

The 'valladolid debate' summary



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Before the Spanish entry to America for the reason of colonizing them, the people of America had their own religion and beliefs. Because the Spanish had already put pressure on Americans, Sepulveda finds that to introduce Christianity, which was a new religion to American, will need to force them to believe in Christianity. He thought that the Europeans civilization was superior to the native civilization. Europeans having the power to colonize the native civilization and making them their slaves, made Sepulveda think that European civilization was superior to native civilization.

As America had various native groups, slavery was a common tool that could be imposed on all groups and thus could make it easier for Spanish to civilize and Christianize the native people of America. This shows that Sepulveda lacked a sense of humanity in native America. According to him, Americans were less human, therefore, he could not find any reason that American deserved humans rights. As a Christian and religious leader, Sepulveda could suggest a good method to convert the Americans, but because it was more on colonizing than observing the religious teaching, he could not find another possible way to deal with the matter.

As a priest and a man of God, Las Casas also wanted American people to become Christians. Therefore, Las Casas figure that Christianity was a new religion to Americans, thus it was not right to force them to become Christians but used a method that could consider the human rights and religious rights. This differed with Sepulveda who proposed that the native should be subjected to slave so that they accept the Christianity religion. Las Casas argued that Americans had the right to remain practicing their beliefs no matter how they were and the Spanish could have considered that

regardless of being their colonizer. Las Casas proposal was not easy to be accepted as the Spanish wanted the American to become Christians, which was not an easy task to convert then while on the other hand, Sepulveda argument did not observe the rights of Americans. This was the first debate that addressed the rights of colonized people by the colonizer. Las Casas was referred to as a defender of the Indians for advocating that their rights as colonized should be observed. Therefore, both argument, i. e. the Sepulveda and Las Casas arguments were valid in regards to both sides of colonizer and colonized thus making it each side a winner of the debate.