

Unit 1: 1491-1607

Questions 1-4 refer to the excerpt below.

Our lord sovereign, king don Felipe* our lord, with our words we appear and stand before you, we of Huejotzingo* who guard for you your city . . . very humbly we implore you: Oh unfortunate are we, very great and heavy sadness and affliction lie upon us, nowhere do your pity and compassion extend over us and reach us, we do not deserve, we do not attain your rulership. And all the while since your subjects the Spaniards arrived among us, . . . we have been confidently expecting that sometime your pity would reach us, . . . and as to the time when you pity someone, when before you appears a vassal of yours in poverty, so it is said, then you have pity on him with your very revered majesty, and by the grace of omnipotent God you do it for him.

Therefore now, in and through God, may you hear these our words, . . . so that you will exercise on us your rulership to console us and aid us in this trouble with which daily we weep and are sad. We are afflicted and sore pressed, and your town and city of Huejotzingo is as if it is about to disappear and be destroyed. Here is what is being done to us: now your stewards the royal officials and the prosecuting attorney Dr. Maldonado are assessing us a very great tribute to belong to you. The tribute we are to give is 14,800 pesos in money, and also all the bushels of maize.

**King Phillip II of Spain*

**indigenous Mexican group who allied with conquistador Hernán Cortés in 1521*

Source: Council of Huejotzingo, *Letter to the King of Spain*, 1560

1. Which of the following factors best explains the alliance between the Spanish and Huejotzingo people?

- Dominant American empires threatened smaller groups with war, slavery, and tribute prior to European conquest
- The Spanish promised salvation to native people through conversion to Christianity.
- Most Native Americans believed that the Spanish were gods.
- The Huejotzingo believed they could steal Spanish technology by befriending them.

Explanations:

- Correct:** The Aztec and Inca empires operated as hegemonic powers in Meso and South America, dominating large territories and trade networks with their military superiority and allying with the Spanish allowed smaller groups to assist in conquering them.
- Incorrect:** While the Spanish did attempt to convert Native Americans, this was not a practical consideration by groups such as the Huejotzingo. Most conversion was done by force, not by choice.
- Incorrect:** Some people of lower status in Native American societies did not know what to make of Spanish armor, horses, and firearms. However, indigenous leaders and decision-makers did not believe the Spanish to be gods.
- Incorrect:** Eventual acquisition of European technology, such as firearms and horses, would play a role in alliances between Native Americans and European, especially in

North America. However, leverage in negotiations was almost always in favor of Europeans.

2. **According to the excerpt, Spanish treatment of the people of Huejotzingo indicates that colonial life in New Spain was affected by all of the following except**
- the *encomienda* system.
 - the *castas* system.
 - the Middle Passage.
 - the religious conversion of natives.

Explanations:

- Incorrect:** *The encomienda system entailed the subjugation of Native American people for the purpose of producing agricultural and mined goods, maize (corn) in this case.*
- Incorrect:** *Indigenous people such as the Huejotzingo held a low status in Spanish colonial society and, thus, were burdened with tribute that colonists of Spanish heritage were not.*
- Correct:** *The Middle Passage was the slave transporting route of the triangular trade system of the Atlantic Ocean. This excerpt makes no reference, direct or indirect, to African-based chattel slavery in the Spanish colonies, though it would play a large role in most European colonies in the Americas.*
- Incorrect:** *Prior to European colonization, Native Americans practiced varying animistic religions and had not been exposed to Christianity. The Council's reference to the "omnipotent God" indicates their conversion to Christianity.*

3. **The Spanish demand for maize from the Huejotzingo as tribute best serves as evidence of which of the following developments in the 15th-16th Centuries?**
- increasing global biodiversity
 - growing European populations
 - industrial farming methods
 - European notions of racial superiority

Explanations:

- Incorrect:** *The Columbian Exchange was the spread of new animals, plants (such as maize), and people between the previously unconnected "Old" and "New" worlds. However, this was not a tangible or direct exchange and refers more broadly to the newfound interaction between continents.*
- Correct:** *Access to new calorically-dense staple crops, such as maize and potatoes, significantly affected European populations. Cultivation of these crops in American colonies through native or slave labor, as well as the planting of them in Europe, became a commercialized venture.*
- Incorrect:** *farming methods remained relatively unchanged until the Agricultural and Industrial Revolutions of the 17th and 18th Centuries in Europe.*
- Incorrect:** *While 16th Century interactions between Europeans, Native Americans, and African slaves did cause more racialized views of different societies, the demand for maize, as well as money, from colonial subjects had practical economic motivation.*

Questions 4-6 refer to the map below.



Source: Map of the Treaty of Tordesillas*, Antonio de Herrera y Tordesillas, 1601

*1494 treaty between the Spanish and Portuguese, granting part of South America to Portugal

4. The territorial disputes such as the one depicted in the map directly contributed to which of the following developments?
- Slave revolts, such as the Stono Rebellion
 - Colonial wars, such as The Seven Years' War
 - Political turmoil, such as the American Revolution
 - Regulatory trade practices, such as the Navigation Acts

Explanations:

- Incorrect:** the Stono Rebellion was a 1739 slave uprising in South Carolina.
- Correct:** The Seven Years' War, known as the French & Indian War in its colonial theater, was the result of competing claims for North American territory between France and England, similar to that of Spain and Portugal's disputed claims which led to the Treaty of Tordesillas.
- Incorrect:** Though having roots in the Seven Years' War and eventually involving numerous European powers in the late-18th Century after war broke out, the American Revolution was not directly caused by colonial rivalries but rather by political disputes between colonial governments and the English Parliament.
- Incorrect:** the Navigation Acts were a series of economic regulations born out of English mercantilist policy. Somewhat influenced by competition with European rivals,

these acts were not intended to settle territorial or trade disputes as the Treaty of Tordesillas and Seven Years' War did.

5. **Prior to the Treaty of Tordesillas, ownership of territory in the New World was affirmed primarily through what authority?**
- Conventions hosted by European governments
 - The Catholic Church and Pope
 - Victors in war laying claim
 - Previously established international law

Explanations:

- Incorrect:** Intergovernmental conventions had not been held with regard to territorial claims in the New World in the 16th Century.
- Correct:** In 1493, a papal bull asserted that all land west of an arbitrary line of demarcation was in Spain's possession. This is often referred to as the "Doctrine of Discovery." A year later, the Treaty of Tordesillas moved this line westward, granting Portugal possession of what is present-day Brazil.
- Incorrect:** Portugal and Spain did come close to an outbreak of war to settle disputed territorial claims but this was averted by diplomatic efforts.
- Incorrect:** Portugal's efforts in exploring the coastline of the African continent and into the Indian Ocean prior to other European nations gave them official claim to most undiscovered lands. However, the Pope's granting of land to Spain in 1493 contradicted previous Church doctrine and gave Portugal justification to appeal.

6. **Which of the following was not a motivating factor in the Increasing European exploration and colonization in the Americas throughout the 15th and 16th Centuries?**
- economic and military competition between empires
 - expansion of Christendom to native populations
 - the search for new sources of wealth
 - food shortages in Europe

Explanations:

- Incorrect:** Numerous examples of warfare and mercantilist trade policies motivated European nations to establish colonies in order to grow their reach and wealth.
- Incorrect:** As Christian nations feeling obligated to save the souls of the perceived "savages" of the New World, the goal of converting Native Americans was significant for the Spanish, Portuguese, and others.
- Incorrect:** Gold, cash crops, and the general desire for wealth was the most significant factor in propelling European efforts to colonize the New World.
- Correct:** The population of Europe was relatively stable in the century leading up to European colonization in the New World. Thus, food availability was adequate. Access to new foods as a result of the Columbian Exchange and improved farming methods in the centuries to follow, however, would result in a massive population increase in Europe.

Questions 7-10 refer to the excerpt below.

Because divine providence has ordered in this world that for the direction and common utility of the human lineage the world be constituted by Kingdoms and peoples, with their kings like fathers and shepherds . . . and therefore the most noble and generous members of the republics, . . . And if any wrongs, failings, defects, or evils should be suffered in those kingdoms, the only reason for that is that the kings have no notice of them.

The Spaniards, who no sooner had knowledge of these people than they became like fierce wolves and tigers and lions who have gone many days without food or nourishment . . . and still today see fit to do, but dismember, slay, perturb, afflict, torment, and destroy the Indians by all manner of cruelty . . . and they do this to such a degree that on the Island of Hispaniola*, of the above three millions souls that we once saw, today there be no more than two hundred of those native people remaining.

Two principal and general customs have been employed by those, calling themselves Christians, who have passed this way, in extirpating and striking from the face of the earth those suffering nations. The first being unjust, cruel, bloody, and tyrannical warfare. The other after having slain all those who might yearn toward or suspire after or think of freedom, or consider escaping from the torments that they are made to suffer, by which I mean all the native-born lords and adult males, for it is the Spaniards' custom in their wars to allow only young boys and females to live being to oppress them with the hardest, harshest, and most heinous bondage to which men or beasts might ever be bound into. . . .

**present-day Haiti and Dominican Republic*

Source: Bartolomé de las Casas, Roman Catholic priest,
A Brief Account of the Destruction of the Indies, 1552

7. The excerpt would be most useful to historians as a source of information about which of the following?
- the wide range of European perspectives toward Native Americans
 - comparing various approaches to colonization by different European groups
 - the role that religion played in the decimation of native populations
 - the harsh realities for Spanish-born colonists in 16th Century New Spain

Explanations:

- Correct:** As a Spaniard, Las Casas broke with the general conception by Europeans that Native Americans were inferior and that colonists were entitled to use them as they saw fit.
- Incorrect:** There is no mention of Portuguese, French, English, etc. approaches, thus no frame of reference for comparison.
- Incorrect:** While Las Casas was a priest and did make scathing religious appeals ("calling themselves Christians"), the observations in the excerpt do not make a connection between the cruelty employed by the Spanish and their religion.
- Incorrect:** The excerpt solely focuses on the mistreatment of Native Americans by Spaniards. Nothing can be accurately inferred about the lives of Spanish-born colonists.

8. Which of the following most significantly contributed to the drastic decline of Native American populations described in the excerpt?

- a. the introduction of African slaves who competed with Native Americans for resources
- b. the trade of firearms between European colonists and Native Americans
- c. the establishment of a caste system that deprived native groups of social privileges
- d. the transmission of disease that Native Americans had no immunity to

Explanations:

- a. **Incorrect:** Africans who were forcibly brought to the Americas did not actively compete with Native Americans for land and food, as their bondage did not allow such freedom of movement and activity.
- b. **Incorrect:** The trade of firearms to Native Americans, especially by the French and English in North America, did foment further and deadlier conflict between rival native groups. However, the impact of firearms on native populations was nowhere near that of new diseases.
- c. **Incorrect:** The Spanish colonial castas system relegated natives and African slaves to the bottom rungs of society. While this certainly made life more difficult for Native Americans, it did not effectively decimate populations like diseases did.
- d. **Correct:** The Columbian Exchange saw many positive effects on European populations, including access to new foods, sources of wealth, and population growth. Conversely, native populations in the Americas were detrimentally affected on the whole, most significantly by diseases such as smallpox and measles. The total population of the Americas prior to European arrival is estimated as high as ~100 million. This number fell to less than 10 million by 1650.

9. Based on the observations of Las Casas, which of the following best describes the Spanish policy toward Native Americans and their land in the 16th Century?

- a. only indigenous crops, such as tobacco, could be planted and harvested
- b. all Native Americans must be killed or removed from their land in order to claim it
- c. the Spanish were entitled to free labor and the resources of colonized territory
- d. native populations would not be killed or mistreated if they converted to Christianity

Explanations:

- a. **Incorrect:** Though the Spanish did attempt to monopolize tobacco cultivation in the early 16th Century, there were no such regulations in place. No reference to crops is made in the excerpt.
- b. **Incorrect:** Despite cruel treatment and "tyrannical warfare" imposed on Native Americans, the Spanish had a vested interest in maintaining populations to some degree for the purposes of labor.
- c. **Correct:** The encomienda system granted Spanish conquistadors and those that followed with all but supreme authority over the land and people they conquered. This included forcing labor and the right to all resources acquired from the land, including crops and precious metals.
- d. **Incorrect:** Efforts to Christianize Native Americans are thoroughly documented. However, conversion did not necessarily mean improved treatment or status in colonial Spanish society.

10. Which of the following groups was Las Casas trying to influence with this excerpt?

- a. The Roman Catholic Church
- b. the Spanish monarchs
- c. Spanish colonists in New Spain
- d. Native American leaders

Explanations:

- a. **Incorrect:** Roman Catholic Church doctrine implicitly condoned the mistreatment of Native Americans by enacting policies of conversion and forbidding native ceremonies.
Reactions
- b. **Correct:** Las Casas ingratiates "kings" by affirming their authority and makes a direct appeal to them as the powers capable of preventing or ending "any wrongs, failings, defects, or evils."
- c. **Incorrect:** The observations in the excerpt describe the actions of Spanish colonists without any direct appeal or encouragement for change from them, accepting their actions as "custom".
- d. **Incorrect:** Native American leaders were rarely addressed or involved in decision-making in the Spanish colonies, especially compared to the interactions between the English/French colonists and their Native American counterparts in the 17th and 18th Centuries.