

How and why were
the spanish able to
conquer the
indigenous peoples of
the new wo...

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The Spanish, out of their thirst to attain wealth from their new lands gathered gold, spun cotton and other precious materials in abundance. Spanish had the advantage of Amerindian labor in the new land they acquired. Amerindians were forced to work for them. Spanish intention was to bring the Amerindians to the Catholic faith and at the same time make them work for them. The role of conquistadors, private adventurers, in the conquest of the new world is also worthy to be mentioned here. The Columbian Exchange, population explosion, advent of new food crops and various other factors made the situation favorable for Spanish expeditors. Spread of diseases and epidemic mortality of Amerindian people disappointed the Spanish as they were losing their workforce. Spanish people further moved to the American mainland looking for wealth. Juan Ponce de Leon and several other adventurers earned lands for Spain. They could also bring people to their faith. The royal council composed Requerimiento, the ideological weapon of conquest. Requerimiento was read to the ignorant Amerindians, and they were taken as prisoners. It became an excuse for slaughter and subjugation of helpless Amerindians. Amerindians encountered destruction and massive mortality through the diseases that they could not resist. Epidemics killed a good portion of the population. Amerindians witnessed a massive onslaught because of the deadly pathogens that they were not immune to. Columbian Exchange included transportation of plants, animals, food crops, germs, cattle, sheep and various other things in different direction across the Atlantic. Several new food crops and domestic animals were brought to the Western Hemisphere.

The corruption of the repartimiento-encomienda system resulted in the exploitation of Amerindians who were subjected to a disguised form of slavery. Spanish had their gold thirst satisfied in their contact with the Mexica Empire. According to the Mexica view Spanish “longed and lusted for gold. Their bodies swelled with greed, and their hunger was ravenous. They hungered like pigs for the gold” (Mooney 14). Cortes and his people, in search of wealth, explored Mexico and further moved to the city of Tenochtitlan. Mexica cities like Tenochtitlan, captured Spanish attention as the city was densely populated and had extraordinary features like clean streets, beautiful gardens and running water. Spanish were lavishly given gold and quetzal feathers that they delighted upon. Amerindian allies of the Spanish were an advantage for them. Cortes could successfully gather a big army of Amerindian allies. Spanish made good alliances with the Amerindian people. La Malinche’s played a major role in the conquest of Mexico. She favored the Europeans for profits. La Malinche had her interest satisfied by the Spanish. The conquistadors arrived at Tenochtitlan and took Mocteczuma as captive. Mocteczuma was later killed in the massacre. In La Noche Triste, the night of sorrows, Spanish were drove out of the city, making them miss half of the gold treasures they gathered from Tenochtitlan. Even though Spanish, with the help of their allies planned a return to Tenochtitlan, the epidemic smallpox accompanied them. The Amerindian allies, gunpowder, steel weapons and horses were a great advantage to Spanish people. The epidemic smallpox however nullified all their advantages. Spanish however could take complete advantage over the Incan empire that was troubled by the smallpox epidemic. The wealth from the New World, however, turned out

to be a curse for Spanish. The wealth and the new world brought more troubles than the advantages. Even though they could conquer the indigenous peoples of the New World, and make advantage over people like Amerindians, the conquest ultimately crippled Spain.

Works Cited

Dr. Matthew Mooney, American History.