

Aim: Did the Spanish conquests of the Americas help or hurt the world?

I. First Encounters

1. Columbus landed in the Caribbean.
2. Conquistadors or conquerors seized gold
3. They enslaved the Indians and made them slaves
4. Forced Indians to convert to Christianity.

II. Columbian Exchange

1. Columbian Exchange as it was known was the exchange of peoples, plants, animals, technology, and disease between the Eastern and Western hemispheres.
2. New products like corn, potato, sugar, horses, and other animals shifted
3. Disease: yellow fever, malaria, smallpox and the measles to the Americas
4. Syphilis was brought to Europe
5. Over 45 million Indians were killed due to harsh treatment and disease

III. Ruling the new Empire

Government:

1. Created the Council of the Indies to pass laws for the colonies.
2. Viceroys or representatives who ruled in his name in each province.

Religion:

1. Catholic Church converted thousands of Native Americans to Christianity.

Economy:

1. New colonies could only export goods to Spain and only import goods from Spain.
2. Could not trade with any other country or any other colony.
3. Spanish were granted encomiendas.
4. This gave the Spanish the right to demand labor or tribute from the natives.
5. Worker shortages started African slave trade
6. They were immune to tropical diseases and skilled in farming, mining and metalworking.

New Social Classes:

1. Peninsulares: people who were born in Spain. Highest positions in gov't and Church.
2. Creoles, American born descendants of Spanish. Creoles owned ranches, plantations and mines.
3. Mestizos people of Native American and European descent
4. Mulattoes people of African and European descent.
5. At the bottom of society were the Native Americans and Africans.