


# Why did Spain switch to Black slave labor?

## Life in the Spanish Empire

- With Mexico, Peru, Spain gained control of huge empire in Americas
- Spanish king chose officials, **viceroys**, to govern American holdings
- Spanish colonial economy based on gold, silver mining, farming
- Spanish drafted Native Americans for labor in mines, on farms

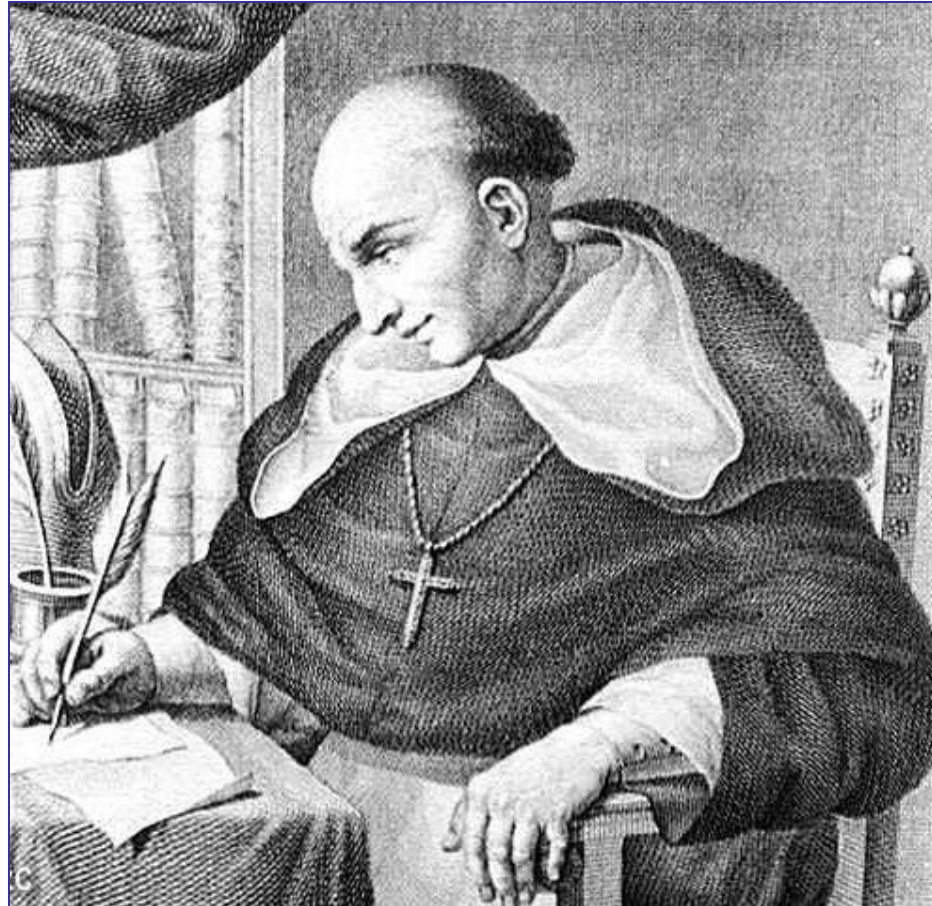
## Beginnings of Slavery

- Disease, mistreatment took toll on native population
- Some appalled at treatment
- One reformer, **Bartolomé de Las Casas** recommended replacing Native Americans as laborers with imported African slaves
- Slave labor soon became common practice in Americas



**TO BE SOLD**, on board the  
Ship *Bance-Yland*, on tuesday the 6th  
of May next, at *Ashley-Ferry*; a choice  
cargo of about 250 fine healthy  
**NEGROES**,  
just arrived from the  
Windward & Rice Coast.  
—The utmost care has  
already been taken, and  
shall be continued, to keep them free from  
the least danger of being infected with the  
**SMALL-POX**, no boat having been on  
board, and all other communication with  
people from *Charles-Town* prevented.  
*Austin, Laurens, & Appleby.*  
N. B. Full one Half of the above Negroes have had the  
**SMALL-POX** in their own Country..

# Father Bartolom de Las Casas



🏰 New Laws --> 1542



# Bartolomé de las Casas Criticizes Spanish Cruelty



**ABOUT THE SOURCE** In the 1500s Spanish explorers conquered a vast empire in the Americas. These conquistadors came to the New World to find wealth, spread Christianity, and win fame. In pursuing these goals, some Spanish explorers brutalized the native population. The arrival of the Spanish meant death or enslavement for millions of Native Americans. The passage below was written by a Spanish priest who observed the cruelty firsthand.



*As you read note the specific words de las Casas uses to describe the actions of the Spanish. The following words may be new to you: iniquity, perpetrators, solemnity. You may want to use a dictionary to look them up.*

New Spain was discovered in 1517. The explorers treated the inhabitants offensively and murdered some Indians. Under the guise of developing the country, the Christians (as they call themselves) in 1518 engaged in plunder and slaughter. From 1518 until the present day, and it is now 1542, the iniquity, injustice, violence, and tyranny that the Spanish have committed against the Indians has escalated as the perpetrators lost all fear of God and the King and all self-respect as well . . .

During the 12 years, the Spanish killed more than four million men, women, and children with swords and lances, and by burning people alive . . . This does not count those who have died, and continue to die every day, from the slavery and the oppression that the Spanish impose . . .

Among other massacres perpetrated by the Spanish was one that took place in Cholula, a city with thirty thousand inhabitants. Dignitaries and priests from the city and the surrounding countryside greeted the Spanish with great solemnity and respect, and escorted them into the city and lodged them in the homes of the local nobility. The Spanish decided to stage a massacre—or a “chastisement” as they call it—in order to terrorize the population.

To accomplish this, the Spanish summoned the local dignitaries. As soon as they arrived to hold talks with the Spanish commander, they were taken captive and had no opportunity to warn others. Then the Spanish demanded five or six thousand Indians to carry their loads . . . Once these poor wretches assembled in the courtyard, guards blocked the gates while Spanish soldiers slaughtered the Indians with swords and lances.

Bartolomé de las Casas

Source: *A Short Account of the Destruction of the Indies*, 1552

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**Read this!**  
**Why did the**  
**Spaniards**  
**abuse the**  
**Natives?**  
**Why does**  
**Las Casas**  
**want to**  
**report this?**



READ THE DOCUMENT *COLUMBUS ....THE LEGACY* THEN  
ANSWER THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS.

1. USE A DICTIONARY TO LOOK UP TERM (LEGACY) \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
2. WHAT DOES LAS CASAS SAY COLUMBUS'S LEGACY WILL  
BE? \_\_\_\_\_
3. DEFINE (*GENOCIDE*) \_\_\_\_\_
4. IS THE EYEWITNESS ACCOUNT PRO-NATIVE OR  
PRO-SPANISH? \_\_\_\_\_  
DISCUSS YOUR ANSWER \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
5. WHERE IS THE EYEWITNESS FROM? \_\_\_\_\_
6. WHAT IS THE OCCUPATION OF THE EYEWITNESS? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
7. DEFINE (*INDIGENOUS*) \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
8. WHAT IS THE INDIGENOUS POPULACE OF THIS  
DOCUMENT? \_\_\_\_\_
9. WHAT TWO WEAPONS DID THE SPANISH USE AGAINST  
INDIANS? \_\_\_\_\_ & \_\_\_\_\_
10. LAS CASAS FAVORED A MORE HUMANE TREATMENT OF  
THE NATIVE POPULATION...THIS LED TO THE SPANISH  
LOOKING TO \_\_\_\_\_ TO FILL THE  
VOID WITH BLACK \_\_\_\_\_.

## COLUMBUS ...THE LEGACY

IN THE YEARS AND CENTURIES SINCE THE HISTORICAL JOURNEY, PEOPLE STILL DEBATE THE LEGACY OF COLUMBUS'S VOYAGES. SOME ARGUE THEY WERE HEROIC FIRST STEPS IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF GREAT DEMOCRATIC SOCIETIES. OTHERS CLAIM THEY WERE THE BEGINNINGS OF AN ERA OF BLOODSHED, CRUELTY, ENSLAVEMENT, AND GENOCIDE.

**BARTOLOME DE LAS CASAS** A SPANISH MISSIONARY GAVE THIS EYEWITNESS ACCOUNT OF THE PERIOD. IN THIS STATEMENT HE WATCHED FELLOW SPANIARDS USE ATTACK DOGS ON NATIVE AMERICANS. HE PREDICTED THAT COLUMBUS'S LEGACY WOULD BE A DISASTER OF MAJOR PROPORTIONS FOR THE INDIGENOUS POPULATION OF THE NEW WORLD.

***“THEIR OTHER FRIGHTENING WEAPONS AFTER THE HORSES, TWENTY HUNTING GREYHOUNDS. THEY WERE UNLEASHED AND FELL ON THE INDIANS AT THE CRY OF TOMALO! (GET THEM) WITHIN AN HOUR THEY HAD PREYED ON ONE HUNDRED OF THEM. AS THE INDIANS WERE USED TO GOING COMPLETELY NAKED, IT IS EASY TO IMAGINE WHAT THE FIERCE GREYHOUNDS DID, URGED TO BITE NAKED BODIES AND SKIN MUCH MORE DELICATE THAN THAT OF WILD BOARS THEY WERE USE TO... THIS TACTIC, BEGUN HERE AND INVENTED BY THE DEVIL, SPREAD THROUGHOUT THESE INDIES WILL END WHEN THERE IS NO MORE LAND NOR PEOPLE TO SUBJUGATE AND DESTROY IN THIS PART OF THE WORLD”....***

