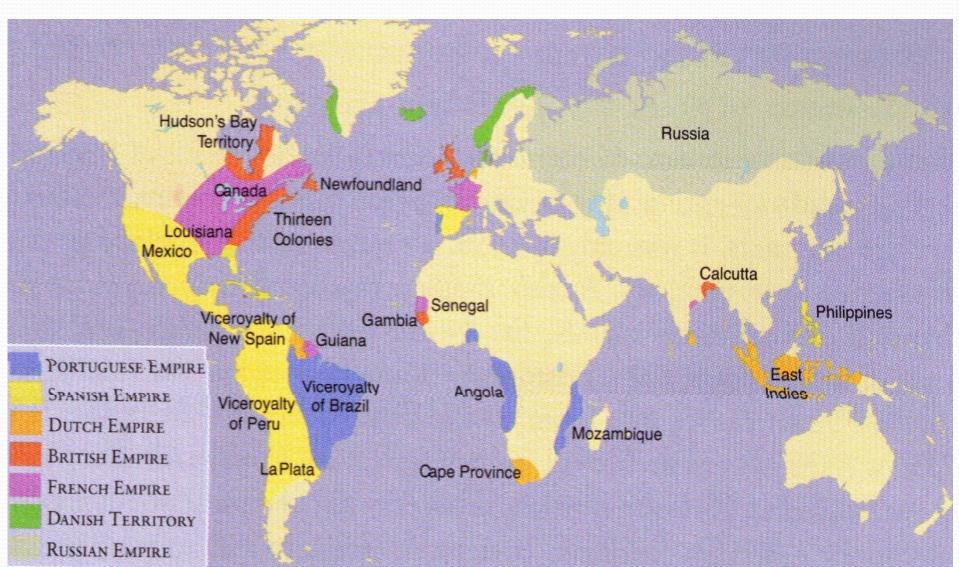
The Maya Land Rights struggle

The colonial world, ca. 1750



What were the economic benefits of colonialism for Europe?

1. Slavery: labor

2. Resources: timber, timber, agricultural land, rubber, oil

Creation and domination of foreign markets

Spanish colonization, 1500-1698

• 1500	Southern Belize occupied by Manche Chol & Mopan speaking Maya people
• 1525	Cortes passes through Verapaz and southern Belize
• 1544	Dominican friars enter the Alta Verapaz
• 1603	Manche Chol met by Dominican friars
• 1633	Chol revolt: "the Chols revolted, burned all the churches, and abandoned the towns"
• 1670	A decade of attempts are made to 'pacify' the Chols
• 1698	"A punitive expedition rounded up such Chols as could be found, and settled them near Rabinal in the Urran Valley"

British colonization of Maya of Toledo (1872-86)

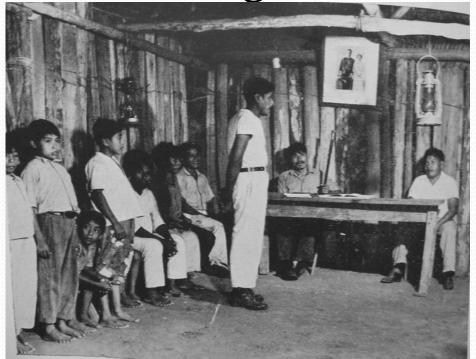
1872	Crown Lands Ordinance soon most land in Toledo is owned by the state
1877	The Municipal Lands Decree in Guatemala strips Mayas of land
1877	Secretary of State's sends "approval of the system of appointment of Alcaldes"
1882	Boundaries of Toledo District defined
1883	Migration from San Luis to Pueblo Viejo
1886	Construction of Peten road calls for forced labor by Qeqchi & Mopan, encourages new migration
1886	Changes to Crown Land Ordinance allow for the creation of Indian Reservations

How did the British rule the Maya of

Toledo?

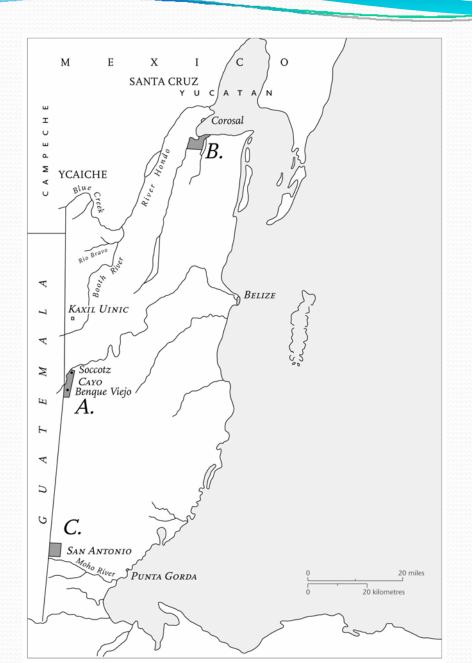
They created the Indian reservations

2. Charge land tax





Kekchi Indian woman and children "bagging" corn on the cob, Toledo District.



What did Julian Cho do? What was he fighting for?

- He wanted the Government to recognize the indigenous rights of the Qeqchi and Mopan Maya people.
- He built the strength of the TMCC.
- He fought to cancel the logging concessions.

Mayan Leaders Confront Malaysian Logging on the Spot







"We have been to the mountain Now the mountain must come to us"



Mission Statement

The Julian Cho Society (JCS) is a non-profit, non-governmental membership organization dedicated to the conservation of the environments and indigenous lands of southern Belize. We aim to carry forward the vision and legacy of the late Julian Cho, a renowned advocate for the rainforests and indigenous peoples of southern Belize. Following Cho, the JCS regards environmental conservation and the struggle for Maya land rights to be inextricably linked.



3 Broad Aims

- To develop and disseminate programs that promote the ethical, social, and intellectual development of the indigenous peoples of southern Belize;
- To facilitate research that contributes to greater understanding and appreciation of the history, cultures, and environment of the Toledo District; and
- To promote the principles and values that Julian Cho fostered as leader of the Maya movement by advocating for the rights of indigenous peoples in Belize and contributing to the struggle for justice, democracy, and sustainable development.



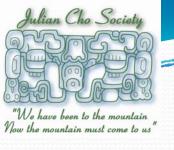
Program Areas

- Scholarship Program
 - 13 students on full scholarship
- Indigenous Land Rights Campaign
- Research and advocacy
- Networking



Scholarship Program

- Full tuition, books and uniform
- JCTHS
- TCC
- ITVET



Policy, Advocacy & Awareness

- Maya Area Cultural Heritage Initiative
 - Presentation to adults and children on the importance of Mayan temples (ruins)
 - Its significance to the general public and to the Mayas
- Human Rights Trainings
- Julian Cho Memorial Day
 - Mass, Procession, cultural presentations at the office compound



Networking

- A member of the Maya Leaders Alliance
- Work closely with the Tumul K'in Center of Learning
- Close collaboration with Ak' Tenamit



The Blue Creek & Aguacate story

"In 1990-1994, our communities were visited by the Toledo Small Farmers Development Project (TSFDP). The TSFDP encouraged us to break up our Indian Reservation lands so that we would have individual plots that we could use as collateral and thereby take out loans. We hesitated to do so, because we could not see how we could profitably invest loan funds. But the Ministry of Agriculture ... promised us technical and marketing assistance for cattle and orange production. And so farmers from our villages signed loans with the DFC and received orange trees and cattle. But the promised marketing and agricultural assistance never materialized, and none of us made any money from the scheme. The TSFDP ended in failure. We were left holding over \$300,000 debt to the DFC—which still holds our lands as collateral."





A community-based co-management plan

- The Government grants ownership of the land to the community
- Community members are able to own land within the village, subject to certain conditions
- Agreements would need to be clear and contractual



Accordingly, I order and grant as follows:

- A declaration that the claimants Villages of Santa Cruz and Conejo and their members hold, respectively, collective and individual rights in the lands and resources....
- An order that the government determine, demarcate and provide official documentation of Santa Cruz's and Conejo's title and rights in accordance with Maya customary law and practices....
- An order that the defendants cease and abstain from any acts that might lead the agents of the government itself, or third parties acting with its acquiescence or its tolerance, to affect the existence, value, use or enjoyment of the property located in the geographic area occupied and used by the Maya people of Santa Cruz and Conejo unless such acts are pursuant to their informed consent and in compliance with the safeguards of the Belize Constitution.











Presently the JCS through its networking is currently waiting for trial.



Press Conference

Present lawsuit was filed by the Toledo Alcalde Association on behalf of all 38 Mayan villages



Date of trial is June 10th 2009





