition and environmental pressures drift into hierarchies dominated by warrior-chieftains. Privilege then yields oppression as certainly as day yields to night.

At around the same time in North America, Sconondoa, an elder chief of the Oneida tribe (within the Iroquois League) was attempting to warn his fellow tribesmen of the European danger while the threat of annihilation might yet be removed. As the French and English each pressured the Iroquois to bring their warriors into battle on one side or the other, Sconondoa rose during this important council to speak:

My children, none among all the Iroquois here have lived as long as Sconondoa and no more than two or three even half as long. Yet, surely among you there must be some who remember what we are and who we are and what we once had. Are there none here who remember when the cry "The Iroquois are coming!" was alone enough to make the hearts of the bravest warriors of other tribes fail within their breasts? Are there none here who remember when this land was all ours and that though other tribes were round about they were there by our forbearance and there was none who could stand before us; are there none here who remember that from the green sea to the east and the blue sea to the south, to the land of always-winter in the north and the land of always-summer in the west, they feared us?

But then came the men in their boats and they brought us gifts. They asked for just a little land and we foolishly gave it to them. Then, when they asked us for more land and we would not give it to them, they asked us to sell it to them and because they had goods that were new and powerful to us, we sold them some. Then they asked us for more land and when we would not give it or sell it, they took it from us and we talked and talked and always it was we who gave in and signed a new treaty and took gifts for what was taken, but the gifts were cheap and worthless and lasted but a day, while the land lasts forever.²⁰⁸

Sconondoa's experiences in resisting the European onslaught had covered nearly a century, and from this he demonstrated a unique appreciation for human behavior and the principles of political economy. He understood that those things we produce quickly deteriorate in condition and usefulness; nature, on the other hand, is regenerative of its wealth producing potential, provided we adopt a manner of harvesting wealth that permits nature to perform its magic. Sconondoa, as had so many other leaders in other once-powerful tribes, saw that his people were fighting a losing battle. Nonetheless, he made one last attempt to rally them against what he recognized as the common threat:

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.²⁰⁹

As Sconooda predicted, tribe by tribe the indigenous Americans quickly lost control of the territories they had inhabited for hundreds, even thousands, of years. The process of complete takeover required nearly 400 years, beginning with the first landings by Christopher Columbus in the Caribbean in 1492, and ending with the surrender of the Sioux warriors under Tatanka Yotanka, the Sitting Bull, near the end of the nineteenth century. The completeness of the transition from indigenous to European control of the Americas is revealed in the terms of surrender dictated to Tatanka Yotanka by John Logan on behalf of the United States of America:

[Y]ou are not a great chief of this country. ...[Y]ou have no following, no power, no control, and no right to any control. You are on an Indian reservation merely at the sufferance of the government. You are fed by the government, clothed by the government, your children are educated by the government, and all you have and are today is because of the government. If it were not for the government you would be freezing and starving today in the mountains.²¹⁰

The tragedy befalling these people was enormous in its scope, particularly because their fate was sealed at the hands of a people whose

founders declared themselves to be building an enlightened society guided by a moral sense philosophy and a pluralistic tolerance for others. Conquest and even annihilation of vanquished tribes by more numerous and technologically superior groups fit the continuum of history; what we are today troubled by is the legacy of moral responsibility that cries out for retribution. The more enlightened of eighteenth century Europeans and European-Americans were unable to fully reconcile their behavior toward the indigenous Americans and enslaved Africans with their growing commitment to human rights and just law. Thomas Jefferson, in so many ways among the vanguard of enlightened *republican* leaders, wrestled unsuccessfully with this dichotomy of reason against belief, intent against behavior. In his *Notes On Virginia* (1784), he does distance himself from the prejudiced and unscientific reports of tribal culture in the southern hemisphere, writing:

Of the Indian of South America I know nothing; for I would not honor with the appellation of knowledge, what I derive from the fables published of them. These I believe to be just as true as the fables of Aesop.²¹¹

His attitude toward the indigenous peoples of North America was similarly balanced and to the extent possible based on first-hand observation or reliable (i.e., objective) information obtained from others who visited and lived among the tribes. He considered the enslavement of these people an "*inhuman practice*" and conveyed in his writing a remarkable appreciation for the relation between the socio-political differences of American and Eurasian societies:

Before we condemn the Indians of this continent as wanting genius, we must consider that letters have not yet been introduced among them. Were we to compare them in their present state with the Europeans, north of the Alps, when the Roman arms and arts first crossed those mountains, the comparison would be unequal,

because, at that time, those parts of Europe were swarming with numbers; because numbers produce emulation, and multiply the chances of improvement, and one improvement begets another. Yet I may safely ask, how many good poets, how many able mathematicians, how many great inventors in arts or sciences, had Europe, north of the Alps, then produced? And it was sixteen centuries after this before a Newton could be formed.²¹²

Jefferson goes on to speculate the Eurasian origins of the American tribes and their migrations across the northwestern and northeastern land/sea bridges. He is clearly sympathetic to the view of a common, although very distant, ancestry. His vision of the future even saw as inevitable the inter-marriage between European-Americans and the indigenous Americans. Jefferson's attitude toward Africans was, however, far more complex and contradictory, denouncing slavery yet purchasing additional slaves beyond those coming to him as part of his father's estate. Moreover, he was apparently unable to believe that Africans came from the same common ancestry he accepted for indigenous Americans and Eurasians. His sentiments are perhaps best revealed in the brief passage from his *Autobiography*, written in 1820:

Nothing is more certainly written in the book of fate, than that these people are to be free, nor is it less certain that the two races, equally free, cannot live in the same government. Nature, habit, opinion, have drawn indelible lines of distinction between them. It is still in our power to direct the process of emancipation and deportation, peaceably, and in such slow degree, as that the evil will wear off insensibly, and their place be, *pari passu* [i.e., on an equal basis], filled up by free white laborers. If, on the contrary, it is left to force itself on, human nature must shudder at the prospect held up.²¹³

The irony in Jefferson's words is remarkable given the extent to which European-Americans and African-Americans joined to produce offspring of a mixed race. Even in his own lifetime, Jefferson had plenty

of evidence to draw on to suggest that the real differences between the races were superficial and would almost disappear with opportunity to learn in the same manner the arts and sciences that represented the highest level of knowledge available. Indeed, despite the systematic attempt to deny African-Americans the opportunity to learn, many were able to do so on their own. Slavery forcibly brought together Africans whose tribes fought one another over territory and were as different in their cultural norms as were the indigenous Americans to one another. Thus, within a few generations, African-Americans no longer possessed a consistent link to their past. They became one people struggling to cope with socio-political arrangements and cultural norms imposed on them by others whose only interest in them was the exploitation of their brute labor. The fact that those African-Americans who managed to obtain their freedom gained exposure to the dominant European-American culture and system of learning (even while generally existing at the edges of those European-American communities), set the stage for an eventual cultural assimilation of African-Americans not experienced by indigenous Americans—not that any African-Americans living as “free blacks” in the late eighteenth and into the nineteenth century would have appreciated this advantage. A few who acquired education and who demonstrated superior talent found their way to England or the European continent to pursue a better life. Even so, when Frederick Douglass made his escape to the north and out of slavery, he was amazed to find that many free blacks lived better than the majority of slaveholders along the Eastern Shore of Maryland where he had lived in slavery.

Free blacks were making remarkable progress under severe conditions. A black man, Wendell Phillips, graduated from Harvard College in 1831. As early as 1833, a New Yorker named Theodore Weld was instrumental in the founding a college in Oberlin, Ohio that accepted both African-Americans and women as students. African-Americans were sufficiently well-organized and learned in

the socio-political norms of European-America that they held a Convention of Colored Citizens in 1843 at Buffalo, New York to demand an end to slavery. Free blacks lived in the South as well, and some prospered even under laws that imposed restrictions on their ability to accumulate property or engage in commerce. New Orleans was the most racially and ethnically pluralistic cities in the South, with numerous members of the city's wealthier citizens being of mixed-blood. All that was necessary for African-Americans to compete successfully with their European-American counterparts was the adoption and enforcement of law that secured and protected equality of opportunity; free blacks demonstrated they were more than capable of prospering and making important contributions to the advance of *Western* civilization. Unlike the indigenous Americans, their numbers were increasing, they lived in the same population centers as European-Americans, came to share the same religious beliefs, cultivated the land in the same manner when given the opportunity, spoke the same language and learned from the same books. The new American republic was far from an hospitable place for African-Americans, but neither did the European-Americans feel so universally threatened by their very presence that genocide was systematically pursued as a solution.

When the time came for the European-Americans to claim their sovereignty and break with the British empire, the leaders did so plagued by the inconsistencies between moral principles espoused and moral relativism practiced. Neither a doctrine of human rights nor a confidence in democracy as a basis of governing found widespread support among the established elite. Bernard Bailyn concluded, after his extensive review of the pamphlets, correspondence and other literature of the period, that:

Throughout the colonial period, and increasingly in the early Revolutionary years, the dangers of "democratical despotism" preyed on the minds not merely of crown officials and other defenders of prerogative but of all enlightened thinkers. ...The

leaders of the Revolutionary movement were radicals—but they were eighteenth-century radicals concerned, like the eighteenth-century English radicals, not with the need to recast the social order nor with the problems of economic inequality and the injustices of stratified societies but with the need to purify a corrupt constitution and fight off the apparent growth of prerogative power. To them it did not seem reasonable to “collect and assemble together the tailors and the cobblers and the ploughmen and the shepherds” of a vast domain and expect them to “treat and resolve about matters of the highest importance of state.”²¹⁴

Could such men, whose acceptance of superior ability among European-Americans of position so dominated their thinking, realistically be expected to view Africans or indigenous Americans as political equals? They were largely unable to do so even for other European-Americans of a lower socio-economic station than themselves. Of the prominent colonial leaders, only Benjamin Franklin and the Quakers who formed the Pennsylvania Abolition Society stand out in their opposition to slavery on purely moral grounds. Even Jefferson seems far more concerned with the threat to the social order posed by an enlarged African-American population than with the inherently unjust enslavement of one group of people by another. The European and European-American knew very little about the societies of the African continent or their history. In terms that spoke only to the state of productive capabilities and the *division of labor*, Adam Smith expressed with certainty “*that the accommodation of an European prince does not always so much exceed that of an industrious and frugal peasant, as the accommodation of the latter exceeds that of many an African king, the absolute master of the lives and liberties of ten thousand naked savages.*”²¹⁵ Two chapters later he adds the following:

All the inland parts of Africa...seem in all ages of the world to have been in the same barbarous and uncivilized state in which we find them at present.²¹⁶

The reason for this, states Smith, is that the opportunity for extended commerce and, hence, interaction with distant societies, was impeded by an absence of an extensive system of interconnected waterways. "*The great rivers of Africa*," he wrote, "*are at too great a distance from one another to give occasion to any considerable inland navigation.*"²¹⁷ To Adam Smith, access to the sea by these inland waterways is even more important in determining which societies are innovative and thrive:

The commerce besides which any nation can carry on by means of a river which does not break itself into any great number of branches or canals, and which runs into another territory before it reaches the sea, can never be very considerable; because it is always in the power of the nations who possess that other territory to obstruct the communications between the upper country and the sea.²¹⁸

And yet, the eventual European conquest of much of the African continent as well as the capture and deportation of so many Africans as slaves to the Americas would not have succeeded without the dedicated assistance of the Africans themselves.

African Empires And Societies Beyond The Periphery

The history of *Black Africa* has attracted far less attention from those interested in the development of the nation-state than from scientists engaged in the study of cultural anthropology. Whether or not this involved a degree of ethnic bias among academicians is subject to considerable debate. We are only now beginning to appreciate the considerable role of African societies in the accumulation of knowledge and the advance of civilization.

In the study of Western civilization, the northern Africans—though dark in skin color—have received greater attention by *Western*-oriented scholars because of their dominant role among Mediterranean societies

and their impact on Eurasian civilization. Among the ancient empire-builders, northern Africans ruled over vast territories from their centers of power in Egypt and Carthage.

During the earliest period of human migrations from northeastern Africa, small groups traveled westward and to the south; others in larger numbers moved northward and eastward. Over tens of thousands of years the descendants of these people formed new tribes, developed distinct languages and inherited individualized physical characteristics that distinguished them in appearance from one another. By 4000 B.C. both the domestication of animals and agriculture were well established in the lower Nile valley and throughout much of northern Africa. Changes in climate forced large numbers of people from this region, leaving only small groups that survived by migratory herding of animals in conjunction with the arrival of dry and wet periods. From around 2000 B.C., when the Sahara region reached the stage of an expanding desert, the southern African population adapted to a tropical existence and established large settlements along the continent's riverbanks and inland lakes. Along the Nile, the Egyptian Pharaohs ruled over a vast, centralized empire that stretched northward from the Nile's tropical origins.

The inhabitants of the Nile valley—possibly as long as forty centuries before Christ—cleared the encroaching jungles and drained swamps to establish agriculture. By 4000 B.C. the intermarriage of peoples from several tribal groups resulted in the emergence of what we think of as Egyptian culture. Egyptian merchants gradually became an important factor in Mediterranean commerce, and mining generated much of the wealth upon which the Pharaohs built their dynasties. All of Egypt was claimed as the personal property of the Pharaoh, and the land was dispensed in feudal fashion to the Pharaoh's favorites. At the bottom were the peasants, tied to the land and taxed heavily for the privilege of producing food. Such was the state of Egyptian society that historian Will Durant wondered "*that a civilization so ruthless in its exploitation*

of labor should have known—or recorded—so few revolutions."²¹⁹ The empire declined after the priests acquired virtual secular power in the twelfth century B.C. A Nubian (Ethiopian) army invaded Egypt from the south in the eighth century B.C., ruling over Egypt until the Assyrians displaced them a century later. Persian invaders soon followed and remained until defeated by Alexander the Great in 332 B.C., after which Alexandria was constructed on the Mediterranean coast and became the Egyptian capital.

One important result of these tribal invasions and wars was that in this part of Africa the cultures of Black Africa, the Arabian peninsula and the Mediterranean interacted and influenced one another to greater or lesser degrees. This long-term contact among the sub-Saharan tribes is thought by some analysts to have brought about the monarchical socio-political structure that swept the adjacent regions. In any event, the pattern of settlement and dependence on agriculture resulted in the warrior-protector dominated hierarchy that arose in similar fashion throughout the Mediterranean and Eurasian tribal societies. The collection of tribute from the producers as well as subversion of their rights under feudal arrangements followed.

What changed the course of history for Africans was, in part, the collapse of the Roman empire, which resulted in a long period of isolation of Europeans from African affairs. Contact was renewed only at the beginning of the European Renaissance by Venetian and other Italian traders after the Crusades. Italian wealth was then employed in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries to construct the ocean-going vessels capable of exploiting the possibilities of trade with the peoples of western Africa. The Portuguese, after defeating the Moors, were anxious to secure a foothold on the African continent and in 1415 attacked and captured Ceuta on the Moroccan coast. Spain followed in the sixteenth century; however, the Moors successfully limited their penetration to a few coastal areas. The Portuguese king, John I, appointed his youngest son, Henry, as governor over Ceuta. From this

base on the African continent, Henry began an aggressive campaign to explore the Atlantic coast of Africa and in doing so became known as *the Navigator*.

By 1444 Portuguese expeditions reached Cape Verde (off the coast of modern Senegal) and made contact for the first time with the tribes of western Africa. The Portuguese established permanent settlements in the Cape Verde Islands and continued to venture southward. A brisk trade in gold and slaves soon developed with the Mandingo people of western Africa, Moslems whose king had been converted to Islam in the eleventh century and who ruled over a well-established and highly organized state. By the fourteenth century, Mandingoland had grown to encompass much of western Africa and extended eastward as far as Lake Chad. Yet, by the time the Portuguese arrived the Mandingoes had been displaced by their rivals, the Songhay (whose origins were at Gao on the Niger River in what is now the nation of Mali).

Under the leadership of Askia Mohammed, the Songhay made a determined effort to unite the Moslem world against further encroachments by Christian Europeans. The Songhay nation went through a rapid period of modernization, and Askia Mohammed's policies greatly encouraged the intellectual life of his people. Thus, here in western Africa, was a nation-state that rivaled in sophistication and socio-political structure any other to arise during this early period of the second great era of empire-building. Historian John H. Franklin describes this society at its height of power, as well as its unfortunate but rapid decline:

By the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries a distinctly Sudanese literature was emerging. At the University of Sankore black and white youths studied grammar, geography, law, literature, and surgery, while in the mosques Askia and his subjects studied the religion of Islam in order that they could more effectively practice and promote it.

Civil wars, massacres, and unsuccessful military expeditions followed the reign of Askia, who was dethroned by his oldest son. Although there were brief periods of revival the empire was definitely declining. The Moors viewed the Sudan covetously and began to push down across the desert. With Spanish renegades as their allies, the Moroccans overthrew the Songhay state and began their own brief rule in Timbuktu.²²⁰

Slavery was hardly a new practice to Africans but took on a new importance during the periods of Moslem conquest, then blossomed into a permanent element in African-European commerce after Portuguese adventurers and traders began bringing African *servants* back to Europe. Conditions in Europe did not, however, require that Africans or any other race be enslaved and brought to work in the European fields or factories. As Franklin explains:

There was never any profitable future for Negro slavery in Europe....[T]he large white population that was dispossessed of land by the enclosure movement in England and on the Continent was in search of employment. If there were jobs to be filled, these impecunious Europeans claimed them for themselves. ...It was the New World with its vast natural resources and its undeveloped regions that could make slavery and the slave trade profitable, if indeed it could be profitable anywhere.²²¹

In the Americas, where land was readily available at very low cost, few Europeans could be attracted of their own free will to labor long for the benefit of another landowner. Although many of Europe's landless poor were sent to the Americas under arrangements that amounted to quasi-slavery, their numbers proved insufficient to meet the growing needs of the landowners. A captive labor pool was needed to make absentee landownership or large-scale, commercial agriculture a profitable venture. The Spanish and Portuguese exploited and in the process decimated the indigenous populations in the mines and

plantations of the Caribbean. As replacements, by the early 1540s some ten thousand Africans were captured and shipped westward each year.

The Competition For Monopoly In The East

By the time of Henry's death in 1460, private entrepreneurs had begun to play a more important role in African expeditions, and by the mid 1470s the Portuguese had established trade links with tribes on Africa's *Gold Coast* (modern Ghana) and were taking a significant quantity of gold out of Africa and back to Europe. The confidence of European adventurers was growing, and they became increasingly aggressive as they competed with one another for dominant commercial relations around the globe. In 1488, Bartolomeu Dias led the first successful expedition around the southern tip of Africa and into the Indian Ocean, and he was followed a decade later by Vasco da Gama.

Christopher Columbus, a Genoese sailor, had become convinced that the African route could be shortened considerably by heading due west into the Atlantic. He first went to the Portuguese with his proposal but was rebuffed and so sought sponsorship from Ferdinand V and Isabella I of Spain. On August 2, 1492 he set sail with his small fleet of three ships. Early in October he landed in the Bahamas, then went on to explore the Caribbean islands of Cuba and Hispaniola. A settlement was established on Hispaniola (Haiti) as a result of his return visit the following year.

Meanwhile, the Portuguese were tightening their grip on the trade route to India opened by Vasco da Gama. They were determined to exclude not only other Europeans but also the Arabs from these lucrative markets:

It is true that there does exist a common right to all to navigate the seas and in Europe we recognize the rights which others hold against us; but the right does not extend beyond Europe and therefore the Portuguese as Lords of the Sea are justified in confiscating the goods of all those who navigate the seas without their permission.²²²

Superior naval power, in part the result of recent technological advances in armament, enabled the Portuguese to smash Moslem opposition in the Indian Ocean and thereby gain control of the spice trade. The Moslems, learning rather quickly from these encounters, built up their land forces on the European model and managed to repulse further encroachments into Moslem territory. This was, however, another case of an emerging and aggressive society creating havoc for a society that was succeeding because of openness and tolerance rather than the imposition of coercive power. To underscore this point, historian G.B. Sansom quotes the observations of a fifteenth century traveler in the Arab world:

Security and justice are so firmly established that the merchants bring thither from maritime countries considerable cargoes, which they unload and unhesitatingly send to the markets and bazaars, without thinking of the necessity of checking the accounts or watching over the goods. ...Every ship, whatever place it may come from or wheresoever it may be bound, when it puts into this port is treated like other vessels and has no trouble of any kind to put up with.²²³

At least to some considerable extent, these Arab states had discovered the benefits of open and free commerce. The European empire-builders, on the other hand, viewed the competition for wealth as what economist Lester Thurow has called a "zero sum game" in which there must be a loser for every winner. Thus, to accomplish their objective of monopolizing trade with Asian societies, the Portuguese had to somehow break up this peaceful arrangement and did so by

concentrating their naval power against the Arabs. They first seized two islands that controlled access to the Red Sea and the Persian Gulf, then attacked and captured the city of Malacca, which commanded the strait through which all commerce with the East had to pass. By establishing a small number of strategically-located military bases throughout the Indian Ocean, the Portuguese thereby achieved (for a time) a significant degree of control over the trade between Europe and the Far East. At great expense in the maintenance of these fortresses and naval forces, a small number of merchants, the Portuguese crown and the aristocracy were assured of ever greater personal wealth. As is consistent with every case presented thus far in this work, those who actually produced wealth were forced to absorb the burden of higher prices for survival goods as well as cover the expenses of the State. These circumstances have been readily identified in both the Portuguese and Spanish socio-political structures by historian Eric Wolf:

In both kingdoms royal control of commerce enhanced the power of the kingship and provided a tribute-taking elite with wealth to purchase goods abroad without altering the tributary structure at home. Yet in both countries that wealth did not suffice to cover the costs of administration and war. Royal bankruptcies and debts transferred control of exchequer and trade to foreign merchant-bankers...²²⁴

External factors also contributed to the eventual displacement of the Portuguese in Africa and Asia by northern Europeans. Firstly, the land route for trade with Asia still competed quite successfully because of Moslem and Turk resistance, corruption among Portuguese officials, and the large number of shipwrecks that occurred during the long journeys. For example, the cost of competing with the Portuguese had been too high even for Spain. After only one ship from Magellan's fleet returned from its voyage to the Far East, the Spaniards abandoned their attempts to challenge the Portuguese in Asia. When the Portuguese finally gave up their own hegemonic position to a new hierarchy of

European states, they did so to the economically more powerful Dutch and English. And, from this point on the balance of power in Asia substantially shifted in favor of the northern Europeans. Another factor in removing Spain from the competition for Asian footholds was the promise of creating an empire in the Americas, which satisfied the desire for land among the younger sons of Spanish nobles who were not in line for inheriting estates back home.

Tragically, the Spanish and Portuguese displayed a general contempt for non-Christian peoples and their societies. This attitude was reinforced by Papal authority and the assignment to the Catholic kings of temporal sovereignty over lands not governed by Christian rulers. In 1493, Pope Alexander had divided all of the non-Christian world between Portugal and Spain. Under this agreement, Portugal obtained sovereignty over all of Asia and over the not yet discovered territory in the Americas to be called Brazil. Spain received everything else and moved to consolidate control over the lands found within the Papal grants. From the Spanish base in Cuba, Hernando Cortes was dispatched with a small force in 1519 to attack the Aztec empire. His first foray into the Aztec capital ended in retreat; however, he returned with reinforcements and a large force that included indigenous enemies of the Aztec. This time they took the capital after a siege of four months. The Peruvian empire of the Incas was also overwhelmed by Francisco Pizarro with even less difficulty in 1532 (although Pizarro was forced to fight other Spaniards for the Incan treasures).

The last of the major indigenous tribes to fall was that of the Mayas, who occupied the Yucatan peninsula in southern Mexico. In 1526 a Spanish force led by Francisco de Montejo attempted to subdue the Mayas but was forced to retreat against heavy resistance. A decade later his son returned with a much larger force. What then happened is recorded by historian Henry Bamford:

Several years of hard fighting gave [Montejo] control of the northern end of the peninsula, where he founded the town of Merida; and the Mayas were gradually reduced to slavery. Montejo burnt alive chieftains who refused to submit, cut off the arms and legs of male prisoners, and hanged the women or threw them into lakes with weights about their necks. ...The subjugation of Yucatan, which had neither gold mines nor a fertile soil, cost the Spaniards more lives than the conquest of the Aztecs and the conquest of the Incas combined.²²⁵

With much of central and south America subdued, the Spanish turned their attentions northward and began to explore the Mississippi Valley and beyond. Ponce de Leon was killed by indigenous American warriors in Florida while searching for the *fountain of youth*. Hernando de Soto died in a similar quest to find seven mythical cities in North America rumored to hold vast riches. A large force under Francisco Vasquez de Coronado attacked the Zuni tribe in New Mexico, then marched as far north as Kansas. Spanish ships also explored the Pacific coast of North America as far north as Oregon. They conquered the Pueblo tribes late in the sixteenth century and eventually initiated trade with those tribes of the great North American plains they could not hope to conquer. Coronado's army had abandoned a large number of horses and cattle on their return south, and the indigenous tribes were quick to master the use of the horse in warfare. These now very mobile warriors effectively blocked any further advance of Spanish territorial conquest in North America. To the south, the Spanish discovered rich silver mines in the Veta Madre of central Mexico and enslaved most of the indigenous people of that area in order to extract the wealth that funded the Spanish empire and created a landed aristocracy of European-Americans in the southern Americas. By this time, the era of the conquistador was ending. Colonial administrators appointed by the Spanish state were now charged with producing the wealth needed to sustain the empire in the face of the growing power of the Dutch and the English.

North/South Conflicts Reach The Americas

Five years after the initial voyage of Columbus, another Genoese navigator named John Cabot (living among a colony of foreign merchants in England) convinced Henry VII to finance an expedition to the northern regions of the Americas. Under the auspices of England, John Cabot and, later, his son Sebastian, traveled back and forth across the north Atlantic to the coasts of Newfoundland and Nova Scotia. Sebastian, as head of the Muscovy Company, also sent out an expeditionary fleet in 1553 to seek a northern passage around Russia to Asia; one ship of three, captained by Richard Chancellor, found its way as far as the White Sea and established trade relations with Russia. Another Englishman, Martin Forbisher, made three unsuccessful attempts between 1576 and 1578 to chart a northwestern passage to Asia across North America. Neither passage was within the technical grasp of these early explorers given the severe weather conditions the freezing of the waters that occurred that close to the Arctic for most of the year. Far more successful were the explorations early in the seventeenth century by Henry Hudson, who discovered for European exploitation the large inland bay that now takes his name, setting the stage for the eventual commercial development of North America by British interests.

The French monarch, Francis I, was also interested in finding a northwest passage to Asia. In 1524 he sent the Florentine navigator, Giovanni Verrazzano, across the Atlantic in search of the passage; and, ten years later Jacques Cartier took up the challenge once more with an equal lack of success. In 1540, however, the French established a fort on the Hudson River below the site where the city of Albany would later be built, and by 1542 they had also constructed a fort on Manhattan Island. As historian Alfred Chandler notes, these were still rather tentative efforts by European societies not yet strong enough to move with deliberate speed:

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All grants for overseas adventures 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.²²⁶

Gilbert and some 260 others sailed from England and reached Newfoundland in June of 1583. By Elizabeth's royal grant he claimed all the land within six hundred miles and imposed a rental charge on the fishermen who had been using the small village of St. John's as a port. Unfortunately for Gilbert, he did not live long enough to acquire any riches; his ship was lost at sea on its return voyage to England. Walter Raleigh, Gilbert's half-brother, inherited the same grant and made plans to establish a settlement on Roanoke Island. In the meantime, the French established their first real settlement in Nova Scotia.

To put the English and French efforts into historical context, more than a century had passed before Spanish hegemony in the Americas was seriously challenged by any other European state. Even then, the prospects for dislodging the Spanish or slowing their expansion into North America were not promising. In 1580, the Spanish monarch, Philip II, succeeded to the Portuguese throne, uniting these two vast empires. To the rest of Europe, Spain now seemed more menacing than ever both on the continent and abroad. And yet, as emerging events would demonstrate, Spain was internally very weak, and its monopoly in the Americas was soon to end. Continuous military adventures against the Turks and Moslems combined with diminished productive output by Spanish agriculture and industry to drain Spain of much of the treasure that escaped the grasp of privateers on the high seas. In 1556, a French fleet under the command of Francois le Clerc had even attacked and sacked the Spanish base at Havana on the island of Cuba.

As English naval power grew stronger under Elizabeth I (1558-1603), England drifted toward direct conflict with Spain. Francis Drake and John Hawkins aroused Spanish ire by their exploits in the West Indies, and Elizabeth was under great pressure from the Spanish to bring them to *justice*. Elizabeth had no desire for a costly war with Spain but welcomed the riches being added to her treasury by these English naval captains. With England's resources already spread thin on the continent and unable to defend her small colonial footholds, Elizabeth gambled that Philip would not move against England, relying on a foreign policy agenda that had served English monarchs well since the thirteenth century. In the words of G.M. Trevelyan:

From Tudor times onwards, England treated European politics simply as a means of ensuring her own security from invasion and furthering her designs beyond the ocean. Her insularity, properly used, gave her an immense advantage over Spain and France in the maritime and colonial contest.²²⁷

England's rapidly expanding naval fleet was only one important outward sign that changes were afoot in England. Of the new empire-building states, England had moved the greatest distance from feudalism and headlong into privatization of landed property for commercial exploitation. The conversion of large tracts of rural land from subsistence agriculture to pastures for cattle and sheep sent peasants into the towns and, increasingly, to the ports where shipbuilding and commerce thrived. Henry VIII's navy was, therefore, manned by a large and well-established class of private merchants and seamen who shared a degree of social equality previously unknown. At the direction of Elizabeth I, Sir Francis Drake then forged the privateers into a well-disciplined fighting force. G.M. Trevelyan notes with obvious approval that Drake instinctively recognized the "*the hierarchy of the sea is not the same as the hierarchy of the land.*"²²⁸ Ability and skill

rather than hereditary position were valued. The sea was unforgiving to the incompetent and the ill-prepared.

From the very beginning of her ventures into the Americas, then, England dispatched no conquistadors of a type similar to those who carried the Spanish or Portuguese flags during the sixteenth century; rather, individuals formed joint stock companies to explore and exploit whatever lands and resources might be found. Charters were granted by Elizabeth I to the Muscovy, Levant and East India Companies. Sir Walter Raleigh then acted on his grant—over the whole of North America north of Florida—by organizing two unsuccessful attempts to establish settlements on Roanoke Island (off the coast of North Carolina). The first group gave up and returned after one year; the second group of 117 men, women and children disappeared without a trace before a relief expedition arrived in 1590. There is some evidence that these colonists attempted to establish a new settlement on another island, named Croatoan, located thirty miles south and closer to the North Carolina coast. Robert Lacey, in his biography of Raleigh, speculates that “*the colonists were probably attacked...by hostile Indians [but that] the women and children would almost certainly have been spared and incorporated into the Indian community, intermarrying and adopting willy-nilly the lifestyle of their savage masters.*” Lacey provides more than circumstantial evidence to support his conclusion:

There are, in fact, in the present day Robertson County of North Carolina survivors of a tribe of Indians called the Croatoans whose language incorporates incongruous words of Elizabethan English. Some of them have fair hair and blue eyes—and some even carry the same surnames as Sir Walter Raleigh's lost colonists.²²⁹

Elizabeth I was moving with deliberate caution into the Americas. Henry VIII had left her with a nearly empty treasury, which only a gradual expansion of trade (and the privateering of Drake and Hawkins) managed to restore. Her support of the Dutch in their war of

independence against Spain finally startled the Spaniards out of complacency toward England's increasing boldness. Despite Spanish protests, Drake was knighted by Elizabeth I upon his return to England in 1580. Then, in 1587 the English queen added even more fuel to the fire by ordering the execution of Mary (*Queen of Scots*), Catholic heir to the English throne.²³⁰ Mary's execution ignited war with Catholic Spain, and Philip II proceeded to claim the English throne as his own. Now, all he had to do was to take England by force.

The ensuing naval battle between the English privateers and the Spanish Armada represented in the widest sense a contest between a fragile, though comparatively open society and a declining feudalistic empire. The outcome on the oceanic battleground proved to be a serious disaster for the Spaniards. After losing a significant number of ships and men in the actual fighting, the escaping Armada was torn apart by storms and wrecked against the Scottish and Irish coasts, where Celtic tribesmen murdered and stripped thousands of Spanish soldiers as they came ashore. Out of 130 ships, less than half managed to return to Spain. The balance of power in Europe shifted almost immediately away from Spain and to northern Europe.

Spain's socio-political structure and the internal strife this caused would have eventually brought about a similar result; however, the loss of this military capability hastened the Spanish decline; and, as Trevelyan suggests, the future of European history may have been altered in an even more encompassing fashion:

The defeat of the Armada ensured the survival of the Dutch Republic and the emancipation of France under Henri IV from Spanish arms and policies. Less directly it saved Protestant Germany, whose Lutheran Princes, at this crisis of the onslaught made by the organized and enthusiastic forces of the Counter-Reformation, had shown themselves more interested in persecuting their Calvinist subjects than in helping the common cause.

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.²³¹

Armed with a sizable fleet of its own, the newly-independent Dutch were consolidating their power and turning Amsterdam into the financial capital of Europe. The Dutch proved themselves to be a creative and energetic people, pioneering in the businesses of insurance and banking, and also acquiring a leadership role in shipbuilding. In the Americas, the Dutch established themselves by re-manning the abandoned French fort near Albany and building a new fortification on Manhattan Island, from which they engaged in a lively trade with the region's tribal peoples. By 1626 the Dutch population in the Americas had grown to around 200 under the leadership of Peter Minuet. Dutch territorial claims had no basis in earlier explorations or Papal declarations, so Minuet initiated the practice of legitimizing Dutch territorial holdings by *purchasing* title to the land from the occupying tribes he encountered. According to Alfred Chandler, the popularized view of this episode and its significance differs considerably from what actually occurred:

Minuet gave the Indians some miscellaneous merchandise, valued at sixty guilders (about \$24), for the right to *occupy* the island, which contains twenty-two thousand acres. This transaction, which was made fifty-six years before the widely proclaimed purchase of land of the Indians by William Penn, has been repeatedly publicized as a purchase by the Dutch of all Manhattan Island for \$24.

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 was an assumption consummated by force. All existing land titles in New York run back to that force.²³²

One should ask, to be consistent, by what moral right did the tribes then occupying this territory charge the newly-arriving Dutch anything at all, even for the mere *right of occupancy*? Other than their legitimate title to whatever improvements (i.e., wealth) had been created by their labor, the indigenous tribes had no more and no less right than the Europeans of access to locations and natural resources found in the Americas. To be sure, the Europeans monopolistically exercised what John Locke called *licence* by their own claims to sovereignty for land already inhabited or set aside by the indigenous people as hunting grounds; and yet, the indigenous tribes attempted to enforce their own control over territories they occupied. The primary difference between these two systems of land tenure was in administration. The widespread communal ownership practiced by the indigenous American tribes had nearly disappeared among the European societies when feudalistic arrangements were discarded in favor of awarding private titleholdings to individuals and groups. The agricultural and pastoral practices of European commercial farmers were land extensive and required the recording of boundaries and construction of fences to protect food crops and keep domestic animals from wandering off. What had not yet emerged, however, was a theory of property declaring that such titleholdings involved a privilege sanctioned by society as a whole and for which compensation to all others in society was justly due. These issues would only enter the socio-political debate when moral principles were subjected to intense debate during the eighteenth century.

Participatory government in any sense that would take human rights into consideration as part of the policy debates of the State was undreamed of during the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries. The expansion of empire was being directed by the kings (and a few

queens) of Europe in conjunction with wealthy landed and mercantile interests. To be sure, in Britain and the Netherlands that power was already under siege, and the Spanish empire was failing under the weight of its oppressive and corrupt internal conditions. In comparison, the British empire was being forged out of a gradual if begrudging sharing of power with the landed and merchant classes.

Tensions between the English and Spanish thrones continued, finally leading Elizabeth to sponsor an expedition under Raleigh against the Spanish fleet anchored at Cadiz in southeastern Spain. Raleigh joined forces with England's temporary ally, the Dutch, and their combined forces destroyed the Spanish fleet before its ships could reach open waters. Destruction of their naval protection left Cadiz open to a landing by English and Dutch soldiers, and Robert Devereux (the Earl of Essex) plundered the town. In retaliation, a second Armada was sent by Philip the following year. This time, with her navy away from home, Elizabeth I knew that England was extremely vulnerable; once again, however, terrible storms in the north Atlantic devastated the Armada. Elizabeth, plagued by meager finances and domestic intrigues, turned cautious. Ireland was once again in rebellion against English authority. Devereux, dispatched to Ireland with a large force, failed to restore order and returned to England, with vague and certainly ill-planned intentions of taking power from Elizabeth; he failed in this enterprise as well and was executed. Command of Elizabeth's army in Ireland was given to Lord Mountjoy, an extremely able strategist, who crushed the rebellion and restored English control. Elizabeth's continued reign was assured, but in one of the great ironies of history, Shakespeare's *Richard II* (a metaphor for Essex's intrigue against Elizabeth) included the passage quoted in the previous chapter, words that captured the rising sense of nationalism and unity within the English population. Shakespeare expressed a universal sentiment the people of England were feeling toward their country, an attachment that grew independent of (or in spite of) commitment to monarchy or any

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authority. Elizabeth might preserve her throne and even die in her sleep, but the socio-political structure of English society was moving away from her form of leadership and control.

As the third decade of the seventeenth century began, the Dutch actually emerged first among the challengers to Spanish and Portuguese hegemony in the Americas. Dutch privateers raided Spanish and Portuguese settlements with increasing frequency and in 1628 captured a Spanish treasure fleet leaving the West Indies. In the meantime, the Anglo-Dutch alliance fell apart as a result of the growing rivalry between these two maritime powers. France was also entering the quest for new markets and territories in the Americas; and, a Franco-Spanish alliance aroused a strong Protestant reaction in England, so that by 1627 tensions erupted into war.

An English fleet under the command of David Kirke defeated and captured a French force in the Gulf of St. Lawrence, then went on to seize several French fortifications. As a reward for their efforts, Kirke and his brothers received a charter from Charles I, ascended to the throne in 1625 after the death of James I, to establish a colony on Cape Breton Island at the entrance to the St. Lawrence seaway. With this charter, of course, came a monopoly license over trade with the indigenous tribes and any Europeans who might settle within the jurisdiction of Kirke's grant. Peace between France and England returned in 1632, however; and, with the signing of the treaty Kirke was forced to relinquish his landholdings to the French.

In the meantime, the Franco-Spanish alliance broke down in a dispute over control of continental territory in the northern part of the Italian peninsula. France also soon became embroiled in war with the Hapsburg empire. In 1630, Spain and the Hapsburgs reached an accord, then formed an alliance against the Dutch. The balance of power among these European states changed once again in 1640, when the Portuguese withdrew from the Spanish empire and entered an alliance with France and England against Spain. The Portuguese also

successfully drove the Dutch from Brazil and other Portuguese colonial outposts. Despite this setback for Dutch territorial desires, the formal granting of independence by Spain in 1648 stimulated the new United Provinces (i.e., the Netherlands) to renew their colonial adventures in the Americas.

Another dynamic was added, favoring Dutch desires, when England's attentions were diverted by internal strife between Charles I and Parliament. Charles I was determined to restore the powers of absolute monarchy to the English throne, and in the process dislodge the *common law*, to be replaced by royal proclamations. Almost immediately, the Scots revolted against Charles. Charles, in desperate need of finances and without a standing army, summoned a parliament in 1640 in an effort to resolve these problems. Under the leadership of Edward Coke, however, this parliament set about to dismantle the royal prerogatives claimed by Charles I. Civil war broke out in 1642 and continued for four years. During this period, the Dutch took maximum advantage of the English absence from the high seas.

By 1650 civil war in England had ended and Charles I had been executed. New leadership had also emerged in the Netherlands. Factions in both countries now hoped for reconciliation, alliance and even the possibility of unification under one government. More powerful, however, were the vested interests in each country that sought protection from competition. Under the newly-formed Commonwealth of England, the House of Commons was made supreme and both the monarchy and House of Lords were abolished. The administration of government was placed in the hands of a new Council of State. In 1650-51 Parliament passed two Acts that virtually prohibited direct trade between the Dutch and England's colonies in North America. Moreover, England claimed as its own all of North America from the southern boundary of Virginia up to Newfoundland. A brief war broke out over these trade and territorial disputes, ending in 1654 after negotiations by England's new Lord Protector, Oliver

Cromwell, and a Dutch agreement to honor English claims to North America. Not unexpectedly, after Cromwell's death and England's return to monarchy under Charles II, the Anglo-Dutch disputes re-ignited.

The English basis for claiming sovereignty over North America rested on the settlements established in Virginia, Maryland and New England between 1606 and 1640 by two private joint-stock ventures—the Northern Company and the London Company. The first northern colony (in Maine) failed to last one winter, and only repeated rescue missions sustained the first southern colony of Jamestown. Soon, however, the promise of free land brought immigrants in ever larger numbers. Poorly conceived plans to diversify the Virginia colony's economy brought financial disaster to the London Company, which was dissolved in 1624. Granted a royal charter, the colony continued to expand in an atmosphere of *salutary neglect*. Farms and plantations stretched out along the banks of the inland rivers of the Virginia tidewater region. The first Africans were brought to Jamestown in 1619, their numbers increasing after immigration of indentured workers was restricted by the English Parliament.

A haven for English and Irish Catholics had been created when Charles I split off the northern portion of the Virginia colony and gave this land to Sir George Calvert (the first Lord Baltimore). Although few Catholics actually migrated to Maryland, the colony's assembly was the first to pass a law guaranteeing toleration in the practice of one's religion. The Puritans, after establishing their own English Congregational Church, left for North America in 1620 to create a new society in which they could practice their own religious beliefs without interference. They were followed in 1681 by William Penn's noble experiment in toleration that became Pennsylvania.

Sovereignty Denied

At the time the first European explorers and conquerors were following in the wake of the voyages of Columbus across the Atlantic Ocean, an unknown number of indigenous Americans were living east of the Mississippi River. Estimates range from a few hundred thousand to several million, spread across a vast territory. One loose confederation of tribes, the Algonquians, controlled a large region stretching from Canada southward into the Ohio Valley. The Iroquois League dominated the middle Atlantic region and contended with tribes of the Algonquian nation for domination in parts of the Ohio Valley. In the southern region three primary groups prevailed: the Cherokee, Tuscarora and Muskhogean. All of these tribes were eventually overwhelmed by the in-migration of Europeans (and their descendants), the diseases brought with them and the warfare conducted to gain control over the land of North America. Arming the indigenous tribal warriors with rifles also intensified the violent nature of inter-tribal conflicts, which tended to be fought until one tribe annihilated the other. The reason for this was that survivors were bound by tradition to seek revenge, even if this required decades or generations before the strength of the tribe was sufficient to respond to an enemy.

The southern tribes successfully fought off Spanish incursions repeatedly during the second half of the sixteenth century but were finally forced in 1598 to submit to Spanish control. Thereafter throughout the Florida territory the Spanish established a series of Franciscan missions, whose friars set about converting the indigenous tribes to Christianity and teaching them the rudiments of agriculture. These warrior-dominated tribes still depended on hunting for subsistence and could not be subdued easily or forced to labor on plantations or in mines; thus, the Spanish also resorted to the importation of captured Africans to replace the central and south American people whose populations had been decimated by Spanish

occupation (a period described by historian Eric Wolf as "*the great dying*"). The Spanish were the first to introduce diseases against which the indigenous people had no natural resistance, then totally disrupted the systems of wealth production on which the survival of the indigenous people depended. In the same way that the enclosures were forcing peasants from the land in Europe, "[i]n many parts of Mesoamerica, as in Spain, sheep began to "eat" men."²³³

Those who followed the Conquistadors into the Americas to cultivate the land made use of the indigenous labor force as long as possible. To meet the demand in Spain and Portugal for cocoa and indigo, as well as for precious metals, the indigenous population was brutalized, exploited and nearly exterminated. In Florida, however, the tribes were still semi-nomadic and too few in number to subdue in a similar manner. As a result, by the mid-seventeenth century the indigenous people (numbering over 25,000) had become extremely loyal to their Spanish wards and defended the Florida frontier against both indigenous and European enemies of Spain.

In the far north, the French established a settlement in 1603 on St. Croix Island in the Bay of Fundy; two years later they moved to Port Royal (Nova Scotia), where they built an extensive settlement and initiated a trading relationship with the indigenous people living in the area. A second settlement, Quebec, was established in 1608 by Samuel de Champlain at the mouth of the St. Lawrence. The French were once more able to establish good relations with the Montagnais, Algonquian and Huron tribes they met, openings that were to serve as the basis for the northern fur trade.

Before long, these northern tribes also looked to the French for assistance in war against their age-old enemy and competitor for territorial control over the St. Lawrence Valley, the Iroquois League. Manpower assistance was one thing, but what the tribes sought most from the French were the firearms and powder that would give them the decisive advantage in these territorial struggles. In response to the

northern threat, the Iroquois of the Mohawk Valley turned first to the Dutch and eventually the English to balance the scales. As time would show, however, reliance on assistance from the Europeans carried a heavy price for the tribes. The Europeans were inconsistent allies and far more opportunistic than the indigenous tribes in the conduct of warfare. Treaties were to the Europeans and the European-Americans neither solemn nor permanent; any change in government or shift in perceived self-interest among the European powers threatened whatever treaties were made between their agents in the Americas and the indigenous peoples. Moreover, a system of land tenure that permitted a small number of colonials to monopolize large tracts of fertile land exerted a never-ending pressure on the indigenous people to relinquish territory. Even had the European governments or their colonial counterparts proclaimed these treaties as solemn and final, they possessed neither the force of law nor the power of arms to consistently restrain the frontiersmen or settlers.

In the beginning stages of European settlement the dangers were not clear to the indigenous tribes. The material benefits of trade with the Europeans seemed real enough. Along the northeastern coast of North America, for example, the Wampanoag tribe, led by chief Massasoit, provided assistance to the fledgling English settlement at Plymouth and observed peacefully as new fishing villages proliferated along the Atlantic coast. The indigenous population could not have anticipated the changes about to occur in their lives or how rapidly they would be displaced by the incoming Europeans. After the settlement of Boston was established in 1630, some 25,000 farmers and political dissidents migrated to the colony from England. The arrival of Europeans in such large numbers immediately threatened the indigenous population's semi-nomadic way of life as the two groups competed for the best agricultural land. Boston and other coastal communities served not as an ultimate destination, but as a point of departure into the hinterland. These Europeans created a new civilization but one whose socio-

political arrangements and institutions followed closely those of their distant motherland:

The dispersal of population went on so rapidly in New England that the usual sequence of frontier types was less apparent than later when fur trader, cattle raiser, pioneer farmer, and equipped farmer were more or less distinguishable. All were present, but they succeeded each other so rapidly that only the fur trader was distinguishable. He was in the van as usual, spying out the best lands, reducing the self-sufficiency of the Indians by giving them the tools and vices of the white man, and paving the way for later settlers.²³⁴

In the immediate path of the settlers were the Mohegan, Pequot, Nipmuck, Podunk and Narragansett tribes, each growing increasingly concerned over the rapid disappearance of their traditional hunting grounds. One of these tribes, the Pequot, were themselves intruders and without any allies in the region. When a series of murders and retaliatory acts exploded into full-scale war between the English colonists and the Pequot, the Mohegan and Narragansett warriors joined with the European colonists in a campaign that resulted in the virtual annihilation of the Pequot population of 500. The European-Americans did not, unfortunately, make a serious attempt to integrate these friendly tribes into their communities or assist them in successfully adapting to the European systems of agriculture or production. Friendly relations between the Europeans and the indigenous people remained friendly only so long as the Colonial appetite for more land was temporarily satisfied. As the European population continued to increase and spread out across the land, the tribes were left with only two choices: give up their land and way of life, or fight.

War erupted in 1671 between the Wamponoags and the European settlers. When the Europeans retaliated indiscriminately against the

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Narragansett tribe as well, the conflict escalated into a major uprising involving many tribes. The Colonials suffered a number of defeats at the frontier's edge. Nevertheless, the pattern of initial defeats followed by the application of maximum force was established. A large Colonial force of over 1,000 attacked and burned the Narragansett villages, destroying their crops and murdering everyone they found (which included only women, children and elders left unprotected by the absent warriors). The Narragansett warriors escaped to join with the Nipmuck tribe to the north, but their lands were now opened to claim by land speculators and resale to settlers. The uprising ended in 1676 after a Colonial force captured the village of Peskeompskut and destroyed grain fields, leaving the tribal peoples in serious risk of starvation. Most of the tribes retreated northward into the mountains of Vermont and New Hampshire; those who remained behind paid a heavy price for failure at the hands of a vengeful English population, as recorded by historian Ray Billington:

[The] war was one of the bloodiest in the history of the frontier. More than six hundred men—one-sixth of the male population of New England—were killed, 90,000 pounds expended, and twenty-five towns destroyed. In Maine where fighting went on until 1678, only six villages managed to withstand attack. Little wonder that the colonial authorities treated the remaining Indians with a cold brutality that belied their Christian principles. Those suspected of taking part in the war were slaughtered or sold into slavery, while the remainder were herded onto reservations or bound out to work for white men. In every colony their lands were awarded the soldiers as bounties. The Indian power was broken, assuring the English peace until they pushed into new frontiers.²³⁵

All along the frontier of the Atlantic coastal region the indigenous tribes were losing ground or disappearing in the face of an advancing European population. Bernard Bailyn estimates that “[b]y the end of the seventeenth century the population [of New England alone] had reached

90,000 to 100,000.²³⁶ Thus, New Englanders represented nearly one-half of the mostly English population in the colonies. A half century later European-Americans in the English colonies represented a more diverse heritage and numbered nearly one million, with 600,000 living in the northern colonies and 400,000 in the southern.

During the 1740s the final stage of conquest and Anglo-European domination of North America began. Renewed warfare between the European empire-builders again spilled over into the Americas. The French, supported by many of the northern and great lakes tribes, stood in the path of English expansion beyond the Mohawk Valley. This region fell within the Iroquois territory and offered somewhat of a buffer zone between the English and the French; as a result, a weak Anglo-Iroquois alliance emerged, ostensibly to resist the threat of French and Algonquian encroachment but which actually weakened the Iroquois, who suffered the loss of their eastern and were forced to relinquish their southern territories to settlers.

Early on in the fighting the French took great advantage of British ineptitude and the meager Colonial support of the British forces. Edward Braddock, a British general totally unfamiliar with frontier tactics, had become commander-in-chief of the British forces early in 1755; his first and only campaign into the Ohio Valley resulted in disaster and his own death. Under the Marquis de Montcalm, French forces in the north scored several important victories during 1756 and 1757, increasing the concerns of the British king, George II, and Parliament, that the French might threaten the English colonial holdings in North America. The French captured the British fortress island of Minorca in the Mediterranean, and both Whig and Tory clamored for new leadership. The elder William Pitt (1708-1778), the first Earl of Chatham, was brought into the government as secretary of state; and, among his first acts was to replace tentative and ineffectual military commanders with younger men charged with carrying out a dynamic offensive strategy. Even as this new war government was

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formed, the latest British foray—against Fort Carillon in northeastern New York—resulted in another defeat. The tide finally began to turn in favor of the British with the fall of the French fortresses at Louisbourg (Cape Breton Island) and Frontenac (at the headwaters of the St. Lawrence) in the summer of 1758.

The French and a small number of Algonquian and Abnaki warriors still held the key fort at the confluence of the Niagara River and Lake Ontario, under the command of a Captain Francois Pouchot. On July 4, 1759 around two thousand British and Iroquois, commanded by Colonel John Prideaux and Sir William Johnson (an immigrant from Ireland who had developed a thriving trade with the Mohawk and was subsequently adopted into the Mohawk tribe), approached the fort. Sconondoa had not been the only chief to warn against Iroquois involvement in the war between the French and English, and some Iroquois chiefs had decided to fight alongside the French. One of these chiefs, Kaendae, and his Seneca warriors were in the fort when the siege began. A council was called between Kaendae and several other Seneca chiefs encamped with Sir William Johnson. Kaendae's counsel to the other Iroquois chiefs was direct:

My brothers, why have you deserted me? Why have you deserted your friends, the French? Are you so blinded that you do not know where your greatest interests lie? Can you not see what the future of the Iroquois League must be if the English drive the French away? We will be finished! Our League will be dissolved, our lands taken bit by bit and we will either have to merge with the English and lose our identity and our pride, or else be pushed back until we have no more lands at all and are destroyed.²³⁷

Several days of negotiation passed, and, finally, Kaendae rather than the Seneca chiefs attached to the British agreed to withdraw. Still, the disposition of the tribes remained in doubt. On July 23 the chiefs of all

the tribes met in council. After two days and many speeches, an aging Chenussio chief named Old Belt, stood and spoke:

As individual people, we are more inclined to the French, for they live with us and trade with us and do not try so much as the English to take our lands or change us. But as nations we must think beyond this. We must change to meet the changes that come to us or we will not survive. ...

We ache for supplies which the French can no longer give us. They themselves starve from lack. The English are many times over their number and their supplies and weapons are more and better. Already some of our lands have been taken by them, but if we are their allies, the taking will be harder for them and we may retain a little of what we have. If we are their enemies, though we may fight for our lands, we will water them with our blood and in the end the lands will be theirs and we will be forgotten...

We are here now, watching the English and the French armies against each other. We are asked by them to fight against each other, but this is not good. It is not good for us to further weaken Indian power by fighting one another in white men's quarrels. We, the Iroquois, must fight for the English because they are already in our lands and only by fighting with them can we manage to hold even a little of what we own. You, the Ottawa, are far from your homes. In your land there are French, but they are few and they must eventually be gone, since they cannot stand against the English. If you fight for the French now, it means that you must fight not only against the English, but against the Iroquois.²³⁸

Many listened attentively to Old Belt, as would be shown during the battle to come. His was not a message of optimism, but a recognition of the desperate circumstances in which his people found themselves.

Colonel Prideaux, perhaps fortuitously for the English and their Iroquois allies, was soon accidentally killed when a mortar shell from one of his own cannon exploded near him. Command then fell solely to Sir William Johnson, who understood better than most other Europeans the nature of frontier warfare. Johnson dispatched most of

his own
or
cannon



his force to ambush the larger number of French, Algonquin and other warriors of the western tribes as they approached from Fort Presque Isle. As the French troops closed in, their *Indian* allies fell back and then disappeared. As Allen Eckert writes, "*The words of Old Belt had had their effect: the Great Lakes tribes would not engage in battles against the Iroquois for the benefit of the French.*"²³⁹ The French force never reached the fort, retreating with heavy losses; the next day Pouchot capitulated and turned the fort over to Johnson and the English. Shortly thereafter the French abandoned and destroyed Fort Presque Isle, retreating to Detroit. Within months Quebec and Montreal fell; virtually all of Canada was now opened to English exploitation. Peace also opened the North American interior to European settlement, despite efforts by the British colonial governors to contain the civilian population in reasonably defensible areas. Old Belt and the Iroquois did not have long to wait before the Colonials encroached on the lands held by the Iroquois. The time had passed when Iroquois claims of sovereignty might have been assured under treaty:

The Iroquois were not done. But in the eyes of the tribal elders was the knowledge that their glory was past, that their race would never again be what it was, that more and more of their lands would slip from them, and that they would become objects of contempt for the English traders and settlers already beginning to stream into the forests and plains and river valleys.²⁴⁰

Even before the conclusion of a treaty of peace between the French and English, the westward migration of European-Americans commenced in earnest. Despite restrictions established by the British officials and treaties that prohibited settlement on tribal lands, they kept coming and coming. For a few brief years, the great chief of the northern tribes, Pontiac, held these incursions in check. Then, the pattern of encroachment was repeated all along the frontier. Not long after the first settlers cleared the land and built homes, they were

followed by land speculators and the colonial administrators in league with them to sanction their claims. By 1771, for example, the European-American population in the Ohio Valley exceeded 10,000 families. All along the frontier ever more settlers arrived, first occupying land secured by treaty, then taking from the tribes what the indigenous people would not *sell* or otherwise relinquish.

The indigenous Americans faced another difficult decision upon the outbreak of war between the Colonials and their British rulers. Some hoped an alliance with the British would, at wars end, result in a British-mandated buffer zone between the races. The southern frontier settlements were attacked by Chickamauga, Choctaw, Creeks and Cherokee. Further north, Shawnee and Delaware warriors attacked settlers throughout the Ohio Valley. From Canada and northern New York, Iroquois warriors and Loyalists also threatened the larger eastern population centers. In hindsight, the tribes were in a no-win situation. Had they joined the rebellion against the British, they might have been given more opportunity to abandon their way of life and become citizens of the new nation. At least some Christianized tribes might have gained protection in this manner. The frontier was by nature a region of extremes, of lawlessness, conflict and the use of force to resolve disputes. As early as the mid-seventeenth century, a commission established by the *New England Confederation* worked to prepare the indigenous tribes "for full citizenship."²⁴¹ However, even at this early stage of interaction between Europeans and indigenous North Americans, those enlightened enough to view these people as potential equals failed to recognize in their culture or socio-political arrangements anything worthy of incorporation into the new European-American society. *Modernization* formed the cornerstone of the post-conquest relationship envisioned by the commissioners:

The New England colonists attempted to establish the English form of government among the conquered [tribes]...based on the assumption that the English way was

better, and it was only done in the spirit of making the Puritan Saints feel that they were performing their worldly obligation to a people that they had seen fit to crush. The epic of America has seen the demands for equalization and sameness—this desire for homogeneity may be a worthy standard when not carried too far, but to bring a savage race, on both feet, into a society it is not accustomed nor fitted to compete in does in the long run an injustice to the group affected.²⁴²

By the mid-nineteenth century, at least some Easterners were already becoming sympathetic to the cause of the indigenous Americans of the frontier region. The lives of these proud people was already desperate, their survival precarious. During Tocqueville's visit to North America in 1831, he visited the Mohican village near Albany, New York, where "*the first Indians [he] saw ran after the carriage begging.*"²⁴³ By 1877 even the President of the United States, Rutherford Hayes, was sufficiently moved by the plight of the indigenous tribes to write: "*Many, if not most, of our Indian wars have had their origin in broken promises and acts of injustice on our part.*"²⁴⁴ Only in 1887, however, did the government of the United States attempt to set a national policy of peaceful incorporation of the indigenous peoples into the European-American civilization. The Dawes Severalty Act paved the way for individual titleholdings to be distributed to tribal members, and in 1924 all indigenous people were granted full citizenship rights. The aggregate result of these and other measures was continued destruction of tribal societies and the loss of their territorial sovereignty without significant improvement in their well-being.

As early as 1779, the southern tribes had been defeated in several key battles and were successfully neutralized for the remainder of the conflict between the European-Americans and the British. In the west and north the tribes continued their attacks, pushing settlers back all along the frontier. Then, in October of 1781, Lord Cornwallis surrendered his army to George Washington at Yorktown in Virginia. As the British pulled their troops out of the rebellious colonies, the last

hope of the tribes to retain their lands and their sovereignty disappeared. More than 100,000 *Tory* loyalists also left for Canada or England, their lands and property confiscated by their victorious brethren. Even before the fighting ended, the newly-independent states began to argue over the disposition of the unoccupied western territories. Negotiations ensued, and the western boundaries of the original thirteen states were established as, one by one, they ceded land to the jurisdiction of the new federal Congress.

Passage of the Ordinance of 1785 allowed settlers to pour into the Ohio Valley and up tributaries of that great river. The Iroquois were forced to relinquish their claims to the lands of western Pennsylvania, and very soon thereafter title to tribal lands from Lake Erie south and westward was surreptitiously acquired by the Congress under treaties signed in most cases by minor village chiefs who had no authority to act on behalf of their nations. As a direct result, late in 1786 the Iroquois, Shawnee, Miami and other major tribes repudiated the earlier treaties and prepared to defend their territorial claims. Full-scale war broke out on the frontier three years later. Again, the tribes suffered defeat and further loss of territory. In the south, a united Creek nation managed to resist encroachments until 1790 when they were overwhelmed and forced to surrender their territory.

New roads now began to connect the heavily populated eastern regions with the interior, and tens of thousands of settlers made their way westward during the 1790s. Kentucky was admitted to the *Union* in 1792, followed by Tennessee (1796), Ohio (1803), Louisiana (1812), Indiana (1816), Mississippi (1817), Illinois (1818), Alabama (1819) and Maine (1820). By 1820 the population of *the Union* of the United States of America had reached more than 9.6 million. Conversely, the population of indigenous Americans was in a steep decline.

Purchasing Sovereignty From Thieves

Britain's North American colonies won their independence on the battlefield, yet the permanent status of the Union of these newly-sovereign states was far from certain at the end of the eighteenth century. British power was once again expanding at French and Spanish expense. In October of 1800, a weakened Spain ceded to France New Orleans and most of the territory claimed by Spain west of the Mississippi River. The prospect of the more powerful French in possession of the North American interior prompted Thomas Jefferson in April, 1802 to write to Robert Livingston, the U.S. minister to France:

The cession of Louisiana and the Floridas by Spain to France, works most sorely on the United States. ...

There is on the globe one single spot, the possessor of which is our natural and habitual enemy. It is New Orleans, through which the produce of three-eighths of our territory must pass to market, and from its fertility it will ere long yield more than half of our whole produce, and contain more than half of our inhabitants. ...²⁴⁵

Jefferson did not really fear the power of Napoleon; rather, he was deeply concerned that French control over New Orleans would force the states into an accommodation with Britain. Livingston was instructed by Jefferson to do whatever he could to convince the French government that holding onto New Orleans would prove more dangerous to France than ceding the territory to the United States. Rather unexpectedly in the Spring of 1803, the French foreign minister, Talleyrand, advised Livingston that all of Louisiana could be purchased for \$12 million. Napoleon's ambitions were focused elsewhere, and he had already lost a large force while attempting to subdue the rebellious Haitian descendants of Africans led by Toussaint l' Ouverture.

For the indigenous Americans west of the Mississippi, the withdrawal of Spanish and French claims in favor of the land-hungry

people already pouring into the frontier regions sealed their fate. Almost immediately upon the news of the Louisiana purchase, influential land speculators petitioned Congress for grants in the newly-acquired territory. Settlers would were not far behind. Less than a century would pass before the surrender of Tatanka Yotanka and his Sioux warriors brought the entire continent under European-American control. This was, nonetheless, a century characterized by the excitement of conquest and by both brutality and compassion on both sides.

Had Thomas Jefferson not sent Lewis and Clark to explore the vast North American interior, another or later president surely would have. Even the presence of a just system of land tenure probably would not have materially slowed the westward expansion. Land hunger was accompanied by the desire to create a frontier society freed of the corruptions that already characterized the Eastern states. Without really understanding the differences, people sought *freedom* beyond the reaches of the State, rather than the *liberty* only the enforcement of just positive law can secure. For more than a century, several generations of people of all ethnic, racial and cultural backgrounds were destined to struggle in the formation of a pluralistic society. And, as the virgin frontier was replaced by one settlement after another, the safety valve of empty territory was no longer available. Among later generations the more thoughtful were forced to stand and work for constructive change.

As had occurred repeatedly during the first 200 years of European settlement in North America, the expedition of Lewis and Clark that began in 1804 from St. Louis opened the interior to another generation of individualistic fur trappers and frontiersmen. And, although Jefferson seemed genuinely hopeful the indigenous Americans would eventually "*become one*" with the European-Americans, the amount of time for this to occur peacefully vanished with the Louisiana Purchase. The semi-nomadic and warrior-dominated tribes of North America

were destined to fight their way toward extinction in the face of the onslaught of settlers, land speculators, industrial-landlords and militarists who crossed the Mississippi River in the tens of thousands or ventured eastward from the cities taking root along the California coast.

Although the defeat of the tribes was inevitable given the disparity in technologies and population size, the indigenous Americans were not without hope or exceptional leadership. One of their most noble leaders was the Shawnee warrior, Tecumseh, who very nearly united the tribes in a strong confederation, one that might have forced the European-Americans to recognize fixed borders and limit their westward advance. As a young warrior, Tecumseh fought alongside Tory loyalists and Canadians during the European-American war for independence from Britain. During this period he met and became strongly influenced by the great Mohawk chief, Thayendanegea (called Joseph Brant by the Europeans), whose education at a Connecticut mission school served him well in his dealings with the European-Americans. From Thayendanegea, Tecumseh learned the importance of knowing one's enemy; and, over time, Tecumseh came to understand a great deal about how the Europeans and European-Americans thought and acted.

As the Ohio Valley opened to settlement after the withdrawal of British troops, Tecumseh was called upon to defend the territorial claims of his tribe against the encroaching European-Americans. His courage and calm leadership in battles with the frontiersmen attracted other warriors to him, despite the fact that he was not himself a chief. In 1794, Tecumseh accompanied the Shawnee chief, Blue Jacket, against Anthony Wayne's army at Fallen Timbers, where the Shawnee were greatly outnumbered and routed by superior firepower. From this engagement, Tecumseh learned that individual tribes had no hope of standing against the growing numbers of European-Americans pouring through the eastern mountains and into the Ohio Valley and elsewhere.

During the next several years, Tecumseh grew angrier and angrier as his people were forced to endure ongoing encroachment onto lands

guaranteed the Shawnee by treaty. Tensions on the frontier were increasing, and a council was held at Urbana in the Ohio Valley in an effort to reduce the threat of renewed open warfare. After a number of chiefs had spoken, Tecumseh, aged 31, stood to speak before the assembled tribes:

My brothers, how can our people continue to deceive themselves with their foolish belief in the supposed strength of the white chief Wayne's treaty signed at his fort of Greenville? The only difference between this treaty and the hundreds before it is the boundary line. Each time we have been told, 'This, Indian brother, is the last treaty; the one that will be honored by red men and white alike for all time.' Such lies make the vomit burn in my throat. This is *not* the last treaty. There will be another. And another after that. And others to follow. And each time it will be the Indians, your people and mine, who will be pushed back, not the whites. ...Think on this, brothers. Put aside our anger. Put aside your fear. Put aside your vain hopes. Think without prejudice of what I have said here and it will become clear to you as it is to me why the very leaves of the forest drop tears of pity on us as we walk beneath. And after you think on it, remember this: any child can snap with ease the single hair from the horse's tail, but not the strongest man, nor the wildest stallion, can break the rope woven of those same hairs.²⁴⁶

If the North American tribes were to retain their sovereignty, they must, Tecumseh understood, put aside their intertribal hatreds and unite against the European-Americans. Such a confederation, far weaker than its adversary in its capacity to wage prolonged warfare, had enabled the Colonials to emerge victorious against the powerful British empire. With very little active support from even his own tribe's civil chiefs, Tecumseh traversed the continent in an effort to bring the tribes together into a formidable confederation. In the end, this effort failed, primarily because the tribes were unwilling to subordinate themselves to a central authority in command of a permanent military on the European model. The eastern tribes, particularly the Iroquois, had little

stomach left for warfare with the European-Americans and were noncommittal. Other tribes could not see past traditional rivalries with one another. As the threat of war grew near, Tecumseh approached the southern Choctaw and Chickasaw tribes and asked them to remember their glorious past while looking realistically to the future:

Where today are the Pequot? Where the Narraganset, the Mohican, the Pocanoket and many other once powerful tribes of our people? They have vanished before the avarice and oppression of the white man, as snow before a summer sun. In the vain hope of defending alone their ancient possessions, they have fallen in the wars. ...

The annihilation of our race is at hand, unless we unite in one common cause against the common foe. ...²⁴⁷

Tecumseh did succeed in establishing a small intertribal village on the Tippecanoe River, attracting hundreds of warriors from many tribes who shared his vision and were anxious to follow his leadership. In October of 1811 and in his absence, a force under William Henry Harrison advanced against this village. A brief battle ensued in which Tecumseh's forces actually bested Harrison's army. However, the renewal of hostilities had come before Tecumseh was ready and the confederation he sought had not yet grown large enough for a sustained conflict. After Tippecanoe, the Potawatomi independently initiated their own campaign against the European-Americans on the frontier; other tribes did the same. The British in Canada were also agitating the tribes and supplying them with arms; and, as the conflict widened Tecumseh recognized that the only hope left for his cause was to once again give his support to the British cause.

During the War of 1812, Tecumseh and around 1,000 warriors from various northern tribes supported the British effort to take Detroit and secure the Great Lakes region. Boldness on the part of Tecumseh and British commander Major General Isaac Brock, combined with the cowardice of U.S. General William Hull, yielded an almost bloodless

capture of the fortress at Detroit in August. Despite this victory, negotiations between the British and United States officials resulted in an armistice, and Tecumseh suffered no illusions of British concern for the well-being of his people. Faced once again with vacillation on the part of the British military command, Tecumseh left the northern war in an effort to bring the southern tribes into the conflict.

In October, Isaac Brock was killed at Niagara. Command of the British forces in North America was then handed over to an arrogant and largely incompetent officer, Colonel Henry A. Procter. Amazingly, as the year 1813 began, Procter did achieve a significant victory over an army of 850 Kentuckians who were advancing against Frenchtown on the Raisin River (some 20 miles south of Detroit). The Kentuckians suffered another serious loss of nearly 500 men when they were ambushed by Tecumseh on their way to relieve the U.S. force at Fort Meigs on the Maumee River. The British siege of Fort Meigs failed, however, and Procter withdrew his army to the north. Tecumseh's own force then began to dwindle as warriors left for home.

The pivotal engagement of the war occurred not on land but on the waters of the Great Lakes themselves. U.S. naval forces won a major victory in September of 1813 on Lake Erie, when admiral Oliver Hazard Perry defeated the British fleet. Soon thereafter, Procter retreated in the face of another advancing army of Kentuckians, a decision that infuriated Tecumseh; yet, short of killing Procter himself, Tecumseh could do nothing to effect a change in British plans. Some 5,000 Union regulars and militiamen under William Henry Harrison recaptured Detroit and pursued the British into the peninsula that separates Lake St. Clair and Lake Erie—on Canadian territory. Tecumseh decided to stand and fight at Chatham, on the Thames River, ten miles east of Lake St. Clair. This proved to be his final battle, and after his death the will of the northern tribes to resist further encroachments disappeared. One by one, the tribes were removed from the lands of their birth. The Ottawa, the Miami,

Mississinewa, Wyandot, Potawatomi all yielded their territories to the oncoming settlers. The Winnebago, Sauk (Sac) and Fox tribes resisted briefly, but also relinquished their lands. Nearly 200 million acres was acquired by the United States as a result of treaties imposed on the tribes. As a consequence, by the mid-1840s there were no indigenous tribes left in what at the time were called the Northwest Territories. The southern tribes fared no better. The Creeks, Cherokee, Chickasaw and Choctaw were all forced off their lands in rapid succession. An injustice of an entirely different sort was perpetrated by the European-Americans in Georgia, assisted materially by Andrew Jackson, against the Cherokee nation.

At the conclusion of the war for independence from Britain, during which the Cherokee had fought alongside the British, a treaty was signed in 1786 establishing the boundaries of Cherokee territory. As always, encroachments by European-American settlers continued in violation of this written agreement. A second treaty and another cession of territory was forced on the Cherokee people, sanctioning both existing encroachments as well as anticipated land hunger. In the War of 1812, however, the Cherokee refused to join with Tecumseh and the Creek-dominated southern confederacy of tribes, choosing instead to come to the aid of the European-Americans; they were, in fact, instrumental in assisting a military force commanded by Andrew Jackson against the Creek at the Battle of Horseshoe Bend in Georgia. As was universally the case, the assistance the Cherokee provided to the U.S. brought no benefit or protection once the conflict ended.

With peace once again returning to the frontier, the encroachments by new settlers continued. John C. Calhoun, Secretary of War in James Monroe's cabinet, called for the wholesale removal of the remaining tribes from the states. Monroe agreed, believing the only chance for the tribes was to resettle them far beyond the existing frontier. For the Cherokee, this meant having to give up not just hunting grounds but a

well-developed system of agriculture and established towns. The tribe dispatched its chief, John Ross, and a delegation to meet with Monroe in Washington, D.C. in February 1816. Although promised protection by Monroe from further land grabbing, the Cherokee soon came under tremendous pressure from Andrew Jackson to relinquish a large portion of their territory and agree to relocation. Some 700 Cherokee accepted Jackson's terms and prepared to leave, and in 1819 a new treaty was signed transferring one-quarter of the remaining Cherokee territory to the United States.

Monroe, who had become extremely fearful of what would happen to the remaining Cherokee, delivered a speech before Congress on December 2, 1817 that, although distinguished by his intent, echoed the earlier hope of assimilation expressed by Jefferson:

[T]he earth was given to mankind to support the greatest number of which it is capable, and no tribe or people have a right to withhold from the wants of others more than is necessary for their own support and comfort.²⁴⁸

This was the same year that Andrew Jackson, upon instructions from Monroe, waged war against the Seminoles in Spanish Florida. To be sure, there were few similarities between the Seminoles and the Cherokee, except for the fact that each was in possession of land the European-Americans wanted for settlement, speculation and profit. Recognizing the futility of further resistance against encroachments by settlers, Spain relinquished its Florida possessions in 1821 to the United States for \$5 million. Despite all that was going on around them, the Cherokee held to the unrealistic hope that they could peacefully live alongside the European-Americans and remain on the land of their birth.

A second visit by a Cherokee delegation to Washington, D.C. resulted in a declaration by James Monroe before Congress in support of the Cherokee claim to sovereignty. The position of the President and,

ostensibly the national government, ignored the fact that the boundaries of the State of Georgia encircled the Cherokee nation. Moreover, only 15,000 Cherokee remained to stand in the way of the final removal of all indigenous tribes from the eastern portion of North America. In Georgia alone nearly 500,000 European-Americans eagerly awaited the opportunity to displace them.

In 1827 the Cherokee formed a republic, adopted a written constitution and elected John Ross as president. The next year, Andrew Jackson was elected to the presidency of the United States, and the wholesale removal of the tribes was accelerated. Unfortunately for the Cherokee, in the same year as Jackson took office gold was discovered in Cherokee territory and the pressure increased for their removal. Even a decision by the Supreme Court (*Worcester v. Georgia*) declaring the State of Georgia had no authority in the territory of the Cherokee failed to protect their property and territory from being confiscated. With regard to the Court's decision, Andrew Jackson is quoted as having remarked: "*John Marshall has made his decision, now let him enforce it.*"

By 1835 the Cherokee people had become divided over what course of action to take. John Ross had once more gone to Washington, D.C. to plead their case, but in his absence other leaders agreed to terms that directed the Cherokee to abandon all claims to their territory. Those who signed the treaty and six hundred others departed in 1837. When Brigadier General John Wool, the officer sent by Jackson in mid-1836 to oversee the Cherokee removal, reacted sympathetically to their cause and attempted to protect them from abuse by state officials and settlers in Georgia and Alabama, Jackson had Wool brought up on charges of insubordination. Winfield Scott was dispatched by the new president, Martin Van Buren, in 1838 to hasten events to the desired result. Nearly 4,000 Cherokee—more than one quarter of the tribe—died on their forced march across the Mississippi and into the region that eventually became of the State of Oklahoma.

Remarkably resilient, the Cherokee people adopted a new constitution and rebuilt their nation in this new territory. John Ross, elected Principal Chief, once again traveled to Washington, D.C. in 1846 to negotiate a new treaty with the United States. During the war between the states, however, the Cherokee joined with the Confederacy; and, in the battles to come, much of what the Cherokee had built was destroyed. After the war their lands were reduced to a small reservation in northeastern Oklahoma.

The western tribes—the Sioux, Blackfoot, Ute, Shoshoni, Navaho and Apache—would each attempt independently to resist the relentless westward advance of the European-Americans. They would be pressed from the east and the west, and the movement of settlers and soldiers would be facilitated by the age of steam and the railroads. With the indigenous tribes defeated and the Union stretching across the continent, the historian Frederick Jackson Turner reflected on the century about to close and raised serious concerns over the socio-political arrangements and institutions established on the heels of conquest:

Up to the close of the War of 1812, this country was involved in the fortunes of the European state system. The first quarter of a century of our national existence was almost a continual struggle to prevent ourselves being drawn into the European wars. At the close of that era of conflict, the United States set its face toward the West. It began the settlement and improvement of the vast interior of the country. Here was the field of our colonization, here the field of our political activity. This process being completed, it is not strange that we find the United States again involved in world-politics. The revolution that occurred four years ago [1899], when the United States struck down that ancient nation under whose auspices the New World was discovered, is hardly yet more than dimly understood. The insular wreckage of the Spanish War...are indications of the new direction of the ship of state, and while we thus turn our attention overseas, our concentrated industrial strength has given us a striking power against the commerce of Europe that is already producing consternation in the

Old World. Having completed the conquest of the wilderness, and having consolidated our interests, we are beginning to consider the relations of democracy and empire.²⁴⁹

In the end, the indigenous American tribes were too small in population, disunited and lacked the knowledge to develop an industrial system of production necessary to carry on *modern* warfare. And yet, they were fearsome opponents whose conquest required the maintenance of a large, standing army. As in all other societies, the presence of a permanent military, with its own institutions and leadership hierarchy separate from the civilian government, has had dire consequences. The seeds of empire-building grew out of the very process of conquering the indigenous tribes long after the threat of European domination disappeared. A national agenda, in direct opposition to the transnational sentiments from which liberty and equality of opportunity arise, found early expression in *The Federalist* papers. Arguing on behalf of the need for a standing army and a strong naval fleet, Alexander Hamilton reminded his fellow citizens of very real external dangers for which they must ever be prepared:

Though a wide ocean separates the United States from Europe, yet there are various considerations that warn us against an excess of confidence or security. On one side of us, and stretching far into our rear, are growing settlements subject to the dominion of Britain. On the other side, and extending to meet the British settlements, are colonies and establishments subject to the dominion of Spain. ...The savage tribes on our Western frontier ought to be regarded as our natural enemies, their natural allies, because they have most to fear from us, and most to hope from them. The improvements in the art of navigation have, as to the facility of communication, rendered distant nations, in a great measure, neighbours. ...These circumstances combined, admonish us not to be too sanguine in considering ourselves as entirely out of the reach of danger.²⁵⁰

Here was the essential dichotomy associated with the European conquest of the Americas and subjugation of the continent's indigenous population. As the second, third and fourth generations of European-Americans migrated beyond the eastern seaboard, they replicated the socio-political arrangements and institutions of the East, although for a time they lived by a rough sort of justice and without effective governance. The railroad kept them in touch with the rest of the country, brought them what was needed to build new towns and cities and facilitated the rapid taming of the frontier.

Thus, what occurred during the four centuries of European conquest in the Americas merely extended the continuum of history into a new arena. The successes of these new arrivals and their descendants, consistent with the historical tendencies in human behavior, came at the expense of people whose kinship-based tribal system still operated on communitarian, if exclusive, principles. Only the tribes of the southern hemisphere had become fully settled and had entered into their own era of empire-building. Unfortunately for the survival of the indigenous American, European-Americans had achieved numerical, technological and organizational superiority, which they brought to the conduct of warfare. Initially, even the tribes of the southern hemisphere, with numbers in their favor had no time to adopt European weaponry or strategy. In North America, the tribes gained considerable access to modern weapons and were more flexible in their strategies. The two most important advantages the European-Americans possessed in the north was the endless stream of migration that more than replaced the population lost during warfare, and a production system centered in large and relatively secure population centers.

While the contributions made by the indigenous American tribes to the advance of civilization remains little appreciated, their true nature is often romanticized and the harsh aspects of their societal structure down played or ignored. They neither championed a human rights

doctrine nor lived by principles we would recognize as inherently just. They were territorial and monopolistic in behavior where the earth was concerned, even when communitarian within their own tribal group. Too late, they finally realized the full danger presented by the Europeans. Unwittingly, the indigenous tribes of the Americas became mere pawns in a struggle for hegemonic power that began centuries before and an ocean away. Even with independence from Britain, the European-Americans had no possibility of escaping the politics of the Old World. Alexander Hamilton correctly assessed that the new republic remained at risk so long as the nation remained a peripheral power whose borders were long and unsecured. For just these reasons Hamilton had supported the terms of peace negotiated by John Jay with Britain, writing under the pseudonym Camillus:

A very powerful state may frequently hazard a high and haughty tone with good policy; but a weak state can scarcely ever do it without imprudence. The last is yet our character.²⁵¹

America's indigenous peoples had been unable to pull together against the common threat. Less than twenty years after the framing of a new government by the European-Americans, even the great Shawnee warrior Tecumseh understood the fate his people could look forward to. Knowing that he would soon be killed in battle, Tecumseh urged his closest supporters to follow a very different path:

Our cause is done. After tomorrow, when I am gone, return to your own people at once. No longer raise your weapons against the Americans; it can only end in disaster for you and all your people. Make peace with them and in all ways possible, live in harmony with them. Help them in any way you can; be loyal to them in all ways; defend them against their enemies if need be, even should those enemies be other Indians, for, hear me, my brothers, the Indians can *never* win against the Americans. Join them, that you and your people may survive.²⁵²

The descendants of these survivors relinquished control over their territories, while becoming subjects rather than citizens of the new nation. Their numbers continued to fall during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries but have rebounded in recent decades. As the institutional structure of the State has come under increasing scrutiny and pressure from people organized on behalf of transnational principles of justice, manipulation of positive law by the privileged few has become more difficult. In the United States and Canada, particularly, the people of America's indigenous tribes are gradually achieving obtaining full rights of citizenship and fairer treatment under law. Still at issue, however, is the question of the territorial and political sovereignty forcibly taken from their forefathers. The larger society is not guided by moral principles where territorial sovereignty is concerned. The indigenous Americans talk about the land that once belonged to them and what was taken from them.

Political economy and the transnational principles of *cooperative individualism* lead us to a conclusion that is, as nearly so as reason dictates, self-evident; namely, that all claims of territorial sovereignty violate moral principles. Neither first occupancy, conquest nor purchase legitimize any claims to territorial sovereignty. The earth is, must be, *the birthright of all persons, equally* in order to guarantee equality of opportunity. Monopolistic control of any portion of the earth by any tribe or other group violates this essential principle of justice. At best, the nation-state and the establishment of territorial borders is an administrative expediency. In reality, borders represent attempts by the few to deny access to natural resources and living space to others. The history of the people who struggled for control over one, relatively small island off the Atlantic coast of continental Europe graphically demonstrates this principle. This is the subject of the next chapter.