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conglomerate of
european settlers
was

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A History of American Capitalism While claiming to be fleeing various forms of oppression themselves, the original conglomerate of European settlers was all too eager to exploit and oppress the indigenous people of North America. The European colonizers who had highly developed military, naval and governmental capabilities out matched the indigenous people of America.

In order to gain their newly sought liberties, these foreign invaders began to compose and implement atrocious acts and systems upon the indigenous people of the land. Promoting the idea of manifest destiny these foreigners would fight to expand their European-American populations further west after the American Revolution. The prevailing idea then was that the white race was the superior and all others were inferior, resulting in increasing pressure of Native American lands and warfare between the groups and rising tensions. These events would bring about the perpetration of many acts of coercion upon the indigenous tribes of North America by their European counterparts. Despite the reasons given by the European land robbers, their main goal was to satisfy their own ambitious desire for more land, religious freedom, and obtaining capital. These European migrants who previously had no hopes of ever owning land were now afforded access to an overabundant amount of land at the expense of the indigenous people. Therefore, America was founded on a capitalistic foundation and there exists in its infancy systems to create and maintain capital.

I intend to prove this ideal through the works of, " The Yakima Affair" by Sarah Winnemucca Hopkins, and " Selections from the Communist

Manifesto” by Karl Marx. Capitalism according to Marx is, “ an economic system based on the exchange of capital, chiefly money and labor.” Capital consists of money, and the controlling classes means to produce wealth. In today’s economies laborers trade their labor in return for money.

Inside of Marx’s,” Communist Manifesto,” the Proletariat or wage laborer is the lowest class of citizen ancient Rome and has no way of producing wealth. This class is matured as a result of the bourgeoisie or capitalist classes practice of capitalism. Marx claimed that every society is split into social classes and those social classes form two distinct groups. One is the ruling class or bourgeoisie who own most of society’s wealth and their means of production, the second being that of the Proletariat. A capitalist economy appears to be controlled through a series of competitive exchanges, in which all members of society cooperate freely under conditions of common freedom and equality. Marx’s belief is that, class communication is determined by an era’s means of manufacturing and that it is inevitable that these relationships cease to be compatible with the developing forces of production.

Marx then asserts that the productive forces of capitalism will rapidly cease to be compatible with this exploitative relationship, resulting in a revolution that entails the destruction of private property. Marx stands firm to his conviction that, class struggles or the exploitation of one class by another, are the motivating force behind all historical developments. These developments can be witnessed during the colonization of America, when white European land robbers fled to North America in search of the chance to

amass their own power and wealth. The settlers were in search of the resources needed to fund growing populations in Europe. More land also equated to the possibility of additional trading routes and the discovery different luxury goods. Marx mentions this newly found possibility in the phrase, " The discovery of America, the rounding of the Cape, opened up fresh ground for the rising bourgeoisie." Within their struggle to obtain capital and power the white land robbers would displace many Native Americans during their westward expansion. " Arming themselves with ' manifest destiny' rhetoric, which claimed divine Anglo-Saxon superiority as justification for the conquest of Indigenous and Mexican peoples and the land they occupied, white settlers forcefully pushed into California territory" (Sneider 257).

The first legal justification for the removal and isolation of America's indigenous people was The Indian Removal Act of 1830 granting the newcomers the legal authority to resettle the Native Americans from east of the Mississippi River to lands west. Whether by coercion or murder the indigenous people of America were forced off of their own land so that the European settlers could attempt to achieve their own goals and aspirations. Hopkins expresses the natives displeasure when she shares, " I said, ' Major my people have not done anything, and why should they be sent sway from their own country?'" Although the removal was supposed to be voluntary, removal became mandatory whenever the government deemed it necessary. Thousands of Native Americans including nearly the entire indigenous

population that had existed in the southeastern United States were moved west.

The white European immigrants to satisfy their desire for more capital systematically perpetrated these atrocious acts. The American governmental establishment was a useful capitalistic system that provided the European immigrants the means by which to create and maintain capital. Through a host of treaties, legal decisions, and congressional acts, the United States extended its powers over many Native American nations. When Thomas Jefferson made his address to the 21st Congress, 2nd Session in 1830 he stated, " It gives me pleasure to announce to Congress that the benevolent policy of the Government, steadily pursued for nearly thirty years, in relation to the removal of the Indians beyond the white settlements, is approaching to a happy consummation.

" Native Americans that didn't leave faced concentration onto smaller parcels of land and were compelled into signing treaties ceding larger amounts of land. The non-appearance of political inclusion in the United States and claims to fundamental government and territory since the lands existence help determine the continuity of contemporary tribal governments and reservation land. The poor economic condition on most reservations was a deciding factor in some of the indigenous population's choice to voluntarily assimilate, thinking that their survival depended on their ability to adopt white ways. Others resisted and were often beaten or killed. Despite the immigrants' pressure to assimilate many Native American individuals fought to retain their identities, and reservation communities propose political,

economic, and cultural paths of preservation and community. Unlike the Europeans capitalistic foundation, Native American communities are founded on cultural and governmental principles that provide motivation to preserve social and global relations. Another such capitalistic system is cultural assimilation. Cultural assimilation can range along a continuance from outright isolation, or seclusion to complete assimilation.

Cultural assimilation is the process of taking on the characteristics of a culture by giving up one's own. The first choice of the dominant Europeans was for a Native American tribe to assimilate into the American culture, become " Civilized Christians," give up tribal ways and be absorbed into mainstream American society. Many of the European foreign invaders held the assertion that assimilation is only a negative matter if the indigenous peoples of America are turned against the preservation of their own communities and nationality. While most indigenous communities favored preserving tribal language, community and government, the European settlers desired the very opposite. The ruling class of the newly established America used several methods to ensure that the indigenous people of America assimilated into their white culture as they saw fit without regards to their own cultural practices.

The basis for the use of cultural assimilation was to make the indigenous people of North America profitable to the ruling class, further proving that there exists in America's infancy systems to create and maintain capital. Possibly the most effective tool at the disposal of the white European land robbers was the Indian boarding schools. The goal of these schools was

to eradicate all vestiges of Native American Culture. The intent of the school's facilitators was to use education as a machine to assimilate Native American tribes into the "white" way of life. Within the white's system the indigenous people would become profitable, satisfying their lust for capital gain. Native Americans would be taught American values such as, the importance of private property, material wealth and a monogamous centered family structure. These reformers assumed that it was paramount to "civilize" the indigenous people, and make them accept white men's beliefs and value systems.

The boarding schools were the ideal mechanism for consuming the ideologies that stood in the way of manifest destiny. The schools would quickly be able to assimilate Native youth. De Jong writes, "Assimilationist Richard Henry Pratt held to the moral belief that all Indian children were capable of being assimilated within a single generation" (De Jong 257). The first order of the boarding schools would be to support the elements of academia: reading, writing, and speaking of the English language. Native youth were also taught individuality which contradicted the basic Native American belief of communal ownership of the land. Religious training in Christianity was also taught. The foundation of democratic society, institutions and the political structure would give the student's citizenship training. At the reservation boarding school students spent half of their day learning English and academics and the other half on industrial training.

Harmonization was the order of the day and students spent countless hours marching to and from classes, meals and dormitories. Order, discipline and self-restraint were all cherished values of white society. Despite the influence that the dominant culture had over the original possessors of the land, the indigenous people were initially able to maintain large portions of their culture. It was for this reason that most assimilationists felt that reservation schools were not sufficiently removed from the influences of tribal life. According to mainstream assimilationists, " In their eyes off-reservation boarding schools would be the best hope of changing indigenous children into members of the white society" (Assimilation). In 1879, Richard Henry Pratt established the most well known of all off-reservation boarding schools with the goal of complete assimilation. Pratt's motto was, " Kill the Indian, save the man." Off reservation schools instituted their assault on Native cultural identity by first doing away with all outward signs of tribal life that the students brought with them.

The long braids worn by native boys were cut off. Traditional Native garments were swapped for standard issued uniforms. The children were given " white" names. Traditional Native foods were abandoned, forcing students to acquire the food choices of white society, including the use of eating utensils, napkins and tablecloths. Communication in a Native tongue was forbidden and all that disobeyed were punished.

History was taught with a definite bias. Thanksgiving was a holiday to celebrate " good" Natives having aided the brave Pilgrim Fathers. George Washington's birthday was the reminder of the Great White Father. The

indigenous people of North America suffered land dispossession, forcible relocation and assimilation programs that contributed to the destruction of the indigenous peoples' social and political foundations, resulting in spiritual and physical dislocation. Exploitation forms the infrastructure of a capitalist system and capitalism remains a visible force in today's American society.

This validates Marx's claim that class struggles or the exploitation of one class by another are the motivating force behind all historical developments. Therefore, America was founded on a capitalistic foundation and there exists in its infancy systems to create and maintain capital. Though they were escaping various forms of oppression themselves, the European immigrants were all too eager to oppress North America's Native population by similar means. Works Cited " Assimilation Through Education: Indian Boarding Schools in the Pacific Northwest." American Indians of the Pacific Northwest Collection content. lib. washington.

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