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## Remembering Our Origins and the Columbus Day Celebration

Americans have celebrated Columbus Day since 1937 and it has become a proud mark on the calendar. Some have argued that Columbus was the cause of the annihilation of the Native population. However, it is important to remember Columbus was a man of his time, he came to the New World with the intention of expanding his culture and obtaining resources. When the Spaniards and Indians met, the clash of the two cultures was messy. However, Columbus Day should never be cast aside, but celebrated, because Columbus's exploration shaped the future of the Americas and is a part of our history.

In the words of the great Samuel Eliot Morison: "The whole history of the Americas stems from the Four Voyages of Columbus" (Doc 3). North and South America were fields waiting to be plowed and harvested. The Native population did not have the tools to properly cultivate the land and capitalize on its potential. Columbus wrote in his travel journal, "All the weapons they have are canes cut at seeding time, at the end of which they fix a sharpened stick", this is merely an example of their weapons, but in comparison to the European's guns, the sharpened sticks were primitive. Columbus introduced modern technology to the Americas and rung in a new era. With this technology, agriculture, the arts, the armies prospered and flourished into rich cultures, expanding cultures.

In *The People's History of the United States* the radical leftist Howard Zinn criticizes Columbus for being so violent. Zinn's anarchist tirade only focused on "exposing" Columbus as a cruel murderer. He excentuates the negative aspects of his discovery: "When it became clear that there was no gold left, the Indians were taken in as slave labor" (Doc 2). Zinn is a known liberal and is self-righteous, believing he may judge the past in a modern context. The discovery of the New World, 600 years prior to *The People's History*, was by no means friendly. However, history is rarely friendly. History should not be judged as though people had the highstanding morality of a modern man. What's more, Zinn never once looks at the situation from the Spaniard's perspective. The first group of men left to settle in the Indies were killed by the Natives. If the Spaniards just acquiesced and never fought with the Indians, then the Spaniard would have been killed off. As well, Columbus came to the New World with the intention of cultivating the land's resources, not to cultivate good foreign relations. To believe otherwise would be foolish, Columbus was a conquerer as well as an explorer. Yet, Columbus's discovery changed the Americas and is forever a part of our history.

Conquesters should never be condemned, for ambition and conquest are part of the human

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condition. To deny the instinctual self is to deny all human kind. What Columbus and his men did, trying to dominate the Native people, may not be truly worthy of celebration. However, Columbus should be a fixture of culture because he was the cataclysm that changed the history of not only the Americas, but the world. A sail across the dark blue Atlantic has never been so influential. Columbus established the foundation of the world we know today and Columbus Day should be celebrated so we can remember where we came from.

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