

Social Studies

FIRST COLONIAL PERIOD

- Read the following information and then answer the questions.



Construction

The Spanish and the mechanisms for implementing their government

Foundation of cities, a form of domination

When the conquerors arrived in the new lands, the first official act they carried out was the foundation of a city, with which they assured the effective domination over the conquered lands. Sebastián de Benalcázar was responsible for taking possession of the territories in the north of Tahuantinsuyo (present-day Ecuador) and founding several cities. This way, they founded Quito (1534), Guayaquil (1538), and Cuenca (1557), among other cities. After the foundation, lots, or pieces of land, were given to the conquistadors, according to their importance. This was a mechanism of appropriation of territory.

Evangelization

Evangelization was one of the main factors of cultural domination by force. However, despite the efforts made by the Spanish to destroy the ancestral beliefs of the natives, these survived. Although the Indigenous people were baptized and converted to Catholicism, they also maintained many of their beliefs. So, for example, even today the dancers of the Inti Raymi carry out the ritual baths of purification in the *Cascada de Peguche*.

Encomienda

The *encomienda* consisted of the Spanish Crown delivering a group of Indigenous people—sometimes whole communities—to a Spaniard to evangelize them. In exchange for this, the Indigenous people had to pay a tribute to the *encomendero*. The obligation of the tribute was inherited, in other words, it passed from parents to children. Many Spaniards demanded the fulfillment of a certain job, instead of the tribute.

The contract of the *encomienda* allowed the *encomenderos* to punish the Indigenous physically and economically when they did not respond to their demands. Abuses performed by the Spaniards transformed the *encomienda* into a system of forced labor in conditions of exploitation.

Questions

1. Why is it important for Spanish people to found cities?
2. What is evangelization?
3. What do you think about “Encomienda”? Is it something good or bad? Justify your answer.