

Major Differences Between Spanish and British Colonization in America

Posted on June 27, 2018

Introduction

America remained home to many outsiders since its discovery in 1492. The Spanish first explored it in an expedition led by Christopher Columbus. The Spanish Empire colonized America and took control of a major portion of America between the 15th and 19th centuries. Spanish came to America for trade purposes and to spread Christianity among the newly discovered inhabitants. Columbus and his successors made The first Spanish settlement in the late 15th century. This settlement changed America's existing political, social, and religious concepts, and the majority accepted Christianity as a result of efforts by Spanish preachers. In the mid-16th century, the British visited North America, starting a war between Spain and England to take over trade and colonization. finally, the English won the war and took control of North America. In the further paragraphs, we will discuss the major differences between Spanish and British colonization in America, their positive and negative effects on the population, how they shaped America's politics, society, and religious concepts, and we will argue why British colonization was better than Spanish.

Discussion

The diversity of the United States in their religion, politics, social issues, and economy relates to the colonization of the British and Spanish. The first difference between British and Spanish colonization is the difference in religion that the Spanish and British brought with them. Both Spanish and British colonization had a significant effect on the religious beliefs of American Northern colonies. Most of the English colonies were Puritans. In the last half of the seventeenth century, Quakers overcame the Puritans. Quakers believed that neither the Bible nor preachers were necessary to worship God (Roark, p. 79). When the British started colonizing America, most of the colonies were Quakers. Colonies with other religions, such as Puritans, Orthodox, Baptists, and Lutherans started settling. The emphasis on religion was less in the Chesapeake towns where natives' whole belief was in the cultivation of tobacco, and they left religion aside (Roark, pp 60). The religion, as presented by the Spanish, was pure Christian faith, and they executed whoever opposed the pure Christian faith, like the protestants and Quakers. While English colonies were busy cultivating tobacco, the Spanish conquered New Mexico and Florida. Instead of involving themselves in cultivating tobacco, the Spanish started efforts to convert native Indians, who were mainly Angolan, to Christians (Roark, p 65). Spanish started civilizing Native Americans and introduced them to advanced concepts of farming, cattle breeding, weaponry, and tools, they also introduced the concept of equality to men

and abolished slavery. The natives then got attracted to Spanish missionary preachings and anti-slavery concepts, and a huge portion accepted Christianity as faith. There were several Catholic churches made in Mexico and Florida. There was some opposition against Spanish preaching, like the Pueblo Revolt, led by the Pope in 1680, in which they burnt images of Christ and the Virgin Mary and abolished churches. In the next paragraph, we will discuss the British and Spanish politics brought to America.

The politics and governance of the colonies were as diverse as the religion. Puritans mostly controlled the British colonies in the seventeenth century. The founding of Massachusetts Bay Company in 1629 was made and given the control of the General Court. The company stockholders were called freemen. The Puritans presented a Royal charter in the general court which permitted the Massachusetts Bay company to be run in the American colonies rather than in England. This action of Puritans enabled them to take control of the government in present-day Massachusetts. The Spanish government in the Florida and New Mexico colonies was mainly controlled by viceroys and governors, who were directly appointed by the king. The laws that were implemented in the colonies were directly given by the king and colonists had to obey these orders at any cost. Most of the Protestants were killed as they opposed the laws enforced on them. The Pueblo Revolt opposed not only the religion imposed on them but also the strict government laws enforced on them by the Spanish. The British relationship with native Americans helped them trade, and they generated revenue by cultivating crops. The colonies of Maryland, Virginia, and Carolina were fully devolved by the start of the eighteenth century, grew staple crops for export, and provided livelihood to many Native Americans. The British colonists had the concept that all men are created equal and deserve equal rights irrespective of their race and color. Many poor natives who got inspired from British equality concepts flocked to the British colonies, and many Indians converted to Protestants, this is different from what happened in New Mexico and Florida where Catholic missionaries enforced religion to them. The forced labor system of “Ecomienda” that the Spanish tried to impose on natives was never accepted by the British colonists. They rejected the concept of slavery, but in contradiction, they still made many Indians and Africans their slaves and defined themselves as superior to them. Next, we will discuss the points based on the colonies’ economic structure.

In British colonies, the economy was based on farming and trade. As the soil of New England was rocky, it did not permit the traditional type of farming that was done in the fertile soil of England. The British colonists were forced by the government to involve in trade with the native Indians to obtain pelts of furry animals as they were in great demand in England (Roark, pp 77), while they searched for furry animals they found vast forests that could be used for timber, and pelts then became one of the highest earning trade items. Another big trade item was the codfish, which was abundant on the New England coast and played a huge role in the growing economy of England. The soil of New Netherland colonies was rich in fertility, wheat was cultivated in abundance, and wheat flour was the number one export item from the middle colonies (Roark, p 96). The second biggest trade item was tobacco, which was cultivated in southern colonies. As the cultivation of tobacco requires effort, the farmers were mostly the slaves whom the colonists bought to perform heavy tasks. The concept of slavery is similar to the British and Spanish colonies, but the difference lies in the enforcement. The

British intelligently used native Indians for their benefit, but the Spanish opted for the way of enforcement. We can be seen from the opposition that started against them as they forced the native Indians to work for the Spanish monarchy (Roark, p. 46).

Conclusion

Based on the facts that we found in the book, it can be concluded that British colonization was better than the Spanish colonization of America. The enforcement of religion and slavery-like, like many other examples in history, has never made any nation obey the rules of the oppressor, and the same thing happened with Spanish colonization, which eventually led to a failure. The governments, while making new settlements, should apply an intelligent approach while colonizing new populations. As we see from the British rule in North and Southern America, for a nation to work under another nation's rule, the rulers have to be gentle and intelligent while presenting religion and new concepts to the new colony.

Works Cited

Roark, James L., et al. The American Promise, Volume I: To 1877: A History of the United States. Vol. 1. Macmillan, 2012.