

The Final Empire

Chapter 11

THE HISTORY OF MODERN COLONIALISM

If we imagine a hive of honey bees, working cooperatively, gathering nectar in the rhythm of the seasons, all working together, fanning their wings to cool the hive, working together to raise the brood and if we saw them adopt the social ethics of civilization we would see immediate social breakdown.

We would no doubt see warlordism break out. Factions would develop, fighting for the control of the hive. Other groups may develop to attempt to steal the honey for themselves. Hierarchies would develop and each war group would struggle against the other to enslave the workers for their own benefit. Cooperative efficiency would plummet. The hive itself would begin to deteriorate without the constant repair, but certain strong warlord groups would corner the large shares of the honey and live royally. Workers would be told that if they are loyal and if they compete, they might someday have a large horde of honey such as controlled by their warlord. The history of empire culture is not much more complex than this, other than the dates and names. It is a history of conquest, of thievery and killing.

The basis, the fuel, of this dynamic is the living flesh of the earth. The competition/conflict enters with the question of who controls and thus is able to extort this living fertility. We have reviewed the early development of this dynamic and described its history. In this chapter we look at recent historic times. We must see that this is an immediate and present part of our existence. The elites and their controlled media will acknowledge the moral and personal experience of the enslaving of African people but they will never put this information into a context of the wider history of slavery, imperialism and colonialism going back to Babylon and the original Chinese dynasties. It is not pointed out that slavery is only a part of a whole dynamic of control and coercion that still exists, without human ownership of humans, but the rest intact. *In 1998, fewer than 500 billionaires have more wealth than more than one-half of the world population.* Little has changed. The new development is that now the elites do not have the expense of the upkeep of the wage slaves, they are no longer valuable property.

The conflict/competition for power pervades the culture. As we have seen in the previous chapter, the struggle for control is imbedded in the very psyche of the neurotic culture. The struggle for power goes on among family members, in the "office politics" of all mass institutions, between mass institutions and between governments. This struggle for power is at the base of modern colonialism. Much of modern colonialism has been a competitive struggle between the various empire culture governments of Europe in a race to loot the planet. We have examined the extortion basis of the culture of empire. The system of extortion began with the

biological slaves and went on to female slavery and general plantation slavery of humans as a production mechanism within society. In examining the recent history of what has become the world industrial empire, we will see that the techniques of coercion have only grown more efficient since Babylonian, Greek and Roman armies went out on slave hunting expeditions.

The development of mechanical technique (a.k.a. science) in important ways has been to facilitate and make more efficient the coercive extortion of fertility from the earth. We will see that those ruling the empires have never shrunk away from the most atrocious methods by which to obtain power. The quest for super-profits (economic power) has used slavery, drugs, munitions, the fomenting of war, sugar, rum and any other addictive, corrupting substance or product by which to gain control and wealth.

The morality of honesty, truthfulness, cooperation and sharing of the former forager/hunter culture existed on a functional basis. There was little hierarchical power to struggle for. The organized hunts and the running of the camp needed truthfulness to benefit all and there was no reason to lie to gain advantage. The carrying out of cooperative enterprise requires that everyone be truthful in order for it to succeed. In our former culture there was a real functional basis for that morality. After the inversion, lies, thievery, murder, selfishness, and slavery became the path of power for individuals and emperor/elites. As we review the history of colonialism we see that the espoused social morality is only a facade to quiet the masses while those who are really serious about the strategy of power practice what is necessary to maintain the huge disparity of power and wealth.

The Invasion of The Americas

"Like monkeys they seized upon the gold. They thirsted mightily for gold they stuffed themselves with it, and hungered and lusted for it like pigs."

-From the Florentine Codex of the Mayas, a Sixteenth Century Mayan account of the Spanish invasion of the Americas.

In the islands of the Caribbean, Christopher Columbus and his Spanish crew were met with hospitality. The indigenous people came out to the ships with flowers, food and friendship. Great feasts were celebrated in the travelers' honor. Columbus and his colleagues came to hold these people in awe.

He says, in his journals, that it had seemed to him that it would be good to take some persons, to carry to the sovereigns, so that "they might learn our tongue, so as to know what there is in the country, and so that when they come back they may be tongues to the Christians, and receive our customs and the things of the faith. Because I saw

and know," says the Admiral, "that this people has no religion nor are they idolaters, but very mild and without knowing what evil is, nor how to kill others, nor how to take them, and without arms, and so timorous that from one of our men ten of them fly, although they do sport with them, and ready to believe and knowing that there is a God in heaven, and sure that we have come from heaven; and very ready at any prayer which we tell them to repeat, and they make the sign of the cross.

"So your Highnesses should determine to make them Christians, for I believe that if they begin, in a short time they will have accomplished converting to our holy faith a multitude of towns.

"Without doubt there are in these lands the greatest quantities of gold, for not without cause do these Indians whom I am bringing say that there are places in these isles where they dig out gold and wear it on their necks, in their ears and on their arms and legs, and the bracelets are very thick."

Before Columbus had finished his several trips to the islands a gold mine had been established and five hundred natives had been carried away in captivity to Spain. Ultimately, because of the activities of Columbus, the islands and their inhabitants were devastated.

The Spanish led the assault on the cultures of the Americas, pursuing gold. Nothing highlights the materialism of the cultures of Europe better than the "gold fever" that grips minds conditioned by ideas of power and wealth. In 1519, Cortez and his followers stormed into the Aztec capital of Tenochtitlán lusting for the yellow metal. Historical records state that human blood ran through the streets of the capital for days. The records maintain that the Europeans and their native allies tired of the drudgery of butchering people day after day.

The invasion of Mexico proceeded and after the invasion of Mexico, the Spanish invaded the Mayan regions in Central America. Had the Spanish been a different people, had they not been fanatics of the collective ego of European culture who could not see the value of any other culture, they would have been able to understand the value of the cultures they destroyed. The vast knowledge of the people of these groups and the productive capacity of their societies would have been worth far more to Europe than all of the gold they carried away. The art, the collective creativity of several cultures, was melted down and shipped to Europe. In many cases the art had more value than the yellow metal with which it was created, but that concept was too sophisticated for the invaders to comprehend at the time.

The writings of the Aztecs and Mayans, including a vast storehouse of astronomical and cultural knowledge, were burned by the fanatical cleric, Bishop Diego De Landa. What is now known as the "Florentine Codex," quoted at the beginning of this chapter, was shipped to Europe where it remains today in the private library of the Vatican. Pizarro, European invader of the Inca society, was motivated by such deficient morality that his troops were in the habit of murdering local Indians and then quartering their bodies to hang from the porches for dog food. Everywhere the Spanish employed the torture techniques of the Catholic Inquisition against native people.

Today the vast highways, agricultural systems and irrigation works of Inca society lie in disuse and disrepair. Even though Pizarro could destroy Inca society and extract the gold, the Spanish were not competent to administer the region. The population in the former land of the Inca have not yet, to this day, attained the cultural vitality or living standards enjoyed in the days before the European invasion. The Aztec and Inca societies were empires themselves, in that they were hierarchical structures of power. They were also male-dominated.

The Aztecs depended upon tribute from conquered peoples and it appears from what we know about them that materialism was an incipient factor in their culture. The Incas on the other hand seemed to have created an aboriginal communism. In cases, the Inca system added tribes when they petitioned for admission and in cases negotiations brought in new groups. When the Inca system came to a new group, the Inca engineers would create new irrigation systems, roadways, storage structures for crops and other amenities for the local population. In return the locals paid a share of the produce, which was far less than the tax that was to come with the Spanish.

The Incas built sophisticated highways and irrigation systems that have yet to be equaled. By transporting guano (seabird manure) fertilizer from the Galapagos Islands up into the elaborate high mountain terrace agriculture, the Incas had created an ecological niche for themselves that provided stability, much like the stability created by the flooding of the Nile Valley in Egypt prior to the construction of the Aswan Dam.

The Mayan culture as a whole was not until its last days, based on military power. It was significantly different from that of either the Aztecs or Incas. It was not based upon the large irrigation systems or highways of the Incas, nor was it based upon conquest and tribute such as with the Aztecs. The Mayas were a rainforest culture that relied on sophisticated and sustainable rainforest horticulture, which was primarily decentralized. The ruins that remain in Central America were not population centers with markets and administrative apparatus but ceremonial centers for native religious/cultural practices.

After the Aztec gold was gone the Spanish continued their quest for precious metals, establishing mines in any area that seemed promising. Zacatecas, Guanajuato, Ixmiquilpan, Zimapan, Pachuca, Chaucingo, Temascaltepec, Tlalpujahuá and Parral, in Mexico were denuded of vegetation for the smelters and of natives for the labor. When so many natives had been worked to death that there was danger that the mines might shut down, African slaves were imported to work the Mexican mines as they had been to work the plantations of the Caribbean after the natives had expired there.

The Spanish did not progress as rapidly in the tropical Central American region as they had in Aztec lands further north because of the rainforest and because there was a relative paucity of gold amassed in the Mayan ceremonial centers. The Spanish Empire did establish a thin European political hegemony all through the region on the coasts and the flat lands of Central America. A plantation economy, designed to extort the fertility of the soil with slave labor, was established in the more level areas where rainforest was cleared and the empire culture was able to gain a foothold.

From these bases, exports could be shipped and European products (especially military supplies) could be received, insuring continued European domination of the region. In this manner the imperial hierarchies became rooted in the area. Human slavery is identified with the plantation slavery of Africans in the social mind of empire. In actuality, empires themselves are institutionalized coercion and slavery. The hierarchical systems of order provide significant control of people while slavery is total control. This, in contrast with our former culture in which there were no police, jails or centralized power over others.

During the Spanish conquest the King of Spain would "give" large grants of land in the Americas to prominent conquistadors and colonists. All native people that existed on that land were also included. In practice the conquistadors enslaved those that were needed and killed drove away or sold the rest. Cortez, for example, received twenty-three thousand vassals (slaves) for his efforts in the conquest.¹

Though we call it by various euphemisms, the power relationships between the oligarchy and the peasants of El Salvador have not changed since the Indians were enslaved to work the original estates of that country. This remains true in much of Latin America where Indians are dominated in a system of violence, coercion and Latino racism. Modern armies supplied by the industrial state now enforce this caste-racial system. The difference in the colonial systems between "settler" countries like the U.S., Australia and New Zealand and "conquest" countries like El Salvador, Peru and Bolivia is that in the former, European settlers swarmed into the areas to create a society and economy that replicated the mother country but was centered in the colonial country. In the colonial style exhibited by El Salvador, Peru and Bolivia, the colonization was to profit by export to the mother country. This was in the style of the latifundia, the large state-owned and slave or peasant-worked farms of Roman times. The profit from this "landed estate" system goes to benefit a small elite who controls the land and the masses of the population. On the other hand, in the countries that began as smallholder-settler colonies, there were not the large factory-farm systems that could profit by cheap labor. Because of this, in the places like the U.S., if the natives could not be used as cheap labor on the settlers' farms and or industries, they were pushed away and confined or eliminated by wars of extermination.

In the "conquest" areas Natives were more likely to be worked to death. Historian Alanzo de Zorita describes conditions in the occupied territories of Mexico where the latifundia system was established:

"The collective tribute and labor demands of the Spanish settlers, the Crown, and the Church far exceeded the relatively puny exactions of the Aztec rulers, nobility, and priesthood. The more advanced European economy demanded a large increase in the supply of labor. The conquistadors or their sons became capitalist entrepreneurs with visions of limitless wealth to be obtained through silver mines, sugar and cacao plantations, cattle ranches, wheat farms. The intensity of exploitation of Indian labor became intolerable. And the Indians, their bodies enfeebled by excessive toil, malnutrition, and the hardships of long journeys to distant mines and plantations, their spirits broken by the loss of ancient tribal purposes and beliefs that gave meaning to life, became easy prey to disease, both endemic and epidemic, to maladies with which they were familiar and to scourges imported by the Europeans: smallpox, influenza, measles, typhoid, malaria. A demographic tragedy of frightful proportions resulted. The Indian population of Mexico, according to a recent estimate based on published tribute records, declined from approximately 16,871,408 in 1532 to 2,649,573 in 1568, 1,372,228 in 1595, and 1,069,255 in 1608.

"Technological changes of Spanish origin contributed to this disaster. A horde of Spanish-imported cattle and sheep swarmed over the Mexican land, often invading not only the land vacated by the declining Indian population but also the reserves of land needed by the Indian system of field rotation. The introduction of plow agriculture, less productive than Indian hoe agriculture per unit of land, and Spanish

diversion of scarce water resources from Indian fields to their own fields, cattle ranches, and flour mills, also tended to upset the critical balance between land and people in Indian Mexico."²

It is estimated that Mexico was heavily forested on over half of its land area at the start of the conquest. Now less than 10% is forested and that is swiftly being destroyed. The process of empire culture has reduced present-day Mexico to a bare skeleton. The only thing of value in that region that can be dug up and sold today is the oil from the ground. Most of the land of Mexico is in an advanced state of eco-death, while its impoverished population explodes. Population doubling time in Mexico is now 25 years. A large share of the Natives died in the mines that the Spanish quickly opened after the Aztec and Inca treasures were hauled away. Eduardo Galeano in his *Open Veins of Latin America: Five Centuries of the Pillage of a Continent*, tells of Potosí in the present country of Bolivia. Potosí is now a relic but it was once a huge city of splendor, living from the silver mines in the area. In 1650, Potosí was one of the biggest and richest cities in the world. Luxuries from the far-flung parts of the empire were shipped to Potosí in return for silver. The luxuries of the Colonial Europeans were generated by the enslavement of the native society. Galeano says that in three centuries the mines of Potosí consumed eight million Indian lives. He says that: "Many people claimed mestizo status before the court to avoid being sent to the mines and sold and resold on the market."³

"The Indians of the Americas totaled no less than 70 million. When the foreign conquerors appeared on the horizon a century and a half later they had been reduced to 3.5 million."⁴

The land of Mexico, Central America and Latin America is still, with the exception of Cuba and Nicaragua, owned and controlled by very small but powerful elites. Large modern plantations still generate wealth for the colonial elites and their allies, the bankers and industrialists of the First World.

The Onset of Machine Culture

Modern European imperialism may be said to have begun with the Spanish and Portuguese conquests during the late 1400's and early 1500's. Originally, the European conquests simply replicated European feudalism on new continents, continuing a pattern of imperialism not unlike that of Rome, Greece, Sumeria, and other Indo-European imperial predecessors, or the Han Chinese. But something new was afoot upon the earth in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. As the Spanish and Portuguese consolidated their colonies in Latin America, Africa and Southern Asia, a change began to occur in Europe, which is now called the Industrial Revolution.

Fueled by transworld trade promoted by a new and growing class of mercantilists, the Industrial Revolution was to simultaneously alter European peasant society almost beyond recognition and to ensure the destruction of native cultures worldwide. The pattern of empire is to conquer peripheral territories, rape them, and ship the valuables to the center of the empire, to feed its further expansion. The initial purpose of the Spanish Empire was to get gold. Gold was the premium article because it could be absorbed easily by the mother country. But ultimately, in order to efficiently absorb

the food and fiber shipments that were being drained from the colonies, the infrastructures of the imperial centers were going to have to change. The industrial revolution solved this problem neatly by initiating the pattern of industrialism that exists today.

A mechanized industrial society could use much greater inputs of imported resources than could a feudal society. Industry allowed more types of resources to be utilized. The new machines began to process those raw materials and turn them into finished, manufactured items. While most of the production enriched Europe, some was shipped back to the colonies for sale at high prices, which further exploited the colonies. Colonial governments displaced natives from their traditional means of survival, and actively discouraged European colonists and natives from developing their own cottage industries, thus forcing the colonies to purchase European manufactured goods. (This type of exploitation was eventually to spawn the Boston Tea Party in America.

The famous Swadeshi movement of Mahatma Gandhi, formed in British-colonized India during the late 1800's, aimed to reclaim the economic power of the spinning wheel back at the cottage level. The British had prohibited many cottage industries including home cloth making in India because they wanted to create consumers for manufactured items like the cloth produced by the textile industry of England. The Swadeshi slogan was, "production by the masses, not mass production.")

The End of Peasant Subsistence Culture

The shift to markets and a manufacturing economy dismembered peasant subsistence culture all over Europe. The machine and its cultural accouterments was the last lever to pry Europeans away from any remaining natural relationship to the land and to organic reality. Europe in the Middle Ages was still largely an agrarian society. The feudal lords of Europe jostled each other for power, wealth and territory, but the organization of society had not yet attained complete dependence on gold as the organizing principle of the society. Currency and markets had not yet become all powerful.

In their daily lives, the medieval peasantry conducted a human community-centered society with extended family systems. Despite centuries of domination by Roman and post-Roman civilized thought forms, and despite the fact that the peasants themselves had descended from invading patriarchal Indo-European tribes such as the Celts, Angles, Saxons, and others, fifteenth-century European peasant society retained significant qualities of ancient human culture. People shared food and took some responsibility for each other. Individual starvation seldom occurred. Peasant society was a subsistence community devoted to the feeding, housing and care of its members. The peasants' relationship to the land was strong and carried with it limited rights. Society had not yet become a market economy. Yet the essence of medieval peasant society had degraded vastly from tribal hunter-forager existence. These people were the inheritors of thousands of years of Indo-European divergence from Natural culture. They lived in a society structured by hierarchy and patriarchy, where the elite accumulated material wealth and power by pursuing military adventure. Peasant surpluses, "the rent" enriched an elite class of landed nobles and royalty.

Patriarchy appears to be endemic to Indo-European culture. The root language, which linguists call Indo-European, was spoken at least ten thousand years ago by peoples in the Caucasus Mountains of Central Asia. Linguist Emile Beneviste writes of the primacy of paternity over maternity, "All the facts up to now prompt us to recognize the primacy of the concept of paternity in Indo-European."⁵ Beneviste finds no female counterpart to the formal word for father in the original Indo-European language. His linguistic study points to "the non-existence of any legal status for the mother in Indo-European society. The absence of a word *matrius* as a counterpart to *patrius* may be cited."⁶ Strict patriarchy certainly characterizes the cultures of Indo-European linguistic groups from India to England. A steady swing of the axe had gone on in Europe for thousands of years after invading Indo-Europeans displaced the ancient forager/hunters who had populated Europe. Cattle, sheep, and goats, brought into Europe with the Indo-European cultural groups, cannot well utilize forests. Cereal grains, the basis of the Indo-European cultural metabolism, cannot be grown unless the forest is cut down and open fields established. Because this metabolism depends upon good soils for their agriculture, we find them in many areas where forests had formerly existed.

After the Thirteenth Century AD, when the Arabs invaded the Iberian peninsula, heavy sheep grazing became part of the culture of Spain, spreading from there to Italy. The forests of these areas went down to create grasslands for grazing, resulting in severe soil erosion. As European empires developed, the forests were increasingly decimated for smelting and shipbuilding for foreign trade and war fleets as well as being cleared for agriculture. The introduction of industrial machinery to weave cloth in England in the Sixteenth Century created a flourishing cloth and wool industry there. The English quickly became the leaders in the Industrial Revolution. As the English drew resources out of their new colonies, they manufactured items such as cloth for sale back to the colonies. Large supplies of cotton and wool were necessary. These were obtained from Europe and from colonies such as Egypt and what is now the southeastern United States. European land-based peasants and gentry alike began to be cashiered from the land by industrialists who needed the land to produce raw materials for industry, such as to raise sheep to supply the new woolen mills.

Dispossessed peasants were forced into the swelling labor pool of the young industrial system. Land and humans were becoming commodities for sale on the labor markets and commercial markets of the industrial empire. People did not give themselves up to the labor market easily. The bulk of the peasantry produced most of what they needed from their own plots and by their own effort. They had little relation to the money (market) economy and little incentive to work in the horrible conditions of the factories. Commentators of the day noted that higher wages produced less work. The reason was simple if wages were high, people would more rapidly gain the little they needed for subsistence and would quit sooner. The laboring classes were still of peasant culture. They produced most of what they needed within their families and had not yet developed unlimited needs or desires for material wealth that would keep them at the wheel indefinitely. Economic historian Karl Polanyi writes:

"The Lyons manufacturers of the eighteenth century urged low wages primarily for social reasons. Only an overworked and downtrodden laborer, they argued, would forgo to associate with his comrades and escape the condition of personal servitude under which he could be made to do whatever his master required from him. Legal

compulsion and parish serfdom as in England, the rigors of an absolutist labor police as on the continent, indentured labor as in the early Americas were the prerequisites of the 'willing worker.' But the final stage was reached with the application of 'nature's penalty,' hunger. In order to release it [labor] it was necessary to liquidate organic society, which refused to permit the individual to starve."⁷

In England, as in many other European countries, parcels of land, and the people on the land, were divided up among landowning nobles. In cultural practice, however, feudal society functioned somewhat like a large family. The peasants had obligations to the baron and the baron had obligations to the peasantry, especially to provide military protection. In this large, somewhat communal family, land tenure was not based on the concept of private property but was held according to "traditional use," a complex of culturally sanctioned arrangements. The agreements of traditional use were destroyed by the Industrial Revolution. Suddenly the English land barons began to say, "I own this land and now I want the peasants removed." The notorious English "enclosure laws" of the sixteenth century stripped peasants of the forest and pasturelands that they had traditionally held in common with the aristocracy.

The numbers of poor and wandering homeless rose. Polanyi writes of this period:

"Enclosures have appropriately been called a revolution of the rich against the poor. The lords and nobles were upsetting the social order, breaking down ancient law and custom, sometimes by means of violence, often by pressure and intimidation. They were literally robbing the poor of their share in the common, tearing down the houses which, by the hitherto unbreakable force of custom, the poor had long regarded as theirs and their heirs'. The fabric of society was being disrupted. Desolate villages and the ruins of human dwellings testified to the fierceness with which the revolution raged, endangering the defenses of the country, wasting its towns, decimating its population, turning its overburdened soil into dust, harassing its people and turning them from decent husbandmen into a mob of beggars and thieves. Though this happened only in patches, the black spots threatened to melt into a uniform catastrophe."⁸

Vagrancy laws were also instituted at this time. It became a crime not to have money. This was particularly directed toward the self-sufficient peasantry because, though they were well fed and housed, they participated only marginally in the money economy. Their domestic industry was land-based, not market-based. Though they were self-sufficient, according to the new laws they were vagrants, and as such were rounded up and sent to the poorhouses where they were rented out as workers to the monied landowners and factory owners. (Vagrancy laws continued to be enforced in the U.S. as late as the 1950's.)

The slums of the new industrial towns were filled with former peasants who were now little more than slaves. Polanyi describes their plight:

"Local authorities were gladly taking advantage of the unexpected demand of the cotton mills for destitute children whose apprenticing was left to the care of the parish. Many hundreds were indentured with manufacturers, often in distant parts of the country. Altogether the new towns developed a healthy appetite for paupers. Factories were even prepared to pay for the use of the poor. Adults were assigned to any

employer who would take them for their keep just as they would be billeted out in turn amongst the farmers of the parish, in one or another form of the roundsman system. Farming out was cheaper than the running of 'gaols without guilt,' as workhouses were sometimes called."⁹

What had been accomplished was a pattern as old as empire, separate self-sufficient people from the land and force them into dependency on the food distribution of the elite. In recent centuries this means being forced into the money economy controlled by the elite. In older times this meant depriving forager/hunters of the use of their traditional gathering areas.

By 1700 the wealth of Europe was concentrated in a few hands and the poverty of the masses was well advanced. By that time subsistence culture was doomed, the power of the nobles was on the decline, and the entrepreneurial "gentlemen farmers" and wealthy industrialists had the upper hand.

Waves of social revolution swept Europe throughout the twelfth through eighteenth centuries. These various and diverse movements, including the Luddites, the Levellers, the Diggers, the Chartists, the Quakers, and others, were spiritually based. They were usually anti-materialist in the sense that they were a move toward a social form of communalism, which incorporated the sharing of meals and property. The impulse toward communalism and anti-materialism was strong. Resistance to the shredding of the last of human social environments as represented by feudalism caused constant revolt and even at times, civil war. Occasionally, whole areas and cities were taken over by these groups. The popes and royalty put these affronts to hierarchy and elitism down by bringing out armies to massacre the participants. Even so, spiritual heirs of these movements continue to attempt to return to a more natural way of life, even to this day.

The Conquest of Rationalism

"Progress," "development" and "productivity" were the intellectual banners of the new entrepreneurial class as it attacked traditional society. A social movement developed, led by the commercial interests whose rallying cry was "free markets" and "unfettered freedom of action for commerce." Then, as now, the touted benefits went largely to the new industrial class, as the numbers of the poor and dispossessed grew. As poverty increased among the masses, the industrialists secured their hold on society. Foreign trade, foreign adventurism and imperialism increased. Most of us have been taught in our schools to regard this era of industrial assault as a time of great progress but it was only "progress" for the elite.

The philosophers of the new movement were the "rationalists." The rationalists believed that human "reason" should be the basis of human conduct. They were set in opposition to the "traditionalists" of various stripes, who accepted truth based on revelation, the Christian Bible, tradition, other "non-scientific" beliefs, or on the remnants of aboriginal knowledge still in the culture. The products of mechanical invention and the new empirical-experimental science continually revolutionized industrial expansion. The vitality of life came to be perceived as the rigid functioning of chemical processes and the earth was perceived as a machine, a giant clock. As scientists projected the new society's thought-forms onto the universe, the mystery

and awe of life evaporated. Science and industry promulgated a world-view, which turned millions of years of human culture, on its head. Now consciously seeking to "subdue" Nature, they waged social war against tradition.

Women were singled out as enemies of the new rationalism. For centuries European village women had retained and passed on remnants of the knowledge of pre-Roman, pre-Christian culture. Women were often powerful figures in peasant village life, maintaining the stability of the people's relationship to the land by practicing their knowledge of healing, of herbs, of the natural life of the earth. The power of these women had long stymied the efforts of the patriarchal Church of Rome to control the peasantry. Now the church, the mercantile state, and the new philosophers of rational "science" joined forces in a largely successful assault of torture and murder aimed at physically eradicating all remaining practitioners of natural healing arts. A bloody convulsion of state- and church- sponsored witch-hunts took place throughout Europe during the sixteenth century. In the several countries for which we have records, over 100,000 people were prosecuted for witchcraft, over 80 per cent of them women.¹⁰ In some cases; female populations of whole villages were tortured to death. The Christian hate propaganda, an early example of the cover-ups and misinformation campaigns of the type which today are used to rationalize the murder of the last tribal peoples on earth, masked, and continues to mask, the true aim of the witch hunts: to finally stamp out Natural culture.

The concept of "progress" is really the old mythos of linear increase dressed in new clothing. People believed that commerce, science, industrialism and the conquest of the inferior by the superior would cause the human family to continually improve its condition (and by the end of the sixteenth century the lot of most of human society in Europe desperately needed improving!). Not even the most rash would say that there would ever be any end to the linear increase of wealth and its benefits created by marketing and technology. It appeared that progress would be infinite, even to the stars. Thus Europeans, en masse, fell victim to the imperialist belief system and the subliminal justification for empire became ingrained in the culture.

Europe Explodes Across the Earth

In 1800 well over half of the earth was populated by tribal, hunter-forager people. These people had maintained their cultural patterns since Pleistocene times. These cultures, which emphasize balance with the natural world, had stable populations. It was against this background of stability that the European Empire exploded.

In Europe the social and environmental disruption caused by empire culture was accelerated dramatically by the Industrial Revolution. It created a population explosion. Demographers estimate that, prior to the Industrial Revolution, the doubling time of the "civilized" world population was approximately once every 250 years, a rate of increase that had generally remained stable back into the distant past. Between 1850 and 1930 world population doubled -in 80 years. The populations of the U.S., Canada, Australia and Argentina tripled between 1850 and 1900. *During the nineteenth century the world population of Europeans, including both the inhabitants of the European continent and the overseas colonials, increased between three and four times as fast as the native populations of other continents.*¹¹ Today, in the 1980's, the world population doubling time is estimated to be only 33 years and is falling. The

reasons for this human population increase may be discerned by studying natural life. Stability prevails in undisturbed natural systems. Species populations of a stable ecosystem remain in balance with one another. When the ecosystem is injured or destroyed, food sources are thrown out of balance. Some foods become more abundant while others disappear, causing the populations of some species to expand while others diminish or become extinct. For a time the ecosystem experiences upheaval, as out-of-balance populations experiencing unchecked growth, swell, exhaust food sources, and crash. Slowly, after a natural disruption, such as a volcanic eruption, the system heals and stability returns.

In Europe, centuries of human disturbance had depleted the land, and human populations had already suffered several large expansions followed by dramatic crashes caused by plagues. By the sixteenth century, human populations of Europe were just recovering from the decimation of the latter waves of medieval plague. During the time when human populations had plummeted, the resilient European landscape, especially the forests, had recovered somewhat from the depredations of farming, and mining inflicted upon it in previous centuries. With the arrival of the Industrial Revolution the commercial interests quickly exploited the health of the land of Europe but there was a new development, the imported raw materials. The new inflow of raw materials from the colonies swelled the productive capacity of European society beyond anything previously imagined. Despite the general misery, the population of Europe increased.

One of the great services the colonization of North America performed for Europe was the export of European population. Had not massive transfers of the exploding European population occurred, sooner or later the progressively impoverished masses of Europe may have achieved their growing demands that the rich share food and wealth. By exporting masses of population the European elite could keep its wealth and control, and the colonists would generate even more wealth from abroad to enrich the empire. This is one of the reasons that elites of all empires demand growth. If there is a growth situation, the people experience increases and don't demand what the elite have. At the same time, if the pie is growing, the elite's percentage share grows faster and the new shares at the bottom come from growth and not from the accumulations of the elite.

Between 1820 and 1930 Europe exported more than 50 million people, one-fifth of the population.¹² Thirty-five million people were exported from Europe in the last half of the Nineteenth Century alone. During approximately that same period, tribal populations worldwide declined precipitously. Anthropologist John H. Bodley writes:

"...It might be conservatively estimated that during the 150 years between 1780 and 1930 world tribal populations were reduced by at least thirty million as a direct result of the spread of industrial civilization. A less conservative and probably more realistic estimate would place the figure at perhaps fifty million."¹²

The varying estimates of world tribal populations are partially a result of newer research. As the European conquest proceeded, there were many areas into which they spilled that were "empty." Like the wild horse that proceeded the European-human arrival on the Great Plains of North America by centuries, human diseases from Europe raced ahead of the conquerors. In his work, *Ecological Imperialism*, Alfred

W. Crosby shows that when Cortez was retaking the Aztec capital of Tenochtitlán, the Aztecs holding the city were already and at the same time undergoing a severe epidemic of smallpox. By the time Pizzaro came to ravage the Incas, smallpox had already been there and decimated the population.

Crosby states that:

"The disease often spread far beyond the European frontier, often to people who had barely heard of the white invaders. Smallpox probably reached the Puget Sound area on the northwest Pacific coast in 1782 or 1783, a part of the world then as distant from the main centers of human population as any place on earth. When the explorer George Vancouver sailed into the Sound in 1793, he found Amerindians with pockmarked faces, and human bones scattered along the beach at Port Discovery - skulls, limbs, ribs, backbones - so many as to produce the impression that this was 'a general cemetery for the whole of the surrounding country.' He judged that 'at no very remote period this country had been far more populous than at present.' It was an assessment that he could accurately have extended to the entire continent."¹³

The toll of the human massacre that was the European -industrial colonization of the earth was in the multiple tens of millions. The conservative anthropological guess that makes estimates from tribes now existing, is thirty million. From the public health view of Crosby this may be boosted to well over one hundred million people. Whatever the monstrous statistics are, we should be alerted that this is the most incredible murder of human populations that has ever happened on the planet. Also it should be noted that in our cultural reality this has gone into the memory vacuum. The significance of this mass murder occupies little space in history books and the public has little understanding that their colonies are based in such dimensions of death.

Given the respective cultural assumptions held by invader and native about life and reality, there was and is no way that the two views of life could live side by side. The one lives stably in its habitat, the living world. The other eats up the living world for its growth. The European existed in a mental-cultural realm of products and beliefs attached to the cultural centers of Europe. The tribal native represented the antithesis of what European culture described as the "proper" way to live. In many cases it was difficult for the Europeans to view the natives as actual human beings. In some areas the natives were consciously worked to death, and in many areas were hunted like game animals. In the early Anglo settlement of California, for example, parties of gentlemen hunters often gathered in San Francisco to go out "hunting" the peaceful natives in the northern part of the state. The programming and conditioning of the culture of empire is so profound that even today it is difficult for the person of industrial culture to see a human being of another culture who is lacking money or high-priced manufactured possessions, as significant.

The truly horrible things done by the Nazis to the Jews, Gypsies, homosexuals and anti-fascists during the holocaust are held up to the world as an extreme example of human inhumanity to human, and deservedly so. This inhumanity happened to white-skinned people of European culture and so is deemed nightmarish by the civilized mind. Little notice is taken by the "official" histories of the tens of millions of native victims of the atrocities during expansion of the European Empire. The colonizers of the empire on the frontier periphery functioned in a vacuum of official attention, and

in many cases enjoyed official complicity while doing their killing and torturing of natives. The "frontier" industrial culture settlers were armed with the latest machine made weapons from the factories of Europe. Native people of the world were little prepared to roll back the invasion.

There were those back in the capitals of Europe and in the colonies that began to clothe these thefts of land and killing of alien people, in theological, moral and legalistic phrases. In his study of the legal relationship between Native Americans and the U.S. government, *Behind the Trail of Broken Treaties: An Indian Declaration of Independence*, Vine DeLoria Jr. points out that the early Puritans claimed the biblical edict of "go forth and multiply" as the reason that they should take native land. As there was no room in Europe to "go forth and multiply," therefore God must have meant them to come to North America.¹⁴ To a European of that time and to a transnational corporation of our time, the idea that human beings can live on the earth without substantially altering and "developing" it is absurd. When empire culture people encounter tribal hunter-forager people who live on the earth without altering it, they assume that the land is not being "used." They refer to it as "wilderness" and abhor this condition. To the European, it is clearly justifiable to take land not being put to "proper use" in order to make it "productive" through farming or herding. DeLoria exposes one of the big myths in European culture- the myth that when native people are exposed to the "obviously superior" culture of the empire they will voluntarily give up their culture and join the invader's culture.

This myth contradicts the worldwide warfare with native people, which has taken place throughout the imperial-industrial expansion. This myth is supported by the basic assumption of the imperial psyche that its own culture is superior to all others. This in turn is supported by the competitive social Darwinist view, which further twisted the nineteenth-century notion of "survival of the fittest" into the idea that those who muscled their way to the top of social hierarchies were obviously the "fittest" to rule. (Nazism and fascism developed logically from this thought.) DeLoria goes to the heart of the matter when he says: "One of the final and more sophisticated arguments for taking the lands of the aboriginal peoples involved the transmission of the benefits of civilization to the uncivilized. Taking the lands by whatever means possible was justifiable because, in return, the Indians were receiving the great benefits of Western Civilization, which had allowed the European peoples to create such military and economic power as to make it possible for them to dispossess other peoples."¹⁵

The advancement of the frontier of the empire of industrial civilization took a uniform pattern throughout the world. First, all easily transported valuables were shipped to the mother country, then settlers were needed to work the land and obtain the raw materials of the area. Finally, the labor of the enslaved natives was necessary, if that was appropriate to the use of that land. When plantation agriculture was instituted, when mining was to be pursued, or rubber gathering carried out, it was planned and presumed by all colonial authorities that this labor would be carried out by native labor. The justification? John H. Bodley recounts an opinion delivered in 1921:

"The American legal authority, Alpheus Snow, pointed out that natives simply lack the acquisitive drive characteristic of civilized man, and doing virtually anything that will correct this mental deficiency is permissible and even a moral duty of the state."¹⁶

The global expansion of the industrial empire was preceded by armed violence and was followed by missionaries and government administrators who performed the function of destroying native culture. In the U.S., the practice of any religion other than Christianity by the subjugated natives was outlawed for many years. In Soviet Russia, Bodley describes how the Soviet industrialists actually created a Lenin-Stalin cult that was used to destroy native cultures of the East, deemed inimical to "progress." Soviet government functionaries circulated printed material and pictures representing Lenin and Stalin as all powerful solar deities to replace tribal shamanism.¹⁷ All over the world where the European empire intruded, millions died. In the 1890's, Germans swarmed over the cattle-herding Herero tribes of the Southwest African region now known as Namibia. By 1906 the original Herero population of 300,000 had been reduced to 20,000 landless fugitives, following numerous massacres and unequal battles between tribespeople with spears and German soldiers with guns and cannons. One of the leaders of that territorial government, Paul Rohrbach, proclaimed the imperial position in 1907, after ordering native herdsmen to turn over their grazing lands to white European settlers:

"...The native tribes must withdraw from the lands on which they have pastured their cattle and so let the White man pasture his cattle on these self-same lands. If the moral right of this standpoint is questioned, the answer is that for people of the culture standard of the South African Natives, the loss of their free national barbarism and the development of a class of workers in the service of and dependent on the Whites is primarily a law of existence in the highest degree. For a people, as for an individual, an existence appears to be justified in the degree that it is useful in the progress of general development. By no argument in the world can it be shown that the preservation of any degree of national independence, national prosperity and political organization by the races of South West Africa would be of greater or even of equal advantage for the development of mankind in general or the German people in particular than that these races should be made serviceable in the enjoyment of their former territories by the White races."¹⁸

This is an example of the types of encounters that happened daily on a worldwide basis, for centuries- and still continue wherever there are aboriginal people remaining.

Slavery and Empire

In the culture of empire, with its social hierarchies, the society is a system of extortion of humans and nature. Given this reality it is difficult to establish a set definition of slavery other than the outright chattel slavery of the plantation system where masses of humans were purchased solely as labor power. The mass system of slavery, which powered the Roman Empire finally ended but the serf system of European land tenure, in its hierarchical nature, was a system of coerced labor to a considerable degree. Some actual buying and selling of European people continued into the times of the Middle Ages. European slavery in the pre-industrial days was more akin to indebted servitude or debt peonage. Slaves of European origin were sold in the port cities of the Mediterranean, traded into North Africa and the Mid-East. For their part, some stratified societies of Africa also sold slaves into North Africa and Europe. In those stratified societies of both Europe and Africa, the social definition of a slave was not what it was with "plantation slavery" or "industrial slavery." The authority on the history of slavery, Basil Davidson describes the type of slavery that existed just

prior to the development of the mass African slave trade that paralleled the development of the industrial revolution:

"As in Africa, so in Europe: the medieval slave, in one as in the other, was a captive who could win access to a system of mutual duty and obligation that bound noble and commoner together. And what went for the manners of society went for the morals of the merchants too - whether in Europe or Africa. European traders sold their fellow-countrymen to the overseas states of Egypt and North Africa. Pressured by the need for European goods, the lords of Africa began to sell their own folk to the mariners who came from Europe."¹⁹

When the Europeans and in particular the Portuguese, arrived in the 1500's on the west coast of Africa they encountered "kingdoms" in some places, stratified African societies. These were peoples who generally had been influenced by the patriarchal/hierarchical cultures of Islam. They were generally contiguous to the Islamic influenced areas of Sahara, Sudan and Ethiopia. These stratified African societies were by no means universal. Many African societies existed without kingships or other centralizing institutions of political or economic power.²⁰

The initial source of slaves was from the stratified African societies. The early beginnings of the trade in the mid-1400's quickly began to dwarf any slave trade that had gone before. No longer were a few slaves on a ship filled with cargo but whole ships full of slaves began to ply the trade. The Portuguese trade began by purchasing slaves from the Kingdoms on the West Coast of Africa. These kingdoms held slaves, most of who were captured in war. This grew into industrial slavery, not the kind where a few people were added onto a feudal barony but the kind of mass system where the millions of slaves were absolutely enslaved in an imperial plantation and production system in the money economy.

As native populations of the New World dwindled, in areas of mass slavery such as the mines of Mexico, the plantations of the Caribbean Islands and the plantations of the Southeastern U.S., colonialists imported human slaves to help them enslave the earth, as it were. They turned accessible flat areas into huge monocultures to produce products for export to Europe. After the purchase price, the labor of slaves was practically free. The great demand for slaves made super profits for the slave traders. One of the first Englishmen to develop the market in African slaves (in the mid-1500's) was John Hawkins, rumored to be Queen Elizabeth's lover. After he spent many energetic years in the slave trade, Elizabeth knighted him for his efforts. During the award ceremony, she described his labor in the colonies as: "Going every day on shore to take the inhabitants with burning and spoiling their towns."²¹

When the supply of slaves purchased from African kingdoms was not large enough, slavers began to raid the coast. At first the slavers, English, French, Dutch, Spanish, Danes, and Portuguese, could simply put ashore on the coast of West Africa and begin raiding villages. As the coast became devastated they began to move inland. E.D. Morel in his classic, *Black Man's Burden*, says that:

"The trade had grown so large that mere kidnapping raids conducted by white men in the immediate neighborhood of the coast-line were quite insufficient to meet its requirements. Regions inaccessible to the European had to be tapped by the

organization of civil wars. The whole of the immense region from the Senegal to the Congo, and even further south, became in the course of years convulsed by incessant internecine struggles. A vast tumult reigned from one extremity to the other of the most populous and fertile portions of the continent. Tribe was bribed to fight tribe, community to raid community."²²

There is no accurate count of the number of slaves taken. Morel indicates that the British alone transported three million between 1666 and 1766, to British, French and Spanish American colonies. One quarter of a million people died on the voyages when these three million were transported and it is estimated that one-third of those on the land route to the slave shipment ports on the coast of Africa died. We may assume that many millions of lives were involved and the lives of many others were disrupted or extinguished after their villages were devastated and crops ruined. Some slave raiding by Arabs in Africa, for the Mid-East market runs far back into history and that total will never be known either, but the medieval and later era can be traced somewhat by historians from written records. The historian Basil Davidson estimates that the complete toll of humans transported out of Africa over the many years into slavery, from the fifteenth to the nineteenth century, may run up toward fifty million people.

Slavery was institutionalized within the social system of Europe. Given the belief in their superiority and the general ideology of an expansionist, conquering empire, civilized people committed the most horrifying acts. E.D. Morel quotes a personal report, an account of a day in the life of a slaver:

"Then might you see mothers forsaking their children and husbands their wives, each striving to escape as best he could. Some drowned themselves in the water, others thought to escape by hiding under their huts others stowed their children among the sea-weed, where our men found them afterwards, hoping they would thus escape notice.... And at last our Lord God, who giveth a reward for every good deed, willed that for the toil they had undergone in His service they should that day obtain victory over their enemies, as well as a guerdon and a payment for all their labour and expense for they took captive of those Moors, what with men, women and children, 165, besides those that perished and were killed. And when the battle was over, all praised God for the great mercy He had shown them, in that He had willed to give them such a victory, and with so little damage to themselves. They were all very joyful, praising loudly the Lord God for that He had deigned to give such help to such a handful of His Christian people."²³

In a culture where the lot of the common English sailor differed from that of a slave only by degree, and the condition of a child laborer working 15 hours a day and living in the slums, was similar, it was easy for the European population to accept slavery. Slavery was widely accepted and condoned. Even religions got into the business. Morel says that at least one missionary offshoot of a major church was involved. He says that the, "'Society for propagating Christianity,' including half the Episcopal bench, derived, as masters, from the labour of their slaves in the West Indies, an income which they spent in 'teaching the religion of peace and goodwill to men.'"²⁴

European slave traders constantly fomented wars between tribes. They thus created lucrative markets for European-made arms while reaping a harvest of slaves for sale

from the victors. At times guns were traded to one group in order to create markets with other groups who scrambled to get guns to redress the balance of power. Like the slave trade, the arms industry produced super profits for imperial exploiters.

Apologists of slavery have said that the slave's lot was good because they were cared for and protected as property, something that the lowly wage laborer was not. Morel gives a short report from one slave holding region: "For a hundred years slaves in Barbadoes were mutilated, tortured, gibbeted alive and left to starve to death, burnt alive, flung into coppers of boiling sugar, whipped to death."²⁵

Many areas of the world that were once used in the plantation/slave production system are now ecologically destroyed. The island of Haiti, prior to the European expansion for example, was once a rich and dense tropical rainforest inhabited by Natural culture people. First the new invaders' plantations worked virtually all the native labor to death. African slaves were then imported and replaced by more African slaves as they in turn were worked to death. The replaceable cheap labor provided by the slave trade enabled exploitation of the land to intensify at an unprecedented rate. Finally, toward the end of the era of mass slavery, the slaves of Haiti revolted and established their own government. The population began to grow and as it grew the last of the natural ecosystem was eliminated. To survive, people were forced to cultivate more and more fragile areas. As the mountainsides were deforested, severe erosion began.

The island of Haiti is now a barren ecological sink, populated by hungry people who can only drive it into further ecological collapse in their attempt to survive. Similarly, soils in the southeastern U.S. have not recovered from the overuse and erosion engendered by the plantation slavery-driven cotton plantations of the same era.

In many cities of the Greek Empire more than half the population were slaves. The same condition obtained in the Babylonian Empire. We see the dynamics of the culture arranged so that it is a monolithic system of extortion of biological energy. The energy comes from the soil, the plant world, animals and the human population. The modern industrial system is simply a refinement of these dynamics. The semantics have changed but the patriarchal/hierarchical system continues to funnel energy to the elite. Now, though they may be called office workers, factory workers or even scientists who labor in the laboratories of "defense" contractors, their power and wealth relationship to the elite is the same.

The World-Wide Extermination of Natural Culture

In the last quarter of the Nineteenth Century, while the "mopping up" of the tribal populations and the invasion of their habitats was in progress in the U.S., a similar war using the Remington rifle, was going on in South America against the Araucanian, Puelche and Tehuelche tribes of the pampas and the Araucanians of Chile. These tribes were almost exterminated outright, leaving only a handful to dwindle away. Human slavery had been abolished in many countries in the mid- to late, 1800's because of the outcry by sympathetic groups in Europe and the U.S. Because of rising awareness of brutality in the colonies, the activities on the "frontier" and military conquests such as Cuba and the Philippines were increasingly described to the public as "civilizing," "opportunities for primitives to work and learn the value

of money," and "moral and material regeneration." A large protracted war, primarily fought by settlers from England and Scotland was conducted against the native Maori of New Zealand in the 1860's and 1870's, while the British and other colonialist countries fought wars against hill tribes all across Southeast Asia, through the foothills of the Himalayas and into the Hindu Kush toward Afghanistan. In Bangladesh and in India efforts are still underway to dominate the last remaining tribal peoples which the British Colonial Administration was unable to subdue completely.

In Southeast Asia the assault on tribal groups continues to this day. In Formosa, in the early 1900's, the incipient industrial empire of Japan used their armed forces to invade the land of the aboriginal Formosans who had been holding out against the Chinese settlers. After conducting warfare against the natives for some years they finally ended the native resistance by using heavy cruisers at sea to bombard the villages with cannons. In other areas such as Australia, the South Sea Islands, Siberia, Tasmania, Lapland, Africa, the cold regions and equatorial regions of the Americas and the rainforest regions of Southeast Asia there were many little wars or in other cases Natural people were simply overwhelmed and pushed aside. Even with increased public awareness of what was taking place in the colonies, the slave trade known as "blackbirding" captured native South Sea Islanders and sold them for labor in the plantations of Queensland, Australia. This trade endured for 50 years, between 1860 and 1910. The anthropologist John Bodley estimates that 60,000 people were successfully enslaved. A large percentage of these were killed or died from diseases brought by the slavers.

These practices were presented to the public mind and world press as "contract labor."²⁶ The genocide of native tribal hunter-foragers goes on today in India, Bangladesh, Southeast Asia, Paraguay, Chile and in the Amazon jungle, carried out by militaries, industrial interests or settlers. The perpetrators continue to justify their behavior in the traditional manner, as the modern empire assaults life in its manifold forms. Human slavery is only an extreme form of what is basic to imperial society itself, the overt or subtle coercion of the masses to produce surpluses for the elite. It is the purpose of empire to conquer and enslave. Some modification of coercion was used on all native peoples who were needed as labor for the productive process. The whole intent was to conquer other lands and make them rewarding for the imperial elite, either by native labor or the labor of the exported poor of Europe. Even without personal, private ownership of other human beings, the very existence of colonies, where the native people are forced into a style of life that serves the material and social interest of the invaders, is a form of slavery.

Historically, the super-profits from guns, drugs, rum, sugar and slaves have driven imperialism. When we look at the vast amount of historical detail we see that there is no limit on murder, torture, pain and destruction that the culture of empire will impose in order to further its ends. It has finally culminated in a situation where whole imperial societies are dependent for their survival upon the ravishing of other societies and other landmasses. A culture that will murder millions in the process of looting whole continents will stop at nothing. Substances that have a compulsive and addictive chemical reaction in the human body have been especially profitable. Galeano says that the Inca Empire distributed coca leaves during ceremonial days but

that when the Spanish had established themselves, they began to push the drug and tax it. He says:

"In Cuzco four hundred Spanish merchants lived off the coca traffic. Every year one hundred thousand baskets with a million kilos of coca-leaf entered the Potosí silver mines. The Church took a tax from the drug."²⁷

In Asia the imperialists found opium. They took this addictive substance, greatly increased its production and turned it into an instrument of foreign policy.

Opium and Empire

The old degenerate empires of Asia fell to modern colonialism, just as did the world's tribal populations.

After Britain's colonial concessionaire, the East India Company, had consolidated control of India, it began to import tea from China. In 1715, the English established a trading center outside the city walls of Canton. The English Empire soon became habituated to Chinese tea. By 1830 the East India Company was making a profit of one million, pound sterling per year, from the China tea trade. The tax on tea levied by the British government was beginning to represent a substantial base of the government budget. The importation of tea soon became a fundamental element of the British economy, but the other side of the equation was deficient. The English could find very little that the Chinese were interested in buying. There was nothing that the Europeans had that the Chinese wanted. The English had tried selling wool and cotton in China, but the Chinese already had fine silks and cotton of their own. The New England Yankees did strike a small bonanza when they discovered that the Chinese would buy seal pelts. In twenty-seven years they nearly wiped out the seal populations of the Falkland Islands and the Aleutian Islands. By 1830, when the seal breeding grounds had been destroyed, that trade collapsed.

As the tea trade grew, the English treasury began to be drained of its silver, which was the only currency the Chinese traders would accept. The balance of payments problem became severe. The English searched for something that they could sell in China to get the silver back. Opium became the answer to the English dilemma. Not only could opium return super-profits from those addicted to the drug but it helped soften-up Chinese society for the penetration of English imperialism (and the other colonial empires trying to nudge their way into the massive "China market").

The French and Dutch had been the first in the opium trade in the mid-1700's, purchasing huge volumes in Bengal. The Dutch in particular used it as a political tactic against Indonesia, whose populations were resisting the imposition of the plantation system in their area. The Dutch flooded Indonesia with opium and then after the social disintegration, were able to take it over. The English saw the success of this tactic. When Bengal fell to the English Empire the East India Company then had a monopoly on the opium trade and they encouraged additional production in new areas of India. Jack Beeching, in his history, *The Chinese Opium Wars*, says: "In 1782 there had been no sale for the cargo of Bengal opium that Warren Hastings had sent hopefully to Canton. *By 1830, the opium trade there was probably the largest commerce of its time in any single commodity, anywhere in the world.*"²⁸

The East India Company was not inclined to miss a chance for profits. They began also to import opium into England for the home population. Soon opium was sold in England in packets of powder and in liquid elixirs called generically, laudanum. Commercial preparations at the retail level were wearing such trade names as Godfrey's Cordial and Mother Bailey's quieting Syrup.²⁹ In the United States where the drug was also legally sold; there were 120,000 opium addicts by 1875.³⁰

By 1700, Chinese society had become stagnant under foreign Mongol rulers. From 1700, until the take-over by the cadres under Mao Tse-Tung after World War II, the European powers plus Canada and the U.S., pummeled the closed society of China breaking in at the edges, trying to create markets for their goods. Armed outbreaks and at times small wars were fomented, the whole period is referred to as the "opium wars." At the time of the opium wars, an administrative class of Manchus governed Chinese society. The Manchus were invading Mongols who continued to maintain close relations with their original homeland, Manchuria. At times they even brought in horse cavalry from the steppes to fight the various groups busily dismembering the huge decadent Chinese Empire. China was twenty times the size and population of England.

China, being a culture of empire, resembled European imperial culture in many ways and it was much older and the cultural images were more thorough. There were few ideological divisions. In China the

Emperor was the Son of Heaven, the ruler of the Middle Kingdom, the center of the universe. The rigid patriarchy was culturally bolstered by the Confucian doctrines of ancestor worship and submission to the emperors and those more elevated in the hierarchy. The Han Chinese, the ethnic group that makes up 97% of China, consider themselves culturally and racially superior to all others, whom they refer to with a term equivalent to "barbarians." Though the throne of China had been captured several times by the nomads from the north during the thousands of years of history, Chinese society had never been completely shattered in war. China had remained for thousands of years as the center of gravity of East Asia. For thousands of years the fortunes of individual Chinese dynasties have ebbed and flowed. They have enslaved the geographical areas adjacent to them in Southeast Asia and to the north of them, but they seldom absorbed anything cultural in excess of the material extortion of the peripheral satraps. The Chinese culture is so thoroughly imbued with super-race feeling that especially in the early days of European contact, "barbarians" were kept out of the walled cities as much for the convenience of the Chinese as for the safety of the foreigners. The simple sight of non-Chinese caused immediate riots among the population. When the powerful European religious organizations began attempting to penetrate Chinese society for their own organizational motives, the missionaries met with little success because they were so restricted and confined. The simple sight of a European missionary on the streets of a city would provoke riots that posed serious physical danger.³¹

The elites of many powerful social structures within the European empires were getting benefits from the opium poisoning and disintegration of Chinese society. The Catholic hierarchy and the Protestant hierarchies also moved with many strategies toward furthering their growth and power in China. The East India Company was a

major force in exploiting China and smaller trader groups from many countries were loitering around the sidelines picking up what crumbs they could.

Because of internal decay and because of the pressures exerted by the outside powers, the decadent Manchu regime finally dissolved in the first decade of the 1900's. The battle to rule China was picked up by indigenous Chinese warlords under the leadership of Sun Yat-Sen and the foreigner assisted Koumintang under the Methodist Church member Chaing Kai-Shek. Although opium importation (officially) stopped after the fall of the Manchus, the Japanese Empire revived it when they invaded in 1938 as a method of extorting money from Chinese society. This was certainly not the end of drug pushing as an instrument of foreign policy.

Mao Tse-Tung and the peasant rebellion represented the resurgence of Chinese imperial culture. Although they had a new ideological twist, they essentially reunified the old imperial culture and campaigned against foreign "contamination." The Communists under Mao succeeded in ridding China of missionaries, traders and other remnants of the "barbarians." China has now rejoined the "family of nations" as a modern imperial state.

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"In Indochina, you have to understand first of all that the extensive opium trade, mass consumption, particularly in the cities, was a result of European colonial policy. It's only in Southeast Asia that colonial governments paid for their very dynamic development: irrigation, massive road networks, rail networks by direct taxes upon indigenous consumers, taxes on alcohol, salt, and particularly opium. In British Malay 40 percent of colonial taxes came from opium. In French Indochina it ranged about 15 percent from the period from the 1870's up through the 1950's, when as a result of UN pressure, all of these governments abolished the state opium trade. Thailand was the next to last to do it. It didn't abolish its state opium monopoly, rather like an alcohol beverage control that a lot of states have, until 1957. Laos didn't abolish theirs until 1961. So you have mass opium consumption in Southeast Asia as a result of the colonial policy of making the colony pay with opium.

"Most of the opium was not produced in Southeast Asia. It came from abroad, either southern China or India."³²

In the early 1950's the U.S. agency, the CIA, sponsored the creation of what became the world's largest opium growing industry in Southeast Asia. They did this to create an economic base for their "allies" in the secret wars of the 1950's and on into the present. The first group of allies was the Nationalist Chinese generals and their troops who were chased into Southeast Asia by Mao's Red Army. Others were different tribal groups that were forced by various elites: Chinese Generals, indigenous elites and the employees of the CIA to create an economic infrastructure based on opium and their males for use as cadre in the wars. In the present all areas of opium poppy and coca production are also areas of historic U.S. government and CIA contacts. These are the Andean nations who have for many years received U.S. military

equipment, money and training, the Syrian generals who control opium growing in the Bekka Valley, the opium growing Afghanistan mujahadeen, the Pakistani Generals, and the military and political elites throughout Southeast Asia.

There have always been the "shadow cadres," the covert operators of empire who would do the clandestine bidding of the elite. This type of situation existed, for example, when the Spanish were shipping the treasure out of the Americas. The English elite sponsored "pirates" who would raid the Spanish Galleons. The covert political strategy is created in situations where the rulers want to be able to have their diplomats say one thing while the shadow players are unsuspectingly making hidden moves. The shadow players perform acts that often violate social norms and thus the ruling elite must be able to deny any association with them. The existence of these "spooks" or intelligence agencies has created a BI-level world where there exists the "accepted" reality of the media and the political dialog and then there is the shadow reality where various international power take place.

It is only in the last century that drugs have joined guns and money as the chief lubricants of empire. In earlier days the insertion of modern munitions into a region could throw the balance of power in some direction. The necessary association of the covert operators with the international arms market has led them into the international financial system as well. Now, these groups have "proprietarys," companies and economic groups that they control (Air America is a well-known example). This has led to a situation where the CIA and others have their own economic base and can act without approval or budget from elected officials. Though they may avoid control by elected officials such as in the case of the Iran-Contra scandal, they are always on the side of the International Financial Elite and they are never on the side of peasants struggling for justice.

This brings us to the present day reality of the world drug market that is estimated to be five hundred billion dollars in size. This rivals major industries on the planet. Common sense tells us that the five and ten dollar bills from the street sales in major cities of the world aren't loaded by street pushers onto freight trains and sent to the points of origin of the drugs. Common sense tells us that profits of this magnitude will attract the biggest economic powers in the game and they will have to have shadow players to watch over and administer the profit taking. They might even have to create a War on Drugs to crack down on any competitors that try to muscle in on the super profits!

There appears to be nothing that the controlling elites of the imperial hierarchies will not do to service their greed and their craving for power. Guns, drugs, slavery, torture, massacre, assassination, and the most massive destruction, ecologically and socially is the stock in trade. Because public education and awareness was growing in the industrial countries in the 1800's, we see also the beginnings of the relationship of the elites to their own First World populations in terms of the control of information to which they are allowed exposure. We see in one example, with the "rubber boom" experience of the Congo, that it is possible for the elites of the industrial societies to literally alter history. We see this also in the opium wars.

Because of the distasteful nature of the colonial activities in the Far East, the facts about the creation of a market for opium in China were downplayed if not obscured.

Jack Beeching in his history, *The Chinese Opium Wars*, recounts one public disinformation campaign conducted by the opium traders. William Jardine was head of one of the largest groups importing opium into China. He spearheaded a media campaign financed with a self-imposed tax on each chest of opium imported into China by all importers. In a letter to Jardine, at that time, in London, a fellow trader instructed Jardine, "You will not, however, be limited to this outlay, as the magnitude of the object can well bear any amount of expense ... you may find it expedient to secure, at a high price, the services of some leading newspaper ... we are told there are literary men whom it is usual to employ ..." ³³ The opium smugglers had abundant cash to bribe newspapers and politicians.

Beeching indicates that the disinformation campaign in the London media worked well. He says, "subsidized or not, sensational pamphlets and news items multiplied. All London was rapidly made aware how honest British [opium] merchants in Canton had been besieged, imprisoned, deprived of food, and actually threatened with death." In fact this was the inflated description of an incident in Canton that was no more than an ultimately failed attempt by one Chinese official to stop the importation of opium.

The Rubber Boom

With the invention of the automobile, demand for rubber increased enormously. In the tropical regions of the Amazon and the Congo, the "Rubber Boom" of the late 1800's and early 1900's resulted in the deaths of millions of people. There were few "laborers" to be found in the rainforests where the extraction of the sap of the rubber tree took place. When the boom began, the industry was faced with the problem of finding a labor supply. The solution to this problem adopted by the rubber companies, like the early industrial revolution, was to force natives out of their subsistence culture in order to turn them into "slave labor." In the western Amazon the British-owned Peruvian Amazon Company sent armed gangs to capture natives. Bodley reports that "rape, slavery, torture by flogging and mutilation," and "mass murder by shooting, poisoning, starvation, and burning," were practiced against the native people. The colonial government of Peru never acted to restrain the British company. Similar atrocities took place in other areas of the Amazon where rubber was gathered, ending when rubber plantations of the East Indies took over the market after 1915. ³⁴

Though the Amazon exported rubber; the richest source was the Congo Basin in Africa. The Congo River drains most of the watershed of the African equatorial rainforest. Villages and tribes ran for several thousand miles along its banks. Most of the native people lived in settled villages where they maintained rainforest gardens, raised tree crops and foraged in the forest for additional sustenance. Native trading all over the Congo was active, although the culture did not support any kind of empire-style market economy. The stability of the many different tribal cultures up and down the Congo River and into the expanse of forest was maintained by thousands of years of complex bartering patterns. By the late 1800's, most tribes of the rainforest of Central Africa had become dominated by European colonial powers. One man, King Leopold II of Belgium, personally owned one million square miles of the Congo, along with everything on it, including the people. As a private estate, the Congo Free State, as the area was known, was subject to no law or scrutiny of any government. It was this peculiar ownership that helped the rulers of the Congo Free State shield their activities from public view even from the view of the Belgian government.

In the Congo, companies that were financed by the sale of stock in Europe were given rights by the King to exploit specified sections. The King retained one-half the shares in each company. Stock in these incredibly profitable companies was distributed around elite financial circles, political circles and the diplomatic circles, cutting many of the "well placed" of Europe into the game.

European merchants had traded up the Congo for many generations exploiting the resources for a lucrative European market for redwood, camwood powder, wax, ivory, tin, copper, lead, and palm oil. But the big new stockholder-owned companies were interested solely in the super-profit trade in two items, ivory and rubber. All other trade was prohibited. The company controlling each area hired gangs of thugs, detribalized and marginalized natives, criminals, and mercenaries to collect a "tax" payable only in ivory or rubber, which had been levied on the natives by the companies themselves. Trade was abandoned in favor of out-and-out-extortion. For twenty years, the mercenary hierarchies in each region assaulted native Congo villages, burning, killing, raping, looting, burning down gardens and fields and killing orchard trees. One popular method to get a village to pay the tax was to imprison all of the women and children of the village until the men paid the tax by gathering rubber or by ravaging elephant herds for ivory. In areas where the rubber plant did not grow, the people were forced to give fish or agricultural products to support colonial administrations in the areas where rubber was tapped.

Soon the rubber and ivory trade began to rival other colonial bonanzas such as the gold and diamonds of South Africa that were produced by quasi-slave labor. By 1900 the French had parceled out the French Congo, just west of the Belgian holding, to 40 concessionaire companies. In both the French and Belgian Congo, mercenaries were routinely awarded bonuses for bringing back hands, sexual organs and ears to the local administrators after a punitive raid on native people designed to compel them to gather more- by terror. One missionary reported: "It is blood-curdling to see them (the soldiers) returning with hands of the slain, and to find the hands of young children amongst the bigger ones evidencing their bravery.... The rubber from this district has cost hundreds of lives, and the scenes I have witnessed, while unable to help the oppressed, have been almost enough to make me wish I were dead...."³⁵ E.D. Morel, founder of the Congo Reform Movement, reported that, "in one region 6,000 natives were killed and mutilated every six months."³⁶ In all, Morel reports that some nine million natives were forced to, "spend their lives in the extremely arduous and dangerous task of gathering and preparing India-rubber in the virgin forests...."³⁷ The population of the Congo Free State, which in 1884 had stood at an estimated 20 to 30 million, had shrunk to nine million by 1911.

The huge dividends on the shares in the concession companies were causing a furor in Europe. Morel writes, "French finance was excited by the wild wave of speculation in Congo rubber shares which swept over Belgium, and by the prodigious profits of the great Belgian Concessionaire Companies."³⁸ The power of the dozens of concessionaire companies reached from Africa into the political and diplomatic circles of England and the Continent. They and their political allies who profited by the outrage in the Congo conducted a constant disinformation operation in the European press through their own statements and the assistance of compliant pundits and politicians. The line was that the Congo natives were, "...little better than animals, with no conception of land tenure or tribal government, no commercial instincts, no

industrial pursuits, 'entitled,' as a Belgian Premier felt no shame in declaring, 'to nothing.'³⁹

Reformers in both France and England worked for years to expose the crimes committed against the peoples of the Congo. The publication of Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* and Morel's book, *Red Rubber*, in 1906, spawned vocal protests over the activities in the colonies. But the evidence was well concealed. Though the French government did not use the words "National Security," popular today, it nonetheless suppressed all evidence held by the government concerning the Congo. Thousands of church people and other concerned citizens, primarily in England and on the Continent, became involved in the Congo Reform Movement. They visited the Congo, interviewed travelers, surreptitiously obtained suppressed government reports and yet the European elite succeeded in altering history. Governments set up "commissions of inquiry" which themselves were actually a damage control and disinformation tactic. When the reform groups finally accumulated voluminous damning evidence, the elite press would not report it. Many in the press held concession shares. The murder of, in excess of ten million people in a twenty-year period by the most grotesque butchers was excised from the history of Western Civilization by the cheerleaders and profiteers of imperial conquest.

By 1915, human society came to an end in the Congo. All trading stopped. Villages were deserted. The forest grew back over the gardens. Any survivors were either enslaved as farmers, porters, mercenary fighters- or they were in hiding in the frontier areas and the deep forest. By 1910 the rubber tree plantations in Southeast Asia were beginning to take over the trade. As World War I began, few paid attention to events in the colonies. Though a veil continued over the deep Congo, the manipulation by outside, covert forces has never really stopped to this day.

NOTES

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36 *ibid.* p. 123.

37 *ibid.* p. 141.

38 *ibid.* p. 128.

39 *ibid.* p. 115.