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**Option before the Working
People of Sri Lanka**

Colonial Conquest of the Americas

Debt Trap & Mega Development

Notes from Correspondents

Poetry: Pablo Neruda, Countee Cullen

From The Heights of Macchu Picchu

Pablo Neruda

Rise up in birth with me, my brother.
Give me your hand out of the deep
zone of your wide-spread sorrow.
You will not return from the bedrock depths.
You will not return from subterranean time.
It will not return, your hardened voice.
They will not return, your pierced eyes.

Look at me from the depths of the earth, you,
the farm worker, the weaver, the quiet shepherd,
the tamer of guardian guanacos,
the mason on his defied scaffolding,
the water carrier bearing Andean tears,
the jeweller with crushed fingers,
the farmer trembling among his seeds,
you, the potter poured in your clay,
all ye, bring to the cup
of this new life
your ancient buried sorrows.
Show me your blood
and your furrow,
tell me: here I was punished
because the jewel did not shine or the earth
failed to yield enough stone
or enough corn:

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Editorial

The delay in holding elections to the Provincial Councils has more to do with the worry of major political parties about the prospect of losing seats to 'independent groups' as in the elections to local authorities, mainly in the Northern Province. Their earlier hope was that voting will be based on the strength of the parties and that elimination of the 'preference vote' under proportional representation would merely avert internal battles for seats within a list of candidates. Nationally and regionally dominant political parties are thus unanimous that Provincial Council elections should be held under an electoral system that all of them once rejected as faulty. Such unanimity is rare, but for matters like increasing all manner of material benefits for the parliamentarians.

The prospect of smaller political groups emerging from among a public angry with the performance of major political parties worries all big players, despite declared political differences and intra party squabbles. Meanwhile, people are increasingly aware that there is little to choose between the big parties, whose smaller partners do not matter very much.

If there was the slightest interest or spirit of cooperation among parties in resolving the national question which, if at all, has worsened since the civil war ended in 2009, the country would have made some progress towards resolving the less controversial aspects of the national question, and demilitarization of the North and East would have been found possible without compromising security and peace in the country.

Reckless talk that stirs chauvinist and narrow nationalist sentiments is on the rise, and really targets the electorate while diverting public attention from the pressing problems of a faltering economy and rise in crime, including theft, murder, sexual abuse of women and children as well as in crimes related to narcotics and communal tension. The credibility of the parliamentary politicians has plummeted and their raw opportunism

driven by desire for power, position and property has added to popular distaste for politicians.

In a context of such political disarray, the existence of a genuinely people-oriented political alternative would lead to the emergence of a strong mass movement and a fundamental political change to benefit the people.

What is happening instead is that fascistic elements are making gains using the frustration of the public. The call for a strong leader as firm as Hitler was strongly rejected by many but it is a prospect that cannot be ruled out. Fascism is not about any personality but about right wing dictatorship, and cannot be treated lightly.

This journal has published several articles on the prospect of an alliance of political reaction, chauvinism and a section of the armed forces coming together with the blessings of imperialism to seize power. The fascist potential of religious chauvinism, which is much stronger than that of ethno-nationalist thinking, was also pointed out.

Imperialism through the agency of chauvinistic and narrow nationalist forces and NGOs is promoting identity politics with a view to divide the oppressed people. On the one hand it backs oppressive states and on the other uses divisive forces to stir conflict. It is dangerous to underrate the potential of US imperialism and its allies to divide and destroy countries that show signs of defiance. There is much to learn from how imperialism used contradictions among people to bring down stable governments in Iraq, Libya and, less successfully, in Syria.

The independence and sovereignty of the country is at stake, especially with the government seeking to play one foreign power against another to keep itself fiscally afloat amid a ruined national economy, badly weakened since 1978 by the open economic policy.

It is thus the duty of all left and progressive forces to be alert to the fascist threat and unite to build a broad-based anti-fascist movement founded on an anti-imperialist political programme.

Option before the Working People of Sri Lanka

SK Senthivel

The entire people of the country are entrapped in the worsening economic crisis engulfing the country. Meanwhile, corruption and abuse of power proliferate. Those who came to power by pointing their fingers at old thieves have now emerged as a new breed of thieves. An increase in the spread and abuse of narcotic substances and the continuing menace of underground criminal gangs in the South and the growth of knife wielding criminal gangs in the North are threatening the daily lives of the ordinary masses.

A solution for the seventy-year long national question still remains as empty talk. At the same time, there has been neither justice nor relief for the people of the North and East who have suffered hardship, destruction and loss of life as a result of the thirty-year war that arose from the unresolved national question. The fundamental reason for this situation is the programme of imperialist neoliberal globalization comprising liberalization and privatization that has been adhered to since 1978.

Neither the parties of the ruling alliance nor the parties comprising the Joint Opposition are prepared to put forward national economic programmes to replace the above schemes that have brought harm and ruin to the country and the people. The Tamil National Alliance, which conducts politics of accommodation while presenting itself as the legitimate Parliamentary Opposition Party, has not the least interest in

such matters. The above political parties that do not take note of any of the problems of the people are only concerned about the forthcoming elections to the Provincial Councils and the presidential and parliamentary elections that would follow. Under these conditions, the New Democratic Marxist Leninist Party emphasizes that the only option before the working people to secure governmental power to their hands is to mobilize along the path of mass struggle.

The present economic structure and the national question that is linked to it have over the past four decades ruined to varying degrees all working people and the Tamil, Muslim and Hill Country Tamil minority nationalities. While poverty and unemployment have risen among the working population, the prices of essential food items and utility goods are being increased. Besides, taxes and the burden of credit are heaped on the heads of the people. Introduction of liberalization and privatization in matters of social welfare including education and health continues to menace those sectors. Meanwhile, planned anti-social activities have a negative impact on cultural matters; and underground criminal gangs in the South and knife wielding gangs in the North serve as agencies for the implementation of this process of decay.

The national question of the country was cultivated and transformed into a cruel war, conducted as a thirty-year civil war focused on the North and East. More than three hundred thousand people have been killed by this war. Property worth several tens million of rupees have been destroyed. Prisons and refugee camps overflowed. A situation was created where hundreds of thousands had to go into exile as refugees, leaving behind their land, and kith and kin. To this day, neither the central government nor the provincial governments have taken suitable steps to rehabilitate the war affected. The number of women who have lost their husbands in the war the North and East exceeds 80,000. These women live a life of tears as widows who have to look after their parents and children amid a host of other problems.

Hill Country plantation workers, who have been denied wage increases and suffer a stagnant standard of living, exist without basic facilities amid economic problems. Workers elsewhere, peasants, fishers and employees of the state and private sectors and the service industry face similar problem to varying degrees.

It is the 40-year long executive presidential rule and the parliamentary system that paved the way for the above said harms. The Constitution of 1978 and practices of liberalization and privatization under programme of Globalization introduced under it thrust the country and the people into ruin. And, it was to implement these policies that the 30-year was initiated and cruelly carried forward.

The United National Party and the Sri Lanka Freedom Party, comprising the political forces of ruling classes led the implementation of these ruinous policies. US imperialism and European imperialist powers and regional powers like India and China continue to embrace and support them.

The World Bank and the International Monetary Fund come forward to grant loans with high interest rates and stiff conditions. Besides that, credit is also obtained from countries including China. The country is continuing to experience the adverse consequences of its ill considered borrowing.

If the people of the country do not unite to mobilize in mass uprisings and struggle against the harms that they suffer, they risk even harsher experiences in the future.

Colonial Conquest of the Americas

Purpose of the Study

Anti-imperialism is a precondition for socialist struggle in the Third World, where imperialism manifests itself as neo-colonialism in varying ways. Imperialism uses a host of strategies to thwart anti-imperialist struggles. While anti-imperialism has a common aim specific conditions obtaining in a country or a region decide the most appropriate strategy and methods of struggle.

The nature of colonial rule has varied with the colonizer and the colony as well as their respective stages of economic development. In our earlier studies of Asia and Africa, we noted differences between regions and between countries of the same region. No two colonizers have acted similarly and the same colonial power has used different methods in different colonies. Effective anti-imperialist strategies in the neocolonial context require a clear idea of how and why successful anti-colonial struggles succumbed to imperialism. Knowing the neocolonial context demands knowledge of how colonial rule came about and influenced the social, economic and political development of the colonies.

This study makes no pretence to new insights. It is a modest overview of the colonization of the Americas and draws attention to the way conquest and colonial control were achieved and sustained, with genocide and

slavery as key features that distinguish colonization in the Americas from that in Asia or Africa. The expectation is that the study will help to understand how transition from colonialism to neocolonialism occurred in different contexts. Colonial settlement in the Americas has lessons for Asia and Africa, especially regions of Asia where ethnicity has been turned into a major contradiction. Latin American experiences can offer new perspectives pertinent to questions of nationalism and ethnicity. It is hoped that this essay will encourage the reader to engage in further study and develop a comprehensive global perspective of colonial conquest and rule, anti-colonial struggles, and neocolonial subversion of national independence as they occurred in different parts of the world.

Preliminary Remarks

Colonial conquest of the Americas had harsh consequences for the indigenous population of the Americas and for the enslaved Africans who were shipped to the Americas as well as the colonized people of Africa. Conquest and colonization by Europeans changed the Americas forever. Early colonists sought gold and silver, which soon grew into a currency for Europe. The haul of precious metals initially by crude plunder and by taxation of subjugated indigenous communities was followed by forcing an enslaved people to pan the rivers and streams, and later to work in mines.

By mid-1500s, gold and silver were extracted by intensive mining and towns and cities developed around the mines. Millions of indigenous slaves toiled in the mines at Guanajuato and Zacatecas in Mexico. Peru was another region of intensive mining. Potosí in Bolivia, a mining town founded in 1546, was by the end of the 16th Century among the largest cities in the world, with 350,000 inhabitants. According to Eduardo Galeano in his classic “Open Veins of Latin America”, Potosí produced over 40,000 tonnes of silver in the next 200 years, to place the Spanish Empire among the richest that the world ever knew, at the cost of eight

million lives. In 150 years from the arrival of the first Europeans, nearly 200 tonnes of gold crossed the Atlantic. Most miners died of accidents, brutal treatment and mercury poisoning during the extraction process.

The indigenous people and their many centuries' old civilization and culture were subjugated. Many were killed and many more died of new diseases that the Europeans brought with them and the adverse living conditions that the conquerors imposed on them. Indigenous religions survived only by making way for European Christianity. Conquest was followed by a phenomenal trans-Atlantic trade of slaves, who were needed to work the land and plantations. Colonial rule approached its end as the European settlers began to demand independence in late 18th Century. The American War of Independence, or American Revolution, freed the thirteen eastern coast colonies in North America from British rule, paving the way for the emergence of the biggest 20th Century power, the United States of America (US). Independence struggles in early 19th Century freed most of the American colonies under Portuguese and Spanish rule. The emergence of the US as a capitalist power, however, voided that independence of substance.

Colonization of the Americas was genocidal. Early underestimates of the native population at the time of the arrival of Christopher Columbus in 1492 underrated its severity. Recent demographic studies have revised the population of the Americas in 1492 from the earlier 10-15 million to 80-110 million (30 million in Central America and Mexico, up to 10 million in the rest of North America, and 50 to 70 million in South America). After 500 years of colonization, the total indigenous population south of the US is a little over 9% of the total, with Mestizos (people of mixed indigenous and European ancestry) comprising four to five times that number. The indigenous people still lack control over their lands in the Americas and, like most other indigenous populations, constitute the most exploited and oppressed layers of the population.

The Pre-Columbian People

The geographic diversity of the Americas and the ways of life associated with each region had implications for the culture and social structure of the hundreds of ethnic groups that emerged.

Organized social groups are broadly categorized as (i) **bands** comprising nomadic groups with an integrated system of political organization marked by egalitarian social relations and absence of private property; (ii) **tribes** comprising settled groups with an informal and egalitarian political structure with natural leadership based on experience and wisdom; (iii) **chiefdoms** comprising an integrated community of one or several groups with some formal structure, often with a hereditary and almost permanent chief; and (iv) **states** with a centralized political structure and a well organized economic system. No indigenous society with a state was known in America north of Mexico.

The way of life of the Arctic region involved hunting of land and sea mammals, fishing and trading with nearby communities. In the Subarctic region comprising Alaska and the northern parts of Canada, life was based mainly on hunting and fishing. Bear, goats and deer were hunted in the west, musk oxen and caribou in the north, and buffalo (really bison) in the prairies of the south. The combined Arctic and Subarctic population is estimated to be of the order of 100,000.

People who lived along the Pacific coast of North America depended on fishing. Their population then is estimated at up to four million. The region between the Pacific coastal mountain range and the central plains of today's southern British Columbia, Washington, Oregon, Idaho and Montana supported a smaller population estimated at around 200,000.

The main source of food of the people of the plains in the region from Texas up to parts of southern Alberta, Saskatchewan, and Manitoba, eastward to North and South Dakota, Minnesota, Wisconsin, Missouri, numbering up to a million, was the bison which also provided essentials

including clothing and shelter. (By late 19th Century, the people of the plains were starved by wanton slaughter of the bison to near-extinction.)

The woodlands stretching from Ontario, Quebec and New York down to the Carolinas was home to two million hunters, fishers and farmers. The fertile region to the south, comprising parts of the Virginias and Florida, Mississippi and Louisiana was home to between two and three million who lived by farming supplemented by hunting and fishing.

Agrarian and nomadic people altogether numbering about two million occupied what is south-western US, northern Mexico and California. The region from Mexico to Panama had between 30 and 40 million members of agrarian communities, whose primary staple was maize. The region had large city-states with stone-and-brick buildings and pyramids, and an extensive irrigation system. There were writing systems and the study of astronomy and mathematics. Their calendar was more precise than any in Europe at the time.

Around five million hunting, fishing and agrarian peoples are estimated to have occupied the Caribbean basin, including the coastal regions and the islands to which they migrated from the continent.

South America was more fertile than North America and amenable to agriculture, and its total population at 1492 is estimated at between 50 and 70 million, comprising mostly settled agricultural communities of varying sizes as well as traditionally semi-nomadic tribes who subsisted on hunting, fishing, gathering and migrant agriculture.

Major Civilizations during Colonial Conquest

The Americas had remarkably advanced civilizations and formidable states when Europeans arrived. The Aztec Empire, a very powerful state, was an alliance of three city-states, namely Mexico-Tenochtitlan, Texcoco and Tlacopan, and ruled the area in and around the Valley of Mexico from 1430 until defeat in 1521 by the combined forces of the Spanish

conquistadors and their native allies. The Aztec Empire waged wars of conquest and, at its peak, controlled most of central Mexico and much of Central America. The Aztecs left in power rulers of conquered cities who agreed to pay semi-annual tributes to the alliance as well as supply military forces when needed for Aztec war efforts. In return they were offered protection, political stability and a place in an integrated regional economic network.

The Tarascan state, a contemporary of the Aztec Empire, founded in the early 14th Century, lay to the northwest of the Aztec empire. It comprised a network of tributary systems, centralized under the control of the Tarascan state, which successfully fought many wars against the Aztecs. Although relatively isolated within the region, it was among the few Mesoamerican civilizations that used metal for tools, ornamentation and weapons. The Tarascan state, the second-largest in Mesoamerica when the Spanish arrived, lost its independence to the Spanish in 1530.

The Inca Empire (1438–1533) lacked many features commonly associated with civilization, including riding and draught animals, and wheeled vehicles. The Incas had no iron or steel, and lacked a system of writing. Nevertheless, they built one of the mightiest imperial states in history, reputed for its monumental architecture, a road network reaching all corners of the state, finely-woven textiles, use of knotted strings (quipu) for communication and record keeping, agricultural innovations in difficult terrain, and the organization and management of the people and their labour. The Empire functioned largely without money and markets. Exchange of goods and services was based on reciprocity among persons, groups and Inca rulers. "Taxes" comprised a labour obligation of a person to the Empire. After the fall of the Empire, Manco Inca Yupanqui, son of the last Inca Emperor Huayna Capac, founded the Neo-Inca state of Vilcabamba in 1537, comprising the remnants of the Empire. It lasted until the conquest of the last Inca stronghold in 1572, and its last ruler, Túpac Amaru, Manco's son, was captured and executed.

The Cambeba (also known as the Omagua, Umana and Kambeba) comprised populous organized societies of indigenous people in the Amazon basin of Brazil. Their population fell steeply in the early years of the Columbian Exchange. These societies left no lasting monuments, perhaps because they used local wood for construction since stone was not locally available. Recent archaeological work shows evidence of semi-domesticated orchards, as well as vast areas of land enriched with terra preta (the use of charcoal to improve the fertility of soils, known in the Amazon basin at least 2500 years ago). Also the discovery of Cambeba ceramics within the same archaeological levels, suggests that a large and organized civilization existed prior to European contact. There is also evidence of complex pre-Columbian social formations, including chiefdoms, and large towns and cities in much of Amazonia.

It seems that, following the demographic collapse of the 16th and 17th Centuries, much owing to European-introduced diseases, sections of settled agrarian people adapted a more mobile lifestyle to evade colonial control to become nomadic but still preserving certain traditions.

Although the region to the north of the Aztec empire had no powerful states, much of the indigenous tribal society was well ordered and had a long and rich culture tradition as confirmed by archaeological studies. Communities outside powerful states were classless and communitarian, often with strong matrilineal features. Elders held importance and honour for their experience and knowledge. There were no prisons and, according to the accounts of elders, anti-social crime was minimal. Community decisions were mostly by popular consensus and discussion. Interestingly, these are among features that the Zapatista movement draws on to conduct the affairs of the region of the liberated zones of the region of Chiapas in southern Mexico.

Inter-tribal armed conflicts existed and slavery was known in the Pacific Northwest coast and Mesoamerican regions. Several indigenous tribes of Canada routinely captured slaves from neighbouring tribes, and a

quarter of the population of some tribes in the Pacific Northwest were slaves comprising mainly prisoners of war and debtors. Colonial conquest, however, had little to do with putting right any such wrongs.

The Process of Colonization

The Spanish were the first Europeans to arrive in the Americas after Columbus landed in the Bahamas in 1492. On his first voyage, Columbus claimed San Salvador Island in the east of the Bahamas, Cuba and Hispaniola (comprising today's Haiti and Dominican Republic) for Spain. He built a fort in Hispaniola, where he left behind Spanish soldiers to hunt for gold. The soldiers misbehaved and the inhabitants killed them. On his second voyage, Columbus settled a thousand Spanish colonists there, who were the source of epidemic diseases such as influenza, smallpox, measles and typhus, which within 50 years drastically reduced the indigenous population in the Caribbean. These conquests were followed by the colonization of most of South and Central America, the larger islands of the Caribbean, Mexico and much of what is the US.

The first permanent European settlements in the Americas were small as they were meant to facilitate and maintain areas of exploitation. An estimated 100,000 Europeans settled in the Americas in the 16th Century. Until the 18th Century, the majority of European migrants to the Americas were impoverished merchants, petit-bourgeois traders, mercenaries and missionaries who hoped to build their fortunes in the 'New World'.

In 1494, Spain and Portugal signed the Treaty of Tordesillas, designed to divide the globe in two spheres of influence. Lands to the west of the dividing line near the New World were to be Spain's and those to the east Portugal's. The line ran across what is today's Brazil and allowed Spain to capture most of South and Central America and Mexico.

Portugal, which discovered Brazil in 1500, initially colonised territory to the east of the line. It later took advantage of the Iberian Union of 1580 to

1640 (a dynastic union of the Crown of Portugal and the Spanish Crown bringing the entire Iberian Peninsula, as well as Spanish and Portuguese overseas possessions, under the Spanish Habsburg kings) to acquire territory that constitutes the bulk of present day Brazil.

While the Spain got on with its colonization, other European powers sent their own expeditions. Explorers financed by England crossed the ocean and charted the Atlantic coast of North America. French explorers followed in 1534 and surveyed the eastern regions of what would become Canada, while the Spaniards penetrated North America. Conquerors claimed the lands for their respective countries and in course of time the European invaders changed South America's trade patterns, which were earlier internal to particular regions.

Initially, the Caribbean was the theatre of European colonial contest. Although the conquest of the Aztecs and Incas was decisive for Spanish expansion in the Americas, the Caribbean was strategically important throughout the 16th Century. By the 1620s, however, non-Hispanic privateers, traders, and settlers set up permanent colonies and trading posts on the smaller islands that were neglected by Spain.

Although nearly all of South and Central America and the Caribbean were divided between Spain and Portugal by early 17th Century, the French, Dutch and advance elements of the British initiated settlements in the Caribbean. The French in 1635 occupied a coastal region of South America that is now French Guiana, and the Dutch an adjoining territory known as Dutch Guiana (later reduced to Suriname after loss of territory to the British in 1814).

The Dutch, French and British were more active in North America. The French took control of the north-eastern regions and occupied what is Quebec in Canada and much of what is the US. However, the Spanish, who claimed Florida in 1539, frustrated French attempts to settle in South Carolina and Florida. British attempts in 1585 and 1586 to settle on

Roanoke Island in North Carolina failed for unclear reasons. Meanwhile, the Spanish pushed into North America from southern Mexico amid resistance from Pueblos and other indigenous people.

The first British permanent settlement in North America at Jamestown, Virginia in 1606 was followed in 1620 by the Pilgrims (English Puritans) who also landed on the east coast to establish the Plymouth colony. In 1624, the Dutch established Fort Orange (later to become Albany, New York) and claimed the area as New Netherland.

Spanish Conquest

Spain's territorial expansion was aided by its advantage as the first conqueror, and conquest involved subjugation of the local populations and imposing Christianity upon them. The large islands of Hispaniola, Puerto Rico and Cuba in the Caribbean were taken first. Although force was used, there was no spectacular military conflict. However, methods of conquest developed in the Caribbean were later used on the mainland. Having found that the indigenous people were not solidly united and would cooperate with an intruder in order to overcome a local enemy, the Spanish developed the method of entering into a dialogue with a tribal chief and use his authority to infiltrate his region. They also evolved expeditionary forces that would carry them to the far reaches of the hemisphere.

Spanish expeditions, despite royal patronage, were local ventures led by senior people with local wealth and a following. Ordinary members were often less privileged recent arrivals. Organization was lax and ambitious high ranking officials with position just below the local governor led important expeditions. Steel weapons and armour, and horses gave the conquistadors great advantage over indigenous forces. They founded and settled in new cities, and a stream of immigrants comprising relatives and compatriots followed.

Conquistadors and officials received tracts of land and “encomiendas” that entitled them to the labour of all who lived there. The horror of the enslavement, abuse and killing of local populations by the conquistadors compelled Prince Philip II of Spain to enact colonial laws in 1542 to protect the indigenous population, based on submissions by the Spanish Dominican friar Bartolomé de las Casas on the abuse of the indigenous peoples and atrocities committed. Spanish colonization, besides killing and enslaving, cruelly repressed native culture. Whole libraries of Mayan and Aztec codices (books consisting mostly of illustrations) were burned as the work of the Devil by zealous priests; and only a handful remain.

The population of Central and South America, conservatively estimated at 60 million at the time of Spanish arrival, dwindled to eight million within a century. Death was due mostly to European diseases like smallpox and measles to which the local people lacked immunity. Warfare and adverse conditions of forced labour in the mines and plantations also contributed. The decline in indigenous population was followed by the arrival of Spanish immigrants, who settled to live and work in their new lands of Central and South America. After 1535 enslaved Africans gradually replaced the dying indigenous work force.

The Spanish, having depleted the demographic and mineral resources of their Caribbean colonies, entered the mainland in two streams: one from Cuba to central Mexico and adjoining regions; the other from Hispaniola to the Isthmus of Panama (the narrow stretch of land linking the Americas) and then Peru and adjoining areas. The thrust into Peru preceded the conquest of central Mexico in 1519–21. Conquest, however, was not easy as the Aztec and Inca empires dominated large areas, and the Aztec empire was still in the rise as an empire. While colonization was generally resisted, the pattern of conquest varied with region.

The Spanish expedition from Cuba to the Yucatán Peninsula in south eastern Mexico was to find slaves for the plantations after the indigenous people of Cuba were annihilated. It took until 1546 to conquer the Maya

of Yucatán Peninsula. Mayan resistance persisted until 1697 when the last independent indigenous kingdom of central Petén fell. Meanwhile, the Spanish conquered nearly all of Mesoamerica (from Central Mexico to Costa Rica) and most of South America. Northward expansion continued throughout the 18th Century, and Spain claimed control over much of the land that is now the US. In the 18th Century it lost important colonies in the Caribbean to Britain and France and by early 19th Century lost much of its colonial territory north of present day Mexico. It held on to the rest until the independence struggles of the 1820s ended Spanish rule, except in Puerto Rico, ceded to the US in 1898, and Cuba, which went under effective US control in early 1899.

Occupation of the Caribbean

Prior to Spanish arrival, a diversity of ethnic groups inhabited the Caribbean islands comprising the Lucayan Archipelago, the Greater Antilles (Hispaniola, Cuba, Jamaica, Puerto Rico and, to some, the Cayman Islands) and the Lesser Antilles (comprising the smaller islands stretching from Puerto Rico to the South American coast). The Taíno were the main group in the Greater Antilles and the Lucayan Archipelago while the Caribs occupied most islands of the Lesser Antilles. Other groups inhabited different parts of the region.

Columbus, after failing to initiate settlement in Hispaniola at the end of his first voyage, took 1200 men in 17 ships with ample weaponry and supplies on his second voyage of 1493. The expedition claimed several islands in the Lesser Antilles before claiming Puerto Rico (Boriquén to its inhabitants). Columbus established a new outpost, Isabela, a few kilometres to the east of the earlier settlement, and sailed west exploring the southern shore of Cuba, and Jamaica, leaving his brother Diego in charge. Diego's men like their predecessors enraged the island's Taíno inhabitants by their violent efforts to secure their women and labour.

Columbus reached Jamaica in May 1494 and claimed it for Spain, and the island was granted to his family by the Spanish crown. The first Spanish colonists who arrived in 1509 tortured and killed the Taíno to get their land. Soon the Taíno population was nearly extinct through overwork, ill-treatment and infection with European diseases. The first African slaves arrived in 1513 from the Iberian Peninsula to work as servants, herders of farm animals and hunters. Towns were barely more than settlements, and Jamaica was mostly a supply base for the conquest of the mainland. It remained poor as very few Spaniards settled there. Lack of attention from Spain encouraged internal strife to weaken the colony in the last years of Spanish rule, and attacks by pirates added to the colony's woes. Under these conditions, the English in 1655 took Jamaica from the Spaniards, who freed their slaves and fled to Cuba. The freed slaves and their descendants became known as the Maroons. England took formal control of Jamaica as well as the unoccupied Cayman islands in 1670, under the Treaty of Madrid.

Columbus sought to enslave the native population to pan for precious metals in the islands, and to be sold as chattel in European markets. A pitched battle between the Spanish and the Taíno followed his approval in February 1495 of the shipping of some 500 Taíno to Spain to be sold as slaves. The Taínos badly lost the battle, as their weapons were no match for the Spaniards' swords and armour. In the next few years ships and men poured into the Caribbean, and Hispaniola was completely subdued in 1495–96, and its surviving inhabitants were enslaved. The Spanish Crown soon replaced outright enslavement with the institution of *encomienda*, which too was abused by the conquistadors. Spain lost control of the western part of the island (which is now Haiti) to France in 1625 but held on to the eastern part (now the Dominican Republic) until 1821. Puerto Rico taken by Spain in the early 1500s remained a Spanish colony until 1898.

Spain's attention shifted to Cuba in 1508. A major expedition of conquest was launched in 1511. The invading Spaniards slaughtered thousands of native Taíno and Ciboney before conquest was complete in 1515.

Expansion in Central America

After defeating the Aztecs and conquering central Mexico, Spain turned to Central America. Spanish colonies to the north of the Isthmus of Panama were under the Viceroyalty of New Spain, established in 1535. The Viceroyalty later included upper and lower California (forming the central and south-western portion of the US) and extended to Florida. It was made responsible for governing Spain's Caribbean possessions and, from 1565, the newly conquered Philippines.

The conquest of Central America mainly concerned the Maya states in its north, although there were other tribes further south. Despite Columbus landing on nearly every Central American country during his fourth and final voyage, Spanish conquest was slow as there were no rich empires to rob. Expeditions launched from different Spanish jurisdictions led to rival conquests by mutually hostile captains. The conquistadors also relied on indigenous auxiliaries from previously encountered tribes.

Panama. The first Spanish explorer to arrive was Rodrigo de Bastidas who set out from Venezuela in 1502. He was followed by Vasco Nunez de Balboa who crossed the Isthmus of Panama in 1513 and 'claimed the Pacific Ocean' for Spain. Panama was claimed for Spain in 1513 following forays launched from Cuba. Settlement started in 1514. Spain's interest was in transshipping treasures from the Americas (mostly Peruvian silver) to Europe through the Caribbean, and Panama City, founded in 1519, was by 1670 the New World's wealthiest city. England and France sought to break Spanish monopoly of the region, but pirates posed a bigger threat.

Costa Rica. Columbus, who landed in Costa Rica in 1502, speculated that a rich empire lay farther inland. In 1506 King Ferdinand of Spain sent a

governor to colonize it. The Spanish, after several failed attempts in the face of disease and hostile natives, achieved a bloody conquest leading to the founding of a colony on the Golfo de Nicoya in 1522, which did not last. The first permanent Spanish colony was established in Cartago in the central highlands of Costa Rica only in 1563.

Guatemala. Pre-conquest Guatemala had rival Mesoamerican kingdoms, mostly of Mayans who also populated Yucatán (conquered between 1527 and 1546 and now part of Mexico) and El Salvador. The Spanish and their Mesoamerican allies vanquished the Mayans, who were on the decline. The Spanish also used traditional rivalries to defeat other hostile tribes. But conquest took until 1697 to complete. Lands were carved up into large estates, and the local people were ruthlessly exploited by the new landowners.

Honduras. Hernán Cortés, the architect of Spanish conquest of the Aztecs, claimed Honduras for Spain in 1525. Spanish planters in Cuba raided the northern coast to enslave indigenous people. Honduras was conquered in 1536, and native lands were shared among the conquistadors who enslaved the indigenous population, whose resistance between 1537 and 1538 failed.

Nicaragua. Spain conquered Nicaragua between 1520 and 1524 by decimating the indigenous population. Many were killed by the Spanish; and European diseases killed far more. The population was largely enslaved, and as many as 200,000 were sent to work in Spanish mines in South America.

El Salvador. The town of San Salvador, founded in 1525 following the first campaign against native inhabitants in 1524, was destroyed in 1526 amid a region-wide indigenous uprising and, following the quelling of the uprising, was relocated in 1528. Nicaragua's attempts in 1529 to annex El Salvador were thwarted by a relief force from Guatemala. However, indigenous uprisings against the invaders that spread from Honduras

lasted until end of 1538. El Salvador, with little gold or silver to find, became a colonial backwater with a small Spanish population.

Belize. Mayan dominated Belize (formerly British Honduras) was the only part of Central America that the Spanish could not conquer, despite penetration by Dominican and Franciscan friars to evangelize the natives. The first European settlers were English seamen shipwrecked in 1638. During the 18th Century, the Spanish, in exchange for help to control piracy, let the British settle and use African slaves to cut logwood (source of a wool dye). The British did not declare Belize as its colony to avert conflict with the Spanish. A superintendent was appointed in 1786, and Belize became part of the British Empire only in 1862.

Expansion in South America

Spain administered its New World colonies by a system of viceroalties. The Viceroyalty of Peru founded in 1543 comprised all of South America under Spanish control except the coastal region of what is Venezuela. Territory comprising Colombia, Ecuador, Panama, and Venezuela were later placed under the Viceroyalty of New Granada created in 1739, and territory comprising Argentina, Uruguay, Paraguay and Bolivia under the Viceroyalty of the Río de la Plata established in 1776.

Peru. The Inca Empire, the largest pre-Columbian civilization, lay along the western coast of South America and in 1528 included today's Peru, western Bolivia and the northern part of Chile. Yet, a modest force of Spaniards who arrived in Peru defeated the Incas in 1532 and made it part of the Spanish empire by 1533. Spain went on to conquer and rule vast areas in South America. Gold and silver were their reward, and the region's population provided the necessary labour.

Bolivia. Bolivia had a large indigenous population, the Aymara and Quechua being the main groups. The Inca Empire conquered most of western Bolivia under its ninth emperor Pachacuti Inca Yupanqui (1438-

71), but not the nomadic tribes in the lowlands of eastern Bolivia. With the fall of the Incas, western Bolivia went under the Spanish, whose settlement of the Bolivian highlands, known as Upper Peru, was delayed by civil war between the forces of rival conquistadors. Spain reasserted its authority in 1548. Conquest of the lowlands was delayed by indigenous resistance. Although the Spanish established the city of Santa Cruz in the Chaco region in 1561, indigenous resistance continued. The Spanish made the area a separate colonial region known as Chiquitos. The Spaniards, whose key interest was in the Bolivian silver mines, mercilessly exploited the region, forcing inhabitants to work as slaves to extract vast amounts of minerals for export to Spain over the next 300 years.

Ecuador. The Inca Empire expanded northward in the late 15th Century amid strong resistance by Ecuadorian tribes and the Kingdom of Quito. The conquest that began in 1463 took until 1500 to complete. Emperor Huayna Capac made Quito the second capital of the Empire. Inca rule, although brief, strongly influenced agriculture, land tenure and social structure while traditional beliefs and cultural features remained intact. Spanish expeditions arrived in Ecuador and laid siege to Quito in around 1527 amid struggle for succession after the Emperor's death.

In 1533, the great Inca warrior Rumiñahui destroyed the pre-Hispanic city to deny it to the Spanish, who founded the city of San Francisco de Quito on its ruins. Indigenous rebellion continued so that Quito received its first captain-general only in 1540. Ecuador was under the Viceroyalty of Peru from 1544 to 1563, and was awarded its own Audiencia in 1563, as part of the Viceroyalty of Peru. In 1720, it joined the newly created Viceroyalty of New Granada.

Chile. The region of Chile, with the Pacific on the west, the Andes on the east and the Atacama Desert on the north, remained isolated until mid 15th Century, when the Incas crossed Atacama in their quest to conquer, but retreated in the face of strong resistance from Mapuche Aruacians in central Chile, but held the land already taken.

Around 1536, the Spanish encountered the Picunche under Inca rule in northern Chile. Resistance was weak and, by the end of the 17th Century, the Picunche were part of the peasant population. The Mapuche, although scattered, formed widespread alliances to confront the Spanish, and averted Spanish and Chilean control for 350 years. The Spanish set up colonies in central Chile and founded Santiago in 1541, but could not subjugate the Mapuche. The Third Great Mapuche Uprising of 1598 swept out nearly all Spanish presence south of the Bío-Bío River, making it the frontier of Mapuche and Spanish territories for three centuries. Cities developed slowly to the north of the frontier, and Chilean lands became a source of food for the Viceroyalty of Peru. Chile, for most of its colonial history, was the least wealthy realm of the Spanish Crown. Steady economic and demographic growth began in the 18th Century following reforms by Spain's Bourbon dynasty.

Colombia. Spanish conquistadors explored the coast of Colombia from 1499. Coastal settlements started in 1510, and coastal cities were havens from attacks by indigenous people as well as bases for expeditions into the interior. The city of Santa Fe de Bogotá (present-day Bogotá), to be the power centre of the colony of New Granada, was founded in 1538. Colonial population centres were mostly in remote valleys and plateaus, and in 1542, New Granada became part of the Viceroyalty of Peru.

The Viceroyalty of New Granada created in 1717 was briefly removed and restored in 1739 with Bogota as capital to include some provinces that correspond mainly to today's Venezuela, Ecuador and Panama, but previously under the jurisdiction of the Viceroyalties of New Spain or Peru, and making Bogotá one of the principal administrative centres of the Spanish possessions on par with Lima and Mexico City, though it was relatively backward, economically and logistically.

Venezuela. Spanish expeditions that reached Venezuela's coast in 1498 were followed by the exploitation of pearl-producing oyster beds, which were depleted by the 1520's. Nueva Cadiz, the first Spanish city of South

America, founded on Cubagua Island in 1500 to serve pearl fishing was totally destroyed by an earthquake in 1541. The first permanent Spanish settlement in South America was founded in 1522 in what is now the city of Cumaná amid persistent indigenous resistance. Caracas became the capital of the Province of Venezuela in 1577.

Germany ruled a few islands in the Caribbean in the 16th and 17th Centuries. Prince Bartholomeus Welser, a German banker, obtained colonial rights for the Province of Venezuela and had 4,000 African slaves to work on sugar plantations. Many Germans moved there from 1528 until 1546, when the colonial rights were revoked.

The colonial economy in the 16th and 17th Centuries was based on gold mining and livestock farming, and slaves were brought in from Africa since 1526. The colonists had indigenous farmers on their farms, and used other enslaved indigenous people and later Africans to work in the mines. More African slaves were brought to work in the cocoa plantations that started in the 18th Century, and cocoa beans became Venezuela's principal export.

Argentina. European explorers arrived in Río de la Plata in Argentina in 1516. The first Spanish settlement was established in 1527, and Buenos Aires was founded in 1536 as a permanent colony. Asunción was founded in 1537 in the area that is now **Paraguay**. Buenos Aires suffered attacks by indigenous people and was abandoned in 1541. A second and more enduring settlement was established in 1580 and the city became the head of the Governorate of the Río de la Plata and later the capital of the new Viceroyalty of the Río de la Plata in 1776.

Uruguay. In the colonial era Uruguay, known as Banda Oriental (east bank), was a buffer between Portuguese Brazil and the Spanish Empire. The Portuguese who explored the region in 1512–1513 could not settle. Spanish landings since 1520 did not lead to permanent settlements either. Cattle and horses introduced in 1603 by the order of the Lieutenant-

Governor of the Rio de la Plata Province greatly multiplied by the mid-17th Century. Spanish Jesuits founded the first permanent settlement in 1624. The Portuguese set up a colony on the northern bank of River La Plata opposite Buenos Aires in 1680. Spain, seeking to limit Portugal's expansion of Brazil's frontiers, founded the city of San Felipe de Montevideo (later Montevideo, capital of Uruguay) in 1726. The Treaty of Madrid of 1750 secured Spanish control over Banda Oriental but let Portuguese settlers remain. Uruguay rebelled successfully against Vice-royalty of La Plata in 1808 but was subject of rivalry between Argentina and Brazil. Brazil invaded Uruguay in 1817 and incorporated it in Brazil as Cisplatina Province in 1820. Uruguay declared independence in 1825, which was formally recognized by Brazil and Argentina in 1828.

Northward Expansion

Spanish expansion in North America in the 18th Century covered much of the land, but was slower than in South and Central America. Spaniards arriving from Costa Rica claimed Florida for Spain in 1513, making it the first major European land claim in North America. Actual settlement followed in 1565. The boundaries of Florida were not well defined and Spanish territorial claims, based on several wide-ranging expeditions mounted during the 16th Century, extended beyond the present-day state of Florida in the US and covered much of what is south-eastern US. The territory was eventually abandoned in the face of expanding English and French colonial projects, the collapse of the native populations and lack of economic self-sufficiency.

Conquest and occupation went slow in the sparsely populated and mostly arid northern Mexico. Expansion was driven by the prospect of discovering precious metals, defence against raids by nomadic indigenous people, and forestalling British and French incursions. The Spaniards captured North Central Mexico by 1546 and found valuable silver mines, and occupation of northern Mexico was in late 16th Century

amid prolonged fighting with nomadic people. The northern border of New Spain was nearly the present Mexican border with the US. Efforts to take Georgia, North Carolina, Florida and Virginia failed, but Spanish expansion continued along the west of the continent.

The conquest of New Mexico started in 1598. But the Pueblo Indians of the region rebelled in 1680 and were not subdued until 1694. Expansion on the northern frontier of New Spain was partly in response to expansion by rival European powers. Thus the 18th Century was marked by boundary disputes between Spain, Britain, France and later the US, with some territories changing hands several times. The northern boundary of New Spain was largely indeterminate until the Adams-Onís Treaty of 1819, by which the US acquired Florida while recognizing Spanish sovereignty over Texas, New Mexico, and California.

Britain claimed the northern stretch of North America's west coast but did not occupy it until 1788, when it set up a small trading post in Nootka Sound in today's British Columbia. Spain founded a fortified trading post on Vancouver Island between 1789 and 1795, and sought force out British traders by seizing ships. The Nootka Conventions of 1790, 1793 and 1794 averted war with Britain over the Pacific Northwest, with Spain accepting Britain's right to settlement in any area claimed but never occupied by Spain. As a result, British presence grew in the Pacific Northwest to include today's British Columbia, Oregon, and Washington.

Following the last battle in the French and Indian War (against the British) in North America, which led to British control of Canada, France granted Spain part of its colony of Louisiana, comprising the entire valley of the Mississippi River, from the Appalachians to the Rockies under the secret Treaty of Fontainebleau in 1762. The Treaty of Paris (1763), between France and Great Britain following the Seven Years' War, divided Louisiana at the Mississippi. The eastern half was ceded to Britain, and the western half and New Orleans remained nominally

French. Also under the Treaty of Paris, Spain ceded Florida to Britain for which western Louisiana was its compensation.

Spanish Governance

Spain's system of colonial administration conditioned the post-colonial development of Latin America. The highly bureaucratic absolutist system was designed to exert royal authority, protect economic and political interests, and forestall the surfacing of adverse interest groups.

All political and legal authority derived nominally from the Spanish Crown. There was no clear separation of the executive, legislative and judicial branches of government, or the authorities of the Crown and the Church. The King was at the pinnacle of authority and the Council of the Indies, which was directly under him, exercised authority in the running of the colonies.

The Viceroyalty was the largest colonial administrative unit and the Viceroy, its highest authority, was the direct representative of the Crown. The Audiencias, comprising eminent persons in the colony and acting like an appellate court and legislative body, subject to royal approval, were partially subordinate to the Viceroy. A lack of clear boundaries between vice-regal and audiencia authority was a source of dispute. From early colonial conquest, military and administrative divisions called Captaincies were created in colonies facing risk of foreign invasion or indigenous attack, and several got elevated to Captaincy General or Viceroyalty. There was no democratic decision making at any level of government, with Municipal Councils comprising the only form of collective self-governance.

Status as Captaincy General allowed the colony a degree of independent development within the same viceroyalty, and contributed to the emergence of a large number of states following the collapse of Spanish control.

Portuguese Conquest

Predominantly agrarian Portugal was also a maritime monarchy that used issuance of trading licenses to attract local and foreign investment in its overseas ventures. Its merchant-king supervised an economy that imported goods from as far as East Asia to Brazil for re-export to Europe. This commercial objective was the driving force behind Portugal's overseas operations that led to colonization. The Portuguese settled on the Brazilian coast following the arrival of the explorer Pedro Álvares Cabral in Brazil in 1500, and secured the "title" to what became eastern Brazil in their attempt to divide the world with Spain based on the Treaty of Tordesillas of 1494.

Settlement served to obtain brazilwood (source of a dye), sugar, tobacco, then diamonds and gold, cotton, coffee, and later rubber for markets in Europe and elsewhere. Brazilwood was the main interest for about 50 years. The Portuguese initially bartered with the indigenous population to bring brazilwood and other forest produce to the coast. When the indigenous people lost interest in the arrangement, the Portuguese resorted to violent persuasion. As sugar plantations initiated in the 1540s expanded, more land was cleared for sugar cultivation. Portugal viewed the indigenous people as slave labour, and colonial Brazil became an economy based on slavery. The Portuguese government granted the settlers land and money to start plantations, as well as the right to use forced unpaid local labour.

The long-held view of historians of Brazil is that the indigenous people comprised a few primitive tribes and that colonies developed and grew independently of them. But in fact the indigenous people were in the millions and the desire of the Portuguese to exploit their labour led to frontier expansion that determined Brazil's modern boundaries.

The conquest of Brazil was not by the overthrow of an organized state. It was a complex drawn out process lasting centuries and involved different

peoples spread across a large area. Portuguese campaigns in the 16th and 17th Centuries resembled those of the Spanish. As much as the Spanish conquests benefitted from indigenous conflicts, Portuguese conquest too gained by arriving at a time of conflict consequent upon the massive migration of speakers of Tupian languages from the south to coastal areas, displacing resident speakers of Ge languages, many of whom moved into the interior. The Portuguese used conflicts over land and resources, and vendettas, to prevent the indigenous people from uniting against them and, later, to obtain slaves.

A crisis of succession in Portugal led to the Iberian Union in which Spain and Portugal and their overseas possessions went under the Spanish monarch. Nominally autonomous Portugal was effectively under Spanish rule from 1580 to 1640. This union deprived Portugal of a separate foreign policy, and adversely affected its colonial control.

The Dutch who seized Bahia, the capital of Brazil, in 1624 were expelled by a Spanish-Portuguese military operation in 1625. But the Dutch held to Pernambuco, the world's richest sugar-producing area, and controlled a sizeable part of northern Brazil adjoining the Brazilian coast, which they took in 1630 and named as New Holland, until 1654. Besides, Dutch pirates raided Portuguese ships in the Atlantic. Dutch control was eased with the help of local resistance and by Portuguese expeditions. Both sides drew the indigenous population into the conflict as allies, and most sided with the Dutch. In the aftermath of the conflict, Dutch allies suffered reprisals. The Dutch and the Portuguese also used African slaves in the conflict, sometimes based on the promise of freedom. There was also tension between the Portuguese settlers who fled Dutch held areas and those who remained regarding possession of abandoned properties like sugar mills and cane fields. The economic consequences of the scorched earth policy adopted by the warring sides were harsh, and Pernambuco's sugar industry never fully recovered. High sugar prices in the 1630s and 1640s made British, French and Dutch Caribbean sugar

compete with Brazilian sugar. Brazil's share of the sugar sold in London slumped from 80% in the 1630s to 10% by 1690.

Brazil's economy did not recover until the 18th Century, that was after the discovery of gold in southern Brazil in 1690 by Portuguese settlers and fortune hunters called the Bandeirantes. Expeditions of the Bandeirantes expanded Brazilian territory by penetrating the interior of Brazil far south and west of the Tordesillas Line. Discovery of gold attracted thousands of migrants from the coastal plantations, induced fresh immigration from Portugal, and promoted cattle farming. Gold miners found diamonds near the banks of Rio Jequitinhonha, in the state of Minas Gerais in around 1725. About 1,000 tonnes of gold and 3 million carats of diamonds were extracted during the 18th Century. Gold mining in Brazil also affected the course of events in Europe. Portugal paid with gold for textile products from England, and the influx of gold stimulated the Industrial Revolution in England. But domination of the Brazilian market by English goods discouraged industrial development in Brazil.

The southward migration of people from Pernambuco and Bahia to Minas Gerais following the boom in gold and diamond mining led to a rise in the cultivation of coffee, and encouraged settlements further to the south. Early plantations were in regions like Rio de Janeiro with readily available slave labour. Following the abolition of slavery and European immigration into the State of São Paulo in late 19th Century coffee growing moved south to regions with more suitable soil and climatic conditions. The colonial capital moved from Salvador to Rio de Janeiro, which was well located to dominate the main access route to Minas Gerais and close to the growing population centres in the south.

The Portuguese regime in Brazil also sought to expand its territory by annexing adjoining regions. A military operation against Cayenne (the capital of French Guiana) in 1809 led to Portuguese rule in French Guiana until 1817. In 1816, Portuguese troops from Brazil invaded the Banda Oriental (now Uruguay), a buffer zone between Brazil and the United

Provinces of the Río de la Plata (now Argentina, and incorporated it in Brazil as Cisplatina Province in 1820. The United Kingdom of Portugal, Brazil and the Algarves (formed in 1815, following the transfer of the Portuguese Court to Brazil during the Napoleonic invasions of Portugal, and dissolved in 1822 when Brazil declared independence) was followed by the Brazilian Empire (founded in 1822 and dissolved in 1889) comprising Brazil and Uruguay (until 1828). A militant revolutionary group in Uruguay calling itself the Thirty Three Orientals, backed by the United Provinces of the Río de la Plata, declared independence on 25th August 1825. A 500 days long conflict led to the birth of independent Uruguay in 1828 under the Treaty of Montevideo, fostered by Britain.

Portuguese Administration

The Portuguese administered Brazil by a captaincy system through the Governorates General of Brazil, rule being by a Governor General who reported to the Portuguese Crown. Captaincies were the socio-administrative territorial divisions with hereditary lordships, established as part of the Donatário System, in order to settle and develop Portuguese overseas territories. Donatários had extensive administrative, fiscal, and judicial powers in exchange for settling and defending lands granted to them, at their own cost. The Captaincies initially comprised nominally 50 leagues (approximately 288 km) wide strips of land (but considerably varying in practice) along the Brazilian coast and stretching westward to the line of the Treaty of Tordesillas that divided Portuguese and Spanish colonial possessions. Each Captaincy was assigned to a Captain-major, often a member of the aristocracy.

Owing to difficulty in governing large territories, most Captaincies became administrative and economic failures and, by 1549, only four of the fifteen created were viable so that most were effectively subsumed by the Governorates General and the States of Brazil in 1549. The last privately granted captaincy reverted to the Portuguese Crown in 1754.

The history of the Captaincies was one of constant subordination, annexation and division. New Donatary Captaincies were carved out of territories that were too vast to administer directly. However, after some of the captaincies attained the status of provinces (or "states") with royal governors during the Philippine Dynasty (1581-1640), Portuguese Brazil was run a mixture of donatary captaincies, royal captaincies and states. Brazilian donatários were gradually replaced by royal administrators, until abolition by 1754.

French, Dutch and English Expansion

The Dutch, French, and British were relatively limited in their exploits in the South Americas, and their main efforts were directed at North America. They also benefitted from Spain's lack of interest in settling the smaller islands of the Caribbean and went on to occupy many of the islands. Conquests between the 16th and 18th Centuries were mostly by chartered companies with state backing and the islands were later integrated with the colonial system of the state.

French expeditions penetrated the north-eastern regions of what would in the 1530s be Quebec and the Atlantic provinces. In 1562 and 1564, the French attempted to establish settlements in South Carolina and Florida, but were repelled by the Spanish, who had laid claim to Florida in 1539.

Since Great Britain was founded only in 1707 by merging the Kingdoms of England and Scotland, reference in the text is to England or Scotland for earlier events. English attempts to settle on Roanoke Island in North Carolina in 1585 and again in 1586 failed as the settlers-to-be could not survive. Reconnaissance missions continued up to 1600: in 1576 Martin Frobisher charted the Arctic coasts encountering Inuuk, and in 1578 Francis Drake charted the coast of California.

French, Dutch and English colonization took off in earnest only in the 17th Century.

Central and South America

It was hard for later European rivals to penetrate South and Central America where the Spanish and the Portuguese were well entrenched. They, however, captured several of the islands of the Caribbean from Spain with relative ease.

French efforts to establish colonies in Brazil were foiled by Portuguese military action. The colony of France Antarctique founded in Rio de Janeiro in 1555 controlled the coast from Rio de Janeiro to Cabo Frio lasted until destruction by the Portuguese in 1567; and France Équinoxiale, a settlement initiated in 1612 by a French expedition in the Northern coast of what is now the Brazilian state of Maranhão by was ousted by the Portuguese army in 1615.

French attempts since 1604 to settle the region that became French Guiana failed amid indigenous hostility and tropical diseases. However, the settlement of Cayenne that was established in 1643, abandoned, and re-established in 1663 remained under French rule, but for spells of occupation by the English and Dutch in the 17th Century and the Portuguese early in the 19th Century. It was the site of a notorious penal colony known as Devil's Island between 1851 and 1951, and was made an overseas department of France in 1946.

The Netherlands emerged as a major commercial power during the 17th Century and traded with the fledgling English and French colonies in the Lesser Antilles. The first European settlement in the area of Guiana was by the Dutch in 1616. With rival European powers gaining colonies elsewhere in the Caribbean, acquisition of territory superseded trade with the indigenous people as the main purpose. Colonies along the Guiana coast became profitable sugar plantations in the 17th and 18th Centuries. The Spanish, who claimed Guiana, could not prevent Dutch control of the region. Conflict including intermittent war persisted among the English, Dutch and French colonists until the Anglo-Dutch peace treaty of 1814. The treaty heavily favoured the British, who had already seized territory

from the Dutch in stages since 1796, and let the British control the territory which became British Guiana (now Guyana) and the Dutch control what is now Suriname. The Guianas were recognized individually as British Guiana, French Guiana, and Dutch Guiana, with slavery as an important part of the plantation economy. British Guiana used large numbers of indentured labour from northern British India as well as slaves from Africa. Suriname had, besides African slaves and indentured labour from British India, Javanese workers from the Dutch East Indies. The Guineas remained colonies for long after the rest of South America were freed of Spanish and Portuguese colonial rule. British Guiana gained independence in 1966 and Suriname in 1975. French Guiana was made an overseas department of France in 1946.

English adventurers used Belize on the Atlantic coast to gather logwood since 1638. Attempts between 1716 and 1754 by the Spanish, who claimed Belize but could neither settle it, to expel British settlers failed. A treaty between the British and the Spanish Governments in 1763 allowed the British to cut and export logwood, while conceding Spanish sovereignty over the area. The shift to mahogany, a bigger tree scattered over a large area, as the main export in the 1770's meant confronting the Mayans as well as need for more labour, leading to a large influx of African slaves. Britain appointed a superintendent for Belize in 1786, named it as British Honduras and made it part of its empire in 1862. The name reverted to Belize in 1973, but full independence was delayed until 1981 by Guatemala's claims on Belize.

Miskito Coast in Nicaragua bordering the Caribbean Sea was first settled by the English in 1630 following friendly relations established between local inhabitants and agents of the English chartered Providence Island Company, based in the Providence Island 200 km off the coast. The English lost contact following the capture of Providence Island by Spain in 1641. Contact resumed after English capture of Jamaica from Spain in 1655. The region was not colonized but had a treaty of friendship and

alliance with England in a common interest against the Spanish. When the British left in 1859, Miskito Coast and the Bay Islands north of the country were assigned to Honduras. Miskito Coast, ceded to Nicaragua in 1860, remained a disputed territory until 1965.

Spain, France and Britain claimed the unpopulated Falkland Islands in South Atlantic, called Islas Malvinas by Argentina. British and Spanish settlements coexisted until Britain abandoned the Islands in 1774 during the American War of Independence, and Spain's Viceroyalty of the Río de la Plata comprised the sole governmental presence in the territory. Argentine attempts to establish a colony in the islands were frustrated by the British who took control in 1833 and made the islands a British overseas territory, amid Argentine objections. The dispute, which led to war between Britain and Argentina in 1982 which Britain won, remains a sensitive issue.

The Caribbean

Although many islands of the Caribbean were initially claimed by the Spanish, only Hispanola, Puerto Rico, Cuba, Jamaica, and Trinidad were settled. British, French and Dutch forces seized most of the Caribbean islands from the failing Spanish Empire amid piracy and 'privateering' backed by the colonial powers.

French colonization. Alongside expansion in North America, the French built a smaller but profitable empire in the West Indies. At various times during the 17th and 18th Centuries, France ruled much of the Lesser Antilles. Control of the islands was contested among the French, the British and the Dutch. Britain captured some of France's islands during the Seven Years' War (1756–1763) and the Napoleonic Wars (1803–1815). France retained control of Guadeloupe, Martinique, Marie-Galante, St. Barthélemy and its portion of St. Martin, which remain part of France.

Settlement in French Guiana along the South American coast began in 1624, and the colony founded on the island of Saint Kitts in 1625 was shared with the English until transfer to Britain by the Treaty of Utrecht in 1713. The Compagnie des Îles de l'Amérique (the Company of American Islands) founded colonies in Guadeloupe and Martinique in 1635 and in Saint Lucia by 1650. Plantations were set up and sustained in these colonies using slaves from Africa. Resistance by indigenous peoples resulted in the ethnic cleansing of the Carib population of Martinique in 1660.

France's most important Caribbean possession was, however, the western part of the island of Hispaniola, where French influence began in 1625. Following Spanish recognition of French control in 1697, French adventurers began to settle the French portion, renamed Saint Domingue, and used African slave labour to make it a major producer of coffee and sugar. The eastern half of Hispaniola, Santo Domingo (Dominica, now Dominican Republic) was ceded by Spain to France in 1795, as part of the Treaty of Basel following the European war between France and Spain, but invaded by the British in 1796. African slaves in rebellion from Saint-Domingue conquered Dominica in 1801, but France reoccupied it in 1802. The slaves of Saint-Domingue freed themselves of colonial rule and declared the Republic of Haiti in 1804, and invaded Dominica again in 1805. The British took over Dominica in 1809 and later that year Spain reclaimed Dominica, whose economy was in ruin. Following overthrow of Spanish rule in 1821, Haiti re-conquered Dominica in 1822 and held to it until 1844, when the Dominican Republic was established. The country became a province of Spain between 1861 and 1865 in the face of uprisings and Haitian attacks.

Dutch colonization. Dutch conquest of the Caribbean started at the expense of Spanish claims around 1620, with the taking of St. Maarten. Dutch colonies in the Caribbean were meagre compared to those of its main rivals, and later in the century the Dutch lost possession of Tobago

and the Virgin Islands to the British. Islands comprising the Dutch West Indies, whose possession was briefly lost to the English during the Anglo-Dutch wars, remain under Dutch control.

British expansion. English conquest started in 1623 on the island of St. Kitts, which was also settled by France in 1624. Between them, the colonists massacred the Caribs before turning on each other; and the island changed hands between them several times until the Treaty of Paris awarded it to Britain. There was also Anglo-French conflict over Montserrat, settled by the English in 1632 and occupied by the French in 1664–68 and 1782–84.

English gains in the Caribbean in the 17th Century were mostly from Spain, the biggest being Jamaica in 1655. British Virgin Islands were gained in 1672 by expelling the Dutch who settled in 1648. Gains in the 18th Century were mostly from France, except for Trinidad seized from Spain in 1797 and Tobago from the Dutch in 1762. The latter was lost to the French in 1781 and regained in 1814.

Britain also captured Havana in 1762 at the tail end of the Seven Years War (1756–1773) with France, when Spain sided with France to contain likely British domination of the Americas. In the Treaty of Paris that ended the Seven Years War, Britain traded Havana for a large area of land in Florida.

Other European players. Among other European players in the Caribbean were the Duchy of Courland (later part of Latvia) that controlled Tobago between 1654 and 1689 and the Knights of Malta, a medieval Catholic military order, that occupied four islands between 1651 and 1655 with French backing. Natives prevented Sweden from taking Tobago in 1733. Sweden bought Saint-Barthélemy in the Leeward Islands from France in 1785, but resold it to France in 1788. It acquired Guadeloupe in 1813 and ceded it to France under the treaty of Paris in 1814.

Denmark, which set up sugar plantations in three minor islands called the Danish West Indies (1715–1917), was not party to colonial conflicts. In 1917, it transferred the islands (now US Virgin Islands) to the US. The bid by the Grand Duchy of Tuscany (now in Italy) to settle in French Guiana in 1608 failed. German attempts to settle in the Caribbean in the 19th Century also failed. Thus Spain, France and England were the main colonial players in the Caribbean and North America.

North America

The Atlantic coastal region area of North America lacked the resources of South and Central America where massive expropriation of gold and silver financed colonial occupation, and the indigenous populations provided slave-labour for the mines and later the plantations.

North America with a low population density had lands that were fertile for cultivation as well as an abundance of fur-bearing animals. Thus its exploitation was a long-term project involving the accumulation of agricultural products and fur trade. Thus the settlements, at least initially, relied much on the hospitality of the native population. The growing colonies competed to acquire already cleared and cultivated land. The struggle for domination of land and trade, however, led to attacks on indigenous communities. The dependence of the colonists on the Native peoples inevitably began to reverse in this period. Increased contact between the indigenous people and the settlers following the expansion of the colonies, led to extensive trading as well as to disease epidemics and conflict.

Dutch settlements. Dutch settlements in North America since 1614, known as New Netherland, comprised parts of the north-east Atlantic seaboard of present-day US. New Netherland expanded by absorbing the Swedish settlement of Fort Christina in 1655, thereby ending the North American colony of New Sweden in the Delaware Valley in 1638. After the Third Anglo-Dutch War in Europe, Dutch possessions in North

America and in much of the Caribbean passed to England in 1674. New Amsterdam became New York, and New Netherland ceased to be.

English conquests. The English in their colonial quest, besides resorting to massacring native populations, used tribal rivalries and alliances with rival communities to overcome strong native enemies. The Colony of Virginia, settled in 1607, was the first enduring English colony. The thirteen British colonies namely Virginia (1607), New Hampshire (1623), New York (1626), Massachusetts (1620), Maryland (1633), Rhode Island (1636), Connecticut (1636), Delaware (1638), North Carolina (1653), South Carolina (1663), New Jersey (1664), Pennsylvania (1682) and Georgia (1732) later became the founding states of the US.

New York, New Jersey, Delaware, and Connecticut were partly settled by the Dutch who were later ousted by the English. The colony of Georgia was an issue of contention between Britain and Spain since its foundation in 1733. Spain claimed it for its own colony of Florida and disputed what it saw as illegal occupation by British settlers. That led to what was called the War of Jenkins' Ear, at the end of which Spain conceded that Georgia was a British possession.

The British gained Florida from Spain in 1763 in exchange for Havana in Cuba and held to it during the American Revolutionary War (or the American War of Independence) of 1777–83 and ceded it to Spain at the end of the War. Spain gave up Florida in 1821 as it was unprofitable to sustain and Florida went under the control of the US.

Early English conquests included Newfoundland (now part of Canada) in 1610 and the small island of Bermuda (1612) which is now British territory. The colony in Canada established by the Kingdom of Scotland in 1621 did not flourish, and Scottish claims were surrendered to France in 1632.

Rupert's Land was a large territory comprising the Hudson Bay drainage basin, and the Hudson's Bay Company operated a commercial monopoly

there from 1670 to 1870, when it was transferred to Canada. Britain acquired the French colony of Acadia in 1713.

The British claimed the northern stretch of the west coast but did not occupy it until 1788, when a small trading post was established in Nootka Sound in what is British Columbia. Spain established a fortified trading post on Vancouver Island from 1789 to 1795, and sought force out British traders by seizing ships. War was averted by the Nootka Conventions of 1790, 1793, and 1794 by which Spain accepted Britain's right to settlement in any area claimed by Spain but never occupied. This enabled expanded British presence in the Pacific Northwest, including today's British Columbia, Oregon, and Washington.

The Canadian Confederation of 1867 united the British North American colonies of New Brunswick, Nova Scotia and Canada as a self-governing dominion named Canada within the British Empire in 1867. The Colonies of Vancouver Island and British Columbia, founded in 1849 and 1858, respectively, were combined in 1866 under the name Colony of British Columbia and joined the Confederation in 1871. Prince Edward Island joined in 1873, and Newfoundland much later in 1949. The British did not assert sovereignty over the indigenous people and, in accordance with the Royal Proclamation of 1763, large-scale settlement by non-aboriginal people was prohibited until lands were surrendered by treaty. In practice, however, the treaties proved to be means of appropriation of territory from the indigenous people, as was the case in the US.

French colonization. In early 16th Century, Spain, out of need to defend its foreign monopoly and based on issues in Europe, blocked French attempts at colonization. France's colonial empire known as New France began in 1605 with the foundation of Port Royal in the colony of Acadia in what is Nova Scotia in Canada, followed by the founding of Quebec in 1608, which later become the capital of the extensive but sparsely populated French colony of Canada.

As French interests were more in fur trade than in agriculture, the French made friendly contact with the local indigenous communities to develop a complex of military, commercial and diplomatic connections that endured pressure from religious orders to convert the indigenous people to Roman Catholicism. The French thus achieved a loose control over a sizeable part of North America, that they called New France. French priority was to dominance in Europe. New France, developed as mercantile colonies, was far behind British North America in population and economic development.

French fur traders found it hard to transport their wares for shipping, especially after the Iroquois drove west the friendly Huron people in 1648–50. European settlers in New France in 1660 numbered around 2300. The French crown intervened by making New France a royal province ruled by a governor, with military, religious and educational support from the state, and the settler population grew following a major influx of settlers, and explorers pressed west and south from the Great Lakes straddling the US and Canada.

French territorial claims expanded with the founding of Louisiana (a much larger region than the state of Louisiana in the US) in the Mississippi River basin in 1682 and the development of an extensive trading network maintained by a vast system of fortifications across the region. France thus controlled the Eastern half of the continent lying to the west of the thirteen English colonies.

Battles for colonial possession mirrored wars across Europe, except that the rivals used heavy concentrations of indigenous warriors in North America and the Caribbean. Wars between the French and the English starting from King William's War (1689-99), followed by Queen Anne's War (1702-13) and King George's War (1744-48) culminated in the 'French and Indian War' (1754-63), which pitted the British colonies against New France, with each side supported by military units from the parent country as well as by indigenous allies. At the time, New France had

roughly 60,000 European settlers, compared with 2 million in the British colonies. The outnumbered French depended much on support from the indigenous tribes. The War eventually led to British military conquest of New France and the acquisition of Canada under the Treaty of Paris in 1758.

Other European conquests. Among other important conquests in the northern hemisphere was the Danish conquest of Greenland from the Norwegians who occupied it between 984 and 1814. Since then Greenland has been Danish territory. Eastward Russian expansion across Asia enabled Russian presence in North America from 1732 to 1867 for the purpose of fur trade. Alaska, which went under the control of the Russian-American Company in 1799, was sold to the US in 1867. Russia also had a brief presence (1812–41) in North California, then part of Mexico.

Indigenous resistance. Resistance to colonial rule persisted even after conquest, at times as prolonged wars against conquest lasting up to three years. The increasingly insensitive and domineering attitude of the Europeans towards the indigenous people also led to frequent clashes between the indigenous communities and settlers since the mid 1600s. The indigenous peoples were, however, weakened from within by inter-tribal strife which the colonial powers took advantage of to use one as an ally against its rival. The process continued well into the 20th Century, even after the US freed itself of British colonial rule in 1783, and the North American tribes faced aggression by an expansionist and potentially imperialist US.

Slavery

Enslavement of the Indigenous People

From the arrival of Columbus to the end of the 19th Century, it is possible that five million indigenous Americans were enslaved. Such slavery,

which coexisted with the enslavement of Africans, led to a catastrophic decline in the indigenous population. In the Caribbean basin, the Gulf Coast, northern Mexico, and what is now southwest US, the decline in population during the 16th and 17th centuries was catastrophic. Native population may have collapsed to a tenth of the pre-Columbian number owing to warfare, famine and slavery, combined with epidemics. Most of the enslaved were women and children. But for the massive revolt of the Pueblo Indians in 1680 in what is now New Mexico, the death toll in North America might have been more.

Slavery was a major economic activity that provided labour in the mines as well slaves for sale to other European colonies. Land-clearing for cultivation and ranching, and mining on a large scale led to severe deforestation and damaged the lands. The livelihood of the indigenous peoples, especially those who relied on subsistence agriculture, was wrecked by the decay of agrarian ways to give way to export crops.

Lack of documentation owing to the declaration of native enslavement as an illegal activity in the colonial period hampered precise estimation of the number of indigenous slaves. Recent estimates place the number of enslaved indigenous people at between two and four million, well above earlier estimates, and the indigenous slave population exceeded that of African slaves until late 17th Century. Linford D. Fisher of Brown University argues that the history of indigenous slavery has been glossed over, and claims that, besides the 12.5 million African slaves, between 2 and 5.5 million indigenous Americans were enslaved from 1492 to 1880 (Source: <https://news.brown.edu/articles/2017/02/enslavement>). Fisher also notes that, although natives had been forced into slavery and servitude as early as 1636, their enslavement in large numbers happened only after King Philip's War of 1675–76. (The Narragansetts, Nipmucs and Wapanoags, led in part by Metacom, known to Europeans as King Philip, rebelled against the colonies of New England in 1675 following the English arrest and execution of three Wapanoags for allegedly killing a

Christianized native, believed to be a traitor. During the war, New England colonies routinely shipped Native Americans as slaves to Barbados, Bermuda, Jamaica, the Azores, Spain, and Tangier in North Africa. Source: <https://www.futurity.org/native-americans-slavery-1361262-2/>)

In the highlands of northern Chile, Peru, Guatemala and Mexico, the Spanish grew crops such as wheat, vegetables, sugar cane and, subsequently, grapes, bananas and coffee, using slave labour, and by mid 16th Century many of the crops were large-scale exports to Europe. Sprawling herds of cattle were established, with as many as 8000 heads of cattle in ranches in Mexico, compared with fewer than 1000 in Spain. By 1579, some ranches in northern Mexico had up to 150,000 head of cattle. (Source: *Gord Hill, 500 Years of Indigenous Resistance, 2009, PM Press, Oakland, CA 94623*)

During transition to a plantation economy in Jamaica, English settlers saw the indigenous people of Central America as a source of cheap labour. Indigenous Americans of the Southeast of what is the US were enslaved through warfare and bought by English and French colonists throughout the 17th and early 18th Centuries, as well as held captive through Spanish-organized forced labour regimes in Florida. Emerging colonies in Virginia, Carolina (later North and South Carolina) and Georgia sent imported indigenous Americans into chattel slavery, where they intermixed with slaves of African descent. The demand for slaves affected communities as far west as present-day Illinois and the Mississippi River and as far south as the Gulf Coast. Tens of thousands of enslaved indigenous Americans were sent to New England and to the Caribbean as a profitable export. Also, the Miskitu of Nicaragua, a group of indigenous and black ancestry who had fruitful commercial ties with English colonists in eastern Central America and Jamaica, helped to ship an estimated 450,000 people to other European colonies.

Enslavement and Settlement of Africans

European colonies in the Americas received slaves from Africa from early 16th Century. Between the 16th and 19th Centuries nearly 13 million Africans were seized from their homelands, enslaved, and forced to toil to benefit the European powers and their colonists in the Americas.

Spain, which had no system for buying slaves, used a licensing system letting Portuguese, French, English and Dutch merchants sell slaves to its colonies. Hispaniola first imported enslaved Africans from the Iberian Peninsula from 1501. Subsequently, slaves were supplied from Africa by slave merchants. Between 1663 and 1711, Spain awarded the Italians, French and English contracts to import African slaves to its colonies.

Slave trade escalated in mid 16th Century with the Portuguese colony of Brazil receiving African slaves to cut cane and clear forest land for settlement. Between 1720 and 1730 Portugal sent huge shipments of African slaves to Brazil.

Slave trade dominated the history of North America from mid 16th to late 18th Century. England and the Netherlands indulged in slave trade between Africa and the Antilles between 1562 and 1618. England settled African slaves in Virginia from 1619 and after capturing Jamaica from Spain in 1655 continued with the slave activities of the Spanish. France sent slaves to Martinique in the Caribbean in 1642. Sweden began its African slave trade in 1645. By 1800 an estimated 15 million Africans had been shipped as slaves to the Americas. Estimates of deaths during the transatlantic crossing in the miserable conditions of the ships holds vary by an order of magnitude, from 10 to 100 million.

Oppressive laws were passed throughout the 17th Century in the thirteen British colonies affirming slavery. New laws passed in the 18th Century were highly restrictive on the slaves. While the nature and degree of oppression varied in the colonies, the regimes responded to slave rebellions with even harsher legislation.

Abolition of slavery started in some of the British colonies of America and gathered momentum in the last quarter of the 18th Century. Slavery, however, continued into the 19th Century. In 1808, the US prohibited the introduction of new slaves into its territory, but slavery was outlawed only in 1865. Although the Netherlands, Portugal, Sweden, Spain and France outlawed slave trade between 1814 and 1820, slavery itself was not abolished until mid 19th Century.

British slave trade officially ended in 1807, making the buying and selling of slaves from Africa illegal; but slavery survived. The Emancipation Act of 1833 became effective in 1834, and slaves under the age of six were freed immediately. Older slaves were to be 'apprenticed' for up to eight years, based on the argument that the slaves were not used to being independent and needed help and training to be free men and women. The real purpose was to soften the blow to slave owners who depended much on slave labour. Slaves thus became 'apprentices' who toiled for low wages under their old masters. Thus the end of slavery did not really mean freedom for the slaves, and the failure of the apprentice system brought it to a premature end in 1838.

Haiti had the first successful slave revolt, which in 1804 freed it of French rule and slavery. Guatemala, which in 1824 became the first Latin American country to outlaw slavery, was followed by Argentina, Peru, Chile, Bolivia, Paraguay and Mexico between 1825 and 1829, and Colombia, Venezuela, and Ecuador between 1840 and 1845. Puerto Rico and Cuba which remained Spanish colonies until 1898 outlawed slavery in 1873 and 1886, respectively.

Abolition of slavery was the result of several factors including slave rebellions most importantly and the rise of liberal social values in Europe. The following revolts during the 18th and 19th Centuries are among the most prominent slave rebellions: Tacky's rebellion in 1760s Jamaica, the Haitian Revolution (1789), Fedon's 1790s revolution in Grenada, the 1816 slave revolt in Barbados, and the 1831 slave revolt in Jamaica led by Sam

Sharpe. Voices of dissent that emerged in Britain, highlighting the poor conditions of enslaved people were also an important factor. While the Abolition movement grew, opposition by those with financial interests in the Caribbean also grew.

The impact of slavery on society was strong for decades after the last slaves were freed. Even after the end of slavery and apprenticeship, the Caribbean was not truly free. Former slaves received no compensation and representation in the legislatures was limited. The use of indentured labour from India and China that followed involved much abuse that lasted until early 20th Century. Asians and Africans had to struggle for long to own land and to create their own communities.

The Impact of Colonial Rule

Race and ethnicity

Race has been an issue in nearly all former colonies, as the slave owners and the wealthy were of European origin. Freedom from colonial rule in the Americas, with the exception of Canada, was through independence struggles and, unlike in several Asian and African colonies, power was not transferred to a loyal elite group. Latin American colonies were very much hierarchical, with layers of society based on race, rather like the caste hierarchy of South Asia. Wealth and social position correlated with race, despite the majority comprising mixed races. Colonists of European blood were at the top of the social pyramid. This was reinforced by the large influx of Europeans after the independence of the colonies. It should also be noted that white racism against indigenous people manifested as genocide during the 19th Century in independent Mexico, Argentina and Chile. Brazil has a notorious record of genocide, torture, rape and enslavement of indigenous people and robbing them of their land well into the 20th Century.

A few colonies like Argentina and Uruguay are predominantly European, and Europeans comprise the largest single racial group in colonies such as Brazil and Chile. The Caribbean, where the indigenous population perished during early colonial rule, is mainly African and Mulatto (European–African). In Latin America the proportion of the indigenous and Mestizo (Indigenous-European) varies vastly and some colonies have a significant African and Mulatto population. The Zambo (Indigenous-African), known by other names like Garifuna in Honduras and Lobo in Mexico, are a small minority in Latin America. There are other multiracial groups besides those of Indigenous-European-African descent including with those of Asian ancestry.

British colonies were predominantly European, and the North American indigenous population declined owing to systematic genocide following the founding and territorial expansion of the US. The Blacks (African slaves and their descendents) became the main minority community. As a result of immigration, the Hispanics later overtook the Blacks. The abolition of slavery has yet to eliminate colour-based discrimination, and White racism remains the most oppressive social force in the US.

Territorial disputes

The administration of the Spanish colonies relatively independently of each other helped the emergence of several independent states. Rivalry between ruling elite obstructed the formation of larger more powerful states. Border disputes have led to wars and several disputes in Central and South America and in the Caribbean remain formally unresolved, hurting unity among Latin American nations.

The struggle between the independent states of Brazil and Argentina for hegemony in Río de la Plata had a strong impact on diplomatic and political relations among the countries of the region. The Paraguayan War (1864–70) pitted Argentina, Brazil and Uruguay against Paraguay, which was utterly defeated and suffered a collapse in population from an

estimated 525,000 in 1864 to 221,000 in 1871, with only around 28,000 men. In the War of the Pacific (1879–84) Chile defeated the combined forces of Bolivia and Peru to capture the saltpetre-rich areas earlier controlled by Peru and Bolivia. The War made Bolivia land-locked. By mid 19th Century, Mexico lost over half of its territory to the expansionist US, following the Mexican–American War (1846–48).

Emergence of regional hegemons

Although the US was still not a world power in early 19th Century, it claimed authority over the hemisphere subsequent to the Monroe Doctrine (1823) which was designed to arrest European colonialism in the Americas and therefore welcomed by Latin American countries. The late 1800s marked a fundamental shift in the new developing Latin American nations. This transition was characterized by a re-orientation towards world markets, which had started before 1880. Rapid industrialization of Europe and the US created a demand for the raw materials in Latin America, and Latin American countries gradually became export economies. Revolutions in communications and transportation had a strong impact on their economy. Much of the infrastructure was built through foreign financing, with financiers who extended loans to governments moving on to investments such as railways and utilities, as well as mining and drilling for oil.

Settler Colonialism and Neocolonialism

Most of the former Spanish colonies faced political instability, civil wars, and large-scale violence following the emergence of political-military dictatorships. Brazil was politically more stable, but economic growth was slow. Latin America was forced to forge economies in a world trade network already dominated by European nations as independence also led to a breakdown of traditional transatlantic commercial networks of Latin America. The entry of foreign merchants and imported goods led to

competition with local producers and traders. Very few exports found sufficient world markets to stimulate local growth, and very little capital arrived from other countries, as foreign investors lacked confidence in the security of their investments. Many new nation-states borrowed from foreign sources to fund the governments, adding to the debt inherited from the independence wars.

Overall, the post independence economy of Latin America was stagnant between 1820 and 1850, and improved after 1850 owing to European demand for Latin American produce. Enhanced trade persuaded the state to invest in infrastructure such as roads and railway. However, dependence of the economy on export, mostly of primary goods, made countries fall into debt and default of payments. Although by the 1870s, economic change and immigration fostered the creation of greater urban centres, Latin America remained predominantly agrarian and dependent on the world trade system. Latin America, despite becoming competitive in the international market, fell farther behind the Western countries during the past two centuries.

The countries of the Caribbean, except Haiti, Dominican Republic and later Cuba, remained under British, French and Dutch colonial rule. All but a few small islands of the British colonies and Dutch Suriname gained independence between 1962 and 1983 whereas what were French colonies during the 19th Century are now French possessions. The Caribbean economies continued to depend heavily on agricultural export, mainly sugar, which was often the only produce in the colonial era.

Settler colonialism

Latin American countries were rid of European colonial rule in the 19th Century, a century ahead of their Asian counterparts. During the last stages of colonial rule and the early years of the new republics effort was made to include the indigenous population as citizens. But the new nations were also burdened by strictly hierarchical colonial social systems

in which a small Creole elite dominated the economy and politics; and the racist white elites who wielded economic and political power pursued an agenda designed to deny the non-white population a share in power. Notably, the former colonies that did well economically encouraged immigration from Europe. Latin America's 19th Century history of Europeanization shows that the new settlements were at the expense of the land rights of the indigenous population. Immigration and extermination continued, but much less than in North America. Although the desired 'whitening' of the nations did not materialize, the impact of white immigration was strong enough to deny the indigenous people a place in the political system, at least until popular movements claimed some of that space in recent decades. Native Americans, former slaves and peasants shared little in the economic expansion of the second half of the 19th Century.

Early colonial power in North America, owing to the strategic need to forge local alliances against rivals, generally respected the territorial and political sovereignty of the indigenous people. Things changed with the emergence of an independent US. Desire for land and fear of potential challenge by large indigenous groups occupying extensive territories led to violent relocation of many indigenous tribes to the American West. A most notable example is the forced displacement the Cherokee (known as the Trail of Tears) under the Treaty of New Echota, imposed on the Cherokee under the provisions of the Indian Removal Act of 1830, which exchanged indigenous land in the East for lands west of the Mississippi River. The US government and local state governments directly aided dispossession through the use of military force, following agitation by settler society for access to indigenous land.

A series of armed conflicts between the indigenous tribes and the settler society backed by US military power and numerous treaties centring on land cessation gradually pushed the indigenous people into a system of reservations, where they traded territory for protection and support from

the government. Many reservations were either far from traditional homelands or posed problems in obtaining goods and annuity payments pledged by the government. Discontent led to further conflict.

After armed conflict ceased in late 19th Century, the displacement of indigenous peoples and denial of identity took a more legal form, with attempts to assimilate them to American society while stripping away territory by means including the division of previously communally held indigenous lands into individually owned plots and economic ventures that made use of indigenous lands. Besides theft of territory and steps to assimilate the indigenous people into settler society, there were moves that systematically eroded tribal culture and social unity. In the educational sphere, a system of boarding schools, often located far from the home reservation, acted to strip indigenous children of their language, religion and culture in the interest of ease of assimilation to American culture. These policies were effected in different forms well into the 20th Century to deprive the indigenous people of their right to land, culture and identity.

The undermining of Federal treaty/trust obligations to tribes, transfer of civil and criminal jurisdiction over many reservations to the individual states, and encouraging of Native Americans to relocate to cities served to further erode tribal identity and accelerate assimilation. The growth in indigenous population in major urban areas, nevertheless, had the unintended side effect of growing political awareness among indigenous people, leading to the creation of political organizations to assert the national rights of the indigenous people.

The US now admits its history of slavery and racist immigration policies targeting Chinese immigrants especially in the 19th Century, but it has yet to admit to the historic violence of settler colonialism, which is a racial issue that inclusion alone cannot solve.

The number of English-speaking settlers in Canada rose rapidly after the American Revolution with the arrival of “Loyalists” (supporters of British colonial rule) from the US and the rise in immigration from Europe (mostly Britain). Canadian immigration, guided by racism, was mostly restricted to European Whites until around 1970. Immigration was slow during World Wars 1 & 2 and during the depression of the 1930s. Chinese labour used in the construction of the Canadian Pacific Railway in the early 1880s was forced to live under deplorable conditions, and between 1885 and 1949 various legal steps were taken to keep out the Chinese.

Canadian settler colonialism was, however, less violent than that in the US. But there was vigorous dispossession and assimilation of indigenous people. Imperialist search for mineral resources continues to encroach on indigenous territory. Settler colonialism is alive in Canada and resistance by indigenous nationhood movements dating back to the days of colonial conquest have revived to enter the Canadian political mainstream in the form of protests directed by and largely comprising indigenous people. The united struggle of indigenous people of Canada and the US to fight the TransCanada Company’s planned construction of a pipeline for transport of Alberta’s tar sands oil to Canada’s Atlantic coast has the potential to derail the project.

The movement ‘Idle No More’ which entered the political scene in 2012 represents a renewed assertion of indigenous sovereignty in opposition to settler colonisation. The struggle for indigenous sovereignty will necessarily be prolonged and, to succeed, will need to be linked with global anti-imperialist struggles.

Neocolonialism

In a sense, Latin America was the first region of the world to face issues of decolonization. Latin America has for long maintained ties to the West by imitating Western models and been under the growing influence of

the US, and its dependent economy has kept it connected to globalized imperialism.

Since the colonies were free of colonial rule well before capitalism approached the stage of imperialism, neocolonialism arrived in the Americas sooner than in Asia and Africa. The growth of the US into an expansionist capitalist power during the 19th Century was decisive in this transition.

The US was strategically located to become the regional hegemon in the Americas in the 20th Century, and was aided by its economic gains from the First World War. Its influence in the British colonies grew as British influence waned since the loss of the Empire.

The history of neo-colonialism in the Americas is thus almost entirely about US imperialist dominance. The role of the US in the Americas as a precursor to independence from colonial rule to one of territorial expansion at the expense of the indigenous people of North America is closely linked to settler colonization which deserves to be dealt in greater detail. Capture of territory from Mexico, besides colonial or quasi colonial control of other former Spanish colonies, was in fact recolonization that marked the emergence of the US as a neo-colonial power.

Debt Trap and Mega Development

Ahilan Kadirgamar

Sri Lanka's foreign debt is again the talk of town. Is the country overly indebted to China? Are we borrowing too much from international capital markets? Or are we financing ourselves into trouble with multi-lateral agencies like the International Monetary Fund (IMF), World Bank (WB) and Asian Development Bank (ADB)? And how do we assess the role of foreign financing for economic development?

Economic growth and prosperity requires investment. And investment can either be funded through savings or borrowings. Investment may come from household savings in banks or taxes that are not used for recurrent state expenditure. If households do not save enough and the Government does not tax enough, then external borrowings must fund investment to increase production and employment. To avoid a foreign debt trap, the Government should impose adequate levels of taxation or, alternatively, ensure it is in a position to borrow from domestic private savings to finance national plans and related investment.

At present, this story is complicated by past foreign loans that remain unsettled, which also require more foreign borrowings to make principal and interest payments. This is the debt trap that is worrying the country at the moment. How does the Government roll over past foreign loans? Is it by borrowing from international capital markets in the forms of

sovereign bonds? Or bilateral donors such as China, Japan and India? Or multi-lateral agencies such as IMF, WB and ADB?

China or Capital Markets?

Sri Lanka's accumulated external debt stock was at US\$ 28.7 billion at the end of 2017, where market borrowings mainly of sovereign bonds accounted for 39%, and loans owed to ADB 14%, Japan 12%, WB 11%, China 10% and India 3%. In addition, many loan agreements in the form of Official Development Assistance have been made over the last five years with disbursements yet to be made for a total of US\$ 9 billion. Of these undisbursed loans by bilateral and multilateral donors, and this does not include market borrowings that are not agreed to in advance, China leads the pack with 22%, followed by Japan and ADB with 19%, WB with 13% and India with 6% (Finance Ministry Annual Report 2017).

It is easy to point fingers at regional powers that have contributed to Sri Lanka's foreign debt problems, whether China, Japan or India. However, as I have previously argued, the biggest culprit is borrowings from global finance capital or the seemingly innocent international capital markets, which charge much higher interest rates.

As evident from repeated financial crises over the last few decades – most recently in Southern Europe – the consequences of international market borrowings can be devastating. And yet, IMF, WB and ADB, want Sri Lanka to open its capital markets to global finance capital, which comes with the dangers of capital inflow and flight causing crises. IMF uses the stick of the Extended Fund Facility Agreement of 2016 towards that end, while ADB and WB use the carrot of hundreds of millions of US dollars in development assistance to expand capital markets – most recently, ADB's Capital Market Development Program (US\$ 250 million) and WB's Financial Sector Modernization Project (US\$ 75 million).

While the data above speaks for itself, why is it that there is so little discussion of Sri Lanka's market borrowings characterized by sovereign

bonds? Is it because we like to believe we are at the centre of the world with China, India and the US fighting over us? Or have we fallen for the bias of Western and regional media, which paint Sri Lanka as a pit stop in the geopolitical game, and overlook the devastation that comes with neoliberal integration of capital markets.

Funding for development

If mega development and trophy projects under the Rajapaksa regime pushed Sri Lanka deeper into a debt trap of foreign loans, the current Government is digging itself deeper by seeking mega development projects with international financing to increase GDP growth and shore up its external finances in the short-term. Here again, Chinese funded projects such as the Port City have been in the limelight, but projects by multi-lateral agencies face little scrutiny.

The massive scale of projects funded by multi-lateral agencies, not to mention the mind-boggling allocations for international consultants, raises questions at multiple levels. A couple instances of mega development in the North may be illustrative, though the same pattern is seen throughout the country.

The ADB funded Northern Province Sustainable Fisheries Development Project is estimated at US\$ 174 million, with over a third of that amount being spent on the Point Pedro Harbour. Compare this with the Budget 2018 allocation of Rs 150 million (less than US\$ 1 million) to rebuild the Mylitty fisheries harbour, currently underway in northern Jaffna. The Mylitty harbour is also more appropriate for the small scale fishing community in the North, rather than the Point Pedro harbour meant for large deep sea fishing vessels. Even more striking is that the ADB “project design advance” for consultants is US\$ 1.59 million of which US\$ 0.29 million comes from the Government. In other words, the consultancy fees for an internationally financed fisheries project is higher than the total allocation for a national project to rebuild a major fisheries harbour,

exemplifying the gravy train of funds for international consultants, perks for local officials and windfall profits for contractors involved in internationally financed development projects.

A second example is the ADB water project for Jaffna, running into the hundreds of millions of US dollars. An “interim solution,” on the order of US\$ 80 million is required for a desalination plant to be built on the eastern coast of Jaffna to supply desalinated sea water at many times the cost of supplying river or tank water from the mainland to parts of the peninsula. The sad reality, according to many in Jaffna, is that we let rain water run into the sea and then use reverse osmosis to convert sea water into fresh water. Perhaps we do not have ambitions of becoming Saudi Arabia or Israel, but neither do we live in a desert nor are we that wealthy! Crazy as these development projects may sound, they are increasingly the norm in many debt-ridden countries at the mercy of multi-lateral agencies.

Returning to the question of Government directed investment in the economy, these foreign financed mega development projects rarely provide adequate returns on investment. However, as accumulated debt stock rises and the country is caught in an intensifying debt crisis, it is these same international agencies that will push Sri Lanka to cut spending on much needed public services such as health and education. Is it not time we start thinking about moving away from the grip of foreign financed development projects and focus on equitable and appropriately scaled nationally funded economic development?

NDMLP 40th Anniversary: Seminar and Meeting

The Seminar Marking the 40th Anniversary of the Party was held on 3rd July 2018 at the auditorium in the premises of the Northern Regional Office of the Party. Heroic salutes and tributes were offered to deceased comrades including Comrade KA Subramaniam, Founder General Secretary of the Party. Comrade K Thanikasalam, member of the Politburo of the Party, initiated the discussion. He was followed by Comrade SK Senthivel, General Secretary of the Party, who outlined in detail the socio-economic and political circumstances in which the Party was founded as the Communist Party of Sri Lanka (Left) on 3rd July 1978 and established as a party of the working class, based on Marxism-Leninism-MaoZedong Thought. He paid tribute to comrades dead and alive who, in order to build the Party, bravely faced the challenges to the Party by way of crises, threats and detention. He also referred to key historical events relating to their contributions.

Comrades S Thevarajah, S Rasanayagam and E Thavarajah presented their observations on the development and positive and negative aspects of the Party in historical perspective.

It was also announced that key aspects of the 40-year history of the Party will be published in Puthiya Neethi, the popular journal of the Party, and in the journals Marxist Leninist New Democracy and Cempthakai.

The public meeting marking the 40th Anniversary of the Party was held in Trimmer Hall, Jaffna on 29th July 2018. The auditorium and its environment were decorated by red flags and banners. A banner calling upon the working people to mobilize to win political power decorated the entrance. The meeting started with the singing of the Internationale followed by the anthem of the Party. The meeting was chaired by Comrade SK Senthivel. The opening address delivered by Comrade K

Thanikasalam was followed by an address by Comrade V Mahendran. Address from the chair by Comrade Senthivel was followed by addresses by Comrades S Thevarajah, David Suren, N Pradeepan and M Mayuran. Comrades Sasi Nandini and Selvam Kathirgamanathan spoke on behalf of the Organization for Women's Liberation Thought.

Statements of fraternity were made by M Thiagarajah, S Karunakaran, P Muththulingam and S Thavanayagam. Mrs Valliyammai Subramaniam wife of the late Comrade KA Subramaniam, Founder General Secretary of the Party, who was unable to attend because of old age sent a message of greeting which was read out. Congratulatory messages from ICOR, MLPD of Germany, CPML (Red Star) of India, MLKP of Turkey and other friendly parties and organizations were read out.

Comrade Sriprakash introduced the programme events and the meeting concluded with revolutionary songs by Comrade Seelan's musical group.

NDMLP May Day Rallies

The Buddhist Maha Sanghas persuaded the Maithri–Ranil Government that May Day demonstrations should be disallowed on the day following Vesak holidays. The May Day holiday of 1st May was annulled and 7th May was declared May Day holiday. The New-Democratic Marxist-Leninist Party strongly criticized this decision and responded to it in a spirit of defiance, as the first political party in the country to challenge the people to mobilize in May Day processions and rallies on 1st May.

The Party played the leading role in joining hands with other left political parties and trade unions that were defiant of the governments ruling and held a press conference to explain their position to the public. The Party went ahead to organize processions and rallies in Puththur in Jaffna, Vavuniya town in the Vanni and Ragala in the Hill Country under the slogan "Workers of the World Unite! Oppressed people of the world unite! Let us mobilize to win power to the people!"

Comrade SK Senthivel, General Secretary of the Party and other leading members led the Jaffna May Day procession. The 4 km long march in which over a thousand participated concluded at the Putthur Kalaimathi Sports Stadium where Comrade K Selvam Kathirgamanathan, Northern Regional Organizer of the Party chaired the May Day Rally, addressed by comrades SK Senthivel, K Thanikasalam, S Thevarajah, T Sriprakash, N Pratheepan, Y Murugesu, Sasinanthini Thevan, Latha Udhayatheepan, K Panchalingam, S Thavarasa, V Robinson, K Ananda Kumarasamy and others. Comrade Seelan's musical group recited revolutionary songs.

The Vavuniya May Day procession started near the Mahavidyalaya and passed through Kandy Road to arrive at Cultural Hall of the Vavuniya Urban Council where the May Day Rally took place. The Rally was chaired by Comrade N Pratheepan, Vavuniya District Secretary of the Party. Central Committee members Comrades S Thevarajah, Don Boscoe and S Nandamohan, trade union representatives S. Mahendran, V Chitran, Chandrapadman and Dr S Madhurakan addressed the rally.

Many plantation workers, teachers and students participated in the Hill Country May Day procession, led by Comrade V Mahendran, National Organizer of the Party, Comrade David Suren, Matale Regional Secretary and Comrade S Panneerselvam, that began at Ragala St Leonards Junction. Comrades V Mahendran, S Panneerselvam, Seba Mohan, S Mohanraj, Brinda Suren, S Yohesvaran, P Samayakaruppi, M Padmasri and A Helen addressed the rally held at the Gemini Hall, in Ragala town.

Protest against Price Increases and Tax Burden

A protest demonstration organized by the Northern Regional Committee of the NDMLP opposing price increases and rising tax burdens on the people was held opposite the Central Bust Station, Jaffna from 10.00 a.m. on 29th May 2018. The main placards carried the slogans, "Are the price increase and tax burden for the working masses to bear?" and "Arrest the increase in price of food items!"

Press Release

8th August 2018

Addressing Social Issues at Community Level

Comrade SK Senthivel, General Secretary of the New Democratic Marxist Leninist Party issued on behalf of the Party.

Unlawful smuggling of narcotic substances, their trading and use continue to increase. Meanwhile the menace of microfinance has pushed people into a severe predicament. As a result there is a rise in gang fights, sword attacks and suicides. The occurrence of robbery, abuse of female children and murders is cruel and unacceptable. Amid this, mysterious characters have begun to roam in threatening ways.

To control such anti-people and socially decadent acts, it is useless to rely on the police or politicians who offer empty talk about law and order. Instead, anti-people and socially decadent forces can be controlled only through the unity of the people and the youth in each village coming forward to act alertly and with discipline. It is only thus that people can pave the way for calm daily life.

It is believed that certain forces are at work behind the anti-social decadent activities that have emerged, and are spreading, especially in the North. Nevertheless, it is essential that the youth are enthusiastically at the forefront in a context where the people have to defend themselves and their villages.

A good example has been set by the activities of the people of Putthur Kalaimathi Village under the guidance of the Northern Regional Branch of the NDMLP. There, each evening, up to 75 youth keep guard across the village as vigilance groups.

The youth who have been active over the past two weeks enjoy the support of the people of Kalaimathi Village as well as adjoining villages. The red and white top clad youth who act to protect the village and people also monitor traffic discipline in the evenings.

They have also created people's health groups, undertake voluntary work (*shramadhana*) and conduct programmes to eliminate parthenium weed and reduce the use of plastic and polythene.

It is also remarkable that the people of the village had set up several years ago groups for people's education, sports and culture and carried out several beneficial activities.

Thus, the Party appeals to the people of other villages in the North to join the people of Kalaimathi Village to identify the political, economic and social factors that are responsible for the unlawful and decadent activities that are undertaken to their detriment, and act to develop appropriate protective programmes.

SK Senthivel
General Secretary, NDMNLP

Press Release

23rd June 2018

Resolve the Postal Strike by Accepting the Just Demands of the Postal Workers

Comrade SK Senthivel, General Secretary of the New Democratic Marxist Leninist Party issued on behalf of the Politburo of the Party the following

statement on the ongoing postal strike, urging the government to resolve the strike by accepting the just demands of the postal workers.

The demands and struggle of the postal workers who have been on an islandwide strike since 11th June are just. But the government that claims to be one of 'good governance' has turned a deaf ear to the demands and is bent on defeating the strike.

The New Democratic Marxist Leninist Party strongly denounces the government's attempts to suppress the struggles of the toiling masses, through adopting its usual anti-worker, anti-trade union stand.

The strike by the postal workers is being carried on unitedly across the country, in all provinces including the Northern and Eastern provinces. The strike based on demands that irregularities practiced in the award of their wage increments and appointments are eliminated and moves to privatize the postal service be abandoned among others has gone on for longer than twelve days.

The government instead of listening to their demands has moved to stop payment of wages and threaten to use the police to carry out postal delivery, in a manner that causes further hardship to the postal workers.

This is an expression of the indifference of the government towards workers and the oppressive mindset of the ruling classes. They deserve to be condemned by all.

Thus the Party urges that the government should immediately hold talks with the trade unions of the postal workers, and resolve the crisis by accepting their just demands.

SK Senthivel
General Secretary, NDMNLP

Press Release

6th June 2018

Persisting in the Practice of Untouchability

Comrade SK Senthivel, General Secretary of the New Democratic Marxist Leninist Party issued on behalf of the Politburo of the Party the following statement denouncing the display of the evil practice of untouchability on the occasion of the Chariot Festival of the Temple of Goddess Kannaki.

Caste-based untouchability found full expression at the Chariot Festival of the temple of Goddess Kannaki that took place a few days ago at the temple of Goddess Kannaki located in the village of Varani North in the Thenmaratchi region of the Jaffna District. The temple management used a JCB vehicle to draw the chariot in order that people of low caste do not touch the rope that is traditionally used to draw the chariot.

This incident demonstrates the ferocity of the practice of caste-based untouchability that exists among the Tamils. The New Democratic Marxist Leninist Party strongly opposes and denounces such conduct. At the same time, the Party also urges the needs to carry forward mass movements against the ideology and practice of caste-based untouchability.

Some of the Tamil nationalist elite boast that the thirty-year war and nationalist campaigns have eliminated caste-based untouchability. But the events that occurred in the nine years after the end of the war have demonstrated that such claims are false.

Another example comprises the soldiers of the Sri Lankan Army drawing the temple chariot last year in Achchuvely in the North in order that the practice of caste-based untouchability of a few Saivaite Tamils was protected. The recent use of the JCB vehicle is an extension of that practice.

No group that proclaims Tamil nationalism or Tamil MP or Member of Provincial Council has uttered a word in this connection. Their silence is ugly and shameful. Hence it is an important duty of all progressive forces that seek social transformation to prevent the recurrence of such uncivilized barbarian acts.

Therefore the Party calls upon all sections of the society to mobilize to raise their voice and act against such oppression.

SK Senthivel
General Secretary, NDMNLP

Press Release

7th June 2018

Halt Chauvinistic Encroachments

Comrade SK Senthivel, General Secretary of the New Democratic Marxist Leninist Party issued on behalf of the Politburo of the Party the following statement demanding termination of communally motivated colonization in Mullaitheevu and unlawful fishery in the waters of Vadamaratchi East.

Planned colonization, illegitimate setting up of industries and land seizure that are motivated by invasive intentions are wrong and should be halted.

Planned chauvinistic settlements with Sinhala Buddhist ulterior motives undertaken by the government and high officials cannot be justified on any grounds. Hence the planned Sinhala colonization in Mullaitheevu, the unlawful fishery that is going on in the waters of Vadamaratchi East, and all other planned acts of aggression against the minority nationalities deserve to be denounced.

The New Democratic Marxist Leninist Party demands that such practice should be ended forthright.

The origins of the national question of Sri Lanka date back to the time of planned colonization by the chauvinist ruling class and the planned seizure of lands in the North–East. The planned settlement of Sinhalese in Mullaitheevu and the invasive fishery activity in the waters of the North by fishers from other regions are activities that follow the same lines. Such moves only serve to defeat attempts to resolve the national question by sharpening ethnic contradictions and sustain in a state of simmer a situation of potential ethnic conflict.

Hence the Party urges that all planned Sinhala colonization and unlawful invasive fishery is put to an end immediately.

SK Senthivel
General Secretary, NDMNLP

Press Release

22nd May 2018

Tamilnadu State Government Brutality

Comrade SK Senthivel, General Secretary of the New Democratic Marxist Leninist Party issued on behalf of the Politburo of the Party the following statement denouncing brutality of Tamilnadu Police in India against people who campaigned in Thoothukudi (Tuticorin) for the closure of the toxic copper smelter unit of Sterlite Copper, a member of the notorious Vedanta Group with headquarters in London..

The people of the region have for long been protesting peacefully demanding the closure of the toxic copper smelter unit of Sterlite Copper located in Thoothukudi. Today, on the 100th day of the blockade campaign, the State Government of Tamilnadu used the state police forces to launch a violent attack on the protesters. So far eight people have been killed by police firing. The New Democratic Marxist Leninist Party strongly condemns the State Government of Tamilnadu for this savage act.

In a context in which people have been campaigning against the Sterlite plant which poses a major environmental hazard as well as threatens the health of the people, the State Government of Tamilnadu gave permission to expand the plant. The people launched a continuous series of struggles protesting that decision. The state government was indifferent to their protest despite the protest struggle going on over the past 100 days. The blockade campaign against the anti-people attitude of the State Government ended up as a killing field in which eight people lost their lives. A large number of people who were subject to police firing, baton charge and unrestrained violence have been hospitalized. It is abundantly clear that the responsibility for the entire violence lies with the anti-people attitude of the State Government of Tamilnadu, which has sold out to the management of the Sterlite plant.

Under the conditions, the Party urges that the State Government of Tamilnadu ceases to side with the management of the plant, take immediate steps to shut down the Sterlite plant, and grant justice the people affected by police brutality and duly compensate them.

SK Senthivel
General Secretary, NDMNLP

Press Release

16th May 2018

Remembering the Victims of Mullivaaykkaal

Comrade SK Senthivel, General Secretary of the New Democratic Marxist Leninist Party issued on behalf of the Politburo of the Party the following statement in connection with the commemoration event that is to take place on 18th May in Mullivaaykkaal in May 2019.

It is important for anyone who respects the quest for liberation of the Tamil nationality subjected to national oppression, the need for a political solution to the national question within a united Sri Lanka, and human

rights and humanitarianism to commemorate the terrible human tragedy that took place in Mullivaaykkaal. In that spirit, the New Democratic Marxist Leninist Party pays its tribute to all who were murdered and lost their precious lives in a pool of blood in the final days of the war.

At the same time, it is essential to learn from the experience of the outcomes of the political stands of the past and resolve to travel along a long-sighted route of alternative politics. Each of the Tamil narrow-nationalist leaderships is, instead of taking this need into account, attempting to make use of the Mullivaaykkaal commemoration for vote gathering and securing posts and positions to advance their supremacist politics. This is raw betrayal of the people who lost their lives.

Ethnic conflict was created early in the last century and cultivated to develop into chauvinist oppression and a cruel war. The chauvinist capitalist ruling class which denied a just political solution implemented a military solution through war, which became the cause of human tragedy of Mullivaaykkaal. No one can conceal or deny the contribution of American and European imperialists and Indian expansionists who served as staunch supporters and guides for the chauvinist ruling classes and other regional powers in implementing this tragic event.

The misfortune today is that the Tamil leadership of today are spreading the false belief among the Tamil people that a political solution that incorporates self determination could be achieved through the agency of the self same American, European and Indian forces.

Hence, the Party appeals to the Tamil people to go beyond this politics of deception to think in terms of an alternative political path for the people. The Party appeals to the Tamil people that they should rescue their political destiny from the supremacist politics of the Tamil leadership and take it into their own hands.

SK Senthivel
General Secretary, NDMNLP

Activities of the Mass Organization for Social Justice

Press Release

29th June 2018

Mobilize to Ensure the Safety of Children

The following statement concerning the lack of safety of young children in parts of the Jaffna peninsula was issued by K Anandakumaraswamy, Chairman and S Thanujan and A Seevaratnam, Joint Secretaries of the Mass Organization for Social Justice.

The murder of six-year old girl student Sivanesarvan Regina in the village of Kaatuppulam in Chulipuram area of Jaffna on 25th June has drowned all the people in sorrow. The Mass Organization for Social Justice strongly condemns this inhumane act of cruelty. It also urges that the demand that the culprits should be identified and punished, about which students and the public of the region have been conducting a continuous campaign, should be acted upon properly by the authorities concerned.

In a context where the people of the region have been pointing out that incidents of abuse and killing of young boys and girls that cause much grief have occurred in the region on various occasions before this, the indifference of the authorities should be condemned.

Hence, the Organization for Social Justice urges that the government should urgently take necessary steps to prevent the recurrence of such sad events, by acting to rid the region of the culture of alcoholism and drug abuse, ensuring proper maintenance of lands and houses that are unmaintained and insecure, establishing infrastructural facilities in the villages and finding ways of properly resolving the problems of school dropout and employment.

News Report

1st June 2018

Demonstration Condemning Thoothukudi Killings

K Anandakumaraswamy, Chairman and S Thanujan and A Seevaratnam, Joint Secretaries of the Mass Organization for Social Justice (MOSJ) announced a demonstration condemning the killing of peaceful demonstrators by the Tamilnadu Police. The awareness campaign demonstration was held opposite the office of the Indian Deputy High Commissioner in Jaffna at 10.00 a.m. on 1st June 2018 denouncing the unleashing of brutal violence against a protest parade by the Tamilnadu State Police that killed and injured many on the 100th day of the public struggle demanding closure of Sterlite Copper's copper smelter in Thoothukudi, Tamilnadu.

The MOSJ pointed out that the people of Thoothukudi have been campaigning for more than twenty years calling for the closure of this toxic copper smelting unit that has harmed the natural environments of sea, ground water and air and been the cause of grave illnesses such as cancer. The central and state governments which took no notice of the demands of the people of Thoothukudi unleashed harsh police violence against the people killing thirteen and injuring more than sixty. Over one hundred persons have been arrested.

The MOSJ had stated that it is deplorable that the State Government that shut down the Sterlite Coppers plant following the mass campaign went on to unleash violence against the people who put forward just and legitimate demands, and has thus far not initiated a legal inquiry into the acts of police terror. The MOSJ also appealed to the political parties, public organizations, social activists and environmentalists to join in the demonstration against the acts of violence of the Tamilnadu State Government acting in the interest of the greed for profit of the big capitalist Vedanta Group.

Denouncing Insult to the First Citizen of Vavuniya

Abridged Press Release

1st June 2018

S Don Boscoe, Vavuniya District Secretary of the Mass Organization for Social Justice, issued a statement, abridged below, condemning the insult to R Gauthaman, Chairman, Vavuniya Urban Council by a prison officer.

We strongly denounce the insult delivered by a prison officer to Mr R Gauthaman, the First Citizen of Vavuniya and demand that the Prisons Department and the Police Department should take action against the officer concerned. An insult to the First Citizen of Vavuniya is an insult to the people of Vavuniya. Prison officers have a responsibility to protect the dignity of citizens. The Association of Lawyers, Vavuniya carried out an awareness campaign about the abuse of power prevalent in the Remand Prison in Vavuniya, thereby bringing to light the conditions in that prison. These make people wonder whether prison officers have a culture of acting against the interest of legal and moral values. If the First Citizen of Vavuniya has been a victim of that culture, one cannot expect ordinary citizens to be spared.

The MOSJ demands that the Local Government Department should take necessary steps to protect the dignity of the members of local authorities.

Book Launch Events

The book by Comrade SK Senthivel “Vaddukkoddai muthal Mullivaikkal varai” (From Vaddukkoddai to Mullivaikkal) analyzing the politics of the period from the Vaddukkoddai Resolution of May 1976 to the tragic end of the armed struggle led by the LTTE in May 2009 was first launched in Jaffna on 3rd September 2017. The book has since been launched in Colombo, Matale, Hatton, Ragala, Vavuniya, Kilinochchi, Alvai (Vada Maratchi) and Pandaththarippu, selling nearly two thousand copies.

(Continued from inside front cover)

point to the rock on which you fell
and the wood on which they crucified you;
strike the old flints,
turn on the old lamps, crack the whips embedded
throughout the centuries in your wounds
and the axes with blood-encrusted sparkle.

I am coming to speak for and through your dead mouths.
Throughout the earth, join together
all the scattered silent lips,
and out of the depths speak to me during this long night
as if I were anchored to you.
Tell me everything, chain by chain,
link by link, and step by step.
Sharpen the knives
you'd locked away,
put them on my breast and into my hands,
like a river of yellow lightening,
like a river of buried tigers,
and let me cry, hours, days, years,
blind ages, stellar centuries.

Give me silence, water, hope.
Give me the struggle, the iron, the volcanoes.
Attach your bodies to me like magnets.
Come to my veins and my mouth.
Speak through my words and my blood.

Incident

Countee Cullen

*Once riding in old Baltimore,
Heart-filled, head-filled with glee,
I saw a Baltimorean
Keep looking straight at me.*

*Now I was eight and very small,
And he was no whit bigger,
And so I smiled, but he poked out
His tongue, and called me, nigger.*

*I saw the whole of Baltimore
From May until December.
Of all the things that happened there
That's all that I remember.*

This poem written in the 1920s was triggered by a little white boy in Baltimore insultingly calling another little boy nigger, and is perhaps the most quoted of Cullen's poems.

Background: Martin Luther King Jr.

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