

BOOKS BY JOHN CHARLES CHASTEEN:

Heroes on Horseback: A Life and Times of the Last Gaucho Caudillos
National Rhythms, African Roots: The Deep History of Latin American Popular Dance

TRANSLATIONS BY JOHN CHARLES CHASTEEN:

The Contemporary History of Latin America by Tulio Halperin Donghi
The Lettered City by Angel Rama
The Mystery of Samba: Popular Music and National Identity in Brazil
by Hermano Vianna

VOLUMES EDITED BY JOHN CHARLES CHASTEEN:

Beyond Imagined Communities: Reading and Writing the Nation in Nineteenth-Century Latin America with Sara Castro-Klarén
Problems in Modern Latin American History: Sources and Interpretations
with James A. Wood

BORN in
BLOOD and FIRE

A Concise History of Latin America

SECOND EDITION

John Charles Chasteen

UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA
AT CHAPEL HILL



W. W. NORTON & COMPANY
New York London

Time Line

	MEXICO	BRAZIL	ARGENTINA
ENCOUNTER 1492–1600	The fully sedentary Mexicas, who built the Aztec Empire, were conquered and their empire taken over by the Spaniards, but Mexican blood still runs in Mexican veins.	The semisedentary Tupi people of the Brazilian forests were destroyed and their labor replaced by African slaves whom the Portuguese brought to grow sugarcane.	The nonsedentary, plains-dwelling Pampas people were eventually wiped out. Much later, European immigrants took their place on the land.
COLONIAL CRUCIBLE 1600–1810	Because of its dense indigenous population and its rich silver mines, Mexico (or much of it) became a core area of Spanish colonization.	Profitable sugar plantations made the northeastern coast a core area of Portuguese colonization, but much of Brazil remained a poorer fringe.	Most of Argentina remained on the fringe of Spanish colonization until 1776, when Buenos Aires became the capital of a new Spanish viceroyalty.
INDEPENDENCE 1810–1825	The large peasant uprisings led by Hidalgo and Morelos frightened Mexican Creoles into a conservative stance on independence, which they embraced only in 1821.	The Portuguese royal family's presence kept Brazil relatively quiet as war raged elsewhere. Prince Pedro declared Brazilian independence himself in 1822.	Without massive populations of oppressed indigenous people or slaves to fear, Buenos Aires Creoles quickly embraced the May Revolution (1810).
POSTCOLONIAL BLUES 1825–1850	The national government was frequently overthrown as liberals and conservatives struggled for control. The career of the caudillo Santa Anna represents the turmoil.	The stormy reign of Pedro I (1822–1831) was followed by the even stormier Regency (1831–1840). But the Brazilian Empire gained stability in the 1840s as coffee exports rose.	The conservative dictator Rosas dominated Buenos Aires (and therefore, much of Argentina) for most of these years, exiling the liberal opposition.
PROGRESS 1850–1880	The great liberal Reform of the 1850s provoked the conservatives to support a foreign prince, Maximilian. The liberals, led by Juárez, emerged triumphant by the late 1860s.	Pedro II (1840–1889) cautiously promoted liberal-style progress while maintaining a strongly hierarchical system. Brazil ended slavery only in 1888.	Liberals took over after the fall of Rosas (1852), but not until the 1860s did they manage to unite all Argentina under one national government.
NEOCOLONIALISM 1880–1930	The dictatorship of Porfirio Díaz, called the Porfiriato (1876–1911), embodied neocolonialism in Mexico. Díaz invited international investment and used it to consolidate the Mexican state.	Brazil's First Republic (1889–1930) was a highly decentralized oligarchy built, above all, on coffee exports. The leading coffee-growing state, São Paulo, became dominant.	Buenos Aires and the surrounding areas underwent an agricultural and immigration boom of vast proportions. Various regional oligarchies ruled until the election of 1916.
NATIONALISM 1910–1945	The Mexican Revolution led Latin America's nationalist trend in 1910. The presidency of Lázaro Cárdenas (1934–1940) marked the high point of its accomplishments.	Getúlio Vargas, president 1930–1935, defined Brazilian nationalism in this period. In 1937, Vargas dissolved Congress and formed the authoritarian Estado Novo.	Argentina's Radical Party was driven by the ballot box. It displaced the landowning oligarchy but remained mired in traditional patronage politics.
REVOLUTION 1945–1960	Mexico's revolution became more conservative and institutionalized (in the PRI) even as radical change accelerated elsewhere.	Populism and the electoral clout of organized labor (led first by Vargas, then by his heirs) energized Brazilian politics after World War II.	Juan and Evita Perón made the working class (1946–1955) a leading force in Argentine politics. Perón's followers remained loyal long after his exile.
REACTION 1960–1990	Overall, the PRI used its revolutionary imagery to absorb challenges from the left—except when it used bullets, as in the 1968 Tlatelolco massacre.	The Brazilian military overthrew the populist president Goulart in 1964 and ruled for twenty years in the name of efficiency and anticommunism.	Taking control in 1966, the Argentine military won its "dirty war" against Peronist guerrillas but bowed out in 1983 after losing to Britain in the Falklands war.



PABLO. Pablo was a little boy who lived at a Colombian boardinghouse in 1978, when I lived there, too. On hot afternoons, Pablo sometimes took a bath in the back patio of the house, the *patio de ropas*, where several women washed the boarders' clothes by hand. He was having a wonderful time on this particular afternoon, as happy as any little boy anywhere, despite the modest character of our dollar-a-day accommodations. Snapshot taken by the author at the age of twenty-two.

INTRODUCTION

Latin America was born in blood and fire, in conquest and slavery. So that is where to begin a brief introduction to Latin American history, cutting straight to the heart of the matter, identifying central conflicts, and not mincing words. It is precisely conquest and its sequel, colonization, that created the central conflict of Latin American history. Conquest and colonization form the unified starting place of a single story, told here with illustrative examples from many countries. We need a single story. Rapid panoramas of twenty national histories would merely produce dizziness. But, before beginning the story, we must ask whether so many countries can really share a single history. At first blush, one might doubt it. Consider everything that story would have to encompass. Consider the contrasts and paradoxes of contemporary Latin America. ✓

Latin America is young—the average age is in the teens in many countries—with all the innovative dynamism that youth implies. And it is old—a land of ancient ruins, of whitewashed walls and red-tile-roofed hamlets continuously inhabited for a thousand years. Some Latin Americans still grow corn or manioc on small plots hidden among banana trees, carrying on fairly traditional rural ways of life. These days, however, most Latin Americans live in noisy, restless cities that make their so-

cities far more urbanized than those of developing countries in Asia or Africa. Megacities like Buenos Aires, São Paulo, and Mexico City have far outstripped the ten-million mark, and many other capitals of the region are not far behind. Latin America is the developing world and also the West, a place where more than nine out of ten people speak a European language and practice a European religion. Most of the world's Roman Catholics are Latin Americans. And Latin America has deep roots in indigenous cultures, too. Most of the world's native Americans, by far, live south of the Rio Grande.

Today many Latin Americans live and work in circumstances not so different from those of middle-class people in the United States. The resemblance seems to have grown in recent years, as government after government throughout the region has liberalized its trade policies, facilitating the importation of cars, videocassette recorders, and fax machines. But the vast majority of Latin Americans are far from being able to afford such things. A family that owns any sort of car is much better off than most, but the great majority do have some access to a TV, if only at the house of a neighbor. So Brazilians and Chileans and Colombians who cannot have a car nevertheless live thoroughly immersed in Western consumer culture and, night after night, watch bright television commercials tailored to those able to emulate the lifestyle of the US middle class. It is for this reason, and not just because of proximity and poverty, that so many Latin Americans come to the United States.

Consider next the contrasts among countries. Brazil occupies half the South American continent, its population surging toward two hundred million. Most countries in Latin America are quite small, however. The populations of Panama, Puerto Rico, Paraguay, Nicaragua, Honduras, and El Salvador *added together* could fit in Mexico City or, for that matter, in Brazil's urban giant, São Paulo. Contrasts in other social indicators are

also vast. Argentina and Uruguay have adult literacy rates comparable to those in the United States and Canada, whereas 30 percent of the adult population in Guatemala cannot read. Costa Ricans live to a ripe old average age of seventy-seven, Bolivians to only sixty-three.

Now ponder the incredible ethnic complexity of Latin America. Most Mexicans are descended from indigenous people and from the Spanish who colonized Mexico. The Mexican celebration of the Day of the Dead—with its candy skulls, inviting people to “eat their own death”—embodies a mood so unfamiliar to people from the United States precisely because its intimate inspirations are largely non-Western. The capital of Argentina, on the other hand, is ethnically more European than is Washington DC. Not only does a larger percentage of the population descend exclusively from European immigrants, but they also maintain more European contacts, such as dual Argentine-Spanish citizenship and relatives born or still living in Italy or England. The modern cityscape of Buenos Aires is very self-consciously modeled on Paris, and French movies enjoy a popularity there unheard of in the United States.

The experience of racial diversity has been central to Latin American history. Latin America was the main destination of the millions of people enslaved and taken out of Africa between 1500 and 1850. Whereas the United States received about 523,000 enslaved immigrants, Cuba alone got more. All Spanish America absorbed around 1.5 million slaves, and Brazil by itself at least 3.5 million. From the Caribbean, down both coasts of South America, African slaves performed a thousand tasks, but most especially they cultivated sugarcane. Today their descendants form large parts of the population—about half, overall—in the two greatest historical centers of sugar production, Brazil and the Caribbean region.

Latin American countries are highly multiethnic, and all

sorts of racial combinations occur. Costa Rica, Uruguay, and Southern Brazil, like Argentina, have populations of mostly European extraction. Some countries, such as Mexico, Paraguay, El Salvador, and Chile, have very mixed, or *mestizo* populations of blended indigenous and European heritage. Other countries, such as Peru, Guatemala, Ecuador, and Bolivia, have large populations of indigenous people who remain separate from the mestizos, speak indigenous languages such as Quechua or Aymara, and follow distinctive customs in clothing and food. In many countries, black and white populations live in the coastal lowlands, with a more indigenous and white mix in the mountainous interior regions. Cuba, Puerto Rico, Nicaragua, Costa Rica, Honduras, Colombia, Ecuador, Peru, and Venezuela all follow this pattern. Brazil, the fifth largest country in the world, shows regional demographic variations on a grand scale—whiter in the south, blacker on the north coast, with indigenous influence still visible only in the large but sparsely populated Amazon basin.

Q To repeat the question, then, do these twenty countries, in all their startling variety, really have a single history? No, in the sense that a single story cannot encompass their diversity. Yes, in the sense that all have much in common. They experienced a similar process of European conquest and colonization. They became independent more or less at the same time. They have struggled with similar problems in a series of similar ways. Since independence, other clearly defined political trends have washed over Latin America, giving its history a unified ebb and flow.

In 1980, most governments of the region were dictatorships of various descriptions. In 2005, elected governments rule almost everywhere. And the globalizing energies of the 1990s have helped Latin America leave behind its 1980s "Lost Decade" of debt, inflation, and stagnation. Economic recovery has given prestige to the "neoliberal" (basically free-market) policies pur-

sued by practically all governments in the region. But, as in much of the world, current free-market growth seems to make the rich richer, the middle class more middle-class, and the poor comparatively poorer. In Latin America, with a poor majority, that kind of growth can produce more losers than winners.

Winners and losers. Rich and poor. Conquerors and conquered. Masters and slaves. That is the old, old conflict at the heart of Latin American history. The conflict remained alive and well in the 1990s. To protest the implementation of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) between the United States and Mexico in the 1990s, Mayan rebels began an uprising that lasted years. These Mayan rebels took the name Zapatistas in memory of earlier rebels, many of them indigenous, who fought for land reform in the early 1900s. Meanwhile, middle-class Mexicans found that NAFTA reduced prices and increased the availability of urban consumer goods. The Zapatistas continued to protest, but the Mexican government kept NAFTA in place.

Aspects of this confrontation can be traced straight back to 1492, which is the purpose of this book. Here, in a nutshell, is the story: In the 1500s, Spanish and Portuguese colonizers imposed their language, their religion, and their social institutions on the indigenous Americans and enslaved Africans, people who labored for them in mines and fields and who served them, too, at table and in bed. After three centuries of this, however, things began to change (at least partly) with the introduction of two new political forces.

The first force was *liberalism*. Students should carefully separate this international meaning of liberalism from narrow US uses of the word. Liberalism, in this larger sense, comprises the core principles of the US constitution, principles shared by Republicans and Democrats alike. Historically, liberalism is a complex of values and practices that developed in the 1600s and 1700s, largely in France and England. Both 1776 and 1789

(marking the American and French Revolutions) are landmark dates in world liberalism. Liberalism favors progress over tradition, reason over faith, universal over local values, and the free market over government control. Liberalism also advocates equal citizenship over entrenched privilege and representative democracy over all other forms of government. Unfortunately, these last elements have sometimes been treated as icing on the cake, a finishing touch too often put off. Overall, the US experience with liberalism has produced prosperity. The Latin American experience with liberalism, on the other hand, has been more mixed.

Nationalism, the second new political force, eventually became liberalism's rough opposite. Liberalism and nationalism emerged together in the struggle for Latin American independence. Latin American nationalism—different in different countries but always built on similar themes—is deeply embedded in the region's historical experience. A portrait of nationalism will emerge gradually over the course of this book. One initial observation: People in the United States often regard nationalism (nationalism *elsewhere*, anyway) as negative. But Latin American nationalism has often provided an ideological self-defense against imperialism, a positive force for social equality, and an antidote to white supremacy.

At the turn of the twenty-first century, Europeans no longer ride on the backs of indigenous porters or in sedan chairs carried by African slaves. But everywhere, wealthier people still have lighter skin and poorer people still have darker skin—a sweeping but sadly accurate generalization that does have exceptions, and lots of them, but only of the kind that prove the rule. The conclusion is inescapable: The descendants of the Spanish, the Portuguese, and later European immigrants to Latin America still hold power, and the people who descend from slaves and subjugated indigenous people still work for them. Half a millennium later, this is clearly the enduring

legacy, rippling across the centuries, of the fact that African, European, and indigenous American people did not come together on neutral terms, like various pedestrians arriving simultaneously at a bus stop. Just how they did come together will be our concern in the next chapter. (Get ready for the blood and fire.)

This quick introduction is for US readers who are encountering Latin American history for the first time. Such readers need to know something about past US thinking on Latin America, because examples of it float freely in our popular culture and still influence our ideas.

Until roughly the 1930s, the interpreters of Latin America focused largely on race and culture, considering the Latin American varieties defective goods. "Hot-blooded Latins" with too much "nonwhite blood," according to this outmoded idea, simply lacked the self-discipline and the brains to make stable, democratic, prosperous societies. As Catholics, they lacked a "Protestant work ethic" (to make work not just a necessity, but a virtue), and their tropical climates further discouraged economic activity with debilitating heat and too many sensuous satisfactions—mangoes, papayas, and passion fruit—literally, as well as figuratively, growing on trees. In this version, Latin American history was racially, culturally, or environmentally "determined," and more or less inescapably so.

Between 1940 and 1970, racial and environmental determinism went out of style intellectually. US historians of Latin America replaced the former villains of the region's history (those pesky indigenous or African genes) with new bad guys: backward mentalities and traditional social structures that had to be "modernized" so that Latin America could advance along the developmental trail blazed by other countries. While "modernization theory" was an advance over racial and environmental determinism, it maintained existing stereotypes. Greedy



landowners and backward rulers took over from congenital laziness and tropical heat as explanations for Latin American problems. One thing remained the same: US explanations for the region's problems always began and ended with Latin America itself.

During the 1960s, however, most historians of Latin America inside and outside the region became convinced that earlier interpretations of its problems were a convenient way to blame the victim. Instead, they argued that Latin American economies stood in a permanently dependent position relative to the world's industrial powers, which were always at least one step ahead of them developmentally. "Dependency theory" thus located the origin of Latin American problems outside the region, partly in the action of colonizing powers, partly in the forces of economic globalization—although "globalization" was not yet the common term.

Dependency theory still provides useful insights, but it has lost its central place in Latin American studies. In the United States, interest in Latin America now focuses on matters that also preoccupy us at home. For example, as US citizens explore new ways of thinking about race, they are interested to learn that Latin Americans long ago embraced multiracial identities. People concerned with multiculturalism and "identity politics" in the United States find a valuable comparative perspective in Latin America. By the 1990s, both the humanities and the social sciences gave new prominence to the study of culture and, more specifically, to the way race, gender, class, and national identities are "constructed" in people's minds. To be male or female is a matter of genes, of biology, but the definition of a "real man" or a "real woman," for example, differs greatly from culture to culture. In matters of cultural and racial complexity, the world has much to learn from the Latin American experience.

Let us begin our story.



COLUMBUS AND THE ARAWAKS. Until recently, we spoke of the "Discovery" of America, which means telling the story from the European point of view. Today, in memory of the people already here in 1492, we use a more neutral term—the "Encounter." This 1594 engraving by Theodore de Bry helped Europeans imagine Columbus (with a jaunty hat) encountering the Arawaks of the Caribbean for the first time. (Yes, those are the gift-bearing Arawaks looking more like figures from European art history than like indigenous Americans.) Courtesy of Bettmann/Corbis.

1400s	1492–1500	1500–1520	1520s–1530s	1548
Aztec and Inca Empires rise	Columbus and Cabral voyages	Slave trade under way	Defeat of the Aztecs and Incas	Royal government established in Brazil

I.

ENCOUNTER

Indigenous peoples inhabited almost every inch of the Americas when the Europeans and Africans arrived. Deserts and forests were less densely populated than fertile valleys, but no part of the continent lacked people who lived off the land and considered themselves part of it. The Encounter between native Americans and Europeans constitutes a defining moment in world history. Neither the Europeans' "Old World" nor the "New World," as they called the Americas, would ever be the same afterward. For Latin America, conquest and colonization by the Spanish and Portuguese created patterns of social domination that became eternal givens, like the deep and lasting marks of an original sin.*

The Iberian invaders of America were personally no more sinful than most. They came to America seeking success in the terms dictated by their society: riches, the privilege of being served by others, and a claim to religious righteousness. It makes little sense for us to judge their moral quality as human beings because they merely lived the logic of the world as they understood it, just as we do. The original sin lay in the logic, justified in religious terms,

*In Christian belief, Adam and Eve committed the original sin in the Garden of Eden, and all their descendants later inherited that sin.

that assumed a right to conquer and colonize. One way or another, the European logic of conquest and colonization soured the Encounter everywhere from Mexico to Argentina. The basic scenario varied according to the natural environment and the indigenous peoples' way of life when the European invaders arrived.

PATTERNS OF INDIGENOUS LIFE

The indigenous peoples of the Americas had adapted themselves to the land in many ways. Some were *nonsedentary*, an adaptation to difficult environments such as the northern deserts of Mexico, territory of the Chichimecas. Nonsedentary people led a mobile existence as hunters and gatherers, and movement kept their groups small and their social organization relatively simple. Often they roamed open plains. Arid plains occupy a wide swath of the interior of South America, then inhabited by tribes of hunters and gatherers. Not forests, neither were these exactly grasslands at the time of the Encounter. Instead, they bristled with various kinds of scrub that, as in the northeastern Brazilian area called the *sertão*, might be thorny and drop its leaves in the dry season. The Pampas peoples who gave their name to the Argentine grasslands were also non-sedentary.

Other indigenous Americans were forest dwellers. Hunting was important to them, too, but the abundant rainfall characterizing most forest environments allowed them to depend on agriculture in a way that the nonsedentary people could not, and so forest peoples were often *semisedentary*. Their agricultural practices were adapted to thin tropical soils. Thin soils? Yes: The exuberant vegetation of tropical forests produces a misleading impression. Outsiders think of these forests as "jungles," a word that suggests overpowering, unstoppable fertility. Thus, a 1949 geography text* speaks of "the relentless fe-

*William Lytle Schurz, *Latin America: A Descriptive Survey* (New York: E. P. Dutton, 1949), 28.

cundity and savagery of the jungle." In fact, the breathtaking vitality of tropical forests resides not in the soil, but in living things, such as insects, trees, and the various tree-dwelling epiphytes that have no roots in the ground. Particularly in the great rain forest of the Amazon basin, the soils are of marginal fertility. Once cleared for agriculture, tropical forest soils produce disappointing yields after only a few years. Therefore, forest-dwelling indigenous peoples practiced "shifting cultivation," sometimes called "slash and burn" because of the way they cleared their garden plots. Semisedentary people built villages but moved them frequently, allowing old garden plots to be reabsorbed into the forest and opening new ones elsewhere. Shifting cultivation was thus a successful adaptation to one of the world's most challenging natural environments. Semisedentary societies, like the forest-dwelling Tupi, the best-known indigenous people of Brazilian history, organized themselves by tribes and by gender roles, but not by social class. Nor did they build empires.

Finally, some indigenous people were *fully sedentary*. Permanent settlement, usually on high plateaus rather than in forests, made their societies more complex, and some constructed great empires, especially the fabled Aztec, Inca, and Maya empires. Not all sedentaries had empires, however. What all had in common were stationary, permanently sustainable forms of agriculture. For example, the capital of the Aztec Empire—more populous than Madrid or Lisbon—was fed by quite an ingenious method. Tenochtitlan was surrounded by lake waters on all sides, and in these waters the inhabitants of the city constructed garden platforms called *chinampas*. Alluvial deposits periodically renewed their fertility. The builders of the Inca Empire had their own elaborate form of sustainable agriculture involving terraced slopes, irrigation, and the use of nitrate-rich bird droppings, called *guano*, for fertilizer. A permanent agricultural base allowed the growth of larger, denser conglomerations

of people, the construction of cities, greater labor specialization—all sorts of things. Not all were good things. Whereas the non- or semisedentary people tended toward fairly egalitarian societies, in which outstanding individuals became leaders thanks to their personal qualities, fully sedentary groups were strongly stratified by class. Aztecs, Incas, and Mayas all had hereditary nobilities that specialized in war.

Note that the names Aztec and Inca refer to *empires* and not, strictly speaking, to their inhabitants at all. The rulers of the Aztec Empire were a people called the Mexicas, who gave their name to Mexico. The warlike Mexicas were relative newcomers to the fertile valley where they built their amazing city, Tenochtitlan, on a lake in the shadow of great volcanoes, but they inherited a civilization that had developed in Mexico's central highlands over thousands of years. For example, the gargantuan Pyramid of the Sun, the largest pyramid on earth, was built long before the Mexicas arrived. In the early 1400s, the Mexicas were only one among many groups who spoke Nahuatl, the common language of city-states in the region. But they conquered much of central Mexico during the next one hundred years. Tenochtitlan, the imperial capital, was a vast and teeming complex of towers, palaces, and pyramids that, according to the flabbergasted Spanish adventurer Bernal Díaz, rose like a mirage from the waters of the surrounding lake, linked to the shore by a series of perfectly straight and level causeways. "We were astonished and said these things appeared enchantments from a book of chivalry," wrote Díaz, describing the Spaniards' first sight of Tenochtitlan.

From an imposing capital city in a high Andean valley far to the south, the even larger Inca Empire had grown just as rapidly and recently as had the Aztec Empire. The Inca capital was called Cuzco, meaning "the navel of the universe." Today one speaks of "the Incas," but the name Inca actually referred only to the emperor and his empire. Ethnically, the people of

Cuzco were Quechua speakers, and they, too, drew on a long history of previous cultural evolution in the Andes. Cuzco's architectural marvels—earthquake-resistant masonry walls with interlocking stones—were an old trick among Andean builders. Heirs to ancient civilizations, the Aztec and Inca Empires were newer and more fragile than they appeared. The Mayas were less imperially inclined. Beginning much earlier than Tenochtitlan and Cuzco, various Maya city-states with imposing ceremonial centers held sway in Central America: Tikal, Copán, Tulum, Uxmal. In cultural attainments, such as art, architecture, and astronomy, the Mayas were second to none in America. But the Mayas did not create an empire to rival the Inca or Aztec empires. And since the high point of the Maya Empire, if such a term really applies, was many centuries before the Europeans arrived, it plays little part in our story.

At the moment of the Encounter, then, most of Latin America was inhabited by nonsedentary or semisedentary people, such as the Pampas of Argentina or the Tupis of Brazil. Today, few of their descendants remain. Instead, the large indigenous populations of Latin America descend from the sedentary farmers, many of whom lived under Aztec, Maya, or Inca rule until the Europeans arrived. Why did they survive when the others perished? The answer is complex, but it explains much about Latin America. It requires, first, some background about Spain and Portugal, joined under the geographical name *Iberia*.

ORIGINS OF A CRUSADING MENTALITY

In the 1490s, when Europeans clambered out of their cramped sailing vessels to face indigenous Americans for the first time, the greatest question was how each would react to the other. This was truly a cultural encounter, a clash of values and attitudes. The Spanish and Portuguese outlook, along

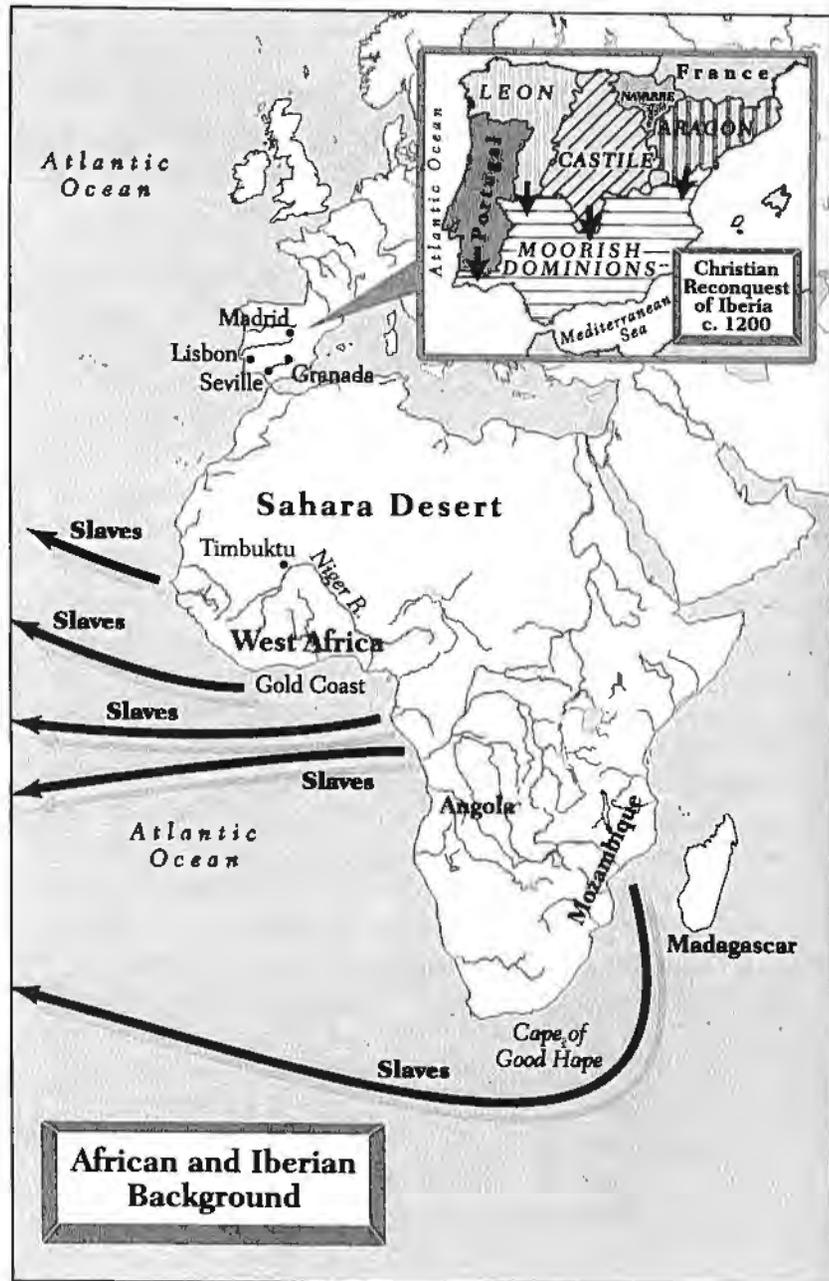
with their crusader rhetoric, had been shaped by the history of the Iberian Peninsula.

Iberia is a rugged, mountainous land. Parts of it are as green as Ireland (very green, indeed), but most of it is dry. On pictures taken from space, southern Spain appears the same color as nearby northern Africa. Historically, Iberia had been a bridge between Europe and Africa, and the narrow straits of Gibraltar separating the two continents had often been crossed, in both directions, by migrants and invaders. In the year 711, Muslims from northern Africa, called Moors, began to cross heading north and seized most of the peninsula from its Christian kings (whose predecessors generations earlier had taken it from the Romans, who, in turn, had seized it from the Carthaginians, and so on). For most of the next eight hundred years, Iberia contained multiethnic societies that intermingled but also fought one another. Both activities left their mark.

Along with the practical skills of the Islamic world, the Moors brought with them the learning of the Greeks and Romans, better preserved in the Middle East during Europe's Dark Ages. Christians who lived under Moorish rule or who traded with Moorish neighbors from the remaining Christian kingdoms learned a healthy respect for the cultural achievements of Islam. The Moors were better physicians, better engineers, and better farmers than the Iberian Christians, whose languages gradually filled with Arabic words for new crops (such as basil, artichokes, and almonds), new processes and substances (such as distillation and alcohol), new furnishings (such as carpeting), and new sciences (such as algebra and chemistry)—eventually totaling about a quarter of all modern Spanish and Portuguese words. Although speakers of Arabic, the Moors were darker than Arabs. Shakespeare's "black" character Othello, for example, is a Moor. So the Christians of Iberia had long exposure to a sophisticated and powerful people who did not look European. In addition, on the eve of

the Encounter, Iberia had one of the largest Jewish minorities in Europe, and Lisbon and Seville were already home to thousands of enslaved Africans. Not sympathetic to cultural and racial difference, the Iberians were nevertheless well acquainted with it. Spanish and Portuguese attitudes toward other people ranged from scorn to grudging admiration to sexual curiosity—dusky Moorish maidens figure erotically in Iberian folktales. The reign of Alfonso the Wise (1252–1284), a noted lawgiver, represents a high point in this tense, multicultural Iberian world. In the end, however, the peninsula's eight hundred years of multicultural experience dissolved in an intolerant drive for religious purity.

The Christian reconquest of Iberia powerfully shaped the institutions and mentality of the Spanish and Portuguese. Iberian Christians believed that they had found the tomb of Santiago, Saint James the Apostle, in the remote northwestern corner of the peninsula never conquered by the Moors. The Moor-slaying Santiago, pictured as a sword-swinging knight, became the patron saint of reconquest, and his tomb in Santiago de Compostela became Europe's greatest shrine. Reconquest brought the repeated challenges of annexing new territory and subjugating infidel populations. As they pushed the Moors south toward Africa over thirty generations, the reconquering Christians founded new urban centers as bastions of their advancing territorial claims, and individual warlords took responsibility for Christianizing groups of defeated Moors, receiving tribute and service from them in return. The same challenges and the same procedures would be repeated in America. Another effect of the reconquest was to perpetuate the knightly renown and influence of the Christian nobility. For this reason, the values of the nobles (fighting prowess, leisure, display of wealth) lost ground only slowly to the values of the commercial middle class (moneymaking, industry, thrift). In addition, the requirements of warfare led to a



concentration of political power to facilitate decisive, unified command. Two of the peninsula's many small Christian kingdoms gradually emerged as leaders of the reconquest. The most important by far was centrally located Castile, whose dominions eventually engulfed much of Iberia and, when united with the kingdoms of Aragon, León, and Navarre, laid the political basis for modern Spain. On the Atlantic coast, the king of Portugal led a parallel advance south and managed to maintain independence from Spain. Portugal was the first to complete its reconquest, reaching the southern coast of Iberia in the mid-1200s. On the Spanish side, the Moorish kingdom of Granada held out for two more centuries before finally succumbing to Castilian military power in 1492.

When Queen Isabel of Castile decided to bankroll the explorations of Christopher Columbus in the 1490s, she did so in hopes of enriching her kingdom, true enough. By sailing west, Columbus proposed to outflank a profitable Venetian-Arab monopoly on trade routes to Asia. But we should not underestimate the religious mystique that also surrounded the Spanish and Portuguese monarchs. Isabel was above all a Catholic monarch. Centuries of reconquest had created a true crusading mentality in Iberia, and the monarchies used this fervor to justify their increasingly absolute power. Moors who had accepted Christian rule, Jews whose families had lived in Iberia for close to a thousand years, anyone suspected of religious infidelity found themselves objects of a purge. Moors and Jews were forced to convert or emigrate. In fact, in the very year of the surrender of Granada, Isabel expelled tens of thousands of people from Spain because they refused to renounce the Jewish faith. And Moors and Jews who did convert remained subject to discrimination as "New Christians." The famous Spanish Inquisition was established to impose religious purity.

During the 1500s, Catholics and Protestants began fighting bitterly in western Europe, and the monarchs of a unified

Spain led the Catholic side, pouring prodigious resources into the war effort. Recall that in 1588 the Spanish Armada attempted to invade Protestant England. Overseas exploration also took on religious significance. The earlier Christian reconquest in Portugal allowed the Portuguese to extend their crusading activities into Africa ahead of Spain. As Portuguese ships edged down the coast of Africa during the 1400s, bringing back gold and slaves, they found religious justification in tales of a lost Christian kingdom that supposedly lay beyond the Sahara, waiting to be reunited with the rest of Christendom. Isabel's decision to fund the voyages of Columbus was Spain's bid to catch up with Portugal. Thus, the two Iberian monarchies, strengthened politically by the reconquest, became the first in Europe to sponsor major overseas exploration, and they arrived in the Western Hemisphere neck and neck.

Although the Spanish-sponsored expedition of Columbus arrived in America first, the difference was less than a decade. Let us start with the Portuguese, who had pioneered the navigational skills and naval technology needed to get there. The Portuguese colonization of Brazil exemplifies what happened when the Europeans encountered indigenous people who were not fully sedentary. An initial look at Brazil will help us appreciate the unique qualities of the very different, and far more famous, encounter of the Spanish with the fully sedentary peoples of indigenous Mexico and Peru.

THE BRAZILIAN COUNTEREXAMPLE

The first Portuguese fleet arrived in Brazil in 1500. Like Columbus a few years earlier, the Portuguese commander Pedro Alvares Cabral was bound for India, but in contrast to Columbus, he actually did get there. Cabral had no intention of sailing around the world. Instead, he was sailing from Portugal down the west coast of Africa and around its southern

tip into the Indian Ocean. To catch the best winds, he had swung far out into the South Atlantic on his southward voyage—so far out, in fact, that before turning back east he bumped into Brazil. Like Columbus, Cabral did not know exactly what he had found, but he knew that it was not India. After naming Brazil the “Island of the True Cross,” Cabral hurried on to his original destination.

Brazil seemed unimportant to the Portuguese at the time. Just a few years earlier, they had succeeded in establishing a practical route to the fabled riches of South Asia—which Columbus had failed to do. For the rest of the 1500s, the Portuguese concentrated on exploiting their early advantage in the Far Eastern trade. Portuguese outposts elsewhere reached from Africa to Arabia, India, Indonesia, China, and Japan. Portuguese ships returned to Europe perilously overloaded with silks and porcelain, precious spices (pepper, nutmeg, cloves, and cinnamon), and Persian horses, not to mention gold and silver. Monopoly access to these riches made Portugal, for a time, a major player in world history. Brazil offered nothing comparable to India in the eyes of Cabral or his chronicler, Pero Vaz de Caminha. Caminha's curious description of what he saw on Brazilian shores presented a vision of a new Garden of Eden, paying particular attention to the fact that the indigenous people there wore no clothes: “They go around naked, without any covering at all. They worry no more about showing their private parts than their faces.” The Portuguese sailors plainly found indigenous women attractive and inviting, but the only thing that seemed to have potential for sale in Europe was a red dye made from the “brazilwood” tree.

The name of this export product quickly replaced the original name of “Island of the True Cross,” just as economics upstaged religion, overall, in the colonization of Brazil and Spanish America. Still, religious ideas must not be discounted. “Fathers, pray that God make me chaste and zeal-

invaders' horses—elsewhere something like a secret weapon for the Europeans, because they did not exist in America before the Encounter—could hardly move amid hanging vines, fallen trunks, and tangled roots. To those who know it, the forest provides countless opportunities to hide, to escape, and to ambush pursuers. Even after they were defeated, native Brazilians would melt into the limitless woodland beyond the plantations if not supervised constantly. In other words, extracting land and labor from semisedentary forest dwellers meant totally destroying their society and enslaving them. Most were likely to die in the process.

This is exactly what happened all along the coast of Brazil once the Portuguese began to establish sugar plantations. The king of Portugal, who viewed the indigenous people as potentially loyal subjects, did not approve of this wholesale annihilation, but his power in Brazil was surprisingly limited. In an attempt to settle two thousand miles of coastline on the cheap, the king had parceled out enormous slices to wealthy individuals, called captains, who promised to colonize and rule in his name. Significantly, the most successful were those who minimized conflict with the indigenous people. Pernambuco, on the very northeastern tip of Brazil, became the model sugar captaincy, partly because the family of its captain established an alliance by marriage with a local chief. Most of the captaincies failed, however. By the mid-1540s, indigenous rebellions threatened to erupt up and down the coast. On the splendid Bay of All Saints, the Tupinambá, a subgroup of the Tupi, had demolished one of the most promising settlements. So, in 1548, the Portuguese king stepped up the colonization of Brazil by appointing a royal governor and building a capital city, Salvador (also called Bahia), on that site.

Over the next half century, between the planters' efforts to enslave the Tupinambá people and certain disastrous efforts to protect them, the Tupinambá vanished from the area of the

sugar plantations. Particularly lethal were European diseases, against which indigenous people had no natural resistance; contagion ran rampant among Tupinambá slaves in the close quarters of plantations. Any gathering of native populations facilitated this "demographic catastrophe." The same ship that brought the first royal governor also brought the first black-robed Jesuit missionaries to Brazil. Famous for their intelligence and zeal, the Jesuits moved quickly to establish special villages where they gathered their indigenous flock to teach them Christianity and defend them from enslavement. Despite all good intentions, however, epidemic European diseases decimated the indigenous inhabitants of the Jesuit villages. On the plantations, too, indigenous slaves were fast disappearing because of disease and despair. To replace them, the Portuguese bought slaves in Africa and crowded them into the holds of Brazilian-bound ships. By 1600, Africans were rapidly replacing indigenous people as the enslaved workforce of Brazilian sugar plantations. The surviving Tupinambá either fled into the interior or intermarried and gradually disappeared as a distinct group. This pattern was to be repeated throughout Brazil as sugar cultivation spread.

AFRICA AND THE SLAVE TRADE

In several parts of Latin America, Africans totally replaced indigenous laborers in the 1600s. How were so many people enslaved and taken out of Africa? Why did they survive to populate Brazil and the Caribbean while people like the Tupi died? Now that Africans have entered our story—never to leave it—we should consider the part they played in the Encounter.

The Encounter brought together people from three continents to create new societies, but as we have seen, the Africans and the Iberians were not total strangers. In fact, the first slaves to arrive in America were Africans who had already spent time

as slaves in Iberia itself. Europeans and Africans had more in common with each other than with indigenous Americans. Along with Europe and Asia, Africa formed a part of what Europeans called the Old World. For tens of thousands of years, the indigenous people of the New World had been isolated, and thus protected, from the diseases circulating in the Old World. Hence their utter vulnerability to European diseases. Africans, on the other hand, were not so susceptible. Old World trade routes and migrations had already exposed them to these microbes. Similarly, indigenous Americans had never seen the horses, cattle, sheep, pigs, chickens, and other domestic animals brought by the Iberians, but Africans already raised the same animals, and some Africans were skilled horsemen. Although indigenous people fashioned intricate jewelry out of gold and silver, they did nothing with iron. Africans, on the other hand, were experienced ironworkers and even produced high-quality steel. Then too, most Africans were fully sedentary agriculturists and therefore closer than the semi-sedentary Tupi to the pattern of Iberian rural life. Finally, indigenous people like the Tupi had every reason to expect the worst when captured and enslaved, because among the Tupi, slaves were frequently sacrificed and sometimes eaten. Africans brought a different set of expectations to the experience of slavery.

Slavery was everywhere in African societies, a social institution basic to economic life. In Africa, as in Iberia and indigenous America, slaves were most often war captives, but with an important difference. In Africa, captives did not necessarily remain eternally degraded servants, and often their children were not born slaves. Eventually, African forms of slavery allowed full social integration of the slaves' descendants. In some African societies, slaves might even attain high status and elite privileges as administrators. Buying and selling slaves at markets, on the other hand, was a European tradition. The

African slave *trade* per se began to take on massive proportions only after the Portuguese arrived in the 1400s.

Along the African coast, the Portuguese established trading centers stocked with silks, linens, brass kettles, and eventually rum, tobacco, guns, and gunpowder, but most especially with bars of iron for metalworking. African traders brought long lines of slaves, chained together at the neck, to these embarkation centers. Most had been captured in wars between African states, and eventually the profits of the trade of war captives provided a new stimulus to warfare. Slaving vessels might also stop anywhere along the coast to buy captives from local traders. Meanwhile, the Portuguese sought ideological justification in the notion that buying such captives to Christianize them was actually doing them a favor. The Board of Conscience in Lisbon cleared the procedure as long as the Portuguese slavers were supposedly "rescuing" the captives of cannibals, or enslaving certified practitioners of human sacrifice, or engaging in some form of certified "just war." In practice, however, such legal distinctions mattered little to slave traders. They bought whoever was for sale, willy-nilly, with a special preference for healthy young men, and then packed them into the holds of slave ships where 15 to 20 percent on average would die on the voyage. Probably more than a million people died in the passage across the Atlantic alone. Early exploration of the African coast led to about a century of Portuguese dominance in the slave trade. Portuguese slavers supplied human cargo to Spanish American, as well as Brazilian, buyers.

We have few firsthand accounts of what being human cargo was like, although around twelve million people over four centuries had the experience. One exception is the account of Olaudah Equiano, written in the 1700s, after the trade had been underway for more than two centuries. Equiano describes his confusion and despair when arriving aboard ship to encounter the claustrophobic horror of the dark, foul, and



narrow cargo spaces. Not until he found a few other people who spoke his language did Equiano learn that he was being taken to work in the white man's land. Enslaved Africans came to Latin America in diverse groups, speaking many different languages, originating in three widely separated areas of Africa.

The first area to be affected by the slave trade was West Africa, from Senegal to Nigeria. Here a coastal belt of tropical forest gives way, farther inland, to savanna (the Sudanic belt) and eventually to the beginnings of the Sahara desert. This is a special part of Africa, traversed in a great arc by the Niger River, the cradle of many cultural developments. Beginning about five thousand years ago, Bantu-speaking people set out from the area around the mouth of the Niger River in great migrations, spreading their culture east and south over much of the continent. Along the course of the Niger, a thousand years ago, arose kingdoms famous in Europe for their wealth in gold. Enough of that gold had trickled north across the Sahara in camel caravans to excite the interest of medieval Europeans, and the Portuguese undertook their exploration of the African coast partly to find the source of the precious flow. Communication across the Sahara also brought Islam to West Africa. Before the slave trade, the most powerful kingdoms arose inland on the upper Niger, where stood the fabulous walled city of Timbuktu, with its bustling markets and university. In 1324, when Mansa Musa, king of Mali, made a pilgrimage to Mecca (as devout Muslims try to do at least once in their lives), his caravan carried enough gold to cause oscillations in currency values in the areas it crossed. The fatal attraction of precious metals first brought the Portuguese to "the Gold Coast" (modern Ghana), but the value of human cargoes from this region eventually far outstripped the golden ones. The British, the French, and the Dutch eventually established their own trading stations, finally breaking the Portuguese monopoly on the West African coast.

Two other areas of Africa remained more or less monopolized by the Portuguese: Angola and Mozambique, where coastal stretches of grassy, open land allowed the Portuguese to penetrate far inland and actively colonize, in contrast to their more limited West African trading strategy. As a result, Portuguese remains the language of government in Angola and Mozambique today. These regions became chief sources for the slave trade only after the Portuguese were edged out of West Africa by competition from other European countries. But that gets ahead of our story.

For now, having observed how Portugal's exploration of the African coast and its clash with the semisedentary Tupi laid the ethnic and demographic foundations for a black-and-white Brazil, let us return to the sedentary societies of Mexico and Peru, where Aztec and Inca rulers boasted astonishing golden treasures.

THE FALL OF THE AZTEC AND INCA EMPIRES

While Brazil remained a backwater in the 1500s, Mexico and Peru drew the Spaniards like powerful magnets, becoming the two great poles of Spanish colonization. For three centuries, Mexico and Peru would remain the richest and most populous places in the Americas, but first their indigenous rulers had to be defeated. The Aztec and Inca emperors commanded tens of thousands of warriors and vast material resources. Their precipitous defeat at the hands of a few hundred Spanish adventurers is unparalleled in world history. Several circumstances conspired to make it possible.

In 1519, when they first set foot in Mexico, the Spaniards already knew a lot about America. After all, a full generation had passed since they began settling the Caribbean islands where Columbus made landfall: Hispaniola (today divided between Haiti and the Dominican Republic) and Cuba. The initial

Spanish experience there with the semisedentary Arawak people, who were not so different from the Tupi, had begun with trading but rapidly degenerated into slaving. The outcome was similar to what had transpired on the Brazilian coast. Disease and abuse decimated the Caribbean's indigenous people within a generation. Soon they would cease to exist altogether, to be replaced by African slaves.

The Spanish invaders were not soldiers but undisciplined adventurers seeking private fortunes. The first to arrive laid claim to the indigenous inhabitants and, eventually, the land, leaving little for the next wave of adventurers. These had to conquer somewhere else. Operating from the Caribbean bases, Spanish newcomers began to explore the coast of Central and South America, crossed Panama, and found the Pacific Ocean, making contact with many different indigenous groups and beginning to hear rumors of glittering, mysterious empires in the mountains beyond the Caribbean. So it was that, by the time he found the Aztec Empire, the Spanish leader Hernán Cortés had already been dealing with indigenous Americans for fifteen years.

In the conquest of Mexico, no other single Spanish advantage outweighed the simple fact that Cortés more or less knew what was happening, whereas Mexica leaders, including Moctezuma, the Aztec emperor, had no earthly idea who, or what, the Spaniards might be. For centuries the story has circulated that Moctezuma suspected the Spaniards were gods from Aztec mythology, that Cortés himself could be Quetzalcoatl, a white-skinned deity whose coming had been foretold in prophecy. That story now appears to be incorrect, however, because it originated several decades after the arrival of the Spaniards. Although repeated a thousand times, it should now be corrected. On the other hand, the list of never-before-seen things that the Spanish brought was long and intimidating: tall-masted sailing ships, ferocious attack dogs, horses of monstrous size, cannon belching fire and thunder, steel blades,

and body armor. The Mexica had never seen Europeans or Africans (who were always present among the conquistadors), and had no prior clue that such strange-looking people even existed. Logically, they regarded these outlandish invaders as beings from outside the world they knew. Searching for a name to call the Spaniards, the Mexica used the Nahuatl word *teul*, which at the time was routinely translated into Spanish as *dios*, or "god." Since the word *teul* could be used for a spirit or demon, it did not imply adoration, but it clearly implied supernatural power. The Spaniards' humanity, vulnerability, and hostile intentions did not become clear until Cortés and his expedition had been welcomed into Tenochtitlan, where they took Moctezuma hostage. By the middle of 1521, smallpox and indigenous allies had helped Cortés annihilate Tenochtitlan, and the Aztec Empire as a whole quickly collapsed.

It took more fighting to overthrow the Inca Empire. Still, the stunningly rapid and complete Spanish triumph in both cases calls for explanation. Once again, experience was on the Spanish side. The leader of the Peruvian expedition, Francisco Pizarro, was another seasoned conquistador who, like Cortés (his distant relative), employed a tried-and-true maneuver, something the Spanish had been practicing since their first Caribbean encounters with indigenous people, when he treacherously took the Inca ruler Atahualpa hostage in 1532. Then, too, the Spanish advantage in military technology must be recalled. Horses, steel, and (less importantly) gunpowder gave the invaders a devastating superiority of force, man for man, against warriors armed only with bravery and stone-edged weapons. Spanish weaponry produced staggering death tolls. At one point, the Spanish under Cortés massacred ten times their number in a few hours at the Aztec tributary city of Cholula. Spanish military advantages came from their Old World heritage, which included gunpowder from China and horses from Asia. Old World microbes were Spanish allies, too.

Imagine the horror of the Incas when Pizarro captured the Inca emperor, Atahualpa. Atahualpa had arrived with an army numbering in the tens of thousands; Pizarro had only 168 Spaniards. Atahualpa had reason to be overconfident, and he walked into an ambush. Pizarro's only hope was a smashing psychological victory, so he drew on another tried-and-true Spanish tactic, one repeatedly used in Mexico: the surprise slaughter of indigenous nobles within an enclosed space. At Pizarro's invitation, Atahualpa's multitude of followers entered a square where the Spaniards had hidden cannons. Without warning, the cannons fired into the crowd at close range, creating gruesome carnage. Then Spaniards on horses charged into the mass of bodies, swinging their long steel blades in bloody arcs, sending heads and arms flying, as no indigenous American weapon could do. Meanwhile, surprise and armor protected Pizarro's men. Not one of them died that day, yet they succeeded in taking Atahualpa prisoner, killing and maiming thousands of his men in the process. Atahualpa's people brought mountains of gold to ransom him, but Pizarro had him executed anyway. Depriving the indigenous defenders of leadership was part of the "divide-and-conquer" strategy.

Neither the Incas nor the Aztecs could have been defeated without the aid of the Spaniards' indigenous allies. In Mexico, Aztec taxes and tributes had weighed heavily on the shoulders of other Nahuatl-speaking city-states. Tributary city-states had furnished sacrificial victims for the Aztec state religion, the ideology that glorified Aztec imperial expansion and bathed the pyramids of Tenochtitlan in the blood of hundreds of thousands. As a result, Cortés found ready alliances, most notably with the nearby indigenous city of Tlaxcala, an old rival of Tenochtitlan. Eager to end Aztec rule, rival cities sent thousands of warriors to help Cortés.

Pizarro, too, used indigenous allies to topple the Inca Empire. Unlike the Aztecs, the Incas had imposed a centralized

power that broke up rival city-states and resettled their populations. While the Aztecs had merely imposed tributes, the Incas administered, building roads and storage facilities and garrisons. Like the Aztecs, and like the Spanish and Portuguese, too, the Incas had a state religion that provided an ideological justification for empire. Unfortunately for the Incas, however, both the reigning emperor and his successor had died suddenly in the epidemic that, advancing along trade routes ahead of Pizarro, ravaged the Inca ruling family, creating a succession crisis just before the Spanish arrival. Disastrously, an Inca civil war had begun. Atahualpa led one side and his brother Huascar the other. The wily Pizarro was able to play the two sides against each other, achieving the ultimate victory for himself. Each side in the Inca civil war saw the other as the greatest threat. How could they know that Pizarro's tiny expedition was only the entering wedge of vast colonizing forces beyond the Atlantic?

Aztec and Inca treasures soon attracted Spaniards by the thousands. The defeat of Aztec and Inca power was only the first step in establishing Spanish dominion over the mainland. Now the Spanish had to colonize, to assert effective control over large populations and sprawling territories, over the civilizations that underlay the Aztec and Inca empires and that remained in place after their destruction. This was a gradual process, requiring several generations and contrasting markedly with the pattern of colonization on the Brazilian coast.

THE BIRTH OF SPANISH AMERICA

Even before the dust of imperial collapse had settled in Mexico and Peru, the Spanish began to parcel out the plunder of conquest. Some was treasure captured from indigenous royalty, but most took a form called *encomienda*, whereby the conquerors were rewarded with people. In this system, indigenous people were "entrusted" (the meaning of the word *encomienda*)

to each conqueror, who had the responsibility of Christianizing them and the privilege of making them work for him. *Encomiendas* of conquered Moors had been awarded aplenty during the Christian reconquest of Iberia, so it was a familiar system to the Spaniards. Conquerors who received *encomiendas* became much like European nobles, able to live from the labor of serflike farmers who delivered part of their crops as regular tribute. For indigenous farmers accustomed to paying tribute to imperial masters, the situation was familiar, too. Most often, the same city-states, villages, and clans that had once paid tribute to the Aztecs or Incas now paid tribute to the new Spanish overlords instead. Calamitous, repeated epidemics during the 1500s, comparable in severity to the Black Death of medieval Europe, reduced native populations to a fraction of their former size. But, unlike what occurred in the Caribbean or along the Brazilian coast, indigenous villages did not disappear from Mexico and Peru.

Whereas Tupi society was swept away by disease and replaced by Brazilian sugar plantations, the sedentary farming societies of central Mexico and the Andes survived, shaken but intact, for the Spanish to take over. The Spanish normally created *encomiendas* out of already existing communities with their own indigenous nobles, whom the Spanish called *caciques*.^{*} The Spanish conquerors cultivated relations with these nobles, sometimes marrying into their families. Gradually, however, Spanish conquest undercut the defeated warrior nobility of Aztec and Inca days, and indigenous people adopted Spanish-style village governments. In Mexico, village officials with Spanish titles conducted their business and kept written records in Nahuatl. Hundreds of Spanish words came into Nahuatl, of course, indicating the powerful impact of con-

^{*}*Cacique* is actually an Arawak word that the Spanish adopted in the Caribbean and later applied elsewhere.

quest, but the basic structure of the language survived, preserving a distinctly indigenous worldview.

Mexico officially became "New Spain," but it was really two societies being grafted together, mostly by Spanish men and indigenous women. Spanish women, like Portuguese women in Brazil, were few. In the early years of the Encounter, Spanish men in America outnumbered Spanish women roughly nine to one. So, within a few years, indigenous women and Spanish men became the parents of a legion of mestizo children, exactly as anticipated by Pero Vaz de Caminha's letter from Brazil. Malinche had Cortés's baby soon after the fall of Tenochtitlan.

What an intriguing figure is Malinche, a Spanish deformation of her indigenous name, Malintzin. She was one of twenty female slaves given to Cortés as he sailed up the Mexican coast seeking the Aztec Empire in 1519. She already spoke Maya and Nahuatl, and she learned Spanish in months. This astoundingly quick-witted and self-possessed sixteen-year-old girl became inseparable from Cortés and was instrumental in the capture of Moctezuma. Understandably, her life has been read as a romantic novel, but also as a betrayal of Mexico. It was neither. As for romance, Cortés summoned his Spanish wife, who was waiting in Cuba, then gave Malinche a bit of property and turned her away. As for betraying Mexico, that country did not yet exist, unless one refers to the Aztec Empire, and Malinche had good reason to hate the Aztecs. Although Nahuatl was her first language, her own family had sold her into slavery to Mayas, which is how she learned that language. Malinche was more betrayed than betrayer. Cortés married her to one of his men, with whom she had a second child. She died, not yet twenty-five, only a few years later.

The Aztec princess Techichpotzín, baptized Isabel, was the daughter of Moctezuma. She became "Isabel Moctezuma," exemplifying the woman of indigenous nobility who could attract a Spanish husband because of her wealth. As the

legitimate heiress of Moctezuma's personal fortune and the recipient of a desirable encomienda, Isabel attracted more than her share of husbands. Before her three Spanish husbands, she was married to two different leaders of the Aztec resistance in the last days of Tenochtitlan. She outlived four of her spouses, bore seven mestizo children, adapted to her new life, and became a model of Catholic devotion and a benefactor of religious charities. She lived to the respectable age of forty.

As the Aztec and Inca nobility declined and the number of Spanish women increased, fewer and fewer Spanish men married indigenous women. Although Spanish men continued fathering unnumbered mestizo children, most were illegitimate and inherited little or nothing from their Spanish fathers. These children were "people-in-between": not Europeans or Africans or indigenous Americans. Mestizo children were second-class people in the Spanish world, poor relations, if recognized at all. Malinche's son by Cortés, Martín, became virtually a servant of his half-brother, also named Martín, Cortés's son by his second Spanish wife.

Spanish women usually arrived after the fighting was over, but that was not always the case. A woman named Isabel de Guevara helped conquer Argentina and Paraguay in the 1530s and 1540s. Years later, in an attempt to gain an encomienda for her part in the conquest, she wrote a letter to the Spanish Crown, describing how the women of the expedition took over when famine killed two-thirds of their party. As the men fainted from hunger, wrote Guevara, the women began "standing guard, patrolling the fires, loading the crossbows . . . arousing the soldiers who were capable of fighting, shouting the alarm through the camp, acting as sergeants, and putting the soldiers in order."

The most famous "conquistadora" of all was Inés Suárez, a woman of thirty when she came to America in 1537, alone,

looking for her husband. She searched first in Venezuela, then in Peru, where she found her husband already dead. Suárez then became the mistress of the conqueror of Chile, legendary for her actions during an indigenous attack there. Her plan was to terrorize the attackers by throwing them the heads of seven captured chiefs, and her most famous deed was to cut off the first captive's head herself. Despite (what was regarded as) her heroism, the conqueror of Chile, who had a wife in Spain, put Inés Suárez aside when he became governor of the new territory.

Favorable marriages outweighed even extraordinary ability in the lives of women. The marriage contract was a pillar of the Spanish social structure, crucial to the distribution of property. Marriage was a religious sacrament, and religious conformity was serious business in the Spanish Empire.

Spanish conquest had meant an earthly and a spiritual conquest, the defeat of the old gods. Spanish churchmen arrived to teach Catholic doctrine. They searched insistently for sacred objects that the indigenous people still preserved, hidden away, from their old religions—"idols," in Catholic eyes. The priest and the holder of the *encomienda* stood side by side in many areas, as the only two representatives of Spanish authority. As had occurred during the Christianization of Europe centuries earlier, the conversion of kings (or, in America, *caciques*) brought whole communities into the church at once. In their haste to baptize, missionaries perfunctorily sprinkled holy water on indigenous people in mass ceremonies that did little to teach them Christianity. Still, the baptized could remember the imposition of other imperial state religions, for that was a pattern familiar from before the Encounter. Among sedentary peoples, the Spanish made a habit of erecting churches on sites already sacred to indigenous deities. The people of Tenochtitlan cannot have been surprised to see Spanish conquerors level the Aztec Great

Pyramid and construct their cathedral on practically the same spot.

The fully sedentary people of central Mexico and Peru survived the Encounter infinitely better than did semisedentary people such as the Tupi. Still, the Encounter had a dire impact on settled agricultural societies, too. The Spanish often demanded more tribute than had indigenous overlords. For example, Andean villages had provided a labor draft called the *mita* to their Inca rulers, but after the conquest *mita* laborers were forced to do something new—toil in the shafts of deep silver mines, sometimes locked down for days. In addition, epidemic European diseases continued to decimate the indigenous population.

By the end of the 1500s, the basic contours of Latin American ethnicities were established. American, European, and African genes and cultures had begun to mix, creating rich potential for human diversity, but the violent and exploitative nature of the Encounter would sour the mix for centuries to come. In Brazil and the Caribbean region, Europeans and Africans took the place of the indigenous populations that were virtually wiped out. In Mexico and Peru, by contrast, Nahuatl- and Quechua-speaking societies survived to be gradually transformed. One way or the other, the original sin of Latin American history—the festering social injustice at the core—had done its durable damage. How would more equitable, more inclusive communities ever emerge from the smoking ruins of conquest? The next step, systematic colonization, the creation of entire social systems geared to serve the interests of distant masters in Europe, only made matters worse.

Friar Bartolomé de las Casas



Colonial Brazilian Church.
Statue by Aleijadinho. Photo-
graph by Michael Teague.
Brazil, Time World Library,
1967.

As our story makes abundantly clear, the European drive to extract labor and tribute explains much about the colonization of Latin America. How could it be different? At the most basic level, conquest is always about exploitation. On the other hand, conquerors and colonizers rarely admitted this, even to themselves. That is how the other, more idealistic, motives enter the picture. Most Spanish and Portuguese people who came to the Americas in the 1500s believed that spreading the “true religion,” even by force, was a good thing. Like all people, they tended to give their own actions the best possible interpretation. On the other hand, religious idealism truly was the driving force for some; logically enough, these were most often church people. The Catholic Church—Inquisition and all—generated the most important humanitarian countercurrents in this age of raw exploitation.

For example, some members of the Franciscan order who arrived in Mexico as early as 1524 showed deep respect for the indigenous people. Several Franciscans carefully gathered and preserved information about Aztec history, religion, and daily life. The most notable was Bernardino de Sahagún, who wrote that Aztec family organization and child care practices were superior to those of Spain. Sahagún collaborated with his indigenous students to assemble a treasure trove of Aztec thought, literature, and customs in their original language, Nahuatl. Gorgeously illustrated in authentic indigenous style, his book, known today as the *Florentine Codex*, remains essential for any interpretation of Aztec civilization. Another Franciscan, Toribio de Motolinia, denounced Spanish tributes, torture, and forced labor as so many “plagues” afflicting the indigenous people. To this day, Motolinia is warmly remembered in Mexico as a defender of the conquered.

The first Jesuits in Brazil similarly worked to defend the indigenous people against the depredations of the colonists. As a first measure, the Jesuits learned a number of the variants of Tupi (which was really a family of related languages as distinct from one another as French, Spanish, and Italian). They then devised a simplified Tupi grammar and a standard vocabulary for use in the mission villages. This *Lingua Geral*, or “general tongue,” was easily learned by speakers of various Tupi dialects. It facilitated religious teaching and separated the indigenous people from the settlers who wanted to enslave them.

But by far the greatest religious champion of the indigenous people was Bartolomé de las Casas, prototype for a long line of radical priests in Latin America. Las Casas was a university-educated, fortune-seeking young gentleman—no radical at all—when he came to America in 1502. He got an *encomienda* himself and for twelve years lived the life of an early Caribbean conqueror, watching indigenous people die

by the dozen from exploitation and disease. He was about forty when, in 1514, he had a change of heart, influenced, apparently, by the fiery sermons of a member of the Dominican order who had begun to preach against Spanish exploitation of encomiendas. By 1515, Las Casas, now a Dominican himself, returned to Spain and proposed various ways to protect indigenous Americans from the encomienda system. "The reason for the death and destruction of so many souls at Christian hands," according to Las Casas, was simple greed: "gold, and the attempt to get rich quickly." One of his alternative suggestions was to rely on the labor of enslaved Africans, but then he had a better idea: the recruitment in Spain of entire farming families disposed to work for themselves. Las Casas dreamed that Spanish and indigenous societies in America might be kept separate and the use of indigenous labor might be strictly limited and supervised. But his pilot colonization project in Venezuela never got off the ground.

During the 1520s and 1530s, Las Casas wrote a stream of publications denouncing encomienda abuses, and he traveled throughout the Caribbean and Central America defending the indigenous people. In 1537, the pope issued a proclamation, partly inspired by Las Casas, saying that the indigenous people were exactly that: people, not subhuman beings, as some claimed. In 1542, largely thanks to Las Casas, the Spanish Crown issued the famous New Laws of the Indies for the Good Treatment and Preservation of the Indians, immediately limiting and eventually ending encomiendas altogether. The high-flying holders of encomiendas hated and vilified Las Casas for the New Laws that clipped their wings, but the old crusader, already in his late sixties, had no intention of stopping.

In 1550–1551, Las Casas represented the cause of the indigenous people in a great debate held in the Spanish city of Valladolid to determine, once and for all, the moral status of

Spanish conquest in America. At Valladolid, Las Casas passionately denied the charge that the indigenous people were naturally inferior to Europeans and therefore deserved to be enslaved. Although the official result of the Valladolid debate was inconclusive, Las Casas had made a strong impression on the imperial government. In 1552, he published the most famous of his innumerable writings, *A Brief Account of the Destruction of the Indies*, full of grisly descriptions of Spanish cruelty, rhetorically exaggerating a slaughter that was horrible enough in reality. Few pamphlets have ever found a wider European audience. Among the most avid readers of this tract were the Protestant enemies of Catholicism in a Europe wracked by religious wars. Over the next two centuries, *A Brief Account of the Destruction of the Indies* saw three editions in Latin, three in Italian, four in English, six in French, eight in German, and eighteen in Dutch, not to mention those in Spanish. The engraving on page 24 was done for a French translation of 1582.

Bartolomé de las Casas lived to be eighty-nine, a fabulously long life for the 1500s. Although his early error in calling for more African slaves remains a stain on his record, he quickly and permanently repented of the idea. Overall, the spirit and struggle of Las Casas continues to inspire idealistic churchmen and churchwomen in Latin America more than four hundred years later.

COLONIAL CRUCIBLE



SOR JUANA INÉS DE LA CRUZ. Women, too, chose to enter religious orders, and convents were lively centers of colonial life. Besides providing a sheltered, and therefore honorable, upbringing for young women, convents had a key role in financing agricultural production. In some situations, convents offered outlets for women's artistic and intellectual pursuits. It is no accident that Sor Juana, the most celebrated woman of colonial Latin America, was a nun. Courtesy of Instituto Nacional de Antropología e Historia—Museo Nacional de Historia.

1600	1651	1690s	1776	1790s
Mature Colonial Period begins	Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz born	Bandeirantes discover gold	Viceroyalty of the Río de la Plata created	French Revolution triggers war in Europe

Rule by Spain and Portugal lasted three long centuries in Latin America. Despite the utopian dreams of the religiously inspired and despite continual resistance to exploitation, the bitter legacy of conquest and slavery remained strong in 1800, the eve of independence. Latin Americans had wrestled with the hierarchy of race imposed by conquest and slavery and had adapted themselves to that hierarchy. As Latin American societies grew around the hard edges of domination like the roots of a tree gradually embracing the rocks at its base, adaptation made colonization endurable but also embedded it in people's habits. Indigenous, African, and European people consorted and intermingled, fought and slept together. They misunderstood and learned about, despised, and sometimes adored each other. Over hundreds of years, most Latin Americans began to sincerely accept Catholicism and the rule of a Spanish or Portuguese king. Thus, more than merely rule by outsiders, colonization was a social and cultural, even a psychological process. The resulting patterns of domination—intricate and omnipresent—constitute the saddest product of the colonial crucible.

The contours of colonial Latin American societies revealed the priorities of the Iberian invaders. A whirlwind tour of the

colonies will explain the basic economic patterns and geographical layout. To begin, only precious metals and a few high-priced items such as sugar (then a luxury) could repay the enormous costs of transportation across the Atlantic Ocean. So mines and sugar plantations loom large in the early history of Latin America.

COLONIAL ECONOMICS

Gold was the precious metal that first mesmerized the Europeans—gold from Aztec and Inca treasures, gold that could easily be panned in sandy streambeds and was quickly exhausted. An early Caribbean gold rush had helped annihilate the Arawaks during the first generation of Spanish colonization. But silver, not gold, eventually structured the colonial economy of Spanish America. The major silver mines of Zacatecas (Mexico) and Potosí (Peru) were opened in the 1540s. Zacatecas, an area without sedentary inhabitants, attracted indigenous migrants from central Mexico. Migrants also became miners at Potosí, on a windswept mountain plateau at twelve thousand feet, where Spanish smelting techniques (using a bellows) did not work and indigenous ones (channeling the Andean wind) had to be adopted instead. These were deep-shaft mines that went miles under the earth, vast quasi-industrial enterprises that attracted diverse assortments of people. Mining immediately began to reshape Mexican and Peruvian society.

The mining zones became the great focus of Spanish activity in America, linking the colonies economically with Europe. For a while in the 1600s, Potosí became the most populous city in America. And because Potosí stood more or less on the roof of the world, too high for agriculture, almost everything except silver had to be brought to it by mules. Sure-footed mules, bred

on the plains of Argentina, trooped up narrow Andean trails to provide transportation. Indigenous women elsewhere in the Andes wove cloth to dress the miners, and farmers at lower altitudes sent food to feed them. (To apply economic concepts here, "primary" export production stimulated "secondary" supply activities.) Eventually, silver came down from the sky on mules bound for the coast. Because the high plateau of the central Andes is so remote from the coast, the Peruvian capital was established at Lima, near a good seaport. Likewise, the wealth of colonial Mexico clustered along routes connecting the northern mines with Mexico City and the port of Veracruz. The northern mining zones became a meeting place for all sorts of people, while southern Mexico, along with Guatemala, had a more strictly indigenous population. The main ethnicities in this southern region were Zapotec, Mixtec, and especially Maya—the people among whom Malinche grew up. Now all of southern Mexico, Central America, and the Caribbean became part of the supply network for the northern silver mines.

The economic priorities of the Spanish Crown determined the political organization of the colony. The "royal fifth," a 20 percent tax on mining, was the prime source of colonial revenue for the Spanish state. To keep an eye on the royal fifth, the Crown organized colonial governments in New Spain (the colonial name for Mexico, administratively embracing Central America and the Caribbean as well) and Peru (which then included much of South America), by the late 1540s. Each of these areas, called *viceroyalties* because of the *viceroy*s sent from Spain to rule in the king's name, also had an archbishop and a high court. Eventually, Mexico City and Lima each developed a wholesale merchants' guild that concentrated commercial power, as well as political power, in the *viceregal* capitals. Gradually, the viceroyalties, high courts, and

other administrative subdivisions multiplied in a manner guided by the principle of profitability to the Crown. Modern Colombia became the center of a third viceroyalty (called New Granada, 1717) partly because of its gold. Eventually, another jurisdiction was created to stop Potosí silver from escaping untaxed through the area of modern Argentina. This became the fourth viceroyalty (the Río de la Plata, 1776), with its capital at the Atlantic port of Buenos Aires. Despite the two new viceroyalties, however, Peru and Mexico remained the core areas of Spanish colonization.

In Brazil, sugar took the place of silver, and plantations replaced mines as the main generators of export production. Sugar plantations capitalized on rich red soils, superb for the cultivation of sugarcane, along Brazil's northeastern coast. The Northeast therefore became the core area of the Brazilian colony, with its principal centers in Pernambuco and the Bay of All Saints. For the Portuguese Crown, the taxes on exported sugar—and on goods imported with profits from sugar—were the prime sources of colonial revenue in Brazil. Throughout the 1600s, sugar was “king” in Brazil, and it structured the Brazilian colony much as silver mining structured colonial Spanish America.

Sugarcane had to be milled and its juice boiled down into cakes in order to be exported. Planters rich enough to build a sugar mill (an *engenho*, or “engine” in Portuguese) became known as “mill lords,” *senhores de engenho*. The *senhores de engenho* stood at the crux of the sugar economy, and they loom large in Brazilian social history. In each locality of the Brazilian sugar coast, a handful of mill lords, each owning hundreds of slaves, lorded over their neighbors, many of whom grew sugarcane but depended on the lords to have it milled. Like a silver mine, a big *engenho* was a complex and expensive economic undertaking, almost a town in itself, with a chapel,



stables, storage facilities, and workshops, not to mention barracks-like slave quarters. As in the early plantation colonies of North America's Chesapeake Bay, plantations that were almost towns in themselves tended to undercut the growth of urban centers. The Brazilian colony, even its core area, was a place of few cities and towns when compared with colonial Spanish America.

Outside of its northeastern core area, most of colonial Brazil was quite sparsely settled. The Amazonian northwest, for example, remained a vast equatorial rain forest inhabited chiefly by semisedentary indigenous tribes, half a continent with a mere handful of tiny Portuguese towns and a sprinkling of Jesuit missions along the banks of its river highways. The backlands behind the sugar coast, the *sertão*, stayed dirt-poor cattle country. Other interior regions could be reached only by thousand-mile canoe odysseys involving arduous portages between rivers, feasible only during the rainy season. The Portuguese called these rainy-season canoe expeditions "monsoons," a word they had learned in India. South of São Paulo lay more Jesuit missions in evergreen forests outside the tropics. And beyond these forests, open grasslands stretched south to the Río de la Plata. Here, cattle and horses that had escaped from the missions ran wild, multiplied, and roamed free in numberless herds.

Overall, colonial Brazil could not compete with colonial Spanish America. Sugar was never as precious as silver. Nor could tiny Portugal equal the resources of Spain. And only slowly did Brazil become the principal focus of the Portuguese seaborne empire, with its rich African and Asian outposts. So the Brazilian colony remained in all ways less: poorer, less populous (with a tenth the people of Spanish America), and more loosely governed. Brazil's diffuse plantation economy limited urbanization and scattered administrative power. Two viceroalties were eventually established, but only during wartime did

Brazilian viceroys possess the authority of Spanish American viceroys. Portugal simply attempted less in its colonies than did Spain. For example, there were a dozen universities in Spanish America after barely a century of colonization, but none was ever established in colonial Brazil. One might wonder how Brazil stayed a Portuguese colony for three hundred years.

A POWER CALLED HEGEMONY

Both the Spanish and Portuguese Crowns had limited resources for colonization. Neither had large military forces in the American colonies. Iberian colonizers and their American-born descendants were a small minority even in the core areas, so how did they maintain control over so much of the hemisphere for three centuries?

To answer that question, consider the life of Sor (Sister) Juana Inés de la Cruz, a Mexican nun who died in 1695. At the age of seven, Juana had made a surprising announcement. She wanted to attend the University of Mexico (which had opened its doors in 1553, a century before Harvard). She offered to dress as a boy, but it was hopeless. A university education was supposedly over Juana's head. Never mind that she had been reading since the age of three or that she learned Latin just for fun. Forget that she stumped a jury of forty university professors at the age of seventeen, or that Juana became known throughout Mexico for her poetry. Like other women of her class, she had two alternatives: marry and devote her energies to husband and children, or become a nun. Juana chose convent life, which offered a little more independence than marriage. She became Sor Juana, as she is known to history. She collected and read books by the hundred, studied mathematics, composed and performed music, and even invented a system of musical notation. Her poetry was published in Europe.

Some of it criticized hypocritical male condemnations of women's sexual morality. "Why do you wish them to do right / If you encourage them to do wrong?" asked one poem. And, concerning the common scorn for prostitutes, she wondered who really sinned more: "She who sins for pay / Or he who pays for sin?" In the kitchen, she dabbled in experimental science. "Aristotle would have written more," she said, "if he had done any cooking." When she published a brilliant reply to one of her century's most celebrated biblical scholars, the fathers of the church became worried. Juana received instructions to act more like a woman. Her scientific interests, they said—and all her other interests, too, except for religious devotion—were unnatural in a woman. This was the wisdom of her age. She could not defy it alone, and ultimately, she consented. She sold her library, instruments, everything, and devoted herself to atonement for the sin of curiosity. Broken, she confessed to being "the worst of women." Soon after, she died while caring for her sisters during a plague.

The fathers of the church never used physical force against Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz. They did not have to. They embodied religious authority, and she was a religious woman. Revolt or disobedience was literally unthinkable for her. Similarly, the conquered indigenous people of Latin America, and the enslaved Africans, too, gradually accepted the basic premises of colonial life and principles of Iberian authority. Otherwise, Spain and Portugal could never have ruled vast expanses of America without powerful occupying armies.

Historians explain colonial control of Latin America as *hegemony*, a kind of domination that implies a measure of consent by those at the bottom. Hegemony contrasts with control by violent force. It is a steady preponderance rather than an iron rule. Though it may seem "soft," this form of political power is resilient and does devastating damage to people at the bottom.

When they accept the principle of their own inferiority and, in the old-fashioned phrase, "know their place," they participate in their own subjugation.

Religion offers one of the clearest examples of cultural hegemony. When enslaved Africans and indigenous people accepted the Europeans' "true religion," they accepted, by the same token, their own status as newcomers to the truth. Catholicism, after all, had been horu and developed far from indigenous America. The history of the "true church" was a European history, and its earthly capital was Rome. Most priests and nuns, not to mention bishops and the rest of the ecclesiastical hierarchy, were of European descent. The monarchs of Spain and Portugal reigned by a divine right that only heretics would question, and they enjoyed royal patronage rights, allowing them to appoint or dismiss priests and bishops as if they were Crown officials. The royal government decided where churches should be built and collected the *tithe* (an ecclesiastical tax of 10 percent, paid especially on agricultural products). To sin against Catholic teachings was, in many cases, a criminal offense.

All educational institutions were religious, so if knowledge is power (and it is), the church monopolized that power. The Inquisition kept a list of banned books that people were not allowed to read. The church even controlled time; the tolling of bells set the rhythm of the day, signaling the hours of work, rest, and prayer. Successive Sundays marked the seven-day week, which was new to indigenous people. The Catholic calendar of observances and holidays provided milestones through the year: a collective, public ebb and flow of emotions, from celebration at Epiphany and Carnival, for example, to the somber mood of Lent, Holy Week, and Easter. The milestones of individual lives, from baptism to marriage to death, were validated by church sacraments and registered in church records.

Place names, too, were frequently religious. Every town and city had an official patron saint, often part of the city's full name—São Sebastião do Rio de Janeiro, San Francisco de Quito, and so on.

Another hegemonic force, omnipresent and inescapable, was *patriarchy*, the general principle that fathers rule. Fathers ruled heaven and earth, cities and families. The Spanish and Portuguese were more rigidly patriarchal than many indigenous American and African societies, so the hegemony of fathers must be understood, at least in part, as a legacy of colonialism. Patriarchy structured all colonial institutions, including the exclusively male hierarchy of the church, right up to the Holy Father in Rome. Iberian law was based on patriarchal principles. Husbands had legal control over their wives as over their children. Wealthy women led shut-in, elaborately chaperoned lives, isolated from all male contact outside the family—a matter of *honor* in traditional Spanish and Portuguese sexual ethics.

Honor was a measure of how well men and women played their prescribed, and very different, social roles. Avoiding extramarital sex, in this way of thinking, became something like a woman's supreme life mission, whereas a man's sexual purity held less value. In practice, if a man could support more than one woman, that heightened his social distinction, so many kept mistresses. On the other hand, men were supposed to defend—specifically, by bloodshed—the virginity of their daughters and the sexual exclusivity of their wives. This conception of honor led to dueling and to the violent punishment of independent-minded women. This cultural pattern has pre-Christian roots in the Mediterranean world and a basic logic, worth mentioning to show the rhyme and reason in this madness, that relates to property. Women's illegitimate children, not men's, would be born into the family and inherit part of its precious patrimony: the family wealth parceled out among

heirs at the death of each parent. Male "wild oats," on the other hand, would sprout on somebody else's property, so to speak. Thus, philandering implied no loss, but rather a kind of territorial gain, for the family.

Women resisted being treated like means rather than ends, of course. Fairly often, it seems, they used magic—coming from the folk traditions of Iberia, as well as Africa and indigenous America—to attract, manipulate, escape, or punish men. The Spanish Inquisition was on the alert against them. In 1592 the Inquisition punished a poor Lima woman for reciting a prayer under her breath "so that men would desire her." That was European folk magic, meant to redirect the powers of Catholic liturgy by saying a prayer backward, for example. Inquisition files of the 1600s also reveal native Andean "witches" like Catalina Guacayllano, accused of spilling the blood of guinea pigs on sacred rocks while chewing coca and praying "Oh Lord Father who has been burned, who gives us the irrigation canals and water, give me food." Her idea of God seems to have remained strongly indigenous, giving her, and her people, a spiritual independence from Spanish religion. In explaining why he had three women whipped, a Peruvian priest reported that these witches "went neither to Mass nor to catechism class." Instead, they publicly disobeyed him and inspired their whole village to do the same.

Women doubtless got less satisfaction than men out of the colonial Latin American "honor system," which cast suspicion on any woman who did not live under male control, even widows. Still, women's protest usually took the form of demands that men live up to their patriarchal responsibilities to be good providers and conscientious husbands and fathers. Learning to live with these values, for there was no other choice, women absorbed them. Only women of property could make the grade, though, because people without property lacked honor almost by definition. Poor women often had to work outside their

homes, after all, as cooks, laundresses, or market women who moved around by themselves in the street as no honorable lady would. Not all roles were honorable, no matter how well played. Slaves, who were themselves somebody else's property, had no hope of honor. Only the most extraordinary slave, like Henrique Dias, a born fighter who led Brazilian forces against Dutch invaders in the 1600s, could achieve it. The women of indigenous communities, whose social life retained different patterns of gender, lived less in the grip of this unfortunate honor system.

Viceroyalty who could literally "grant honors" and refined European ladies and gentlemen who provided models of "honorable" behavior—these inhabitants of colonial cities made them the heart of the honor system, as cities were the staging areas and command centers of the colonizing project generally.

A PROCESS CALLED TRANSCULTURATION

Across the varied landscape of colonial Latin America, from Mexico to Chile, from the high Andes to the mouth of the Amazon, urban institutions created a framework of authority, hegemonic rather than absolutely dominant. In some respects, cities seemed like tiny, scattered islands of European life and architecture dotting the vastness of indigenous America. Both Spanish and Portuguese colonizers were town dwellers whenever possible. Cities were the only places in Latin America where white people could socialize mostly with each other and maintain a basically European culture. All administrative officials, bishops, judges, notaries, merchants, and moneylenders—the people whose commands, reports, and dealings with one another connected cities to Europe—were urban-based. Cities staged the great public spectacles that dramatized imperial power: solemn processions for Holy Week (preceding Easter), ceremonial welcomes for new viceroys, boisterous celebrations to commemorate royal marriages.

Especially in Spanish America, cities were laid out according to imperial directives mandating the now familiar but then innovative checkerboard of square blocks and streets that intersect at right angles. Around the central square of each city stood the governor's palace, the cathedral, and mansions for the bishop and richest families, also the seat of the city council (*cabildo* in Spanish, *câmara* in Portuguese), which was the most important governing institution outside the handful of major capitals. Urban centers were given the legal rank of village, town, or city, each under the jurisdiction of higher-ranked centers nearby, all reporting to the handful of major capitals such as Lima, Mexico City, Bogotá, and Buenos Aires. Colonial cities, like colonial people, were to be just so, according to imperial order.

But the attempt to impose uniformity was an uphill battle. The challenge lay partly in new and distinctive Latin American cultures—not Spanish or Portuguese, not indigenous or African, but fusions of two or more elements, varying from region to region in kaleidoscopic combinations. These new Latin American cultures emerged gradually from a give-and-take process called *transculturation*. Imagine transculturation as a thousand tiny confrontations and tacit negotiations taking place in people's daily lives, always within the force field of hierarchy and domination. The people on top are usually able to impose the broad outlines of things, as in the case of religion, with those below contributing subtle aspects more difficult to police from above—style, rhythm, texture, mood.

Religion, once again, provides an excellent illustration. Although church practice structured the outer contours of collective life even among indigenous people and slaves, the inner spiritual content resisted colonial standardization. Slaves, who gathered and danced on religious feast days, preserved African religion by dressing it in the clothes of Catholic saints, so to speak. A blending of indigenous, African, and European reli-

gious attitudes often occurred. The blend might be covert, as when indigenous artists integrated their own sacred plant and animal motifs (and in the Andes, symbolic rainbows) into the mural paintings of Catholic cloisters, but they could be more obvious, as in the famous case of Mexico's patron saint, the Virgin of Guadalupe. The Virgin of Guadalupe supposedly appeared on a site already sacred to the Aztecs. Her image sometimes had a dark face, and Nahuatl-speaking Mexicans continued to call her by the name of an indigenous earth goddess, Tonantzin. Thus did indigenous and African religions infiltrate Latin American Catholicism. The profusion of blood on colonial Mexican crucifixion figures, for example, was meant to evoke blood's life-giving power, a prominent element of Aztec religion. In the Caribbean and Brazil, on the other hand, Catholicism acquired a less austere, more celebratory and African tone. In Cuba, the singing of black women in church choirs created a stir—for and against—when they began to infuse Cuban music with African sensibility as early as the 1580s. In Salvador, on Brazil's Bay of All Saints, an African religious spirit, including dancing to very un-European rhythms, infused many Catholic ceremonies during the 1700s.

Transculturation happened especially in cities. Many indigenous and mestizo people, as well as blacks, both free and enslaved, were city-dwellers. From the very beginning, the impact of colonization had shaken some indigenous people loose from their native communities and forced them to migrate. Some went to the mines or Spanish estates. Some built simple housing on the outskirts of Spanish cities—Latin America's first suburban shantytowns. Torn away from their cultural roots, indigenous migrants had to regrow them in new environments, as did those other forced migrants, enslaved Africans. Urban slaves enjoyed greater freedom of association than did plantation slaves. Urban slaves could locate and socialize with people from the same part of Africa. Urban slaves could also join free

black people in Catholic lay brotherhoods that provided a social support group and a sense of voluntary belonging. Slaves, and free blacks too, often worked as artisans (bakers or carpenters, for instance), and artisans came in all colors. Thus, cities were sites for the creation of distinctive new cultural forms. As mestizos, free blacks, and poor whites rubbed elbows at a shoemaker's bench or in a blacksmith's shop, they were inventing Latin American popular culture.

Transculturation had different contours in rural life. Plantation slaves worked in gangs and were often locked down at night. Rural indigenous people had more chance to live apart, speaking Quechua or Quiché or Aymara or Nahuatl and following their own traditions. But the white people of the countryside were too few and far between to socialize, or marry, exclusively with each other. Rural people of Spanish and Portuguese descent, even when they maintained a house in town, thus acquired indigenous habits and African tastes sooner than did their urban counterparts. If transculturation happened on profitable Brazilian sugar plantations, where export earnings could pay for imported clothing, wine, and even food, it happened even more on *haciendas*, the sort of large estate more typical of Spanish America. Rather than investing huge sums in an enslaved workforce, haciendas relied on indigenous workers, who earned a small salary or shared the harvest. Instead of crops for export to Europe, haciendas produced less profitable harvests for local consumption. And as a rule, hacienda owners who had little to sell to Europe could afford few imported European goods. On rare visits to town, their speech, clothing, and behavior seemed (from the point of view of their urban cousins) rustically tinged with indigenous or African influences.

For Latin America's subjugated majorities, transculturation was both a blessing and a curse. For example, Nahuatl speakers came to worship the dark-skinned Virgin of Guadalupe because they identified her with Tonantzin, making her *their*



Virgin. Thus, colonial masters and servants became a bit more like each other, seemingly a positive result. But by refashioning the colonizers' religion in their own likeness, the indigenous people more easily consented to the basic ideology of colonization and, therefore, moved more firmly under Spanish control. In other words, transculturation and hegemony often went together.

The Jesuit Antônio Vieira, who has been called the Las Casas of Brazil, exemplifies the paradox. Vieira was one of the most famous intellectuals of the 1600s. In fact, it was a publication by Vieira that Sor Juana made the mistake of refuting too brilliantly for her own good. Vieira traveled back and forth between Brazil and Portugal, preaching fiery sermons. He studied both Tupi and the language of Angola. He tried to protect the indigenous people against the Portuguese settlers. He defended the humanity and worth of African slaves. Vieira preached that "Brazil has its body in America and its soul in Angola," but he also called on slaves to endure slavery with a good heart and await their reward in the Christian heaven. Vieira had some African heritage of his own, through his grandmother; slaves who heard him preach no doubt found him more convincing for that reason.

THE FRINGES OF COLONIZATION

While the colonizers concentrated their efforts on silver mining and sugar cultivation, vast reaches of Spanish America and Brazil remained outside the core areas, on the "fringe" of colonization. The fringes were quite different from the core areas because they had little to export. They could not generate as much wealth for Iberian colonizers and therefore attracted fewer of them. Lack of sugar and precious metals meant less incentive to force labor from indigenous people, less capital to invest in African slaves, and, overall, fewer stark contrasts be-

cattle, many drifted away from Minas Gerais. Still, the Brazilian colony had changed shape as gold pulled its demographic and economic center southward. In 1763, the capital of Brazil was transferred from Salvador to Rio de Janeiro, a port city closer to Minas Gerais. Former fringe areas, Minas Gerais and Rio de Janeiro now counted as part of central Brazil.

Of course, the distinction between core and fringe is only a rough guide, a conceptual model, not a neat physical reality. In fact, in the late 1700s the variety and distribution of Latin America's local cultures was already infinitely more complex than can be explained in a few paragraphs. Still, a few basic principles such as the core/fringe distinction help us understand many permutations. Latin America is—and already was, in the late 1700s—a land of many permutations. Three centuries of transculturation had made that inevitable.

RACE MIXING

If transcultural mixing characterized colonial Spanish America and Brazil, how did this transculturation take place? Transculturation usually occurred along with some sort of race mixing. Obviously, transculturation can happen without any mixing of genes, and vice versa. Nevertheless, in Latin American history, transcultural mixing and race mixing go together.

Race mixing could mean several things here. It could mean social interaction and shared experience—rarely on a basis of equality, of course, but still meaningful in human terms—as when apprentice artisans of various colors labored and caroused together, or when white rural families spent their whole lives—their childhood, their workaday routine, their moments of deep personal significance—surrounded by slaves, indigenous people, or free people of mixed race. On the other hand, race mixing often meant sex as well. Intermarriage among poor whites, blacks, and indigenous people was com-

mon, as were consensual partnerships. Often *not* consensual, or only superficially so, were the sexual encounters between social unequals of different race, as when “gentlemen” hired prostitutes or forced themselves on enslaved women.

The story of Xica da Silva is extreme rather than typical, memorable rather than anonymous. Xica became celebrated, and also notorious, in the diamond fields of Brazil. Her mother was African and her father was Portuguese. The riches of the diamond fields flowed into the pocket of the king's royal diamond contractor. He could buy whatever he wanted. What he wanted was Xica da Silva for his mistress, but she did not come cheap. For her he had to provide rich clothing, a place of honor at church, a dozen maids in waiting, a park with artificial waterfalls, even an artificial lake with a miniature sailing ship. (Xica had always wanted to see the ocean.) Now she wore a powdered wig, and people came to her seeking access to her lover, the diamond contractor. One of her sons—not the diamond contractor's—studied at European universities. Her disdainful reference to certain Portuguese visitors rang in people's memories. “Butler,” she famously said, “take care of the *sailor boys*,” using the scornful Brazilian slang for Portuguese immigrants just off the boat. When she called the Portuguese “sailor boys,” Xica da Silva, a Brazilian woman of mixed race, was daring to look down on European men—flying in the face of the *caste system*.

To exercise control over colonial Latin American societies, the Iberian Crowns sorted people into fixed categories called *castes*, as in India. The caste system was all about pedigree, so it more or less corresponded to what people today call “race.” In practice, the caste system also factored in other characteristics, such as education, clothing, and especially wealth. “Money whitens,” according to a famous phrase expressing the importance of wealth in the Latin American caste system. A person's caste classification was noted in the baptismal register

at the time of baptism, and people of low caste were legally prevented from becoming priests, attending the university, wearing silk, owning weapons, and many other things. A person wholly of European descent occupied one category in the system, and a person entirely of African descent occupied another. That much is quite familiar from US race relations. But the child of a European and an African belonged to a third category—half European, half African, logically enough. There was a fourth category for a child with a European father and an indigenous mother, and a fifth for a child whose parents were indigenous and African. And indigenous people had a category to themselves, making six. And this was just the beginning.

Members of these six categories continued to produce babies with each other, despite official rules against this, creating new “people-in-between” who confounded the categories and strained the system. At least in theory, caste categories proliferated geometrically—to sixteen or more, including some with animal names, *Lobo* and *Coyote*—during the last century of colonial rule. These names are from the 1700s in Mexico, where many series of paintings were commissioned to illustrate the caste system. Such caste paintings were entitled, for example, “An Español and a Mulata make a *Morisco*,” with father, mother, and child shown in a domestic setting, each with the appropriate clothing, demeanor, and skin color. Caste paintings were sent to Spain, where imperial officials viewed them much as species classifications in natural history. Above all, these strange works were intended to help impose order on the unruly reality of race mixing. The dozen or so new caste names never really gained everyday currency. They should be viewed mostly as a symptom of the strain that progressive race mixing was putting on the caste system by the late 1700s.

Also in these years, successful people of low caste (prosperous mule drivers or artisans, for example) presented a different challenge to the caste system. Perpetually in need of

money, the Spanish Crown sometimes allowed such people to buy an official exemption that made them legally white and eligible to occupy positions of distinction and authority. This exemption was called *gracias al sacar*. Creoles with little else going for them except for caste privilege complained bitterly about the sale of legal whiteness, saying it undermined the whole caste system. The sale of *gracias al sacar* also exemplified the Latin American tendency to think of race as a negotiable spectrum, a ladder that families might ascend. Families could climb the ladder, even without legal exemptions, when daughters and sons were able to marry “up”—which is to say, find partners lighter than themselves. Note, however, that moving “up” by marrying for skin color also meant buying into the logic of the caste system, with its premise of white superiority. Therefore, race mixing provides a tracer of transculturation (and cultural hegemony) in action.

Whether valued, abhorred, or merely tolerated, race mixing was a fact of colonial life in Latin America. By 1800, near the end of the colonial period, people of mixed blood already made up roughly a quarter of the Latin American population, and these “people-in-between” were also the fastest-growing group. The African and indigenous majority had adopted much from the Spanish and Portuguese. They had made a cultural impact of their own. In living together, with all the conflicts that entailed, people of diverse origin had created shared identities and unifying webs of loyalty. By the year 1800, even white Spanish Americans and Brazilians, roughly another quarter of the population, were noticing that many of their habits and preferences, such as their taste in music, now made them different from their European cousins and in some ways a bit like the people below them in the colonial hierarchy. Still, few colonials assigned much importance to a distinctive American identity in 1800.

The wars of independence would change that.

COUNTERCURRENTS: *Colonial Rebellions*

Durability and stability were the most surprising traits of colonial rule in Latin America, but there were many small rebellions—and a few notably large ones—especially toward the end. Some of these uprisings were aftershocks of the Iberian takeover. Others, the later ones, can be taken as signs of rising tensions and, thus, precursors of independence.

THE REBELLION OF GONZALO PIZARRO, 1544–1549. The most important early rebellion was carried out by the conquistadors of Peru. It occurred when the New Laws limiting *encomiendas* (in 1542) arrived in Peru along with the first viceroy to be sent by the Spanish king. The leader of the revolt was Gonzalo Pizarro, brother of the Peruvian conqueror, Francisco Pizarro. Pizarro's followers feared losing their *encomiendas* altogether as a result of the New Laws, and they reacted violently, capturing and killing the viceroy in 1546. Within three years, the rebellion had run its course. Gonzalo Pizarro was beheaded for treason, and a new viceroy resumed royal control of Peru.

INDIGENOUS REVOLTS, 1500–1800. Indigenous people often revolted once the first shock of conquest had worn off. The 1560s Andean movement called *Taki Onqoy* was a particularly interesting example. In it, indigenous people heard their old gods calling them and, as in Europe's Saint Vitus's Dance of the 1300s, they suffered uncontrollable fits of shaking and dancing. However, most indigenous revolts, of which there were hundreds, were small and isolated, seldom threatening to overall Spanish or Portuguese rule. The 1680 Pueblo rebellion of New Mexico was an exception. In that year, the Pueblo people rose up and, for more than a

decade, expelled all things Spanish from their land. Yucatán, at the other end of Mexico, was the site of repeated uprisings. In 1761, a Yucatec Maya took the name Canek (a legendary indigenous leader) and led a brief but serious revolt. He was captured within the year and executed by being torn limb from limb. Punishments for indigenous revolts were, as a rule, truly savage.

REBELLIONS AGAINST BOURBON REFORM MEASURES, 1740S–1780S. A new royal family, the Bourbon dynasty, ruled Spain in the 1700s. The Bourbons attempted to tighten royal control and extract greater profits from their American colonies in a series of administrative reforms. These reforms included higher taxes and various sorts of government trade monopolies, and they sparked resistance in several places. In 1749, Venezuelan cacao growers revolted against the government's monopoly control of their product. In 1765–1766, urban crowds staged an uprising to protest tax hikes in Quito (Ecuador). In the *Comunero* uprising of 1781, inhabitants of a town in present-day Colombia revolted because of tax increases and new monopoly restrictions on the cultivation of tobacco. Often, such rebellions united people across caste lines for a short time, but their alliances usually broke apart, precisely along those lines, within a few weeks. In addition, these rebellions targeted specific Bourbon reform measures and not Spanish rule per se. In fact, the rebels often proclaimed their loyalty to the Crown at the very moment of revolt, shouting "Long Live the King! Death to Bad Government!"

QUILOMBOS AND PALENQUES, 1500–1888. We have already encountered the great Brazilian quilombo (refuge of escaped slaves) called Palmares. Refuges also existed in the Spanish Caribbean, where they were termed *palenques*. (The Spanish word describes the palisade of tree trunks that of-

ten fortified a camp of escaped slaves.) Uprisings in which slaves took revenge on masters were much less common, but never out of the question. The great slave rebellion in the French colony of Haiti, which totally crushed and expelled the master class in 1791, created a vivid worst-case scenario for generations of Latin American slave owners. Although slaves always have good reason to revolt, the Haitian Revolution also showed the ideas of the French Revolution at work in the Americas.

"FRENCH-STYLE" CONSPIRACIES IN BRAZIL, 1789 AND 1798. An early tremor or two showed those ideas at work in Brazil as well. In a few cities, circles of daring men began to discuss new political philosophies—namely, the overthrow of monarchies to form republics—then emanating from France and the United States. The city of Ouro Preto, in Brazil's mining region, was one such place. Informers revealed the conspiracy almost immediately, however, and the participants were swiftly arrested. Most, being white and well-off, were merely exiled. But one, a mulatto army officer (nicknamed *Tiradentes*, "Tooth-puller," because he practiced dentistry on the side), was publicly executed. Today *Tiradentes* is Brazil's greatest patriot martyr. A similar "French-style" conspiracy, called the Tailor's Rebellion because several of the conspirators practiced that trade, was exposed in Bahia nine years later. There, most of the conspirators were blacks or mulattos, a circumstance particularly frightening to the white elite.

THE REBELLION OF TUPAC AMARU II, 1780–1783. This most important of colonial rebellions shook the high Andes and sent shock waves throughout Spanish America. The mestizo who called himself Tupac Amaru II claimed royal Inca descent, but whether or not he had it, the Inca name itself was the main point. He took it in memory of Tupac

Amaru I, an Inca resistance leader and folk hero who fought a rearguard action against the conquest in the 1500s. The initial proclamation of the new rebellion was anti-"Peninsular" (a name given to Iberian-born Spaniards) and called for an alliance among American-born whites, mestizos, and indigenous people. Once begun, however, the rebellion became primarily indigenous and raged out of control, leaping south through the high plateaus of dense indigenous population like a grass fire, into Upper Peru (modern Bolivia), where it set off another, more stubborn revolt, involving a leader who called himself Tupac Catari. The rebellion, which consumed perhaps a hundred thousand lives before it finally burned out, thoroughly terrified the Peruvian elite and profoundly affected their behavior in the coming wars of independence.



THE LIBERATOR SIMÓN BOLÍVAR. Bolívar, who helped create five nations, was the single greatest general of independence. Bolívar was from Caracas, the son of a plantation-owning family who gave him a privileged education—including a European walking tour with his brilliant tutor, Simón Rodríguez, a man afire with new ideas. But white, upper-class generals like Bolívar could not win independence without the support of Latin America's nonwhite majority. Indigenous patriots figure prominently in this Bolivian painting. Courtesy of Hulton Getty Picture Collection.

INDEPENDENCE

Latin American struggles for independence erupted suddenly and unexpectedly. There had been a few ominous tremors before 1800, but the most remarkable thing about colonial rule continued to be its overall stability. Therefore, nobody saw an imperial collapse coming, and when it came, everybody improvised. One might expect those at the bottom to rise up when European control slipped; that did happen in some places, notably Haiti, where slaves literally took over. But the outcome in Spanish America and Brazil was more conservative. In general, the white people at the top of the social hierarchy stayed there, while blacks and indigenous people stayed at the bottom. On the other hand, Latin American independence created a dozen of the world's first constitutional republics. The fighting dealt the caste system a deathblow and brought new honor to many people of mixed race.

The fighting itself changed much in Latin America. Many men of color became honored war heroes because of their bravery in combat. But winning the wars of independence took more than blood; it also took a sense of belonging and shared purpose. The modern nations of Latin America did not yet exist, even as a pipe dream, when the wars began. What did an African slave, a Quechua-speaking villager, a landowner of pure Spanish blood,

1807–1808	1810–1814	1815	1820	1824
Napoleon invades Iberia	Spanish-American revolts begin	Brazil raised to status of kingdom	Liberal revolutions in Spain and Portugal	Battle of Ayacucho

and a mestizo artisan have in common just because all had been born (for example) in the viceroyalty of Peru? Not much, obviously, aside from being subjects of the Spanish Crown, which treated them almost as different subspecies of human being. So patriot leaders faced a great challenge. They had to imagine new nations and get other people with little in common to imagine those nations, too. The image had to be so vivid that people would betray their king, kill, and risk death for it. The patriotic vision of the wars of independence introduced elements of the two big ideas, liberalism and nationalism, that have animated Latin American political life ever since.

To understand people's actions during the crisis years of 1808–1825, to see how independence came so unexpectedly, then so quickly, how it changed so much and yet so little, we must observe how violent events in Europe suddenly destabilized colonial rule. Then we will see how Latin Americans reacted—a story with several different threads. Core areas like Mexico and Peru followed one pattern, fringe areas like Venezuela and Argentina another. Brazil followed its own, quite distinctive path to independence. These winding roads can get a bit complicated, but understanding them is worthwhile, because the wars of independence cast a long shadow on the history of Latin America.

REVOLUTION AND WAR IN EUROPE

Spanish Americans experienced a grueling couple of decades after 1788 under the calamitous rule of an incompetent king, Carlos IV, who shirked his royal responsibilities and left governing to a hated minister widely known to be the queen's lover. Misrule had combined with a series of costly wars to bankrupt the Spanish state during the 1700s. The bankruptcy of the Crown led to higher taxes, as well as to other irritating practices like the sale of high office, which put incompetent people in positions of command, and highly unpopular government fore-

closure of long-term loans. Worse, war with England, beginning in 1796 and lasting off and on for the next decade, meant confronting the world's most powerful navy, for these were the years when "Britannia ruled the waves." The Spanish navy was overwhelmed, and the number of Atlantic sailings dropped drastically, strangling colonial trade. Spanish Americans watched all this with dismay but without seeing it as a cue to rebel. After all, foreign wars often evoke feelings of loyalty to king and country, and the English were hereditary enemies who frequently attacked Spanish-American ships and ports. Neither Spain nor Portugal could escape the widening repercussions of the French Revolution (1789–1799) and the subsequent Napoleonic Wars (1799–1815) that eventually engulfed all of Europe. In practical terms, Spanish-American independence began to exist *de facto* in 1808, when the Spanish king was imprisoned by Napoleon.

In Brazil, things worked out differently. Portugal had maintained a friendly relationship with England since the 1300s, a relationship described in the 1386 Treaty of Windsor as "an inviolable, eternal, solid, perpetual and true league of friendship"—a relationship that England dominated. England would prove a valuable but demanding ally. But, English ally or no, the French Revolution and Napoleonic Wars started the process of independence in Brazil as well.

French revolutionaries of the 1790s had challenged the idea of monarchy based on divine right, even executing the French king and queen, Louis XVI and Marie Antoinette. These revolutionaries took inspiration from the intellectual awakening called the Enlightenment. They proclaimed "Liberty, Equality, and Fraternity," questioned traditional authority, and remade the political order. They sneered at idiot kings who, thanks to their royal bloodlines, possessed power they did not deserve. Instead, the revolutionaries argued for *popular sovereignty*, meaning that the people of each nation (not yet including women, however) had the right to determine who would rule

them according to a written constitution. French revolutionaries set out to overthrow other European kings and establish republics. Somewhat perversely, the revolutionary creed became an ideology to justify military aggression, as French armies led by General, then First Consul, and finally Emperor Napoleon Bonaparte began "liberating" other countries into French control. Spain and Portugal were two of these.

The new political ideology of liberty and liberation—liberalism, in a word—was almost as much English as French in origin. England's own Civil War and revolution in the 1600s had enshrined the principle of popular sovereignty in the unwritten English constitution. England preserved its monarchy, as it does to this day, but it is a limited monarchy, subordinate to an elected legislature, the House of Commons, which liberals regarded as the voice of "the people." England opposed the radicalism of the French Revolution and led the fight against Napoleonic expansionism. That aligned England with anti-Napoleonic Spanish and Portuguese patriots during Latin America's independence period, as we will see. In sum, liberalism, whether coming from France or England, inspired all sides in the Napoleonic Wars. It was the impact of those wars, and their aftermath, in turn, that triggered Latin American independence—all under the ideological banner of popular sovereignty.

In late 1807, when the Portuguese refused to close their ports and declare war on their old ally, England, Napoleon invaded Portugal. The Portuguese royal family fled, accompanied by a glittering entourage of nobles and government officials, swarms of servants and courtiers—over ten thousand people, as well as the royal treasury—sailing from Lisbon only days before Napoleon's troops arrived in the Portuguese capital. British warships were on hand to escort the royal flotilla and, most especially, Prince João (who exercised power in the name of the queen, his demented mother) to Brazil. For more than a

decade, João made his court in Rio de Janeiro, safely outside the reach of Napoleon. Meanwhile, both the Spanish king, Carlos IV, and his heir, Prince Fernando, had fallen into Napoleon's hands and, under pressure, both abdicated their claims to the Spanish throne. Napoleon then had his own brother Joseph crowned king of Spain, a move that most Spaniards and Spanish Americans refused to accept.

One aspect of colonial hegemony had been the gradual acceptance of the Spanish and Portuguese monarchs as rightful rulers by almost everyone in the colonies. The Crown had strong *legitimacy*: authority that inspires obedience. By 1810, a startling contrast existed. The Portuguese Crown was closer than ever to Brazil. The Spanish Crown, usurped by a foreigner, was further than ever from Spanish America. Brazilian history shows how much difference the king's presence could make.

João's royal court in Rio de Janeiro had become the political center of the Portuguese-speaking world, and the people of Rio, always fond of glamour, were delighted to have it there. Thousands of rich European courtiers flooded the city, sparking a boom in building and profitable services, from livery stables to hairdressing. The presence of the royal court also favored the Brazilian elite, for the opportunity to speak a few words directly into the king's ear is valuable indeed. The end of colonial trade monopolies favored Brazil as a whole. Before, Brazilian trade had all been channeled to Portugal, but now João allowed Brazilians to trade with everybody (chiefly the British, who had pressed strongly for this trade opening), and imported goods became less expensive. João liked Rio and enjoy placid naps in his botanical garden as ships from Europe and Spanish America brought news of one distant upheaval after another.

Back in Portugal, an anti-Napoleonic patriot uprising began in 1808 soon after João's departure, and fighting in the Iberian peninsula dragged on for years as Portuguese and Spanish guerrillas,

supported by British troops, fought hit-and-run actions against the French. In Spanish America, chronic fighting broke out as well. Independence was declared here and there. Meanwhile, Rio bustled and Brazil remained peaceful. Whatever social and economic pressures had built up during the colonial period, whatever rivalries existed between Portuguese and Brazilians, they did not explode now. So content was João in Rio that even after Napoleon met ultimate defeat in the battle of Waterloo (1815), the Portuguese king conspicuously failed to hurry back to Lisbon.

Events in Spanish America between 1808 and 1815 contrasted totally with the picture in Brazil. Spanish Americans were shocked at the eclipse of the legitimate monarchy. The Spanish government had not vanished entirely, because provincial resistance movements in Spain sent representatives to a national resistance committee, called the *Central Junta*. The Central Junta expected Spanish-American support, but Spanish Americans had other ideas. The Central Junta had been chosen entirely in Spain. It therefore represented the Spanish people, but not the Spanish-American people, and they rejected its dictates. In the wake of the Napoleonic takeover of Spain, most Spanish Americans professed fervent loyalty to their legitimate king, Fernando VII, but in so doing, they also rejected the idea that Mexico or Peru or New Granada were colonies. In other words, paradoxically, the Napoleonic crisis led Spanish-American patriots to invoke the principle of popular sovereignty against Spain itself. Soon, they began to form their own juntas to rule locally in Fernando's name. These "caretaker" juntas were often created at an open meeting of the town council, a *cabildo abierto*.

By 1810, the Spanish resistance to the French occupation had been pushed to the southern port city of Cádiz, where it continued to function under British naval protection. The Spanish liberals who led the resistance now called for a con-

stitution to be written by elected representatives from both Spain and Spanish America. The Constitution of Cádiz was a truly liberal document and, if implemented, would have profoundly altered the Spanish empire. But it was never fully implemented. By the time it was completed, patriot rebels had already raised the cry of anti-Spanish rebellion in Mexico, Venezuela, Argentina, and elsewhere.

THE SPANISH-AMERICAN REBELLIONS BEGIN, 1810–1815

But who were these patriot rebels? In most cases, the initiatives for independence came from native-born whites, called Creoles to distinguish them from Spaniards born on the Iberian Peninsula. Iberian-born Spaniards were now called Peninsulars or, often, nastier things that do not translate well. We should backtrack a bit to explain what the Creoles were after.

By the late 1700s, Spanish-American Creoles had grown quite resentful of the Peninsulars, with whom they competed socially. Spanish birth made Peninsulars the preferred agents of imperial rule. Peninsular Spaniards normally got the best ecclesiastical and government offices, the key positions on boards of trade, and so on, gaining privileged access to wealth and power over their American-born Creole cousins. But this rivalry existed only at the top of Spanish-American society. The other three-quarters or four-fifths of the population—people of indigenous, African, or mixed descent—had little at stake in the Creole-versus-Peninsular contest, because the caste system put them out of the competition altogether. Sometimes they disliked the Creoles more than they disliked the Peninsulars, because the Creoles were the masters and overlords who annoyed them in daily life. Creoles generally owned the land, and much of the Spanish-American population lived under the thumb of landowners. In the towns, it was Creoles, not Peninsulars, who feared the social climbing of prosperous people of

mixed race and fought to keep them "in their place." In other words, the majority of Spanish Americans had plenty of reason to revolt—but not particularly against the Peninsulars.

Mexican independence shows these dynamics at work. Mexico was by far the Spanish Crown's brightest imperial jewel by the early 1800s, vastly the most profitable colony, and home to four out of ten Spanish Americans. Peninsulars numbered only a fraction of 1 percent, but Creole resentment against them ran high, so the Creole-dominated cabildo of Mexico City seized the 1808 crisis in Spain as a chance to gain ground against their privileged European cousins. Affirming their continued loyalty to the imprisoned Fernando VII, the Creoles convinced the viceroy to call a representative assembly to provide legitimacy while the king was out of the picture. The colony's powerful Peninsulars would have none of it, however. They actually unseated the viceroy to forestall such an assembly. Creole anger smoldered.

Then, in 1810, Spanish America's political upheavals began in earnest. A Creole conspiracy in Mexico's northern mining region sparked a massive rebellion of indigenous and mestizo peasants. The man who let the genie out of the bottle was a Creole priest, Father Miguel Hidalgo. A reader of banned French books who also studied indigenous languages and defied the Catholic rule of sexual abstinence for clergy, Hidalgo was an impulsive non-conformist, and the Inquisition already had a file on him. Informed that the Spanish authorities would soon arrest him for his part in the conspiracy, Hidalgo hurried to his parish church and rang the bell. He then spoke to the gathering crowd using religious language that his audience well understood—not about independence, but about the need to defend Mexico against the Peninsular usurpers of legitimate authority and the enemies of Fernando VII. Hidalgo presented the rivalry between Creoles and Peninsulars as a unanimous Spanish-American revolt against Spain. He spoke of how Spanish conquerors had stolen Indian lands. In point of fact, it was the Creoles, and not the

Peninsulars of 1810, who descended from those conquerors. In truth, Hidalgo had more in common with most Peninsulars, his social peers, than with his indigenous parishioners. But his rhetoric constructed a simple dichotomy: Americans versus Europeans. His battle cry was "Long live the Virgin of Guadalupe, and death to the Spaniards!" The appeal worked.

Poor rural people flocked by the thousands to the banner of the Virgin of Guadalupe, now a potent symbol of Mexican identity. The throngs included men, women, and children, whole families, burros, and cattle. Their weapons were mostly farming tools rather than firearms. A recent famine in the mining zone had left many humble Mexicans with little to lose. When terrified Peninsulars in the important mining center of Guanajuato saw twenty thousand angry indigenous peasants coming at them, they hurriedly barricaded themselves in the largest, strongest building in town, the massive granary—but to no avail. Peninsulars died by the hundreds in Guanajuato and then all along the route of this rampaging ragtag army. And not only Peninsulars: Creoles died, too. Hidalgo's patriotic rhetoric had theoretically drawn the line between the Peninsulars and everyone else, but Creoles and Peninsulars resembled one another. Many Peninsulars had Creole wives and children. Furthermore, Peninsulars cornered by the rebels commonly claimed to be Creoles. The downtrodden indigenous and mestizo peasants who followed Hidalgo lacked military discipline, and to them, Creoles and Peninsulars seemed equally arrogant. As Hidalgo's multitude reached sixty, seventy, eighty thousand, it began to look to many Creoles like their own worst nightmare.

Few Mexican Creoles, or town dwellers of any description, joined Hidalgo, and his unruly followers dispersed after only a few months. Hidalgo himself was captured, forced to repent publicly, and then executed. As an exemplary lesson, Hidalgo's head was dangled in a metal cage on a corner of the Guanajuato granary where so

many Spaniards had died. But the revolutionary genie would not go back into the bottle. In southern Mexico, where indigenous communities retained village identities and lands from before the conquest, one of Hidalgo's officers still raised the torch of rebellion. He, too, was a priest, but a modest and practical one, very unlike the grandiose visionary Hidalgo. Father José María Morelos was not a Creole at all, but a mestizo, and a more able leader in every way. His army was well organized and his main goals were clear: an end to slavery, to the caste system, and to the tribute paid by indigenous people. Morelos prohibited the use of caste classifications. All born in Mexico were simply "Americanos." In 1813, he declared outright independence. His movement still did not attract many Creoles, but it had staying power—at least until Father Morelos was caught and executed in 1815. By then, small bands of patriot guerrillas had been fighting for years in several regions of Mexico, and with Morelos gone, they continued to defy the government, causing heavy military expenses, living off the land like bandits, and gradually gnawing away at the fabric of colonial rule.

In Peru, independence got a slower start. Peruvian Creoles had already glimpsed their nightmare scenario a few decades earlier, in the 1780s, when the great indigenous rebellion of Tupac Amaru II rocked the Andes. Although a generation in the past by 1808, Tupac Amaru's rebellion was far from forgotten, and it had given Peruvian Creoles a vivid appreciation of the dangers inherent in mobilizing the indigenous people against the Peninsulars. So they avoided revolt, aside from a few early protests, even at the cost of putting up with arrogant Europeans who got all the best government jobs. Overall, Peru, along with other Andean areas such as Bolivia and Ecuador, remained comparatively quiet during the crisis years of the early 1810s as major revolts erupted elsewhere.

Leading Creoles in "fringe" colonies such as Venezuela and Argentina were less cautious. They chafed under imperial trade

restrictions that favored silver production in the core areas of Peru and Mexico. And the grassy plains of both Venezuela and Argentina abounded in horses and horsemen, very useful in pre-mechanized warfare. Unlike the movements of Hidalgo and Morelos, which were uprisings from below, the patriot juntas of Caracas and Buenos Aires began as *cabildos abiertos*, gatherings of the most influential men in the two cities. This was revolution from above, led by confident, well-traveled Creoles, some of whom had witnessed European events firsthand. When the crisis of legitimacy began in Spain, Creoles in Caracas and Buenos Aires reacted like those elsewhere. Gradually, however, they shelved their protestations of loyalty to the king, embraced the liberal revolution, and moved toward full independence. Their critics called this "taking off the mask of Fernando."

In Venezuela, all this had already happened by early 1811. The problem was making it stick. The first Venezuelan republic crumbled when an earthquake, convincing evidence of divine disapproval, struck Caracas a year later. Nor was the earthquake the patriots' only problem. In the heart of Venezuela, beyond the mountainous Caribbean coast with its plantations of cacao, lay the flood-prone tropical plains of the Orinoco River basin, a land of cattle and dark-skinned cowboys called *llaneros*, who ate mostly beef, carried lances, and rode as if born on horseback. To put it mildly, the *llaneros* had no sympathy for the elite, plantation-owning revolutionaries of Caracas, who regarded them more or less as scum. When the Caracas junta went so far as to deny the authority of Fernando VII, the *llaneros* opted to defend their king, and their horses' hooves kept the ground trembling long after the earthquake had subsided. As long as the *llaneros* opposed them, the patriots would never win in Venezuela.

In Argentina, the revolutionary junta had an easier time gaining military dominance. The patriot advantage began back in 1806 and 1807, when the Spanish and the British were enemies.

During those years, two British expeditions landed in the viceroyalty of the Río de la Plata. They were both defeated, not by Peninsular forces, but by local militias. So Creole patriots there had the upper hand militarily when Spain's Napoleonic crisis began. By May 1810, Peninsular control had ended once and for all in Buenos Aires. Other regions of the Río de la Plata viceroyalty, however, showed little inclination to follow the lead of Buenos Aires. Whether patriots or royalists, people in the interior resented the airs of overweening Creole aristocrats from the capital. The wars of independence in the Río de la Plata therefore consisted mostly of fighting between armies from Buenos Aires on the one hand, and provincial armies, whether royalist or patriot, on the other.

By 1815, with the execution of Morelos in Mexico, royalist victories in Venezuela (and elsewhere, such as Colombia and Chile), Peru still firmly in Spanish hands, and patriots fighting among themselves in the Río de la Plata, the wars for Spanish-American independence stood at a low ebb. The patriots had not yet succeeded in getting enough people on their side. What did they really have to offer, anyway?

THE PATRIOTS' WINNING STRATEGY: NATIVISM

After all, it was *not* the exploited majority, as one might have expected, who initiated independence movements. The movements' Creole leaders had little interest in helping the masses or making colonial society more egalitarian. Instead, they simply wanted to rule it themselves. Mexican and Peruvian Creoles, particularly, worried about losing control of large populations of indigenous peasants who had shown a fearsome penchant for rebellion. Consequently, Mexican Creoles hacked away wide-eyed after a look at Hidalgo's ragged multitude of 1810, and Peruvian Creoles, mindful of Tupac Amaru II, preferred not to risk declaring independence at all. Venezuelan and

Argentine Creoles, on the other hand, showed more confidence in their ability to hold the tiger by the tail. To do so, they somehow had to reach out to "the people." The Creoles were just too few to win independence without help from below.

The winning strategy for independence-minded Creoles was *nativism*. Nativism glorified an American identity defined by birthplace, something Creoles shared with the indigenous people, with those of mixed blood, even with the children of African slaves. *Americanos* was the nativist keyword. From Mexico to Brazil to Argentina, patriots defined theirs as the *American* cause, and their enemies as everyone born in Spain or Portugal. Nativism had many advantages. The name *Americanos* fit easily and comfortably over multihued Spanish-American and Brazilian populations, contrasting them with Europeans. And nativism drew on powerful emotions. Resentment is always at the heart of nativist attitudes, resentment of foreigners and foreign influence. A powerful resentment of the Spanish and Portuguese, now foreigners in nativist eyes, was widespread in America at all social levels. Finally, nativism linked arms with liberal ideology in an obvious way. "Who should govern? The People! And who are the People? *Americanos*!" No patriot fighters could ignore the rhetorical appeal of nativism, and all used it sooner or later.

For maximum wartime appeal, the definition of *Americanos* had to be as broad as possible. Few revolutionary leaders really wanted to see social equality, however. Most simply wanted popular support to win independence, leaving the social hierarchy more or less intact. As long as that hierarchy remained in place, the Creoles expected to be the leaders of the emerging sovereign nations.

Brazilian independence provides a good illustration of the way this worked. As Spanish America underwent military upheaval and political mass mobilization during the 1810s, Brazil remained relatively undisturbed under the rule of João VI. Of

It had made Brazil independent while maintaining the social hierarchy that kept the slave-owning elite in charge. Even the provinces that had lately formed their own liberal juntas accepted the proposition that Prince Pedro—now Pedro I, Emperor of Brazil—embodied the cause of Brazilian patriotism. Had the emperor not promised a constitution? There was disappointment ahead, but for now, the cloning of a legitimate monarchy had provided Brazil a political unity that contrasted starkly with Spanish America.

PATRIOT VICTORIES IN SPANISH AMERICA, 1815–1825

Meanwhile, Spanish-American nativists regained momentum after 1815. By that time, Napoleon had met defeat at the battle of Waterloo. Fernando VII had recovered his throne, renounced the liberal constitution of Cádiz, and set out to crush patriot rebels in America. Spanish recalcitrance left the rebels nowhere to go but forward. In South America, Spanish royalist forces held the Peruvian Andes until ultimately defeated—in a great, continental “pincer” maneuver—by patriot armies that had originated on the distant plains frontiers of Venezuela and Argentina. In Mexico, Creoles entered an alliance with the heirs of the Morelos movement and backed reluctantly into independence.

The guerrilla followers of Father Morelos had remained strong in the rugged country south of Mexico City after their leader's death in 1815, continuing their stubborn fight but unable to defeat the royalists. Then European events intruded once again when Spain had its own liberal revolution in 1820. Spanish liberals forced the tyrannical Fernando VII to restore the constitution. The mystique of the monarchy suffered, and many formerly royalist Mexican Creoles felt betrayed. Within months, a Creole army commander named Agustín de Iturbide began to parlay with the guerrillas. His contact on the patriot

side was Vicente Guerrero, a mestizo and man of the people. When Iturbide and Guerrero joined forces, the independence of Mexico was at hand.

Iturbide and Guerrero rallied a winning coalition with guarantees of an independent, constitutional Mexican monarchy that preserved traditional religious and military privileges and offered social “union” (vaguely implying the equality of all Americanos with Peninsular Spaniards). According to the traditional social hierarchy, Iturbide and not Guerrero was the natural candidate for monarch. In 1821, a triumphant Iturbide entered Mexico City, where enthusiastic crowds called for his coronation the next year as Agustín I. But the monarchical solution did not work in Mexico. Crowned or not, Iturbide was a Creole like the rest, without a drop of royal blood, and years of patriot struggle had generated political convictions and animosities not easily soothed by a make-believe monarch. When, after a short year in power, Iturbide closed the newly formed congress, composed of representatives of the sovereign people, military leaders ejected him and ushered in a republic.

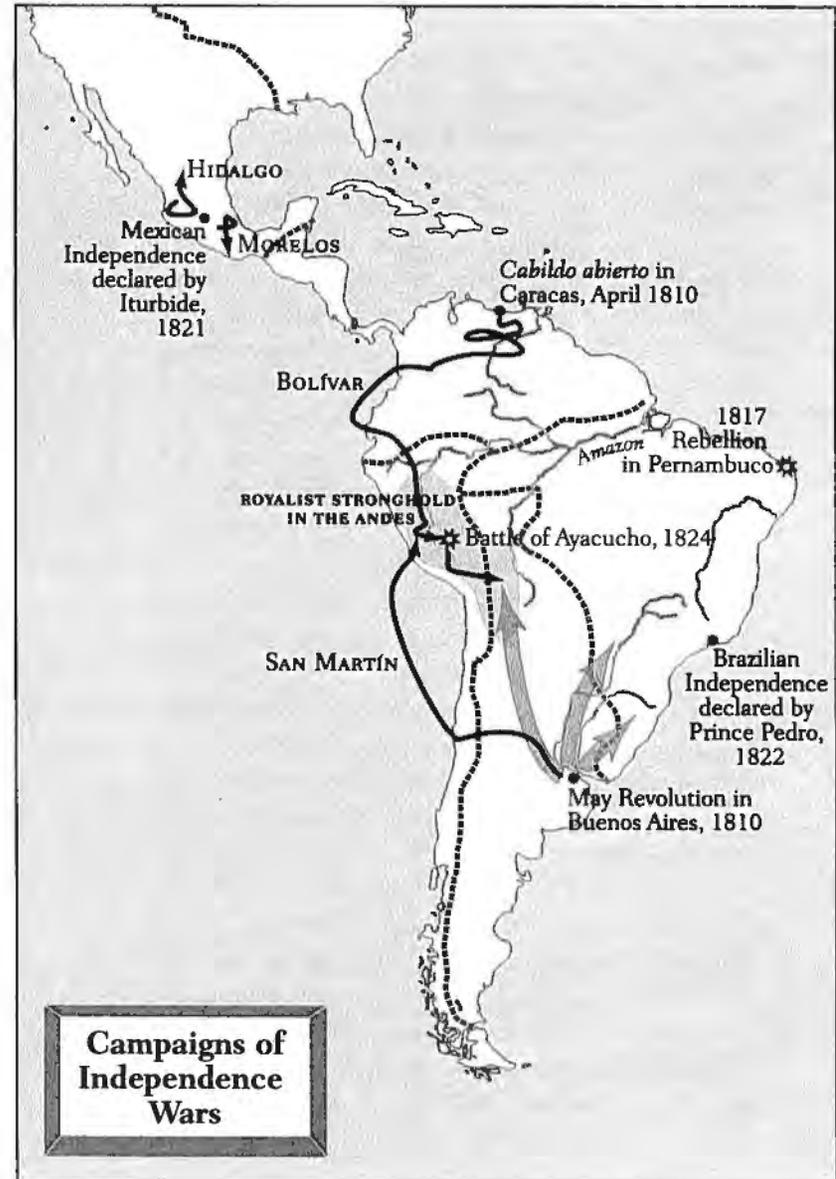
Meanwhile, patriot armies from Venezuela and Argentina, former fringe areas of Spanish America, were converging on the second great core area of the Spanish colonization, Peru.

Despite many previous failures, the tenacious man who became the single most important leader of Spanish-American independence, Simón Bolívar, “the Liberator,” began his string of triumphs in 1817. Bolívar had participated in the Venezuelan independence struggle from the start. The early defeat of patriot forces by the royalist llaneros had been Bolívar's personal defeat. He learned from it and planned to get the llaneros on the patriot side. Setting up his base in the Orinoco plains, far from Caracas, Bolívar used feats of physical prowess and Americano nativism to attract llaneros. Here was one Caracas aristocrat whom the tough tropical cowboys could respect. When the llaneros switched sides, the momentum moved to the patriot cause. In

August 1819, Bolívar's army of llaneros crossed the Orinoco plains during the floods of the rainy season, then climbed the Andes and took surprised Spanish forces from behind. The viceregal capital of Bogotá fell to Bolívar in a sudden, shattering triumph. By late 1822, Bolívar's forces also captured both Caracas and Quito, now controlling all of northern South America.

Far to the south, during those years, the brilliant general José de San Martín had trained a combined Argentine-Chilean patriot army in western Argentina, then crossed the Andes unexpectedly, in a surprise attack similar to Bolívar's, and decisively defeated Chilean royalists. San Martín met a hero's welcome in the Chilean capital, where his movement gathered strength for three years before launching an expedition northward against Lima. The viceroy of Peru withdrew from Lima into the Peruvian highlands. Then San Martín's frustrations began. A year after capturing Lima and declaring Peruvian independence, his army had hogged down, unable to finish the job. At this point, Bolívar invited San Martín to a personal meeting in the port city of Guayaquil. What passed between the two patriot generals at their Guayaquil meeting was confidential, but whatever was said, San Martín immediately returned to Chile, then to Argentina, and eventually to Europe, leaving Bolívar to lead the final assault on Spanish power in South America.

It took Bolívar two years to equip an army equal to the task, but resounding victories in 1824 made Bolívar the liberator of two more countries, one of which, Bolivia, even took his name. In the second of these battles, Ayacucho, fought at an exhausting altitude of over ten thousand feet, the patriots captured the last Spanish viceroy in America. Everything after the battle of Ayacucho was essentially a mop-up operation. The long and bloody Spanish-American wars for independence were finally over. Only Cuba and Puerto Rico remained under Spanish control, where they would stay for the rest of the 1800s.



UNFINISHED REVOLUTIONS

Flags waved, cheering crowds lined the streets, and victorious patriot armies paraded throughout Latin America, but independence meant less than met the eye. The broad contours of colonial Latin American culture and society underwent no profound, sudden change. For all the talk of "America for the Americans," the old hierarchy of status and race created by colonization, with native Americans and Africans at the bottom, remained substantially unaltered. The language and laws of the Iberian colonizers became those of the new nations, and the Creole descendants of the conquerors continued to profit from the ill-paid labor of the conquered and the enslaved. In that sense, independence did not undo colonialism in Latin American nations. Rather, it made them postcolonial—now self-governing, but still shaped by a colonial heritage.

Many things changed hardly at all. Latin American women, for example, would find the new republics nearly as patriarchal as the old colonies, even though women had fought hard for independence and often died for it. Patriot women became powerful symbols. Andean women had led the way back in the 1780s. Imagine Manuela Beltrán, a poor woman, stepping up to a royal edict announcing new taxes, pulling it down, and trampling it as an angry crowd roared its approval. That was in Colombia's Comunero rebellion. Imagine Micaela Bastidas and Bartolina Sisa, tormented and executed in front of another crowd, this time a jeering group of enemies, alongside their husbands, Tupac Amaru and Tupac Catari. That was in Peru and Bolivia.

Juana Azurduy, another Bolivian, was remembered for wearing a man's uniform and leading a cavalry charge in which she personally captured the enemy flag, a feat that normally defined the superior male. Because of her fame, we know more about Azurduy than some of the others. She was a mestiza

whose Quechua-speaking mother apparently married "up" into a family of property. Born in 1780, Juana grew up in Chuquisaca, a city of courts, churches, convents, a university, and many Peninsular Spaniards. One of them apparently killed her father but went unpunished because he was a Peninsular. Now an orphan, Juana entered a convent but rebelled and was expelled at the age of seventeen. She married a man who shared her affinity for indigenous culture. In addition to Quechua, Azurduy learned the other major indigenous language of Bolivia, Aymara. The official commendation after the cavalry charge congratulated her for "heroic actions not common at all in women." Interestingly, though, during those same years, the name of the martyred patriot women of Cochabamba, a Bolivian city where many had heroically died rather than surrender to the Spanish, became synonymous with a fighting spirit. Whenever special courage was needed in battle, patriot officers taunted their men with a famous challenge: "Are the women of Cochabamba present?"

In 1816, the same year as Juana Azurduy's glorious charge, Policarpa Salavarrieta was hanged in Bogotá. She had been caught carrying messages, a more usual activity for patriot women, like providing supplies—not to mention keeping households running, crops planted, and animals tended in the men's absence. Both Salavarrieta and the Mexican woman María Gertrudis Bocanegra de Lazo de la Vega became patriot martyrs despite their Spanish heritage—both women had Peninsular parents. Gertrudis Bocanegra saw her son and her husband executed as patriots. Then, like Policarpa, she too was caught with a message and executed. Like Policarpa, she spoke for the patriot cause in the moments before her death.

The wars of independence provided stories of patriotic heroism to inspire future generations. But in the aftermath of war, many patriot leaders became disillusioned. Bolívar himself came to think that Spanish Americans "did not understand

their own best interests," and his mood turned authoritarian. Before his death in 1830, he complained that he had "plowed the sea," accomplishing nothing.

Immediate change was not the measure of independence, however. The long-term impact was more important. Wherever the patriot cause had resorted to mass mobilization, fighters of indigenous, African, or mixed blood gained political prominence. The old social hierarchies, no matter how stubborn, lost their explicit, public justification in new republics with liberal constitutions. To gain independence, white elites from Mexico to Argentina had vigorously waved the banner of popular sovereignty. Now they would have to govern through new institutions, such as elected assemblies, always in the name of "the people": the Brazilian people, the Chilean people, the Colombian people.

The old rallying cry "Americanos!" was no longer sufficient, as Spanish America shattered into a dozen national pieces. The viceroyalty of the Río de la Plata alone broke into four independent countries: Bolivia, Uruguay, Paraguay, and Argentina. It would take years for these new nations to acquire much legitimacy in people's minds. After the Spanish and Portuguese outsiders were defeated, it became much harder to sell the idea of a common political purpose uniting all Brazilians or Chileans or Colombians, whether they be mighty plantation owners or hardscrabble peasants. Despite the achievement of independence, the struggle to decolonize Latin America in a deeper sense was only just beginning.

COUNTERCURRENTS: *The Gaze of Outsiders*



Traveler and indigenous porter
in the Colombian Andes. In
Eduoard André, *Voyage dans
l'Amérique Equinoxiale*, Paris,
1879.

After independence, outside travelers, especially North American, English, and French, poured into Latin America. Great curiosity surrounded the mysterious empires that Spain and Portugal had for centuries kept off-limits to most outsiders. Many travelers went for business—mining, trade, finance. A few were Protestant missionaries or naturalists collecting new specimens to classify and name. In hopes of expanded trade, England and the United States quickly recognized the new nations of Latin America and sent diplomatic personnel. Other travelers went for the thrill, or mainly to write a book about the area. Among the first European travel writers to explore Latin America was Alexander von Humboldt, who visited Cuba, Venezuela, Colombia, Ecuador, Peru, and Mexico. A scientist, Humboldt carefully collected information and wrote many influential books about his travels. Travel books like his became

an important branch of popular literature in the 1800s. These books reflected—and also shaped—attitudes toward Latin America in the English-speaking world.

Latin America loomed in the US and British imagination as a lush, exotic land of opportunity, especially commercial opportunity. In the very first years of independence, travelers reported sixty British firms in Rio, twenty in Lima, thirty-four in Mexico City and Veracruz, and so on. In 1833, Brazil was Great Britain's third largest overseas market. Meanwhile, in Rio, English residents were outnumbered by French merchants, teachers, and professionals, who set the tone in the city's fashionable districts. A similar invasion occurred in major ports throughout the region. Traveler Mary Graham reported in her *Journal of a Residence in Chile during the Year 1822*:

English tailors, shoemakers, saddlers, and innkeepers hang out their signs on every street; and the preponderance of the English language over any other spoken in the chief streets would make one fancy Valparaiso a coastal town in Britain.

Yankee traders from the United States often visited Latin American ports, too. Overall, though, early business ventures were disappointing, as we shall see.

Lost investments, defaulted loans, and dashed hopes—not to mention the chronic banditry of the countryside—compounded the scornful, superior attitude that many travelers brought with them to Latin America. In his *Journal of an Expedition 1400 Miles up the Orinoco, 300 up the Arauca* (1822), a British traveler mentions “a corrupt, stupid, beggarly and dishonest set of beings, chained in ignorance and swayed by superstition and the most gloomy bigotry.” Sadly, such attitudes were typical. “It’s the vilest place I ever saw,” wrote an important British diplomat about the plains of the Río de la Plata, “and I certainly should hang myself if I could find a tree

tall enough to swing on.” The place had “no theater that can be endured,” he moaned, “nothing good but the beef.” The bias of such writers is hard to miss. “Superstition” and “gloomy bigotry” were Protestant code words for Catholicism, and denunciations of Latin American “vileness” were plainly racist. Latin Americans as a whole did not rate very high in English-language travel books. Henry Hill, a US consul in Rio, considered the Brazilian people “wholly incapable of self-government.” Sometimes, travelers suggested that Latin Americans did not deserve the natural wealth of their own countries. According to scientist John Mawe’s *Travels in the Interior of Brazil* (1823): “No territory perhaps in the world is so rich in natural products and at the same time so neglected for want of an enlightened and industrious population.”

Women travelers, on the other hand, often wrote of Latin Americans more sympathetically. One was Frances Calderón de la Barca, a Scottish woman married to a Spanish diplomat in Mexico City. She called Mexico City “one of the noblest-looking cities in the world.” In contrast to many travelers, she found Mexican religious fervor overpoweringly sincere and often praised the personal habits of humble people. “The common Indians, whom we see every day bringing their fruit and vegetables to market, are, generally speaking, very plain, with a humble, mild expression of countenance, very gentle and wonderfully polite in their manners to each other,” she wrote. “Occasionally, in the lower classes, one sees a face and form so beautiful, that we might suppose such another was the Indian [she means Malinche] who enchanted Cortés.” On the other hand, like many others, she faulted the traditional limits to women’s education in Latin America. Even jewel-encrusted elite women received little education: “When I say they read, I mean they know how to read; when I say they write, I do not mean they can always spell.” In many ways, she was as biased as any male traveler.

For all their negative attitudes, travelers' views are useful, in part precisely because they were those of outsiders who noticed and commented on things that local writers took for granted. Take slavery. Only travelers from the southern United States knew slavery at home. Most travelers were mesmerized and horrified by the spectacle of human bondage, which also provided sensational descriptions to sell their books. On the other hand, travelers' testimony is impressionistic. Often they did not fully comprehend what they were seeing; their vision was partial, too, for no individual traveler sees things from all angles. Therefore, travel accounts provide an excellent example of the subtle problems that arise in interpreting historical evidence.

Consider the following views of wet nurses, women who breast-feed the babies of rich families. In Brazil, many wet nurses were slaves. An enslaved wet nurse was a status symbol, as this 1862 traveler's description from Rio de Janeiro makes clear: "The black girl, richly and splendidly dressed, approaching with her head held high, a superb smile on her lips, as majestic as an ancient goddess, will obviously establish with her fine attire and the embroidered garment of the child she carries, the immense wealth of her masters." But a much starker view emerges in this 1845 newspaper ad, also from Rio:

FOR RENT: An eighteen year old girl, wet nurse, healthy and with much good milk for the last two months. She is for rent because her child has died. Inquire at 18A Candelaria Street.



ENSLAVED WOMEN. In this illustration by a French traveler to Brazil, enslaved women are preparing food for the midday meal of field workers. In spite of independence, Latin American societies remained models of social inequality, in which hierarchies of race and class defined people's lives. The persistence of slavery is among the most extreme examples. But only in Brazil and Cuba did outright slavery continue long after independence. Elsewhere in Latin America, social inequalities took a more subtle and more enduring form. In Charles Ribeyrolles, *Brazil pittoresco*, Paris, 1861.

1828	1829	1830s	1840s	1848
Remaining Spaniards expelled from Mexico	Rosas takes power in Argentina	Conservative trend throughout region	Guano boom in Peru	US troops occupy Mexico City

POSTCOLONIAL BLUES

Liberty. Equality. Popular sovereignty. America for Americans. These ideas, loosely grouped under the banner of liberalism, had made Latin American independence possible. They had inspired patriot dreams and justified revolt by explaining why Americans should rule themselves. They had solidified the patriot alliance with vague promises of future equality, and they became basic premises for the constitutions of a dozen new republics. In 1825, only Brazil remained a monarchy. Even the Brazilian emperor, Pedro I, considered himself a liberal.

All across Latin America, liberals came forward to put their ideas into practice—with disastrous results. Many liberal governments were overturned by force within only a few years, and then presidents and constitutions followed one another at dizzying speed. It is during these years that Spanish America (Brazil had better luck, as we shall see) gained a reputation for political instability, a bitter disappointment of patriot dreams. What happened?

In a nutshell, the first governments of independent Spanish America possessed few resources and faced tremendous obstacles. Liberal dreams of prosperous, progressive new countries soon dissolved in disappointment and economic failure. Hopes for true democracy were crushed by old habits of con-

servative hierarchy. Recurring patterns of political violence and corruption alienated most people from the governments that supposedly represented them. Politics became, above all, a quest for the personal benefits of office. In sum, the first postcolonial generation (1825–1850) saw Latin America going nowhere fast.

LIBERAL DISAPPOINTMENT

From the outset, Latin American liberals suffered collectively from a split personality. The Creole leadership of the patriot armies had waved the banner of liberalism, but governing by liberal principles was not so easy. The liberal emphasis on legal equality for all citizens had radical, disruptive implications in societies that were still fundamentally hierarchical. It is important to observe that liberalism grew out of social and economic transformations (such as the rise of capitalist trade, manufacturing, and a middle class) that had occurred more in England and France than in Spain and Portugal. The new Spanish-American republics and Brazilian monarchy inherited strongly traditionalist societies. For generations, Spanish and Portuguese thinkers had emphasized collective responsibility over individual liberties and religious orthodoxy over religious freedom. Spanish-American and Brazilian societies were much further from the liberal model than was US society at independence. The exception was the US South, which, with its plantation economy and slave system, looked rather like Latin America. At any rate, the liberal vision was more difficult to implement in strongly hierarchical societies with exploitative labor systems.

A formal public commitment to legal racial equality, for example, had been the price of mass support for Latin America's independence movements. In the generation following independence, the various mixed-race classifications typical of

the caste system were optimistically banished from census forms and parish record keeping. In republics, all but slaves were supposed to be citizens, equal to other citizens. Slavery receded everywhere in Latin America, except in nonrepublican Brazil, Cuba, and Puerto Rico. In practice, however, very few elite Latin Americans, who remained in leadership everywhere, could accept the idea of broad social equality. The basic contradiction between political theory and social reality fatally undermined the stability of the new republics.

Theoretically, liberals sought "government of the people," but in Latin America, liberal leaders, who were typically white and upper class, had mixed feelings about "the people." They considered indigenous people and their lands a national problem, never a national asset. Admiration of Europe made liberals Eurocentric, and their interest in new political ideas made them ideological. Despite the importance of liberal thought in the recent struggles for independence, liberalism remained an exotic plant on Latin American soil. Conservative leaders soon rose to challenge the liberal agenda. In contrast to liberals, conservatives openly proclaimed that the common people should "know their place" and leave governing to their "betters." Even so, conservative defense of traditional values appealed to many common people.

Church-state conflicts offer an excellent example. The church represented reverence for colonial traditions in general. So liberals called for freedom of worship and the separation of church and state. Conservatives, on the other hand, wanted Catholicism to remain the official religion of the new republics. Liberals believed in public schools, whereas conservatives were satisfied to let the church retain its dominant role in education. And so on. The liberals had Protestant merchants and educational reformers on their side on this issue. But the defense of the Catholic Church was highly popular with pious, tradition-minded peasants and landowners alike. The church

issue became the chief litmus test distinguishing liberal from conservative cultural outlooks, and it was a winning issue for conservatives.

Gradually, all Latin America divided along liberal versus conservative lines: the liberals, oriented toward progressive—especially US, English, or French—models; the conservatives, harkening back toward colonial or Spanish models. Popular sovereignty, enshrined by the wars of independence, was the one political principle espoused, at least publicly, by everyone. But how would “the people” become engaged in the political process? Formal party organizations—often, but not always, called the Liberal Party and the Conservative Party—formed slowly. After all, partisan politics—with electoral campaigns, newspapers, and speeches—was new in Latin America (and in the rest of the world, too, for that matter). Under colonial rule, there had been few forums for public debate. Meanwhile, there was much to be debated. These new nations faced enormous difficulties, both economic and institutional.

Horrendous economic devastation had occurred during the wars of independence. Hardest hit were the Mexican and Peruvian silver mines. Their shafts flooded, their costly machinery wrecked, the mines needed major injections of capital. Yet there were only a handful of banks in Latin America before 1850. Local moneylenders charged astronomical interest rates, and, after some initial failures, London bankers showed little interest. They had safer investment opportunities in industrializing, railroad-building, commercially booming England and the United States. Colonial Latin America had produced much of the silver in world circulation, but the region ran very short of capital after independence. As for trade, colonial restrictions had ended, and nobody regretted that except the Spanish merchants who lost their former monopoly. But control of import/export trade passed from the hands of Peninsulars directly into the hands of British, French,

and US traders. Creoles had little experience in commercial business and preferred to invest in land.

Another major economic problem was the lack of transportation infrastructure. With few navigable rivers—Mexico, for example, had none to speak of—and lots of steep mountains and tropical forests, transportation was costly indeed. Colonial merchants had responded by keeping quantities small and profit margins high. A few mules loaded with silver or with the luxury goods that mine owners imported did not need much of a road. Transporting bulky agricultural products for the new high-volume trade of the mid-1800s was a different matter. British traders offered consumer goods, such as cotton cloth and steel tools, at low prices. This trade could not prosper until crates of sugar, stacks of hides, bolts of cloth, and bags of coffee could be transported more cheaply. Adequate port facilities, roads, and bridges—not to mention railroads, which belong to a later period of Latin American development—did not yet exist. Without capital to build them, Latin America had to wait half a century to realize its trade potential. Meanwhile, Latin American economies grew slowly or, as in Mexico and Peru, even experienced decline.

So much to be done, and fledgling liberal governments had few practical assets. Everywhere but in Brazil, the governing institutions had to be rebuilt from scratch, an expensive undertaking. Meanwhile, another institution, the army, was already overdeveloped—another negative impact of the protracted independence wars. These armies were frequently top-heavy with salaried officers who got testy when their pay was late. And wobbly new states possessed little political legitimacy to inspire obedience in societies made turbulent by war. The vogue of republican institutions such as constitutions was recent, their efficacy untested. Most ordinary people had heard of constitutions, presidents, and legislatures but regarded them as newfangled importations. When push came to shove, no-

body was sure whether constitutions would be binding. Loyalty to the king had taken generations to develop, and so would loyalty to republican institutions.

In the meantime, the new republics were fragile. And fragile, understaffed governments found it hard to administer (that is, make people pay) taxes. Latin American states relied on import/export tariffs, high-yield taxes that could be charged at the docks by a few inspectors and a handful of soldiers. But tariffs were only as lucrative as the meager import/export trade they taxed. To meet basic needs, revenue-starved liberal governments borrowed what money they could. Often, they defaulted.

Overall, the deck was stacked against the liberals who held the reins of government in Spanish America after independence. Their vision implied sweeping change, but they had neither the resources nor the allies they needed to achieve it. They presided over countries wracked by war—militarized societies where many had new guns and old grudges—and their innovative plans often offended powerful vested interests and provoked violent confrontations. The postindependence period of liberal ascendancy ended in most countries after only a few years. Conservatives cried “Anarchy!” and called on generals to impose order and protect property. The rapid fall of Latin America’s first republican governments further undermined their legitimacy and set a tragic precedent, as one constitutional president after another was overthrown militarily.

Between independence and the 1850s, strings of presidents held office for only months, or even days. Few governments were able to implement their programs. Conservatives—in the ascendancy by the 1830s—basically wanted things *not* to change. And many, conservatives and liberals, saw politics mostly as a path to office and personal enrichment—the traditional colonial approach. Their objective was to take over the

government and distribute the so-called spoils of office, a pattern that also characterized US politics of the day. People in power could distribute spoils to their friends and followers to reward their loyalty. These spoils, also called *patronage*—government jobs, pensions, and public works—loomed large in societies with sluggish economies. Spoils fueled the “patronage politics” and *caudillo* leadership that characterized post-colonial Latin America.

PATRONAGE POLITICS AND CAUDILLO LEADERSHIP

Patronage politics made corruption (channeling government benefits to one’s cronies and clients) a necessary part of the system. Patronage flowed through personal relationships, sometimes replacing party platforms altogether. A local justice of the peace—whom we can call Don Miguel, as a hypothetical example—would use his office to secure benefits not only for his extended family, but also for his political allies (in return for past and future favors), for his informal “clients” (for example, his godchildren and their families), and for his faithful servants and employees. These people’s support of Don Miguel and his party had little to do with abstract principles of liberalism and conservatism. Loyalty was what counted. At election time, clients held up their end of the patronage bargain by voting the way their “patron” wished. If the patron joined a revolution, his clients would be expected to pick up weapons and follow him. Don Miguel, in turn, received favors and honors from a patron wealthier and more powerful than himself—a cabinet minister, say, or the state governor—and so on, up to the highest patron of all, the party’s national leader, or *caudillo*.

A caudillo in office would be president; in opposition, he was the second most powerful man in the country. Caudillos were typically large landowners who could use their personal

resources for patronage or for maintaining private armies. The first caudillos rose to prominence during the wars of independence and then carried their wartime fame as leaders of men into peacetime politics, which were not especially peaceful, as we will see. Caudillos were often war heroes who embodied ideal masculine qualities—bravery, loyalty, generosity, and sexual glamour—in their followers' eyes. A string of romantic conquests and mistresses only enhanced a caudillo's reputation. Most caudillos were from well-off families, though some rose from the ranks. Either way, they generally cultivated a "common touch," the special ability to communicate with, and manipulate, humble followers, including mestizos, free blacks, and indigenous people—a rapport often called *charisma*. Caudillos could be liberals or conservatives, but their folksy style fit more naturally with conservative traditionalism. Caudillos were defined by their army of followers, not by formal ranks, offices, and institutions. Sometimes they were generals in the regular army, sometimes not. The focus on personal leadership expressed itself in language. The supporters of Don Miguel would be known simply as Miguelistas.

Or Rosistas, in the case of the caudillo Rosas. Juan Manuel de Rosas, who dominated Argentina from 1829 to 1852, exemplifies caudillo rule. Rosas was a rancher of the great cattle frontier called the *pampa*, and frontier militias stiffened his grip on the city of Buenos Aires. He made routine use of violence against his political opponents, but also shrewd use of political imagery and mass propaganda. Rosas had his picture placed on church altars and ordered the people of Buenos Aires to wear red ribbons signifying their support. Anyone caught not wearing the red ribbon might be beaten in the street. Rosas represented himself as a man of the people, able to identify with hard-riding gauchos of the pampa and poor black workers in the city, while depicting his liberal opponents as effeminate Eurocentric aristocrats, out of touch with the real Argentina. The

powerful ranchers of the pampa saw Rosas as one of them, and he protected their interests. For example, the nonsedentary indigenous people of the pampa remained unconquered in the mid-1800s. They had been pushed back by a line of forts, but they often raided herds and ranch houses. Rosas made war on the indigenous people to expand the territory open to ranching, but he also negotiated with them skillfully, sometimes in their own language. Finally, Rosas won patriotic glory by defeating British and French interventions in the 1830s and 1840s.

Antonio López de Santa Anna of Mexico was another famous Latin American caudillo and, by all accounts, a great racial and political opportunist. Here was a Creole who fought against the patriot cause of Hidalgo and Morelos, finally accepted independence with Iturbide, and then helped overthrow Iturbide, making him, oddly enough, a founding father of the Mexican republic. During the 1830s and 1840s, thanks to his influence over the army and his status as a war hero, Santa Anna seemed to install and remove presidents at will. He made himself president, too, over and over, first as a liberal, then as a conservative. Santa Anna's opportunism was displayed by many caudillos. They moved in a world of friends, enemies, followers, and factions where abstract principles faded into the background. One source of Santa Anna's otherwise perplexing public popularity seems to have been his military victories against a last-gasp Spanish invasion of Mexico in 1829 and against a small-scale French intervention of 1838. Like Rosas, Santa Anna had a keen sense of political theater. When he lost a leg fighting the French invasion of 1838, he famously had it buried with full military honors.

The history of Spanish America during the mid-1800s can be told as a succession of caudillos. Interestingly, this is true even in Central America, which had never revolted against Spain, becoming independent on Mexico's coattails, so to speak.

needed allies among the common folk, and they took a similar tack. Exalting the importance of native Brazilian birth and invoking the menace of Portuguese recolonization, liberals in a number of provinces rebelled against the central government, which they thought too timid by half. By the late 1830s, liberal rebellions raged simultaneously in four provinces, from far north to far south, and these were not the last. Ephemeral republics were declared. Slaves were getting involved here and there. The regents panicked.

Liberals among the imperial elite now did an abrupt about-face. Maybe the conservatives had been right, they admitted. Maybe Brazil needed strong royal authority more than democracy. Decolonization was put on hold. In 1840, even though Prince Pedro was still only fourteen, the national assembly voted to put him on the throne anyway. It canceled earlier liberal reforms, built up the imperial army, and instituted a centralized national police force. Liberalism had failed, and the conservative Brazilian success story of the mid-1800s—slaves, coffee, and monarchical stability—could now be told.

CONTINUITIES IN DAILY LIFE

Whatever the political alterations after independence, the texture of people's daily lives—their work, their families and other social relationships, their amusements and beliefs—changed less than one might think. The great economic engine of transformation that would eventually touch everyone, capitalism, was still idling spasmodically in most countries (for reasons already explained) and would not roar to life until after 1850. In the meantime, however, things were not so bad for most Latin Americans.

Indigenous people farmed communal lands belonging to their villages, relatively unmolested by outsiders. During the period 1825–1850, the economic slowdown took pressure off

indigenous land and labor. Colonial labor drafts such as the *mita* had ended—except in extraordinarily backward cases—and indigenous people preferred, whenever possible, to avoid wage labor and grow their own food. Especially in Mexico, where indigenous villages had governed themselves through Spanish institutions since the 1500s, village elders administered their own communities, giving them an independent voice in political matters. But most indigenous people cared little for republican politics. They wanted to live apart, observing their own customs, speaking their own language, and generally minding their own business.

In some cases—Colombia, for example—free peasants of mixed blood far outnumbered the inhabitants of indigenous communities. Sometimes, rural people lived as “attached workers,” called *peons*, on the property of a large landowner and became, in effect, his economic and political clients. For attached workers and their families, the standard name for the landowner was, in fact, *patrón*. Having a *patrón* provided security but also carried obligations. Typically, hacienda peons worked part time for the *patrón* and part time growing food for themselves. On the other hand, much virgin forest still existed here and there, where peasants might clear a field and farm their own crops without having to work as peons or fight battles for any landlord. In sum, during the period 1825–1850, most rural Latin Americans depended, one way or another, on subsistence agriculture rather than the market for their food.

At the other end of the rural spectrum, African people and their children still slaved in the fields of plantations, especially in Brazil and Cuba. They, too, raised food in their own provision fields, but spent most of their time, when not household servants, cultivating and processing the export crop. In fact, Brazilian coffee planters had imported record numbers of Africans in the period 1825–1850, despite the English-inspired legal prohibition of the trade. Some laws were on the books,

according to the old Brazilian expression, merely "For the English to see." Cuban plantation owners, benefiting particularly from the abolition of slavery in Jamaica, Barbados, and the other sugar-growing islands colonized by England, also imported vast numbers of enslaved workers. Cuba was becoming one big sugar factory, highly capitalized and relentlessly productive, an indicator of things to come elsewhere.

Rich or not, landowners held the balance of power in post-colonial Latin America. They complained about bandits and impassable roads but enjoyed greater social prestige and political influence than in their parents' generation. In the wake of independence, liberals had eliminated powerful urban merchant guilds and instituted free trade. The massive importation of foreign machine-made fabrics had then bankrupted urban weavers. Now most of Latin America's export opportunities were agricultural, putting new *economic* clout in the hands of landowners. Landowners' *political* clout got heavier, too. Urban merchants and bureaucrats had fewer followers than the owners of plantations and haciendas, and numerous clients counted in elections and revolutions.

Transculturation, the give-and-take creation of new Latin American cultures, was encouraged by the postcolonial prestige of national identity and the rise of the landowning class. By the mid-1800s, landowners were less likely to maintain a house in town and more comfortable seeing themselves as country people. Years of nativist rhetoric had proclaimed the essential patriotic dignity of "Americanos," and the countryside, rather than the cities, was thought to define the native identity. The folk dances of poor mestizos, long condemned by the colonial authorities as inappropriate for anybody, now enjoyed a broad vogue as representations of a national spirit. Mexican *jarabes* and Brazilian *lundus*, two such dances, were cheered on stage by patriotic audiences that might hiss at actors with Portuguese or Spanish accents. Even in

Spanish-controlled Cuba, people danced—at rustic wedding parties, seedy dance halls, or elite social clubs—to music with an Afro-Cuban lilt. Place of birth had been enough to define native identity during the wars of independence, and it remained a crucial reference point. Defining the national "us" partly happened through opposition to a foreign "them." But national identities needed more than boundaries. They needed substance, and transculturation provided it.

The nativist spirit, a key to independence, remained strong for several decades afterward, before gradually fading. Peninsulars who had remained in republican Mexico, for example, were expelled following widespread nativist agitation in 1828. Conservatives, along with and eventually more than liberals, also used nativist imagery. Rosista publicists created folksy newspaper characters like Pancho Lugares, *The Gaucho*, who dispensed homespun advice and made fun of Eurocentric liberals in 1830s Argentina. Nativism remained antiforeign, but it lost its liberal emphasis on social equality.

By 1850, the oppressed majority of Latin America, the descendants of the conquered and the enslaved, were clearly not going to overthrow the descendants of the conquerors. Overall, the upper classes of the new nations still looked like the upper classes of the colonies—with a few darker faces, now, in the elite group portrait. There were only a few isolated cases in which mass rebellions threatened to sweep aside the existing social hierarchy. The most famous was the mid-century Caste War of Yucatán, in which Mayan people rose up, inspired by prophetic religious messages from a talking cross, to cleanse their land of white and mestizo intruders. They called themselves Cruzob, a mixed Mayan/Spanish word meaning "people of the cross," but their worldview was more Mayan than Spanish. In general, truly radical rebellions occurred only where the rebels, like these Mayas, kept a cultural distance from the larger society. The Bahian slave conspiracy of 1835, perhaps the

most famous of independent Brazil, occurred among slaves many of whom were Arabic-speaking Muslims, the Malês, impervious to the Christian ideology of Brazilian society. Their Muslim identity helped the Malês organize, but it also limited them by alienating Christian slaves, some of whom revealed the conspiracy.

White minority rule in Latin America still exercised the subtle, resilient power of cultural hegemony. Whereas whites had once ruled because they represented the colonizing power and the true religion, now they represented "civilization." What was civilization? A silly question! Civilization was Paris, London! It was free trade and steam power and romantic poetry. It was everything money could buy from Europe. Whoever accepted this outrageously Eurocentric definition of civilization more or less had to accept the "more civilized" white ruling class with it. The black Muslim rebels of Bahia and the Cruzob Mayas of the speaking cross did not need the white man's definition of civilization, nor his values, because they had their own and could envision a radically different world. But these were the exceptions. In most of Latin America, transculturation had, over the course of centuries, created societies that shared basic values and attitudes despite huge differences in wealth. The result was continued hegemonic control for the elite minority. An example is the awe attached to writing.

Spanish and Portuguese had been the languages of empire, and writing in those languages remained the vehicle of law, administration, and all long-distance communication. Although educational opportunities expanded slightly after 1825, most Latin Americans could neither read nor write. Meanwhile, new nations, as well as states and provinces within them, now had legislatures to draft laws and newspapers to air political debate. Political hopefuls of all kinds orated endlessly in electoral campaigns and then, if fortunate, on the floor of the senate or the balcony of the presidential palace. So important was rhetoric

and oratory to public life that many a semiliterate caudillo captured a capital city only to slink back to his hacienda in tongue-tied embarrassment, amid snickers from the educated elite. Politics constituted the principal venue for this kind of language, but special glamour went also to the young man who could write poetry in proper meter and rhyme, recite classical wisdom in Latin, or show easy familiarity with untranslated English or French authors. Only men could have this glamour, for the most part, because university education was still closed to women.

Indeed, the tumultuous public life of the new nations—the biggest transformation of independence—largely excluded women altogether. Women's names became well-known either because of their connections to powerful men or because they broke the gender rules—or both. Domitila de Castro, for example, known to history by her title *Marqueza de Santos*, became the best-known woman in Brazil after the Empress Leopoldina, because she was the emperor's mistress. She had a reputation for giving excellent parties at the lavish villa that Pedro built for her near the beach in Rio. Pedro gave titles of nobility to several members of Domitila's family, too, and officially recognized his paternity of their daughter, whom he made Duchess of Goiás. By most accounts, his behavior virtually killed the Empress Leopoldina with humiliation. Pedro had introduced Domitila among Leopoldina's ladies-in-waiting and for a time had her and the infant duchess living in the imperial palace. Leopoldina was a vigorous, intelligent, and loyal woman who had borne six children and died from complications of her seventh pregnancy. Born in Austria, she was much loved in Rio despite her foreign manner. She had helped persuade Pedro to make Brazil independent in 1822. Her death in 1826 discredited Pedro in the hearts of many Brazilians, preparing the way for his downfall.

Encarnación Ezcurra, the wife of Argentine caudillo Juan

Manuel de Rosas, played an important political role, but mainly behind the scenes. When Rosas was away from Buenos Aires, ranching or leading military expeditions, Ezcurra took over his political affairs. She greeted and offered hospitality to poor as well as rich Rosistas. She dealt with other caudillos and wrote her husband frequent, detailed political reports. Her correspondence shows a proud, strong, tough-talking Rosista. She dismissed slanders directed at her by her husband's enemies: "But none of this intimidates me. I will put myself above it. And they will pay *dearly*." Still, she did not assume any public office, although Rosas proclaimed her "Heroine of the Federation." When she died in 1838, the banner on her casket put her life achievements in the order believed proper for a woman: "Good mother, faithful wife, ardent patriot."

Her daughter, Manuela de Rosas, soon stepped into her shoes. Manuela (more commonly, Manuelita) now managed the public relations of her father's rule. When still a girl, she had famously joined in the dancing when the black people of Buenos Aires paid their respects to Rosas. Later, she entertained visiting diplomats, playing the piano and conversing with them in French. More than one wanted to marry her, but her father opposed her marriage: he needed her. So she remained "la Niña" to all Buenos Aires, one of the most popular people in public life. She finally did marry, against her father's wishes, after he was overthrown.

Camila O'Gorman, a friend of Manuelita's, was famous for an awful scandal. This young woman of "decent family" fell in love with a young priest. When they ran away together in 1847, a tremendous outcry arose, not only from the church and from Camila's father, but also from Rosas's enemies, who loudly bewailed the moral corruption of Argentina under Rosas, and from Rosas, who loudly vowed to find and punish the lovers "even if they hid underground." The lovers had changed their names and gone to live in a distant village, but they were

quickly found. Manuelita Rosas tried, but failed, to save her friend. Camila now symbolized danger to the social order. Even though she was pregnant, she and her lover faced a Rosista firing squad, side by side.

Obviously, Iberian patriarchy remained virulent in postcolonial Latin America. The political activities of an Encarnación Ezcurra were, though not unique, infrequent. Women's exclusion from the new political arena of public life merely continued a colonial practice, but it found new justification in republican theories assigning women specifically to the domestic sphere. Women bore the total burden of arduous but indispensable tasks—cooking, cleaning, sewing, and child rearing—that took place in the home. Poor women often had to work outside their own home and inside someone else's, still cooking, cleaning, and rearing children, even breast-feeding someone else's children. Women also took in laundry to wash, starch, and iron for their social "betters," and crowds of washerwomen could be seen scrubbing on the rocks and extending clothes to dry on the grass at choice riverbank locations. Prostitution, too, remained a standard feature of urban life.

Eugenia Castro, a poor woman thirty years younger than Rosas, never got much from him, nor did he ever publicly recognize his six children with her. Unlike the Marqueza de Santos, Eugenia Castro led a shut-in life, hidden from public view. Rosas had been her legal guardian, and she had been raised as a sort of respectable servant in his house. Eugenia had nursed the dying Encarnación Ezcurra and then took her nightly place in the bedroom of the "the Illustrious American," as Rosas allowed admirers to call him. In private, she sat with him at the same table (reported a surprised visitor), and Manuelita was affectionate with her and her children. But when Rosas later invited her to share his exile in England, she stayed in Argentina.

Women of higher status continued to suffer the tyranny of

the honor system that so limited their experiences and movements, but honor itself was evolving. Honor had always been partly assigned by hierarchy and partly earned through behavior. Scoundrels with the right pedigree could claim honor, and so could more humble people who showed themselves to be personally virtuous. After independence, the second, more modern definition of honor increased in importance, as befitted societies of supposedly equal citizens. Women who had achieved ideals of chastity or motherhood could demand social recognition as honorable people, despite having been born in poverty or with the "wrong" skin color. Military service could compensate for a similarly dishonorable background in men, at least hypothetically. As the caste system declined after independence, honor served as an auxiliary sorting principle for the new class system.

Caste, usually determined by skin color or some other physical characteristic, had been a fixed aspect of people's social being, but class was a bit easier to change. Class depended especially on wealth, and poor people sometimes struck it rich. Exceptionally prosperous black, indigenous, or mixed-race people had been held down in the colonial period by laws that kept them out of silk clothes and high-status jobs, unless they bought an exemption to make them "legally white." These caste laws disappeared after independence. In addition, the political turmoil of the early 1800s resulted, as we have seen, in increased social mobility for successful military and political leaders. White upper-class families worried about the social climbing of mestizo competitors. They had reason to worry. People of mixed race made up an ever larger portion of the population. Indigenous people who knew Spanish and lived outside traditional communities increasingly abandoned an indigenous identity and became competitors, too.

The multiple categories of the caste system were collapsing, gradually, into two basic class categories: the self-described,

mostly white, "decent people" at the top, and the common people, *el pueblo* in Spanish, *o povo* in Portuguese, below. The so-called decent people zealously patrolled the perimeters of their privileged social space. Diamond jewelry or an ostentatious coach with matched horses driven by a uniformed servant could help the daughters of a mestizo general get a foot in the door of "decency," so to speak, but those already inside held new arrivals to strict standards of behavior and fashion. The daughters of the mestizo general might buy the most costly materials for their dresses, but did they have the most up-to-date Parisian pattern? Did they know proper ballroom etiquette? Could they play the piano? If so, how well?

No less than in the colonial period, European norms defined what was "civilized," "stylish," and, ultimately, "decent" in the eyes of postcolonial Latin Americans. Those at the top of the social hierarchy and most in touch with Europe obviously held the winning cards in this parlor game. Was Latin America merely passing from formal, overt colonialism to a more subtle kind? In some ways, that is exactly what was happening.

Overall, Latin American states had gotten off to a rocky start between 1825 and 1850. Economically, these were stagnant years; politically, unstable years. Liberals had failed to create inclusive political communities, law-abiding commonwealths of equal citizens. At mid-century, old habits of hierarchy appeared to have triumphed in most of Latin America over liberal dreams of transformation. In the long run, however, the tide of history favored change. When the liberals got their second wind after 1850, they had much better luck.

COUNTERCURRENTS:
The Power of Outsiders



Only Cuba and Puerto Rico remained outright colonies, but all Latin America remained culturally and economically oriented toward the outside world, highly receptive to European influence, especially from France and England. Spain and Portugal retained little influence and instead attracted angry disdain from Latin American liberals, who faulted Iberian colonization for what they found wrong with their societies. Conservatives were a bit more sympathetic to the "mother countries," but not much.

Both liberals and conservatives regarded the United States, on the other hand, as worthy of imitation. But their admiration was mistrustful, and with reason, as we will see. US traders had begun to operate in Latin America soon after independence. Their presence was welcome indeed. Since 1823, the US government had also promoted a mostly self-serving diplomatic vision of hemispheric solidarity, the Monroe Doctrine, which called for "European hands off" the Americas. England and France paid little attention. Since US influence paled beside the awesome commercial and naval power of Great Britain in the 1800s, the Monroe Doctrine remained mostly theoretical for decades. Nor could the cultural achievements of the United States rival those of England or, especially, France in Latin American eyes. But US trade grew stronger as years went by, and so did the aura of US technology and prosperity.

Together, the United States, England, and France began to define Latin America's new relationship to the outside world. As embodiments of Civilization and Progress, they became models of everything that, according to liberals at least, Latin America should aspire to be. Furthermore, traders from these countries would gladly provide the look and feel of progress, ready-made, if only Latin Americans had francs or dollars or pounds sterling enough to buy it. Generally, however, Latin American economies were weak in the first decades after independence, exporting little and importing little.

A famous exception is Peru's *guano* boom. Formerly the mighty center of Spanish-speaking South America, its very name synonymous with silver, Peru had suffered a series of turbulent military caudillos in the wake of independence. But already in the 1840s, a new export product rescued Peruvian fortunes or, more precisely, the fortunes of the "decent people" of Lima. This product was guano, the old fertilizer from Inca days, seabird manure, that had accumulated for thou-

sands of years on offshore islands where the birds nested. Easy—if not exactly pleasant—to mine, guano deposits stood in great mounds, waiting to be shoveled aboard ship, and European farmers could not get enough of the nitrogen-rich fertilizer. Guano export required substantial capital for ships, crews, installations, and shovel men, but British capitalists saw it as a safe investment. British guano exporters operated offshore, even bringing workers from China to keep the process totally under outside control. The Peruvian government, for its part, got a direct cut of the profits, usually more than half, because the guano islands were government property. As Peruvian export earnings doubled and doubled again, the formerly poverty-stricken national government had a bonanza on its hands.

Guano money immediately began to build one of Latin America's first railroads. Lima got public gas lighting and other urban improvements, not to mention public jobs for the "decent people," a kind of export-driven growth that became common in Latin America as a whole only half a century later. But now (or later), little of this prosperity reached the other Peru—the *sierra*, the Andean highlands that rise sharply behind Lima and the narrow coastal plain. Since the Peruvian government no longer depended on Andean silver or on the head tax paid by indigenous people of the *sierra*, it could afford to neglect that region. This, too, was a portent of the future. Progress, when it finally arrived, would be very unevenly distributed in Latin America.

During the 1830s and 1840s, England, France, and the United States occasionally sent gunboats and landed soldiers on Latin American shores, sometimes to protect their citizens (the merchant community), sometimes to "punish" Latin American governments for some reason (such as lack of cooperation collecting debts owed to foreign citizens). Incidents of this "gunboat diplomacy" became common, especially in

defenseless Caribbean and Central American countries. A few larger invasions also occurred. Both Rosas and Santa Anna earned patriotic glory by defeating European expeditionary forces, as we saw. By far the largest outside intervention before 1850, however, was the US war on Mexico, sparked by a rebellious Mexican territory called Texas.

The Mexican government had made a major mistake when, soon after independence, it allowed slave-holding US southerners to settle in Texas. When Mexican centralists tried to limit Texas autonomy, these settlers, eventually outnumbering Mexicans, rebelled and, in 1836, declared Texas an independent republic. They were determined to preserve slavery, which Mexico had formally abolished in 1829. Although defeated at the famous battle of the Alamo, the Anglo-Texans won the war and remained independent for almost a decade. Mexico did not recognize Texas independence, however, and so when Texas became a US state in 1845, fighting soon erupted again. Mexicans feared US desires to acquire more Mexican land, especially California, but Mexico was too weak to defend itself against the United States. In 1848, US troops occupied Mexico City and took huge spoils of war: control over all or part of the future states of New Mexico, Arizona, Nevada, Colorado, and Utah, along with California and, of course, Texas. Although sparsely settled, these lands constituted about half the territorial claims of Mexico. The heroic (and suicidal) last stand of Mexican military cadets against US soldiers became a potent patriotic symbol in Mexico, and Mexicans' early admiration of the United States took on the darker tones of a love-hate relationship.



BENITO JUÁREZ. Mexico's great liberal president, a contemporary and friend of Abraham Lincoln, was an indigenous Zapotec villager who learned Spanish as a teenager. Juárez represents the hard-fought triumph of Mexican liberalism at mid-century. Liberalism had encouraged the rise of a few talented mestizo and even indigenous men like Juárez, though the upper classes remained white overall and the prestige of racist ideas was on the rise internationally when this photograph was taken in the 1860s. Courtesy of Bancroft Library, University of California at Berkeley.

1855	1861	1868	1874	1888
Juárez Law in Mexico	Liberal gains in Colombia and Chile	Sarmiento becomes president of Argentina	Transatlantic cable connects region to Europe	Slavery abolished in Brazil

5.

PROGRESS

In 1850, Latin American conservatism stood at high tide. Then, over the next quarter century, the liberals made a stunning comeback and oversaw a long period of export-driven economic expansion. At last, Latin American countries were fully integrated into the free flow of international trade. The social and economic transformations liberals had so desired in 1825 now finally gathered momentum.

The liberal comeback was, in part, a simple return swing of the pendulum. Any official ideology, any ruling cadre, tends to discredit itself after decades in power. Conservative rejection of liberal pipe dreams had promised "a return to sanity" in the 1830s, a soothing reestablishment of order, a rosy appeal to traditional values. But the virtues of security faded as the years passed and the benefits of peace seemed ever more narrowly distributed. Gradually, all those outside the charmed circle of official patronage began to pine for a change. Maybe, thought more and more Latin Americans, the liberal dreams of a transformed society were not so crazy after all. Landowners wanted a chance to sell coffee or hides or tobacco on the international market. The urban middle classes wanted paved streets and libraries, sewers and parks. Many pinned their hopes on new energies surging through the international economy after 1850.

The Industrial Revolution was accelerating in Europe and the United States during the period 1850–1875. Industrialists regarded Latin America as a potential market for their manufactured goods. European and US industrial workers constituted a market for sugar and coffee grown in Latin America. Especially in England, which, unlike the United States, had no civil war to divert it in these years, industrial profits produced more capital than could be reinvested at home. Latin America's previous investment drought now ended in a rain of international capital. Governments borrowed and so did private businessmen who wanted to build railroads or port facilities. The Industrial Revolution, the mechanization of manufacturing, had not yet begun in Latin America. Factories were rare. But nineteenth-century steam technology did revolutionize Latin America's connection to the outside world.

The transportation revolution in Latin America meant, above all, steamships and railroads. Wooden sailing ships were at the mercy of fickle winds, and they carried less cargo than the iron-hulled steamships that gradually replaced them. Steamers plowed the waves faster and more reliably than did sailing ships. Steam-powered trains would eventually transform overland transportation, which had relied principally on pack mules or oxcarts. In general, mules and carts limited profitable export agriculture to the coastal plains. Railroads cost a lot to build, but once built, opened access to enormous areas, creating agricultural boomlets in practically every locality along the length of their tracks. As if steam were not enough, telegraph lines, able to transmit written messages instantaneously, introduced another nineteenth-century technological wonder—electricity. Stringing wires was easier than laying rails, blasting tunnels, and erecting bridges, so telegraph lines often outran train tracks. By 1874 a transatlantic telegraph cable had already been laid across the bottom of the Atlantic Ocean connecting Brazil to Europe.

New technology transformed Latin America's hazardous, unpredictable, and expensive communications with the rest of the world. That world would soon come to call, and elite Latin Americans, for whom Europe remained a cultural beacon, began to feel nervous at the prospect. After all, the "decent people" claimed social priority because of their European race and culture. But how would they measure up in the presence of the real thing? Would Europeans smirk at the "decent people's" attempts to imitate them? Would they find Latin American countries devoid of *Progress*?

Progress (with a capital P) was the great theme of the West in the nineteenth century. The industrial and transportation revolutions had massively reordered societies and touched everyone's lives in one way or another. Even when people suffered as a result, they stood in awe of the change. Somehow, the idea of inevitable, all-conquering technological advancement—a notion still with us today—had already taken hold of people's imaginations. Here was a new hegemonic idea to replace the old colonial version. In a world where Progress seemed unstoppable, well-informed elite Latin Americans wanted to be part of it. Like other ruling classes in the West, they worried about modern materialism eroding traditional values, but they embraced materialism anyway. Exporting something for pounds sterling or dollars or francs was the obvious way to satisfy their desire to be up-to-date in European terms. Export earnings, after all, could buy fence wire and sewing machines and steam engines. In other words, export earnings could literally import Progress, or so the elite believed.

In the mid-1800s, Progress was becoming a sort of secular religion, and liberals were its prophets. Back in 1810, their vision of progress had a political emphasis: republics, constitutions, elections. As it turned out, that kind of progress bogged down in a morass of conflicting interests. Technological progress, on the other hand, still had an invincible reputa-

tion, and Latin American liberals reaped the benefits of the idea's awesome persuasiveness. The years 1850–1875 saw a political sea change all across Latin America as the inevitability of Progress became simple common sense for the educated elite. People continued to follow caudillos and patrons. Economic interests still collided. But everywhere in Latin America, the liberals gained advantage by riding the wave of the future.

Upwardly mobile families tended to join the Liberal Party, whereas long-established status made other families Conservatives. Opposition to the Catholic Church—its wealth, its power, and its abuses—remained the litmus test for liberals. In essence, liberals always represented change, and the church symbolized the colonial past. To conservatives, who remembered colonial days as a peaceful age when uppity mestizos knew their place, the past was attractive. But the past was the opposite of Progress. And after mid-century, Progress seemed unbeatable. The ever-dramatic history of Mexico provides an excellent example.

MEXICO'S LIBERAL REFORM

Nowhere had the colonial church been more sumptuous, more omnipresent in people's lives than in Mexico. The Mexican church owned vast properties, real estate bequeathed in wills or taken in mortgage for loans over the centuries when the church was Mexico's chief moneylending institution. This property had accumulated steadily, because the church was a landowner who never died and whose property was therefore never subdivided among heirs. By the mid-1800s, the church owned about half the best farmland in Mexico, as well as monasteries, convents, and other urban real estate, not to mention the church buildings themselves. Especially in central and southern Mexico, rural society was organized around agricul-



tural villages, and each of these around a church. Generally, the priest was a local leader and, sometimes, a petty tyrant. According to traditional Spanish law, still in force, the clergy enjoyed a broad legal exemption called a *fuero*, and parish priests often supported themselves by charging fees for their religious services. In addition, Mexicans were legally obligated to pay a tenth of their income to the church as a tithe.

The independence era had been a time of progressive priests like Hidalgo and Morelos, but these seemed to vanish by mid-century, when the pope himself led a spiritual counterattack against the gospel of Progress. Europeans called this ecclesiastical conservatism *ultramontane* because it emanated from beyond the Alps, that is, from Rome. Ultramontane conservatism now became official Catholic policy, and assertive churchmen, especially a wave of militant priests who arrived from Spain in these years, refused to accept government control over ecclesiastical affairs. All of Spanish America and Brazil too felt the impact of ultramontane conservatism, but again, nowhere felt it as much as Mexico.

Religion and politics had always gone together in Mexico. The language of Mexican independence struggles, years before, had been infused with religion, and even most liberals of the 1830s and 1840s had viewed the church as a necessary part of the country's social order. Then, as the mid-century church became explicitly antiliberal, liberals became more antichurch. This did not make them necessarily irreligious—although some were. Leading Mexican liberal Melchor Ocampo, for example, caused great scandal by announcing the nonexistence of God. For the most part, Mexican liberals directed their anger against the Catholic Church as an institution; they were more anticlerical than antireligious. The church's unproductive wealth and the *fuero* exemptions enjoyed by the clergy were affronts to Progress, reasoned the liberals. The anger of liberal anticlericalism comes out in a story (true or not) that Ocampo

liked to tell about a priest who refused church burial to a dead boy until paid his fee. Asked by the boy's father what he should do, the priest in the story replies: "Why don't you salt him and eat him?" For Mexican conservatives, on the other hand, religion, church, and clergy were one and the same. "Religion and Fueros!" became their battle cry.

When Mexican liberals began their great mid-century uprising—the beginning of an entire period called the Reform—the president was once again the old caudillo Antonio López de Santa Anna, who had worked overall to keep things from changing for a generation. Santa Anna finally left for exile in 1855. If Santa Anna represents Mexican politics as usual in the early postindependence era, the liberals who gathered against him represent an alternative Mexico. At their head was Juan Alvarez, a tough mestizo caudillo from the tangled mountains of indigenous southern Mexico. Alvarez had been a patriot since the 1810s, when Santa Anna was still a royalist. Now an old man, and not much of a politician, Alvarez became the figurehead president after the departure of Santa Anna. But the real liberal crusaders of mid-century were younger men, educated men of words and laws. One was Melchor Ocampo, already mentioned. Like Alvarez, Ocampo was a mestizo, a man of humble background but extraordinary talent—an amateur scientist, economist, linguist, dramatist, and professional lawyer. Ocampo exemplifies a particular kind of liberal leadership—young, urban, mestizo, upwardly mobile men for whom progress offered personal advancement. Benito Juárez, the first person of fully indigenous ancestry to become governor of a Mexican state, likewise provides an atypical, but highly symbolic, example.

Juárez, like Ocampo, was an orphan with nowhere to go in life but up. At the age of twelve, he tired of watching over his uncle's sheep in the mountains, left his Zapotec village, and traveled to the provincial city of Oaxaca, where his sister

worked as a cook. There he put on European clothes (becoming famous, in fact, for the relentless formality of his black frock coat), perfected his Spanish, and eventually studied law at Oaxaca's new public Institute of Arts and Sciences, which existed thanks to Mexico's postindependence liberal government. Juárez then practiced law in Oaxaca, at one point representing poor villagers against a supposedly abusive priest, a case that landed Juárez in jail for a few days. Eventually, he was elected to the state legislature and national congress and served five years as governor of Oaxaca. But Juárez left his Zapotec identity behind when he donned his black frock coat. He did not represent the interests of the Zapotecs in particular, or of indigenous people as a group. To call him an *indio* was to insult him, and he sometimes used rice powder to lighten his dark complexion. Yet everyone in Oaxaca—and, one day, all Mexicans—knew where Benito Juárez came from. His enemies might call him “a monkey dressed up as Napoleon,” but to many Mexicans, the personal rise of Benito Juárez confirmed the promise of liberalism.

Among the first decrees of the liberal Reform was the Juárez Law (1855), which attacked military and ecclesiastical *fueros* and thrust its author into the national limelight. A couple of months later, the liberals decreed the Lerdo Law (1856), abolishing collective landholding. The Lerdo Law struck primarily at the church, which would now have to sell off its vast properties, but its secondary effect was to jeopardize the communal lands of indigenous villages. The Reform credo enshrined individual effort, property, and responsibility. According to the liberals, distributing village lands to individual families as private property would motivate each family to work harder because of the selfishness inherent in human nature. But indigenous villagers had their own vision, and they believed that communal lands benefited them. For that reason some indigenous villagers joined the “decent people” and other conserva-

tives under the banner of “Religion and *Fueros*” and opposed the liberal Reform of the 1850s.

The Reform lasted for only a few years before a conservative general seized the presidency and dissolved Congress in 1858. A full-scale civil war then erupted. Fleeing toward the liberal strongholds in the mestizo mining towns of the Mexican north, the reformers chose Benito Juárez to command their forces. They chose well, because even those who disliked Juárez respected his determination. The conservatives controlled most of the army, but the liberals now enjoyed widespread popular support. The Juárez government soon retook Mexico City, but the liberals' troubles were not over. The civil war had bankrupted the Mexican state, and Juárez suspended payment on foreign debt. France, Spain, and Britain retaliated by collectively occupying Veracruz. At first, this occupation seemed simply another episode of gunboat diplomacy. The French, however, had an ulterior motive.

In desperation, defeated Mexican conservatives reached for their secret weapon: a monarch. Napoleon III of France wanted to expand French influence in Latin America. In fact, the French invented the name “Latin America” during these years as a way of making their influence seem natural. Before the mid-1800s, people had talked of Mexico or Brazil or Argentina, and also of “America,” but never of “Latin America.” Because French, like Spanish and Portuguese, is directly descended from Latin, the term “Latin America” implied a cultural kinship with France. Napoleon III obligingly supplied Mexican conservatives with a potential monarch obedient to French interests. The would-be emperor of Mexico, Maximilian, was a truly well-intentioned man from one of Europe's greatest royal dynasties, the Hapsburgs. Before accepting the plan, Maximilian asked earnestly whether the Mexican people really wanted an emperor. Mexican conservatives falsely assured him that they did.

So French troops invaded Mexico in 1862 and installed Maximilian as emperor two years later. Benito Juárez retreated northward to lead the resistance. The French invasion had fueled a nationalist reaction that aided Juárez. In an attempt to satisfy the patriotic feelings of Mexicans, on his first independence day in Mexico Maximilian made a public pilgrimage to the church where Father Miguel Hidalgo had begun the fight for independence in 1810. The emperor engaged in a bit of political theater by ringing the bell of Hidalgo's church and on other occasions wearing a serape and exhibiting his taste for Mexican food. But nationalism was a losing issue for the conservatives in this case. Juárez, Zapotec in spite of the rice powder, was simply a more convincing nationalist symbol than Maximilian dressed as a mariachi.

In addition, Juárez found a powerful ally in the United States. The French invasion had presented an obvious challenge to the Monroe Doctrine. Napoleon III had attacked during the US Civil War, when there was little danger of interference from the United States. In 1865, however, that war ended, US aid to Juárez increased, and Napoleon III decided to withdraw French forces from what had become an expensive mess. Maximilian stayed in Mexico, where he was captured and executed. When he faced the firing squad, among his last words were "Viva Mexico!" His wife, the glamorous Empress Carlota, escaped. She managed to return to Europe but was insane for the rest of her life.

Benito Juárez returned to Mexico City as president. Mexican conservatives had utterly disgraced themselves by inviting the French invasion. They would never again rule Mexico. Nor would Catholicism ever regain its former prominence in Mexican society.

OTHER COUNTRIES JOIN THE LIBERAL TREND

Colombia, Chile, and Central America further illustrate the rising fortunes of liberalism throughout the hemisphere. The church issue was especially crucial in Colombia and Chile.

Colombian liberals had attacked the church ever since Bolívar's day. Then came the conservative reaction of the post-independence generation. The 1840s governments restored the ecclesiastical fuero, which liberals had eliminated, and even invited the Jesuit order to return to Colombia. The Jesuits, known for their loyalty to the Vatican, had been too Catholic even for the Spanish Empire. They were expelled from Spanish America in 1767. When Colombian liberals began their comeback in the 1850s, they threw the Jesuits out again and went through the usual anticlerical drill, removing the fuero, making tithes voluntary, insisting on government control over Catholic clergy, even legalizing divorce.

In 1861, Colombian caudillo Tomás Cipriano de Mosquera rode into Bogotá at the head of an army and inaugurated two solid decades of liberal rule. Mosquera was a classic Spanish-American caudillo: an independence hero, a general by the age of thirty, no political idealist. Like Mexico's Santa Anna, Mosquera had the distinction of being president, eventually, for both liberals and conservatives.

At the other end of South America, Chile had a stately and exceptional air in the 1800s. In an era when presidential palaces seemed to have revolving doors and their residents rarely served a full term of office, Chile was governed by only three presidents, all of them conservatives, each of whom served two consecutive terms—a full ten years—and none of whom was overthrown by a revolution: Joaquín Prieto in the 1830s, Manuel Bulnes in the 1840s, and Manuel Montt in the 1850s. The Chilean state owed its remarkable stability mostly to its excellent system of rigged elections. Still, the conserva-

from a small town in Nicaragua, was another Latin American to receive universal tribute for his literary genius. Even amid the generally racist neocolonial climate, Latin American respect for art, especially literature, conferred on men like Darío and Machado de Assis a status then unequaled by any person of color in the United States. Darío became one of the most influential poets ever to write in the Spanish language. For the first time ever, people throughout the Spanish-speaking world, *including Spain*, recognized a Spanish-American poet as the great master whose vision and style defined the highest artistic expression of their civilization.

These writers were exceptional men whose stories are not typical. Still, as part of a slow, steady process happening all across Latin America, talented mestizos were joining the middle classes of Latin American countries, finding more opportunities and meeting less prejudice than did socially ascendant black people in the United States. By the turn of the century, the Mexican middle class had become notably mestizo, and many other countries were not far behind.

Only in the mid-1900s would most countries of the region become predominantly urban. Until 1930, the balance of population and power rested in the countryside, where landowners controlled not only the national wealth, but also the electoral system. This phenomenon—by which a landowner in Chile or Brazil or practically anywhere in Latin America took his clients to the polls on election day to “vote them”—was the backbone of every strong government in the region. Such “managed elections” were essential to the political system of neocolonialism. On this point, the ruling liberals truly did not deserve their name.

AUTHORITARIAN RULE: OLIGARCHIES AND DICTATORSHIPS

A funny thing happened to the liberals of Latin America during their big comeback of the 1860s and 1870s. Once in control, they forgot about the political freedoms they had demanded under the conservative caudillos. Democracy now took a distant second place, in their thinking, to the material Progress associated with export growth. Economic growth required railroads and export crops, and to get *them*, you needed law and order: firm, qualified government, not mass politics but “scientific” rule by the nation’s supposedly “best and brightest,” which amounted, in most cases, to its richest and whitest. The philosophy that justified their rule was *positivism*, a French social doctrine that prescribed authoritarian medicine to achieve order and progress and made European norms into universal standards. The new Brazilian republic put the positivist slogan “Order and Progress” on the national flag in the 1890s.

Governance did become more orderly. As the profits of the export boom rose, government revenues from import/export taxes rose, too. National armies and police forces received modern weapons and a new level of training, as country after country invited European military advisors. Now national presidents commanded far more firepower than any regional caudillo. Railroads and telegraphs speeded the deployment of troops to quell rebellions. Civil wars became less frequent as elite families busied themselves with the export boom. Higher government revenues afforded middle-class people new employment opportunities in the expanding bureaucracies and schools. Greater stability and prosperity attracted further investment from abroad, intensifying trade, and the cycle repeated itself. In most Latin American countries, frequent revolutions became a thing of the past by about 1900. Instead, stable *authoritarian* governments characterize the neocolonial period.

What about those—the huge majority—left out of the euphoria? Progress held little appeal for them—often hurt them, in fact—so why would they go along? For the most part, the majority had little say in the matter. The political influence of the rural majority was limited by income and literacy requirements for voting, and limited even more by the practice of managed elections. The authoritarian governments of neocolonial Latin America made electoral management into an art form.

Managed elections constituted a tug-of-war between rival patronage networks, a test of strength at many levels. At the national administrative level, those in power named electoral officials favoring their party. That practice radically tilted the election from the outset. At the local level, an election was still a no-holds-barred contest among factions who tried to cast as many ballots as possible—per person—while preventing the other side from doing the same. The countryside, where great landowners controlled the votes and the fighting power of many clients, was the managed election's natural habitat. As long as the great export boom lasted, most neocolonial governments had the landowners' solid support, delivering reliable electoral majorities. The judges and local authorities who administered the process also influenced the final tally. They kept the voter registration rolls and could disqualify their opponent's clients ("I'm sorry, sir, your name just isn't on the list") while allowing even dubious votes for the "right" candidate.

Everybody knew about the fraud. Opposition newspapers and representatives frequently denounced it. But many Latin American electoral systems had been subtly modified to facilitate "management" from above, so it was very hard to thwart. Mostly, people just endured the fraud and learned to live with it, coming to see managed elections as the normal way of the world.

After 1880, authoritarian governments preserved republican forms but actually functioned as dictatorships or oligarchies.

Oligarchies (from Greek, meaning "rule by a few") represented a narrow ruling class. Within oligarchies, elections served to measure the strength of client networks. Even when ballots were not freely cast or fairly counted, they still showed who controlled what, and where—information that helped negotiate oligarchic power sharing. Dictatorships, on the other hand, centered on one all-powerful individual. Dictators might hold elections purely for the aura of legitimacy or to impress their foreign associates. Take landowner support and a good show of institutional legitimacy, add lucrative customs revenues and a dash of modern military technology, and neocolonial governments needed nothing else to rule—except, of course, for good relations with Europe or the United States or both.

This basic power structure facilitated a half century of economic transformation that benefited a quarter of the population at the expense of everybody else. Oligarchies and dictatorships provided *stability*, the virtue always most desired by foreign investors. That was the virtue that a former US secretary of state had in mind when, in a moment of diplomatic ardor, he called Mexican dictator Porfirio Díaz "one of the greatest men to be held up for the hero worship of mankind."

The rule of Porfirio Díaz (1876–1911), called the Porfiriato, was the very epitome of neocolonial dictatorships in Latin America. Díaz kept up constitutional appearances, but only his candidates ever won elections. He also had a circle of technocratic advisors steeped in the positivist "science" of government—the Científicos, they were called. As the value of Mexico's import/export trade expanded by roughly ten times during the Porfiriato, Díaz used the new revenues to strengthen the Mexican state. He curbed regional caudillos by crushing them or buying them off. He created public jobs for middle-class townspeople by vastly enlarging the bureaucracy. Díaz offered just two alternatives: *pan o palo*, meaning roughly "carrot or stick." For example, he subsidized the press to keep it

friendly, then jailed journalists who spoke against him. Mexico acquired a national rail system and graceful, monument-lined avenues in its capital city. But as Mexico approached the centennial of Hidalgo's 1810 uprising, the Mexico City police had orders to hustle indigenous people away from downtown, so that the foreign visitors would not get "the wrong impression" of Mexico.

Interestingly, Díaz himself was part Mixtec. He was a man of the strongly indigenous south, an authentic war hero who rose in the ranks during the struggle against the French, whom he famously defeated on Cinco de Mayo (5 May 1862), a red-letter date in Mexican history. But, as with Benito Juárez, Díaz's indigenous roots added to his popular image as a national leader without making him, in any way, a defender of indigenous identities.

In the countryside, Díaz founded the famous *rurales* (mounted national police) to secure an environment for investor confidence. He also oversaw a massive sale of public lands, most of which went to speculators and others who already had large properties. Almost all the land remaining to indigenous villagers now passed into the hands of surveying companies. Díaz welcomed foreign investment in Mexican land, and foreigners soon owned about a quarter of it, as well as the silver and oil underneath. Oil gushed from newly opened wells on Mexico's gulf coast. Champagne gushed, too, as glasses were raised to toast the exemplary president of neocolonial Mexico with effusive praise in a variety of foreign accents. Still, Díaz knew that outside influence was a mixed blessing. "Poor Mexico," he quipped, "so far from God, so close to the United States."

Except for the champagne and managed elections, government in neocolonial Brazil was a very different affair. It was highly decentralized, exemplifying the possibilities of oligarchic—as opposed to dictatorial—rule. With the emperor gone, how

could far-flung landowning families control Brazil's vast territory? The first Brazilian Republic (1889–1930) was a federation of twenty states with a weak central government. Its first principle, contrasting markedly with the Porfiriato, was local autonomy for each landowning oligarchy. Cattle ranchers, coffee and sugar planters, cacao and rubber barons from one end of Brazil to the other managed local elections to their liking. Various regional oligarchies negotiated control of each Brazilian state. Importantly, the new federal structure let each state keep its own export revenues. In effect, the country's state governors together determined who would be president. The two most powerful states were the current leading coffee producers, São Paulo and Minas Gerais, and they traded the presidency back and forth between them.

Because the São Paulo and Minas Gerais oligarchies wanted autonomy above all—and already had it—their federal presidents did very little. The republicans opened Brazil for business, so to speak, and then stood out of the way. One initiative of Brazilian neocolonial government is an exception proving the rule. In 1906, the Brazilian federal government began to buy and stockpile excess coffee, millions of tons of it, to prevent overproduction from lowering the price. In so doing, the coffee planters who controlled the central government used meager federal resources to bolster privileged interests. Huge stockpiles of coffee were burned when the system finally came crashing down.

Meanwhile, northeastern Brazil provided several examples of angry resistance to liberal Progress. In 1874–1875, peasants rioted in marketplaces to defy the imposition of metric weights and measures that they were sure would cheat them. The excited crowds then burned the official records and archives that lawyers used to evict families without legal title to land. In the 1890s, bandits with Robin Hood reputations, backlanders of the arid sertão, became popular heroes and the subjects of ballads in northeastern Brazil. This dirt-poor region of Brazil also



DISTRIBUTING ARMS. Nationalist movements transformed Latin America in the mid-1900s. This mural, painted on the walls of Mexico's Department of Public Education in 1928 by Diego Rivera, exemplifies the militant nationalist mood. Rivera depicted his wife, Frida Kahlo, among those distributing arms to Mexican revolutionaries. The hammer and sickle in the background signals Rivera's Marxist inspiration, but nationalism was not necessarily a movement of the left or the right. Courtesy of Instituto Nacional de Bellas Artes y Literatura © 2000 Banco de México Fiduciario en el Fideicomiso relativo a los Museos Diego Rivera y Frida Kahlo. Av. Cinco de Mayo No. 2, Col. Centro, Del. Cuauhtémoc 06059, México, D.F. Photograph, Mexico City, Secretaria de Educacion Publica, Court of Fiestas (third level) © 1986 The Detroit Institute of Arts.

1910	1929	1930S	1937-1945	1945
Mexican Revolution begins	Stock-market crash undermines neocolonial order	Import Substitution Industrialization	Estado Novo in Brazil	Gabriela Mistral wins Nobel prize

7.

NATIONALISM

For nations to be united internally, they have to know who they are; they need a clear and positive sense of national identity. Four centuries of Latin American transculturation—the creative process of cultural give and take—had given rise to a multitude of differences in speech, in customs, in attitude. Intertwined with the process of transculturation, the process of race mixing had created national populations that were also distinctive.

During the colonial period, European rulers had assigned American difference a negative meaning—an essentially “political” act. Then independence-minded Creoles reversed that attitude in their nativist rhetoric of 1810–1825 (“Americanos, you are the true sons of the soil!”), again as a power move, a matter of politics. But nativism faded after the Spanish and Portuguese were expelled, except when occasional foreign intervention revived it. The new nationalism that swept the region in the 1900s was another wave of the earlier nativist spirit, now with a strong economic agenda.

Who were the new nationalists, and what were they after? The nationalists very often were urban, middle-class people, recent immigrants or of racially mixed heritage. They had benefited less than landowners from the export boom. They rarely

could travel to Europe or the United States, rarely could afford to import all the "Progress" they wanted. Neocolonial elites had created glass bubbles of European culture in Latin American countries, but middle-class nationalists, too numerous to fit inside those bubbles, committed themselves to a larger, more ambitious, and above all, *more inclusive* vision of change. The nationalists would shatter the neocolonial bubbles, breathe Latin American air, and feel pride when young factories made it smoky, because industrialization was the practical goal they most desired.

Unlike the neocolonial elites, they would also feel comfortable in Latin American skins. Nationalism fostered collective self-respect by positively reinterpreting the meaning of Latin American racial and cultural difference. The nationalists declared psychological independence from Europe. No longer slaves to European fashion, Latin Americans would create styles of their own, especially in painting, music, dance, and literature. True, they would still watch Hollywood movies and listen to US jazz, but they also would teach Paris to tango and New York to rumba.

Nationalism's wide appeal—reaching far beyond its "core constituency" of middle-class urban people—gave it a special power. Four centuries of colonial and then neocolonial exploitation had left a bitter, divisive legacy in Latin America. Independence in the 1820s had created the outlines of countries, but not cohesive national societies. Neocolonialism, with its official racism and its railroads connecting exportable resources to seaports, but not connecting major cities to each other, had done little to advance national integration. The nationalists' simple truths—that everybody belonged, that the benefits of Progress should be shared, and that industrial development should be the priority—offered an important principle of cohesion. Nationalist critiques of imperialism also provided a clear, external focus for resentment—foreign intervention, both military and mone-

tary. And a shared enemy is politically useful. Like all rhetoric, nationalist rhetoric sometimes rang hollow, and nationalism had its ~~dark~~ side, too, as we shall see. Yet, nationalists who rejected the premise of white superiority and directed practical attention to long-neglected matters of public welfare clearly had a new and exciting political message. Nationalism attracted the ardent support of people across the social spectrum—something that liberalism had never really done. No wonder the advent of nationalism marks a clear watershed in the history of the region.

Latin American nationalism celebrates the unique—a particular historical experience, a particular culture. This *ethnic* nationalism is more like the German or French variety than like US nationalism, which tends to focus on a set of shared political ground rules and ideals. The US version is sometimes called *civic* nationalism. Consequently, signs of ethnic identity—folk costume, for example, or traditional foods—take on a nationalist importance in Latin America that they lack in the United States. In addition, *ethnic* nationalism tends to emphasize the idea of race—often, the idea of racial purity. German Nazism of the 1930s offers an extremely unpleasant example.

Latin American nationalism, on the other hand, emphasizes mixed-race, *mestizo* identities. The racial optimists of the neocolonial 1890s, persuaded by doctrines of "scientific racism" emanating from Europe and the United States, believed that national populations could—and should—be whitened over time, through immigration and intermarriage. And these were the optimists! The racial pessimists claimed that race mixing inevitably caused degeneration. Thus, people of color who made up the Latin American majority were to be excluded or, at best, *phased out* from the neocolonial vision of the future.

In contrast, Latin American nationalists celebrated the mixing of indigenous, European, and African genes. Each country's unique physical type, argued some nationalists, was an adaptation to its environment. Back in neocolonial 1902, Euclides da



WHITENING IN THREE GENERATIONS. *Redemption of Ham*, by Modesto Brocos y Gomez. This 1895 Brazilian canvas illustrates the outmoded neocolonial idea that European immigrant blood would “whiten” Latin American populations. Three generations—a black grandmother, a mulatta mother, and her white child—are intended to show the whitening that resulted from the women’s finding lighter-skinned partners. The father of the child, a Portuguese immigrant, is seated to one side. Nationalist thinking on race did away with the official goal of whitening and made African and indigenous roots a point of pride. Courtesy of Museu de Belas Artes, Rio de Janeiro.

Cunha had called Brazil’s mixed-race backlanders “the bedrock” of Brazilian nationality, yet he still thought them inferior to Europeans. A generation later, in the 1930s, the idea of inferior races was dying a well-deserved death in Latin America—officially, if not in racist hearts—and mestizo nationalism had made the difference. A string of great novelists—Cuba’s Alejo

Carpentier, Peru’s *Ciro Alegría*, and Guatemala’s *Miguel Angel Asturias*—used African and indigenous themes to put their countries on the literary map. Not only did these nationalist authors deny the premise of European racial superiority; they raised the idea of race mixing to a special position of patriotic honor. And they did so even as Hitler’s Nazis were successfully promoting the doctrine of white supremacy in Europe.

NATIONALISTS TAKE POWER

You might guess where the nationalist eruption started—a country where neocolonialism had done its worst, where nationalism drew energy from repeated foreign invasions, where people of mixed race were now the majority, a country that had already elected a president with no European blood—Mexico. The centennial of Hidalgo’s 1810 rebellion saw the outbreak of the twentieth century’s first great social revolution, the Mexican Revolution (with a capital R).

By 1910, Porfirio Díaz had dominated Mexico for thirty-four years, and he was getting old. Reformers backed the presidential candidacy of Francisco Madero, a slim gentleman from northern Mexico. Madero wanted only for Díaz to share more power among the Mexican elite, but the dictator refused. Madero’s appeal broadened when Díaz jailed and then exiled him. Now Madero got radical. He talked of returning lands unfairly taken from indigenous communities. Among many others, people of an indigenous community called Anenecuilco had lost land to encroaching sugar plantations during the years of neocolonial Progress. A leader of Anenecuilco, one Emiliano Zapata, allied his own uprising with Madero’s national movement. Zapata’s image—broad sombrero and black mustache, cartridge belts across his chest, riding a white stallion—became an icon of the Mexican Revolution. But Emiliano Zapata represents only one of many local leaders of rebellions

that broke out all over Mexico. Unable or unwilling to fight them, Díaz left for Parisian exile in 1911.

Suddenly, Mexico was full of "revolutionaries" with vastly differing backgrounds and goals. They had agreed only on the need to oust Díaz. Who would rule now? Madero tried first but failed. He was removed by a general—with an approving nod from the US ambassador to Mexico—and assassinated in 1913. Years of upheaval followed in 1914–1920, as various forces fought it out, their armies crisscrossing the Mexican countryside with women and children in tow. New weapons of the World War I era, especially machine guns, added their staccato music to the dance of death. In the northern state of Chihuahua, and then nationally, Pancho Villa built an army of former cowboys, miners, railroad workers, and oil field roustabouts very different from the peasant guerrillas of southern movements like Zapata's. A third movement, better-connected, more urban and middle-class, finally gained the upper hand and drafted a new, revolutionary constitution in 1917. These so-called Constitutionalist, fairly typical of the nationalist core constituency throughout Latin America, may be called the winners of the Mexican Revolution. Their political heirs controlled the destiny of Mexico for the rest of the 1900s.

The Constitution of 1917, still Mexico's constitution, showed strong nationalist inspiration. Article 27 reclaimed for the nation all mineral rights, for instance, to oil, then in the hands of foreign companies. It also paved the way for villages to recover common lands (called *ejidos*) and for great estates to be subdivided and distributed to landless peasants. In principle, Article 123 instituted farsighted protections (although practice would vary) such as wage and hour laws, pensions and social benefits, the right to unionize and strike. The new constitution also sharply limited the privileges of foreigners and, as a legacy of earlier Mexican radicals, curbed the rights of the Catholic Church. The Mexican church now lost the rest of its once vast wealth. It could

no longer own real estate at all. Its clergy, their numbers now limited by law, could not wear ecclesiastical clothing on the street nor teach primary school. Anticlerical attitudes exemplify the revolutionaries' commitment to destroy traditions associated with old patterns of cultural hegemony. Leaders who emerged from the Constitutionalist movement strengthened their rule in the 1920s. They did away with both Zapata and Villa, crushed Mexico's last renegade caudillos, and fought off a challenge from armed Catholic traditionalists in the countryside. (These devout counterrevolutionary peasants were called *Cristeros* from their habit of shouting "Long live Christ the King!") Finally, the Constitutionalist created a one-party system that would last, in various permutations, until the late twentieth century.

This party was first called National, then Mexican, and finally Institutional. But for seven decades it remained a Revolutionary Party. Its official heroes were Madero, Zapata, and Villa, its official rhetoric full of revolutionary and nationalist images. Despite incalculable destruction and horrendous loss of life (a million people died), the Revolution had been a profoundly formative national experience. It had created powerful new loyalties and would loom on the imaginative landscape of Mexican politics for generations. Two US interventions during the years of fighting—a punitive invasion against Villa, who had raided a town in New Mexico, and a US occupation of the port of Veracruz—only added nationalist luster to the Revolution. The new government also brought some material benefits to the impoverished rural majority. A road-building program lessened their isolation, and some land was distributed—though not nearly enough for everyone. Major initiatives in public education began to reduce the country's 80 percent illiteracy rate. The Mexican minister of education in the 1920s was José Vasconcelos, one of the hemisphere's leading cultural nationalists, who celebrated the triumph of what he called (colorfully, but confusingly) the Cosmic Race, meaning mestizos.

1 - 8 (2) not not

The great Mexican painters Diego Rivera and Frida Kahlo, who married in 1929, illustrate Mexico's revolutionary nationalism. Diego Rivera was huge, ugly, magnetic, and brilliant. He was a muralist, a public painter whose works covered walls and ceilings. He painted like a tornado for days straight, eating, even sleeping on the scaffold. Rivera's crowded murals depict, above all, Mexico's indigenous heritage. He worked from 1923 to 1928 painting Vasconcelos's Ministry of Public Education with scenes of open-air schools and indigenous peasants dividing land won by the Revolution. In 1929–1930, he painted Mexico's National Palace (built by heirs of the conquerors!) with images of Aztec Tenochtitlan's colorful bustle, images that show the Spanish conquest as a greedy, hypocritical bloodbath. In Rivera's mural, Cortés, resembling a troll, looks on as the conquerors slaughter, enslave, and count gold. Rivera's nationalist message is vivid—and likely to remain so: he painted *al fresco*, on wet plaster, so that his murals became part of the walls themselves.

Frida Kahlo, by contrast, painted small self-portraits, one after another. She painted especially while bedridden. Surviving polio as a girl, she had a horrible traffic accident that led to dozens of surgeries. Her body, like Aleijadinho's in colonial Brazil, was literally disintegrating while she created. Her paintings explore a private world of pain, but also humor and fantasy. "I paint my own reality," she said. European surrealists began to admire her in the late 1930s, but recognition elsewhere, including Mexico, came later. Frida expressed her nationalism in personal ways—fancy traditional hairstyles, pre-Columbian jewelry, and the folk Tehuana dress of southern Mexico (floor-length, to conceal her leg withered by polio). She especially enjoyed wearing these clothes in the United States, where Diego painted in the 1930s. Frida loved Mexican folk art, like the papier-mâché skeletons that decorate Day of the Dead celebrations.

The nationalism of Diego Rivera and Frida Kahlo was widely shared in Mexico during the 1920s and 1930s. Everything

national had become fashionable—folk music (*corridos*) and dance (*jarabes*), traditional dishes (*tamales* and *moles*), old-style street theater (*carpas*), and artisan objects (like Frida's papier-mâché skeletons). Mexican movies featuring musically macho *charros* like Jorge Negrete, a Mexican version of the US singing cowboy, now competed with Hollywood. The nationalism of many Mexican revolutionaries had Marxist overtones. Diego and Frida, for example, joined the Communist Party and offered their home to the exiled Russian revolutionary leader Leon Trotsky, who lived with them for several months.

Far away, in Argentina and Uruguay, nationalism showed a different face. In this most urbanized, literate, and middle-class part of Latin America, the core constituency of nationalism was stronger than in Mexico. So the nationalists of Argentina and Uruguay were able to take over without a revolution. Uruguay, in particular, soon had one of the most progressive governments in the world.

During the 1800s, Uruguay had been just another war-torn minirepublic battered by more powerful neighbors. Its political struggles were entangled with those of neighboring Argentina. Then Uruguay's economic growth during the post-1880 export boom paralleled Argentina's phenomenal performance. As in Argentina, Uruguay's delirious prosperity was controlled through managed elections. The country's great nationalist reformer José Batlle y Ordóñez began as a tough, traditional politician. Batlle used his first presidency (1903–1907) mostly to vanquish political rivals. But having established broad support in the heavily immigrant middle and working classes of Montevideo, he used his second term (1911–1915) to launch the reform movement known simply by his name: Batllismo.

Batllismo was not about race or cultural uniqueness. It was more a civic and *economic* nationalism. Batllismo meant concerted state action against "foreign economic imperialism." It brought an unprecedented level of government involvement to

oil company, PEMEX. The railroads had already been nationalized, less noisily, in 1937.

Great Britain severed diplomatic relations as a result of the oil expropriation, and the US oil companies clamored for intervention, but FDR had other ideas. The world seemed a dangerous place in the 1930s, and FDR thought the United States badly needed allies in Latin America. As world war loomed on the horizon, he did everything possible to cultivate Latin American goodwill. In his inaugural address, he announced a "Good Neighbor Policy" toward Latin America. The idea was not totally new in 1933. Republican US presidents of the 1920s had already begun to abandon the aggressive interventionism of earlier years, finding that it created more problems than it solved. In 1933, however, at the seventh congress of the Pan-American movement, FDR's representatives publicly swore off military intervention. In addition, Cuba and Panama were no longer to be "protectorates" where US Marines could come and go at will. The result was a remarkable change in the mood of US-Latin American relations. FDR then took advantage of improved relations to advance hemispheric security arrangements in successive Pan-American conferences during the late 1930s and early 1940s. Carmen Miranda, now living in the United States, made "Good Neighbor" movies, and so did Walt Disney; an example is the 1945 animated feature *The Three Caballeros*, in which Donald Duck joins forces with a Brazilian parrot and a Mexican rooster.

If the nationalization of Mexico's oil industry in 1938 was the acid test of the Good Neighbor Policy, it passed. Relations between Latin America and the United States became friendlier than ever before or since. After the United States entered the war, all the countries of Latin America eventually joined as allies. The small states of Central America and the Caribbean, closest to the United States in all senses, signed on immedi-

ately. Sadly, however, some of the quickest to join the war effort were former "beneficiaries" of US military intervention, now in the hands of pro-US dictators. Some of these were outrageous petty tyrants, like Rafael Trujillo of the Dominican Republic, about whom FDR supposedly admitted: "He may be a bastard, but he's *our* bastard." *Ours rather than the enemy's* was the point. Chile and Argentina—much farther away from the United States and diplomatically more aloof, with many immigrants from "the other side," Germany and Italy—were the last to join the US war effort. Brazil, in contrast, became the most helpful ally of all. The "bulge of Brazil," reaching far east into the Atlantic, had major strategic importance in the Atlantic war, and Vargas allowed the construction of US military bases and airstrips there. In addition, a Brazilian infantry division went to fight in Italy alongside US troops. Mexican fighter pilots, for their part, flew missions in the Pacific, doing much to mend relations between Mexico and the United States.

World War II also gave further stimulus to ISI—more, even, than had the Depression—not only in Brazil, but everywhere. Government spending for war production brought US industry humming back to life—although now building tanks and bombers instead of cars and buses. US demand for Latin American agricultural exports also recovered. Foreign earnings in hand, the Latin American middle classes were ready for a shopping spree, but consumer goods could not be bought in the United States or Europe because of the war. So, with demand up and foreign competition still out of the picture, Latin American industries continued to flourish. In 1943, for example, Brazil's exports totaled about \$445 million, a \$135 million trade surplus. For the first time ever, many Latin American countries had favorable balances of trade with Europe and the United States.

In 1945, at the end of World War II, the nationalists could

1-807 out red

take credit for leading the major countries of Latin America successfully through stormy times. Great things seemed just over the horizon. If their industrialization continued at the rate of the prior decade, Brazil, Mexico, Argentina, and possibly others would soon get the heavy industries characteristic of the world's most developed countries.

At the same time, a sweeping transformation of public culture suggested that Latin America's bitter legacy of racial hierarchy and political exclusion was fast disintegrating. The hallways of Mexico's palace of government—truly "corridors of power"—now proudly displayed Diego Rivera's huge murals depicting the achievements of indigenous Mexico and the evils of Spanish colonization. The black samba dancers of Rio de Janeiro were now acclaimed as exponents of Brazilian national culture, and their carnival parades received state subsidies. Across the board, Latin Americans were taking pride in themselves and each other. The advent of the phonograph, radio, and cinema had made Argentina's great tango singer, Carlos Gardel, an idol throughout Latin America. Audiences loved the handsome Gardel's tangos so much that they sometimes interrupted his movies to make the projectionist rewind and repeat a song. Gardel was on a triumphant international tour in 1935 when his plane crashed on a Colombian mountainside, tragically ending his still ascendant career. Then, in 1945, Gabriela Mistral, a Chilean poet, became the first Latin American to receive a Nobel Prize. In literature, as in painting and music, Latin America was finally world-class.

Yet great problems remained. For one thing, nationalism, ISI, and the growth of an urban middle class had left some parts of Latin America virtually untouched. Central America provides a good example. The internal markets of Central American countries were too small to support much industrialization. So

old-style landowning oligarchies had not, for the most part, ceded control to more progressive nationalist coalitions on the isthmus between Panama and Guatemala. In the years when nationalists like Cárdenas were breaking the back of Mexico's landowning class, old-fashioned coffee-growing oligarchies still ruled much of Central America. In Guatemala, many coffee growers were Germans whose attitude toward Guatemala remained strictly neocolonial. El Salvador, a miniature version of the old Brazilian "Coffee Kingdom," represented the worst-case scenario. There, a grim dictator, Maximiliano Hernández Martínez, a dabbler in the occult, defended El Salvador's King Coffee so brutally that 1932 became known in Salvadoran history as the year of "The Slaughter." Most of the victims—more than ten thousand—were indigenous people. To be an "Indian" became so dangerous in the 1930s that indigenous Salvadorans gradually said goodbye to their ethnic identity. They hid their distinctive clothing, spoke only Spanish, and tried to blend in. Much of their culture was lost forever. Ironically, in the same years when indigenismo became an official creed in nationalist Mexico and elsewhere, the indigenous heritage of stubbornly neocolonial El Salvador practically ceased to exist.

Nor should nationalist rhetoric be confused with simple reality. Despite the popularity of indigenismo and mestizo nationalism, racist attitudes lingered everywhere in Latin America. The poet Gabriela Mistral never forgave the Chilean elite that made her feel inferior early on because of her mestizo coloring. Also, urbanization had outrun existing housing and city services. Shantytowns, constructed by rural migrants in search of industrial jobs, sprawled on the outskirts of major Latin American cities. Hopefully, these would be temporary; in the meantime, blackouts and water shortages became routine. Outside of Mexico, the Latin American countryside had felt few of the improvements brought by nationalism. More industrial jobs

1
1-8977
arts
vol

were needed for the migrants who arrived day by day in the shantytowns. Meanwhile, Latin American industries remained technologically far behind those of Europe and the United States. They had prospered under the special conditions of ISI during the Depression and World War, but they would have to improve rapidly to be competitive in the postwar period.

COUNTERCURRENTS:

Populist Leaders of the Twentieth Century



Juan and Eva Perón.
Courtesy of UPI,
Bettmann/Corbis.

The mid-twentieth century was a time of charismatic leaders in Latin America. Generally they were electrifying speakers with a nationalist message. They became *populists* by directing their message to poor and lower-middle-class voters. Populist versions of nationalism dominated Latin America's political scene after World War II. Populists invariably cultivated a folksy style, often a paternalistic one; "Father-knows-best" paternalism is generally a conservative trait. On the other hand, populists often used radical rhetoric, blasting oligarchies and economic imperialism. Their behavior in office is very hard to categorize on a left-right political spectrum. But in the cold war days of 1948–1989, any leader who talked a lot about workers was likely to be viewed as a leftist, or even as a communist, by US diplomats. The result was a lot of confusion. Recognizing this confusion is essential to interpreting the turbulent politics of the cold war in Latin America, our next stop.

PERU'S VICTOR RAÚL HAYA DE LA TORRE, the creator of APRA, qualifies as a populist. When he ran for president in 1932, the frightened Lima elite called him a communist, but the Peruvian communists criticized him just as much. Haya's real issues were nationalist ones—cultural pride (“Indo-America”) and anti-imperialism (“Foreign firms extract our wealth and sell it outside our country”). Although he never became president of Peru, Haya de la Torre established a powerful bond with Peruvian voters that lasted a quarter century. Populist leaders like Haya de la Torre awakened the kind of personal loyalties inspired by caudillos in the 1800s.

ECUADOR'S JOSÉ MARÍA VELASCO IBARRA, another famous orator, worked similar magic. His self-bestowed title of “National Personification” exemplifies the idea, used by many populists, of a mystical identification with the masses. “Give me a balcony, and I will return to the presidency,” he famously declared, and it was no empty boast. From the 1930s to the 1960s, Velasco Ibarra's nationalist rhetoric got him elected president of Ecuador no fewer than five times, always from a slightly different position on the left-right spectrum. Usually, the army expelled him before the end of his term.

COLOMBIA'S JORGE ELIÉCER GAITÁN was perhaps the most fiery orator of them all, although, like Peru's Haya de la Torre, he never reached the presidency. Gaitán rose to national fame denouncing a massacre of banana workers, and his condemnations of power and privilege put the word “oligarchy” into Colombia's everyday vocabulary. When Gaitán stepped to the microphone before a Colombian crowd, he often reminded them of his own poor upbringing and early humiliations, and they loved him for it. He did not have to remind them of his dark mestizo coloring, for it was plainly

visible and, anyway, never forgotten by anyone—least of all by the light-skinned elite. Gaitán's assassination in 1948 triggered one of the greatest urban riots ever to occur in Latin America—the *Bogotazo*, an upheaval that shattered the Colombian capital, took two thousand lives, and etched itself in the mind of every Colombian living at the time.

MEXICO'S LÁZARO CÁRDENAS, who reenergized Mexico's institutional revolution in the 1930s, was another populist. Cárdenas was less a high-flown public speaker than a non-stop grassroots campaigner, who mingled comfortably with the common people and received crateloads of letters from humble petitioners, just as FDR did in the United States. In fact, Cárdenas spent little time in Mexico City, preferring to travel tirelessly around the country, hearing the grievances and requests of humble petitioners who came hat in hand, then dispatching his presidential decisions from tables set up in dusty village squares.

BRAZIL'S EX-DICTATOR GETÚLIO VARGAS, creator of the Estado Novo, made a comeback in the 1950s, as we shall see. And he came back as a left-leaning, vote-winning populist. Vargas exemplifies the puzzle of populism. Was he really a worker's candidate, defending the little guy, or was he using pro-labor rhetoric opportunistically? The answer is yes, or rather, both. The Estado Novo had persecuted the Communist Party. It had been paternalistic in many ways. But Vargas's nationalist policies had made him truly popular among the Brazilian poor. In fact, a radiantly smiling Vargas, described as “father of the poor,” became a principal theme in Brazil's *literatura de cordel* (popular narrative poems sold in cheap pamphlets on the street), a good gauge of positive lower-class attitudes.

ARGENTINA'S EVITA AND JUAN PERÓN were probably the greatest and most controversial populists of all. Their story is

told in the next chapter. The bedrock of their Peronist movement was the loyalty of Argentine workers to the calm, fatherly figure of Perón and to his glamorous consort, a loyalty that has never gone away. The Peróns won this loyalty in part by raising the workers' standard of living. But there was more to it. Like Vargas, Perón had a famous smile that seemed to function as a blank screen on which people projected their own hopes and dreams. Officially, the Peróns espoused a political "third position"—not the left or the right—but their movement eventually split on left-right lines.



"UNCLE SAM'S NEW CLASS IN THE ART OF SELF-GOVERNANCE." This cartoon (which appeared in the US magazine *Harper's Weekly* in 1898) exemplifies the neocolonial notion that only people of European heritage could govern themselves well. Two black Cuban independence fighters are shown squabbling like boys, while the great Philippine independence fighter Emilio Aguinaldo is shown wearing a dunce cap. Uncle Sam, who has just "liberated" these ill-behaved children from Spain in 1898, seems justified (according to the cartoonist) in whipping them. From *Harper's Weekly* (1898).

1880	1898	1900	1912	1922
Great export boom underway	US intervenes in Cuba	Rodó publishes <i>Ariel</i>	Nicaraguan intervention begins	Pan-American Conference of Women

6.

NEOCOLONIALISM

The liberal plan to make Latin America resemble Europe or the United States partly succeeded. But Progress turned out differently in Latin America. True, massive changes occurred, changes that affected the lives of everyone, rich and poor, urban and rural. Major Latin American cities lost their colonial cobblestones, white plastered walls, and red-tiled roofs. They became modern metropolises, comparable to urban giants anywhere. Streetcars swayed, telephones jangled, and silent movies flickered from Montevideo and Santiago to Mexico City and Havana. Railroads multiplied miraculously, as did exported tons of sugar, coffee, copper, grain, nitrate, tin, cacao, rubber, bananas, beef, wool, and tobacco. Modern port facilities replaced the spectacularly inadequate ones of Buenos Aires and elsewhere.

Landowners and urban middle-class people prospered, but the life of Latin America's rural majority improved little, if at all. To the contrary, agrarian capitalism laid waste to the countryside and destroyed traditional lifeways, impoverishing the rural people spiritually and materially. And Progress brought a new brand of imperialism from Great Britain and the United States. The same countries that modeled Progress for Latin America helped install it there, so to speak—and sometimes

owned it outright. Foreign influence was so pervasive and powerful that Latin American historians call the years 1880–1930 their *neocolonial* period.

Despite many transformations, neither Latin America's subordinate relationship to European countries nor its basic social hierarchy—created by colonization—had changed. Hierarchical relations of race and class, in which those at the top derive decisive prestige and advantage from their outside connections, remained the norm. Where once Peninsular Spaniards and Portuguese had stepped ashore with their irritating airs of superiority and their royal appointments firmly in hand, now it was an English-speaking *mister* who arrived with similar airs of superiority and princely sums to lend or invest in banks, railroads, or port facilities. Whether in 1790 or 1890, elite Latin Americans reacted by swallowing hard and throwing a party for their guests. Ultimately, the “decent people's” own status and prosperity was linked to the outsiders, and they knew it. Ninety percent of their wealth came from what they sold to European and US markets, and their own social pretensions, their own airs of superiority at home, came from their Portuguese complexions, their Austrian crystal, their son's familiarity with Paris. Neocolonialism was a relationship between countries but also an internal phenomenon—and a familiar one—in Latin America.

THE GREAT EXPORT BOOM

Elite and middle-class Latin Americans had a lot to gain from Progress. First and foremost, they stood to profit from the great export boom, over half a century of rapid, sustained economic growth, never equaled in Latin America before or since. For example, Mexican exports, which still included silver along with sugar, coffee, and fibers, doubled and then doubled again in the late 1800s. In fact, the total value of Mexican trade grew

by 900 percent between 1877 and 1910. By the early 1900s, Brazil was producing two thirds of the coffee drunk in the entire world. Coffee now utterly dominated Brazilian exports. Cuba depended even more on its single crop, but what a crop! Cuban sugar production reached an astounding five million tons by 1929. Then there was the saga of Chilean mining production—nitrates, copper, iron—hundreds of millions of dollars' worth by 1929. And on and on. The greatest prodigy of all was Argentina. Argentina exported twenty-one tons of wheat in 1876 and over one thousand times that much by 1900. And the country's exports continued to grow rapidly into the 1920s.

From Guatemala (coffee) and Honduras (bananas) to Ecuador (cacao) and Bolivia (tin), all the smaller countries of Latin America had their own versions of the great export boom of 1870–1930. The quantity of railroad track in the region—integral to the boom, because railroads were built primarily to carry exports—went from 2,000 to 59,000 miles between 1870 and 1900.

The direct beneficiaries of this export bonanza were the large landowners, whose property values soared with the approach of the railroad tracks. Beneficiaries, too, were the middle-class city dwellers—professionals, merchants, and office workers—who performed secondary functions in the import/export economy. For these people, Progress opened cultural horizons and brought material enrichment. Still, they constituted only a tiny fraction of the Latin American population. The middle class grew rapidly between 1880 and 1930, but even Argentina's middle class, perhaps the largest in the region by 1930, represented only a quarter to a third of the population. Mexico's smaller middle class was more typical of Latin America. Around 1900, a million or so middle-class Mexicans were clerking in offices, riding bicycles, and listening to US ragtime music. A small working class—a third of a million cooks, laundresses, shoemakers, policemen, and so on—comprised the rest of the

urban population. Meanwhile, eight million country people, mostly of indigenous heritage, lucky to have a single change of clothes, sweated on the sun-drenched land to produce Mexico's agricultural products. Thanks to Progress, their lot was actually getting worse.

The arrival of the railroad benefited the owners of large Mexican estates by raising property values. But it also drove a lot of peasants off the land, allowing the landlords to extend their holdings, make landless peasants their employees, and multiply their profits. Despite the official abolition of communal village property in the 1850s, many indigenous villagers had managed to hold on to their lands through the 1860s and 1870s. But now it seemed that wherever the tracks unfolded and opened a way for the locomotives to pass, hissing steam and belching smoke, peasant villages lost their lands to greedy hacienda owners who could foreclose on a mortgage or bribe a judge. Although Mexico was still a heavily rural country in 1910, only about 3 percent of the people owned land. Most rural Mexicans lived and worked as peons on large haciendas, some of them vast indeed. To take an extreme but illustrative example, just three families owned a third of the Mexican state of Colima.

The indigenous people of the Andes, too, lost their village lands in the neocolonial period. In general, the landless country people of Latin America, who for centuries had grown their own food and supplied their other needs as subsistence farmers, now had nowhere to plant their potatoes, manioc, corn, and beans. As export profits beckoned, the owners of haciendas and plantations acquired more and more land. They bought land that had been public property and evicted the families who had dwelled there without legal title, sometimes for generations. Because they worked their resident laborers harder and planted more of their acreage in export crops, the estate owners left their workers less time and space to grow their own

food. Workers often got wages too small to support a family. To make ends meet, women and children who had formerly stayed close to home, cooking and mending and tending the family's chickens and garden, now had to join the field gangs who worked under the watchful eye of an overseer. And just for good measure, labor-hungry landowners pressed for and won "vagrancy" laws to harass people who got along without wages completely. Thus did the great export boom enrich landowners at the expense of the rural poor.

In Argentina, large numbers of Italian immigrants performed miracles of wheat production, but only in exceptional cases managed to acquire their own land. What incentive did the owners have to sell? Some of the immigrants returned to Italy, but most went to the cities, especially Buenos Aires. Rowdy, rootless gauchos also vanished from the countryside as wire fences and fancy English breeds of cattle and sheep transformed the open pampa. In 1876, the first refrigerator ship took Argentine beef to Europe. The trade in chilled beef was vastly more profitable than the older trade in beef jerky of pre-refrigeration days. By 1900 refrigerator ships numbered in the hundreds.

Coffee boomed in the tropics, creating several kinds of neocolonial landscapes. In the deep red soils of São Paulo, Brazil, Italian immigrants tended coffee after abolition because freed slaves wanted nothing to do with plantations. To attract European immigrants to a job recently performed by slaves, the plantation owners had to make special concessions, such as allowing workers to cultivate their own crops in the spaces between the rows of coffee bushes. Italian agricultural workers in São Paulo proved unusually successful at making the export boom work for them. But, like the immigrant farmworkers in Argentina, they tended to move to the city eventually. Coffee also grew in the tropical sun and crisp mountain air of Colombia and Venezuela, Central America and the Caribbean.

In Guatemala, El Salvador, and southern Mexico, indigenous people became workers on coffee plantations often owned by foreigners, especially Germans. Although usually a plantation crop—always bad news for agricultural workers, coffee could also be grown profitably on family farms. It contributed to the growth of a rural middle class in highland areas of Colombia, Costa Rica, and Puerto Rico. Tobacco—like coffee, a delicate crop that thrives in small-scale production—benefited small producers in Brazil and Cuba.

Sugar production and mining, in contrast, were always massive, industrialized operations that divided societies ruthlessly into rich and poor. By the late 1800s, great gleaming sugar refineries, with their high smokestacks and rail depots, stood like industrial monsters amid the cane fields of northeastern Brazil, on the Peruvian coast, and in the Caribbean. The owners of the sugar refineries, like the Brazilian *senhores de engenho* of the 1600s, utterly dominated the rural economy, and for the same reason. Immediate, reliable milling is crucial to the sugar harvest. The refineries set their price, and growers had no choice but to accept it. Factories in the fields turned cane cutters into industrial workers. Their wages were low, and they earned them only part of the year. Cane cutters spent part of each year unemployed—what Cubans called “the dead time.” Mining in Mexico, Peru, Bolivia, and Chile constituted a similarly capital-intensive activity, carried out by powerful companies employing thousands of workers who had little bargaining power. Because of high capital requirements, installations such as refineries for Cuban sugar, oil wells pumping Mexican and Venezuelan crude, and deep-shaft mines in the high Andes were usually foreign-owned. In Peru, the massive, state-of-the-art mining complex of the US Cerro de Pasco Copper Corporation squatted at twelve thousand feet amid a cluster of tiny earth-colored huts where the indigenous miners lived—something like a twentieth-century version of Potosí.

In the rain forests of Amazonia, neocolonialism brought a rubber boom. The latex sap of the rubber tree was a raw material consumed especially in the United States for tires. Rubber harvesters lived isolated along riverbanks deep in the Amazon basin, tapping sap from rubber trees. In Brazil, the tappers were mainly refugees from droughts of the arid *sertão* lands of northeastern Brazil. In the Colombian, Ecuadorian, and Peruvian areas of the Amazon basin, many were semi-sedentary indigenous people, terrorized into wage labor they neither needed nor wanted. Rubber workers earned tiny wages, barely enough to pay for the food and supplies sold them by the rubber company. Meanwhile, the rubber trade produced vast profits for international traders and for the companies whose steamboats outfitted the workers and collected their rubber in periodic visits. By 1910, rubber accounted for a quarter of Brazilian export earnings. Rubber barons could literally find no way to spend all their money. (So why not send shirts to Paris to be properly laundered?) In Manaus, the one Brazilian city a thousand miles upriver, in the middle of the impenetrable forest, the rubber barons built an opera house and attracted touring opera performers—though not, as myth would have it, the immortal tenor Enrico Caruso. Meanwhile, the rubber boom ravaged indigenous people, their tribes decimated by alcohol and disease. Then, by the 1920s, rubber from Malaysia definitively undercut the price of Amazonian rubber. The rubber barons steamed away downriver, never to return, and the rubber tappers looked for another way to survive. Only the Manaus opera house stood as a silent reminder of Progress.

Bananas were a neocolonial nightmare for the palm-studded coasts of the Caribbean. US banana companies blossomed there in the 1880s and 1890s, becoming multinational corporations—among the first anywhere in the world. By the early 1900s, several merged into the United Fruit Company, a banana empire operating in Costa Rica, Honduras, Guatemala,

Nicaragua, Panama, Colombia, and Venezuela. Banana companies far overmatched the governments of their small host countries in economic power. United Fruit made several Central American nations into "banana republics," where it could keep governors, cabinet ministers, even presidents in its deep corporate pockets. The banana companies acquired millions of acres for their plantations, millions more for future use, and millions more simply to head off possible competition. Sometimes, railroad builders used land along the tracks (given to the companies as an incentive) to start banana plantations. Sometimes, banana companies laid their own rails. Either way, fast transport of the delicate fruit was the sine qua non of the banana business.

Banana companies created company towns, inhabited by managers, engineers, and agronomists from the United States, along with their families, with miniature US neighborhoods of screen-porched houses on meticulously manicured lawns, virtually sealed off from the country around them. After delivering bananas to the United States, company ships returned with newspapers, clothes, movies, vehicles, and food, allowing these new colonizers to live as if they had never left home. These isolated banana *enclaves* contributed little to the development of their host countries. Companies like United Fruit reserved managerial positions for white US personnel and hired "natives" for the machete work. Governors and ministers benefited from cordial relations with company officials, of course. Whoever sold the banana companies land profited, too. The companies also paid some taxes, on terms invariably favorable to them. And when they pulled out—because of a banana blight or a new corporate strategy—all that these multinational installations left behind was ex-banana choppers with no job, no land, no education, and a lot of missing fingers.

No wonder that rural people migrated to the cities as agrar-

ian capitalism took hold of the countryside. This flow was not yet a flood in 1900. Mexico City, today one of the biggest cities on the planet, still had only about 350,000 inhabitants at the turn of the century. Neither Bogotá nor Lima had many more than a hundred thousand. All of Latin America had a comparatively small and overwhelmingly rural population of around sixty-three million at this time. Still, cities were growing steadily, and those that attracted new inhabitants both from rural areas and from Europe grew spectacularly. At the fall of Rosas in 1852, the city of Buenos Aires had about a hundred thousand inhabitants. By the end of the neocolonial period, around 1930, it had two million. In 1900, it was already the largest city in Latin America at two-thirds of a million inhabitants. Rio de Janeiro, a magnet for Portuguese as well as Italian and Spanish immigrants, was the second biggest city of the region at just under half a million. Montevideo, Santiago, Havana, and São Paulo followed at around a quarter million each. By this time, virtually all the capital cities of the region boasted electricity, telephones, and streetcars. Buenos Aires, Mexico City, and Rio were building splendid avenues on the Parisian model.

Except for the top four or five, Latin America's neocolonial cities were not places of factories and smokestacks. Industrialization would come later to most of the region. Instead, cities and towns were chiefly commercial, administrative, and service centers. Now they bustled as landowning families spent the profits of the export boom.

Money from crops, livestock, and mines bought mansions, pianos, fine furniture, china, artworks, and eventually cars. All over Latin America, landowning families began the 1900s with an exhilarating sense of new cultural horizons. Their prosperity allowed them gradually to become urban people, leaving the hacienda or plantation under the supervision of a hired admin-



istrator or a country cousin. They went back only occasionally, for a few days' vacation, to sample rustic delicacies and amaze their faithful servants with tales of urban Progress.

Education was increasingly important for the sons and daughters of urbanized landowning families. Some studied engineering, architecture, agronomy, and medicine, but the favorite degree by far remained law. Indeed, the standard image of the landowner's son in 1900 is that of the young doctor of law, probably bound for politics rather than legal practice. (All university graduates were addressed respectfully as *doctor*.) Education and city life went together. Rarely could an education, even a primary education, be gotten in the countryside. Thus, Argentina and Uruguay, the most urbanized countries in Latin America, were also the most literate. By 1900, a majority there could read. Well over half the population in most countries was still illiterate, however. In Brazil, a heavily rural country that had almost no rural schools, no more than two people in ten could read.

During these years, talented people of mixed racial heritage continued gradually to infiltrate the white middle class. Because education was such a scarce, prestigious commodity, nonelite Latin Americans rarely got it—but when they did, it opened doors.

Occasionally, the person walking through the door was a literary genius, like novelist Joaquim Maria Machado de Assis, still considered the greatest Brazilian novelist. Whatever their attitude toward his *café-com-leite* ("coffee with milk") complexion, elite Brazilians expressed unreserved awe for his mastery of the written word. Machado de Assis's mother had been a laundress. He worked his way up as a typesetter, then a journalist. In 1897, Machado de Assis became president of the prestigious Brazilian Academy of Letters, where he presided over a distinguished (and very white) crowd of poets, statesmen, and scholars. Rubén Darío, a dark mestizo child prodigy

become "valuable instruments of the progress of Brazil." Lutz, too, attended the 1922 Pan-American Conference of Women, and she made special friends there with the pioneer US feminist Carrie Chapman Catt. In fact, it was during a visit with Catt following the Baltimore conference that Lutz sketched the constitution for an organization for the Brazilian Federation for Feminine Progress. Lutz and her organization deserve credit for Brazilian women's winning the vote in 1932, before Uruguayan, Argentine, and most other Latin American women.

Few today would question the positive influence of international feminism on Paulina Luisi or Berta Lutz. Indeed, the intense outside influence we now call neocolonialism was rarely identified as harmful during its heyday. The powerful vogue of Progress seemed universal. Liberals believed that Progress was European-oriented only because it started in Europe, then spread to the rest of the world. This idea was hard to shake off. So, in ideology and values, as in trade and finance, neocolonialism meant the absorption of Latin America into an international system dominated by Britain and the United States. It is here, in friction with powerful outsiders, that Latin Americans began to feel the *colonial* in neocolonialism.

Until the late 1800s, it was definitely Britain that ruled the international roost in Latin America. British power had loomed over Latin America since the defeat of Spain and Portugal in the 1820s. Despite the overwhelming naval power of Great Britain for almost a century, British military exploits in Latin America were rare, however. Argentina bore the brunt of them, as during the independence era. Only the British seizure of a few cold and lonely South Atlantic islands—the Malvinas in Spanish, the Falklands in English—was of lasting consequence. Britain had little need of Latin American colonies. It controlled territories enough elsewhere: South Africa, India, Australia, Canada, and Jamaica, to mention only a few of the areas under British rule at the time. British commercial and fi-



nancial expansion in Latin America, on the other hand, was relentless. By 1914, when Latin America's foreign investment and debt totaled close to \$10 billion, over half belonged to Great Britain, with US and French investors in distant second and third places. British diplomats were mild-mannered when compared to their French and US counterparts, because British pounds sterling talked by themselves.

The ideological sway of Great Britain was also subtle but powerful. Undeniably, Great Britain was a center of the Progress and Civilization that so mesmerized Latin American liberals. Whereas France remained the Latin American ideal of literary and artistic culture, and Paris the fashion Mecca for "decent" women of the middle and upper classes, Great Britain was imitated in economics and politics. The British Parliament's Liberal and Conservative Parties, for example, were the model for most Latin American party systems. And while elegant ladies looked to French fashion, "decent" gentlemen adopted British styles. Dark wool suits suitable for cool and misty Britain became excruciating in the tropics, but fashionable males wore them anyway, a measure of their devotion to the European model.

US influence in Latin America began to overtake British influence only in the 1890s. Admittedly, the United States had invaded and dismembered Mexico in the 1840s, and various US presidents and secretaries of state had coveted Caribbean islands. But the capitalist energies of the industrializing, railroad-building, Civil War-fighting, West-winning United States had been turned mostly inward until, in the 1890s, the US frontier officially closed and the country entered the worst depression of its hundred-year history, later overshadowed only by the Great Depression of the 1930s. According to the conventional wisdom, US factories had outrun the internal demand for US products, glutting the market. Like Great Britain earlier in the 1800s, the United States would now have to export

manufactured goods in order to maintain industrial health at home. The US National Association of Manufacturers was formed to search for markets abroad, especially in Latin America and Asia. At the same time, some in the United States called for military expansion. Great Britain, France, and many other European countries, as well as Russia and Japan, had recently acquired colonies in Africa and Asia. These colonies provided raw materials and captive markets for our competitors, warned US imperialists, and "our backyard" in Latin America was the natural place for us to acquire colonies of our own. Also in the 1890s, US naval strategist Alfred Thayer Mahan wrote about the need for a powerful navy and a transoceanic canal linking the Atlantic and the Pacific. In the US presidential campaign of 1896, the Republican Party called for that canal, for annexation of the Hawaiian Islands, strategically located halfway across the Pacific, and for intervention in Cuba, where patriots were fighting for independence against Spain.

In 1898, the United States declared war on Spain and invaded Puerto Rico and Cuba as well as the Philippine Islands, another Spanish colony. The war lasted only a few weeks, in part because Spain's decrepit forces were already weakened by years of patriot rebellion in Cuba and the Philippines. The Cuban rebellion had been organized by Cuban exiles in New York and coincided with a protracted circulation battle between two major New York newspapers. These papers created the term "yellow journalism" by using sensational stories of alleged Spanish atrocities to boost sales. US public opinion favored "rescuing" Cuba from Spanish tyranny. But the outcome of the war benefited US strategic and economic interests, not those of the people who were "rescued." The United States seized these islands from Spain and treated Cuban and Filipino patriots like bandits. Cuba remained a protectorate of the United States for thirty-five years. By a specific proviso, the Platt Amendment, written into the Cuban constitution, US Marines

could intervene in Cuba whenever the US government thought it necessary. The Philippines, viewed as the commercial gateway to Asia, were governed directly by the United States until the 1940s. The Hawaiian Islands, too, were annexed to the United States in 1898. Only they and Puerto Rico were colonized permanently by the United States. Yet, this "splendid little war," as the secretary of state called it, permanently projected US military power into the Caribbean basin.

A future president of the United States, Theodore Roosevelt, enjoyed the war enthusiastically. His special cavalry unit, the "Rough Riders," hoisted Roosevelt's political career. An admirer of Alfred Thayer Mahan, Roosevelt had been secretary of the navy during the 1890s. As president in 1903, he acquired a US base—along with rights to build and control a canal—in Panama. But his bravado in doing so offended many Latin Americans sympathetic to the United States. Until then, Panama had been part of Colombia. To fulfill Mahan's vision, Roosevelt helped separate Panama from Colombia and then bought the canal rights from the new Panamanian government only a few days later. This shady deal, for which the US Congress later apologized, was conducted with no native Panamanians present. Roosevelt did not worry much about this high-handedness. To him, Latin Americans, whom he customarily described as "dagoes," did not rate the consideration owed to equals.

Nor were Teddy Roosevelt's racist attitudes unusual. In fact, US attitudes toward the people of Latin America were colored by intersecting veins of prejudice. As US soldiers swept aside indigenous and Mexican claims to western North America during the 1800s, many in the United States saw US triumphs as preordained by racial and cultural superiority. In the early 1900s, having asserted military power in Mexico, Central America, and the Caribbean basin generally, the United States gradually overthrew Britain's old position of dominance in

Latin American trade and diplomacy. This changing of the guard was completed by World War I (1914–1918), with its devastating cost to Britain. International US hegemony spread south over South America in the 1920s. Distant Argentina remained, for a few years, a last bastion of British influence on the continent.

US diplomats and businessmen, not to mention missionaries, had a more sanctimonious approach than their British counterparts, but their overall vision was similar. Rudyard Kipling, a respected British writer of the day, famously urged the United States to "take up the white man's burden" of "civilizing" non-Europeans during its post-1898 expansion. US diplomats saw precisely that role for themselves in Latin America. In the United States, visions of a "Manifest Destiny" of irresistible, inevitable US expansion into Latin America had stirred some people's imaginations for generations. "The Mexican is an indigenous aborigine, and he must share the fate of his race," proclaimed a US senator in the 1840s. Ideas about the racial inferiority of indigenous, mestizo, and black Latin Americans combined with old Protestant prejudices against Catholic Spain. "This powerful [white US] race, will move down Central and South America," wrote the US Protestant visionary Reverend Josiah Strong, whose ideas of white supremacy were not unusual. According to Senator Alfred J. Beveridge, a key architect of US foreign policy, "God has marked the American people as His chosen nation to finally lead to the regeneration of the world." British imperialists had always been more pragmatic and less preachy.

The overbearing US sense of superiority went double in "our backyard." Since 1823, the reader may recall, US diplomats had proclaimed the Western Hemisphere off-limits to powers outside it. The Monroe Doctrine had remained mostly bluster for half a century. Still, along with a superior attitude, the idea that the Americas, North and South, share a special relationship

became an enduring assumption of US policy toward Latin America. In 1905, Theodore Roosevelt provided the Monroe Doctrine with a corollary. The Roosevelt Corollary to the Monroe Doctrine made the US Marines a sort of hemispheric police force to prevent European military intervention in Latin America. European powers had repeatedly used gunboat diplomacy to extract payment for debts. Roosevelt thought that the US government should no longer tolerate European interventions. Yet, he believed, incompetent Latin American governments would occasionally need correction "by some civilized nation." During these same years, cartoons in US newspapers often showed Uncle Sam dealing with Cuba, Puerto Rico, Nicaragua, and other countries caricatured as naughty "little black Sambos." Uncle Sam was sometimes shown as a stern but benevolent teacher, reluctantly whipping these childish pranksters. Likewise, under the Roosevelt Corollary it became US policy to discipline Latin American countries militarily when "required" by international trade and finance. And it was required fairly often. By the close of the neocolonial period in 1929, 40 percent of all US international investments were in Latin America.

Meanwhile, US diplomats had created the Pan-American Union, an organization based on the ideal of free trade—and the reality of neocolonial inequality—among countries. The Pan-American Union was composed initially of Latin American ambassadors to the United States meeting as a hemispheric body headquartered in Washington DC, chaired by the US secretary of state. At periodic Pan-American conferences, US secretaries of state promoted trade while Latin American representatives voiced dismay at US interventions in the region. Their unanimous protests came to a head at the Havana Conference of 1928.

By that time, Latin American diplomats had much to pro-test. In addition to the interventions in Puerto Rico, Cuba,

and Panama already described, US soldiers had occupied Nicaragua (1912–1933), Haiti (1915–1934), and the Dominican Republic (1916–1924). Sometimes, as in the Dominican Republic, these were mostly peaceful debt-collection operations that included some "messy police work" but also public health and sanitation projects. Sometimes, as in Nicaragua, they were more violent military interventions. By the late 1920s, US Marines were in a five-year shooting war with Nicaraguan patriot guerrillas. The guerrilla leader, Augusto César Sandino, accused the United States of "imperialism." He became a hero to many Latin Americans, much the way Fidel Castro later did, precisely because he stood up to the United States. Several US interventions installed leaders who became long-term dictators, corrupt petty tyrants, known for their greed and their obedience to US policy.

Shocked by the US takeover of Cuba and Puerto Rico, Latin America's greatest writers began to protest. Rubén Darío raged poetically against the "Godless" Roosevelt. The Cuban poet José Martí began a literary movement in defense of "Nuestra América" ("Our America"), which did *not* include the United States. Cuba's greatest patriot hero, called "the Apostle" of Cuban independence, Martí began to fight Spanish colonialism at a young age. He was exiled from Cuba at sixteen and devoted his life to the cause of "Cuba Libre." He edited a magazine in Mexico and taught at the University of Guatemala. From 1881 to 1895, he wrote and worked for the Cuban patriot cause in New York City, while reporting on the United States for Latin American newspapers as far away as Buenos Aires. Martí knew the United States close up, but the most influential warning against the United States came from afar—from a Uruguayan essayist, José Enrique Rodó, whose book *Ariel* (1900) inspired an entire generation of Latin American teachers and intellectuals. Like Martí, Rodó respected the United States but found its utilitarian values alien. Rodó accused US

culture of crass materialism and challenged Latin Americans to cultivate finer things—personified by the spirit Ariel. In other words, by the early 1900s, some respected voices had actually begun to question the US/European model of Progress.

They had a difficult task, however. The cinema, with its moving pictures that heralded a new era, would bind the Latin American imagination to Europe and the United States more firmly than ever. Moving pictures first arrived in Latin America in the 1890s, with little time lag. For example, in 1902, six years after representatives of the pioneering Lumière brothers showed Porfirio Díaz their flickering images of Paris, Mexico already had two hundred movie houses. Despite some early innovations, such as the world's first animated feature film, produced in Argentina, Latin American movie screens soon succumbed to a US cinematic invasion that would last through the 1900s. The main US advantage was—and would remain—its huge home market. Hollywood had privileged access to half the world's movie screens, located in the United States. Hollywood soon dominated the world's most expensive art form because it could afford the highest production values and the most glamorous stars. Soon Hollywood began to define what people expected in a movie. As in other aspects, US influence increased while Europe lost ground during World War I. After the war, 95 percent of the movies Latin American audiences were watching came from Hollywood.

By the 1920s, the warnings of Darío, Martí, and Rodó against US influence had sunk in. Latin Americans widely admired Sandino in his fight against the US Marines, and a tide of nationalism rose in country after country. Nationalist sentiments did not fit the neocolonial mold, and they generated political energies capable of breaking it. The limitations of the mold were becoming unpleasantly evident. Although neocolonial Latin America had *grown* economically, it had *developed*

much less. Export agriculture had boomed for half a century, but industry was still lacking. Landowners, foreign investors, and the middle classes generally had profited, but many ordinary Latin Americans, especially rural people, suffered a decline in their standard of living. Governments were more stable, but rarely more democratic—and often less so. Many of them seemed totally in thrall, first to Great Britain, then to the United States.

Then the neocolonial mold was shattered totally by an international event akin, in its impact, to the Napoleonic Wars. The New York stock market imploded in 1929, the international system of trade and finance came crashing down around everyone's ears, and the world slid gradually into two stormy decades of Depression and war. Demand for Latin American export products plummeted. From Mexico to Brazil to Argentina, the importation of Progress screeched to a halt. The external supports of neocolonialism had disappeared, and its internal supports would soon crumble, as nationalists toppled oligarchies and liberal dictators from the Rio Grande to Tierra del Fuego.

try optimistically signaled a new frontier. Its design was decided by an international competition and reflected the futuristic urban planning of Le Corbusier. Brasília's strikingly original public buildings, such as the partly subterranean cathedral, made their creator, Oscar Niemeyer, the best-known Latin American architect of the century. This "space-age" urban mirage took shape in the late 1950s, during the poignant years of hardship described in Carolina de Jesús's diary. Inaugurated in 1960, Brasília is the perfect symbol of the post-Vargas moment in Brazil.

The perfect symbol of the moment in Mexico, on the other hand, was the PRI: the Institutional Revolutionary Party, with an accent on *Institutional* rather than *Revolutionary*. The military had now been definitively subordinated to the PRI, and Mexico had a one-party system of admirable stability—but questionable democracy—in which each outgoing president handpicked the next PRI candidate. And the PRI candidate never lost. The only thing "revolutionary" about the PRI now was a nationalist devotion to the Mexican Revolution's heroes and slogans. But the Mexican Revolution, if defined as a fight for social justice and a vindication of the downtrodden masses, was dead in the postwar period.

Mexican industrial growth continued, however. Landowner power had been definitively shattered, and the PRI held the political loyalty of the many who had benefited from land reform. Because the government marketed food grown on the restored common lands called *ejidos*, it could hold food prices down and thereby, in effect, subsidize urban living standards. Although the Mexican Revolution had been largely a rural uprising, its ultimate winners were urban people. Industrialization continued. The Mexican currency held rock-steady, in contrast to roaring inflation elsewhere. As in Brazil, the economic pie grew overall, but the redistribution of wealth stopped. The majority of Mexicans would not see great improvement in their welfare during the PRI's half-century rule.

ONSET OF THE COLD WAR

The 1950s were a time of frustration for most Latin Americans. The United States, now definitively replacing Europe as the ultimate model of Progress, displayed a brilliant postwar prosperity, with living standards previously unimaginable. Glossy magazines and movies showed Latin Americans what they were missing. The good life, proclaimed US media, meant having a refrigerator, even a car. But, for most Latin Americans, to have a refrigerator was a stretch—and a car, absurdly out of reach. Having modeled "the good life" to this attentive and yearning audience, the United States offered little help in getting there.

Now a superpower, preeminent in the world, completely unchallenged in the hemisphere, the United States no longer seemed a good neighbor. Latin American disenchantment with the United States began in 1947, with the announcement of the US Marshall Plan. The Marshall Plan spent vast sums rebuilding Europe to foment postwar prosperity and limit the appeal of communism. Among the major recipients of Marshall Plan aid were the US enemies of World War II. Former Latin American allies of the United States, also struggling for prosperity, thought they rated similar help; but Latin America got only about 2 percent of US foreign aid between 1946 and 1959. Latin American diplomats raised the issue at hemispheric meetings, but US priorities lay elsewhere. Western Europe, with the Soviet armies nearby and vigorous Communist parties in several countries, was judged the danger zone, followed by Asia. Latin American issues hardly concerned US policymakers.

So, instead of aid, Latin Americans got a lean diet of diplomatic pressure from the United States. In 1947, the United States convened hemispheric nations to sign the Rio Pact, a permanent Pan-American defensive alliance. In 1949, China's

communist revolution triumphed, and Soviet Russia tested an atomic bomb. Now the cold war began in earnest.

The US population was thirsty for coffee, hungry for bananas, and ready, having shifted away from arms production (although the "military-industrial complex" formed a permanent pillar of the postwar economy), to provide consumer goods in return. The few more sophisticated, heavier industries that now began to appear in Latin America were often subsidiaries of US multinational corporations. They routinely installed used machines that had been retired from their US plants, equipment already obsolete in the United States. The result, logically enough, was factories planned *not* to be competitive with those in the United States—a bitter pill for nationalists bent on economic independence. According to the ECLA analysis, this kind of industrialization only reinforced the economic subordination of Latin America. For US policymakers, on the other hand, the expansion of the multinational corporations was a natural development of global capitalism. Free-market capitalism was viewed as "American," and US prosperity depended on it, at home and abroad. Any kind of Latin American economic nationalism was therefore "un-American," something to be combated.

In the grip of an anticommunist witch-hunt at home, the US State Department began to regard virtually any Latin American opposition as a sign of "creeping communism." The principal venue of US anticommunist diplomacy was the Organization of American States (OAS), a beefed-up version of the Pan-American Union, no longer managed exclusively by the United States but always dominated by it. Rather famously, a chorus of unsavory dictators such as Rafael Trujillo in the Dominican Republic, "Papa Doc" Duvalier in Haiti, and Anastasio Somoza in Nicaragua followed the US line in the OAS, overwhelming any opposition (on a one country—one vote basis) from larger nations like Mexico, Brazil, and Argentina. In 1954, the OAS

issued the Declaration of Caracas, saying that all Marxist revolutionary ideology was necessarily alien to the Western Hemisphere. Therefore, Marxist revolutionary movements, composed of peasants, workers, and university students, would be treated as foreign invasions. US diplomats had begun to view Latin America strictly through cold war goggles. Everywhere, they saw red—or, at least, "pink."

In Venezuela, for example, US diplomats endorsed the dictator Marcos Pérez Jiménez, who had hosted the 1954 meeting of the OAS, because they thought Pérez Jiménez was at least better than the nationalists of Venezuela's Democratic Action Party. Democratic Action had convincingly won Venezuela's free election of 1947, but it was too "pink" by half for the US State Department. On the other hand, the dictator Pérez Jiménez, who made both Democratic Action and the Communist Party illegal, seemed reliably friendly to US oil companies, now in the midst of a major Venezuelan oil boom. Like Trujillo, Duvalier, and Somoza, Pérez Jiménez was unsavory—but nonetheless acceptable as one of "our bastards."

Guatemala's OAS representative voted alone against the anticommunist Declaration of Caracas, calling instead for Latin American solidarity against US pressures. Here—infuriatingly, for US diplomats—was the "pinkest" Latin American government of the hemisphere. To combat it, the US State Department abandoned its 1933 pledge of nonintervention in the internal affairs of Latin American countries. Instead of sending in US Marines, however, it inaugurated an indirect form of military intervention—the "proxy" force, recruited among the local enemies of the targeted government. Proxy forces were armed and trained, usually in secret, by another new player of the cold war era, the CIA.

Following a string of grim dictators, Guatemala had enjoyed an exciting and hopeful "decade of spring" between 1944 and 1954. Two democratic elections had seated nationalist presi-

For summary, see Kefauver Report

dents, one after another, by wide margins—unprecedented events in the country's history. The first of these reformist presidents was Juan José Arévalo, a formerly exiled university professor who returned to oversee legislative advances such as social security, a new labor code, and a new constitution. Although hardly radical, he described his philosophy as "spiritual socialism," troubling words for US diplomats and for officers of the United Fruit Company, with large banana plantations in the country. When the nationalist government urged better pay for Guatemalan workers, accusations of "communistic" behavior sounded in Washington.

Then came the second reformist president, an idealistic thirty-seven-year-old army officer named Jacobo Arbenz. Arbenz went beyond speeches and legislation to push for big changes on the ground. In this country where half the people were illiterate Mayan peasants, treated more or less like animals by the owners of the coffee plantations, who retained great influence, Arbenz started to confiscate large estates and divide them up for peasant cultivators. In addition, his government expropriated land from United Fruit, along with Guatemala's foreign-owned railway. The cries of communism now became intense, both in the United States and in Guatemala.

The Arbenz government was doing no more than other nationalist governments (and the United States in the radical 1930s) had done before it. But Guatemala was small, close, and previously obedient to the United States. Furthermore, just as the US diplomats suspected, Marxist ideas were becoming increasingly persuasive to nationalists in Guatemala. Arbenz had embraced them, and so had many of the shop-floor activists who propelled the country's unionization and the grassroots organizers who carried out the land reform. Some became members of the Communist Party, and many believed, along with millions of other Latin American nationalists, that the United States was their imperialist enemy, bent on bleeding them dry.

A number of important US policymakers, including Secretary of State John Foster Dulles, had a personal interest in the United Fruit Company's banana empire. The same was true of 1954 CIA chief Allen Dulles, John's brother.

Most Guatemalan generals were far more conservative than Arbenz. Revolutionaries within the Arbenz government wanted to arm a people's militia as a counterforce to the army. They arranged for an arms shipment from Czechoslovakia, then part of the Soviet-controlled Eastern bloc, the last straw for US policymakers. Shortly thereafter, a US proxy force invaded from Honduras. Instead of fighting the invasion force, which was puny, the Guatemalan army joined it, ousting Arbenz. The State Department then announced a landmark victory for "democracy" in Guatemala. But the post-Arbenz military rule of Guatemala turned out, by all accounts, to be utterly murderous. As the decades passed and the grisly death toll mounted, US diplomats began to view the intervention of 1954 as a tragic overreaction. To see why, let us compare Guatemala to Bolivia, another mostly indigenous country with similar problems and about equal population.

Bolivia's National Revolutionary Movement (MNR) took power in 1952, just as the Arbenz government moved into its final phase. The MNR was entirely as nationalist as the government of Arbenz. In addition, the MNR showed clear Marxist influences. But because Bolivia is farther away from the United States, because the US business interests were less affected by MNR expropriations, and because the Moscow-oriented Communist Party clearly lacked clout in Bolivia, the US State Department decided to remain "constructively engaged" with the MNR. Instead of arming a proxy force, it sent US aid.

Bolivian wealth rested on tin mining, much of it controlled by three incredibly opulent Bolivian families who lived in Europe. It was said that the young heir of the Patiño family, the richest clan of all, got an allowance larger than the country's

For... y... K...

budget for public education. The MNR received support from the miners' unions and their militias, who made deafening displays of their sentiments by tossing lit sticks of dynamite, a tool of their trade, the way mischievous boys elsewhere throw firecrackers. The MNR nationalized the tin mines and conferred substantial improvements in wages and benefits on the miners.

Indigenous Bolivians, whose peasant communities had been losing their land steadily for generations, now took the initiative, and the MNR supervised a substantial land reform. Almost sixty thousand poor families got title to a parcel of land to farm. Another important move of the revolutionary government—mindful of events in Guatemala, no doubt—was to reduce the power of the Bolivian army to a shadow of its former self.

Revolutionary change took a toll on middle-class living standards, however. Peasants with title to land now fed their own families better, so they sent less food to urban markets, raising prices there. Improved conditions for miners cut into the profits of Bolivia's main export earner. Furthermore, because tin refining continued to be done outside the country, where refiners kept the price of tin as low as possible, the mines began to operate in the red. Consequently, more conservative elements within the MNR gained influence, and US aid strengthened their hand. In the long run, the US policy of "constructive engagement" with the Bolivian revolution proved more effective than the Guatemalan-style intervention. Bolivian peasants and miners still got the land and wages they deserved, and the country's government steered clear of Soviet Russia.

As the 1950s advanced, the battle lines of the cold war began to affect everything that happened in Latin America, even literature. Literature has always been political in the region, and during the cold war, most authors sided with the left.

Take Nobel laureate Pablo Neruda. The most popular poet of twentieth-century Latin America, Neruda was lusty, ex-

pansive, democratic, and plainspoken. His *Twenty Poems of Love and One Desperate Song* (1924) are among the most widely recognized and recited in the Spanish language. Neruda's greatest theme was "América" itself—mostly Spanish America—but he roamed the world over. Like Gabriela Mistral, Chile's earlier Nobel Prize-winning poet, Neruda held a series of diplomatic posts, serving as consul in Asia, Europe, and the Americas between 1927 and 1945. This sort of tribute to literary talent is a Latin American tradition. Neruda's heart was with "the people," which meant, in mid-twentieth-century Latin America, siding with the revolutionaries. After World War II, he returned to Chile and devoted himself to revolutionary politics. In 1945, Neruda was elected senator for Chile's Communist Party. The great poet's reputation was at its height as the cold war settled over Latin America in the 1950s and 1960s.

Argentina's Jorge Luis Borges, another literary giant with an international reputation, makes an interesting contrast to Neruda. Like Neruda and many other Latin American authors, Borges had strong international affiliations. He spent a few years in Switzerland, studied briefly at Cambridge, and translated works from German, French, and above all, English. Borges loved the English language and even wrote some poetry of his own in English. But the Argentine Borges was a retiring and bookish man, far different from the carousing, rambling Neruda. Born in Buenos Aires, Borges seldom left there for long. And for most of his life, he was blind. His world was a private, shadowy theater of *Fictions* and *Dreamtigers*, the titles of two of his books. For Borges, rustic gauchos and the brawling poor neighborhoods of Buenos Aires were literary motifs. He liked them as themes for an Argentine national literature, but he was no "man of the people" and he sympathized with the military in its long struggle against Perón. Nevertheless, Borges created short stories so startlingly innovative and imaginative

that he became, if anything, more influential in literature than Neruda. Many believe that Borges never won the Nobel Prize only because of his unpopular right-wing views.

THE CUBAN REVOLUTION

After the 1950s, Latin American nationalists increasingly adopted a Marxist perspective on history and a revolutionary vision of the future. Influential poets, novelists, artists, folk-singers, and social scientists—not to mention outspoken students at public universities throughout the region—expressed the Marxist revolutionary vision. And they did so just as anti-communism became the overriding imperative of US policy toward Latin America.

The rise of Marxist ideology among Latin American nationalists had little to do with Soviet Russia, a remote, unhelpful, and uninspiring ally. Nor was the Marxist dream of a perfect future without inequalities or injustice more convincing in Latin America than elsewhere. It was Marxist historical analysis that made persuasive sense to Latin American nationalists bent on dismantling neocolonialism. The Marxist view of capitalism, highlighting class exploitation, seemed an apt description of Latin American experience. The Leninist theory of imperialism—suggesting that a privileged class within the dominated countries would profit from collaboration with the outsiders' imperial plan—also seemed quite accurate in Latin America. In the 1950s, Marxism was becoming associated with nationalist struggles for decolonization and self-determination around the world. And if the imperialist United States hated and feared Marxism, many Latin Americans found that simply a further incentive to study it.

The Marxist diagnosis of Latin America's big problems was injustice—not a wrong policy here, a bad decision there, but injustice woven into the fabric of a society founded on con-

quest and dedicated, over the centuries, to maintaining inequalities. The prognosis was grave. Rapid population growth and urbanization were creating massive shortages of the most basic social necessities. Children on the street, whole neighborhoods built on garbage dumps—the toll in diminished lives was (and is) unspeakable. The recommended treatment was revolution, not reform. And by revolution, Marxists meant not simply a new, better government overthrowing a corrupt old one, but rather a full reshuffling of the social deck, pulling down the well-to-do and powerful who had enjoyed their privileges for so long in the presence of misery—worse, *at the expense of misery*—and redistributing the wealth among everybody. Social revolutionaries did not hesitate to confiscate fortunes extracted from generations of slaves and indebted peons. And they believed that US multinationals were only a new version of the Spanish and Portuguese empires, siphoning riches from what one influential book called *The Open Veins of Latin America*. Aspirin would not cure this cancer, believed the Marxist revolutionaries. The situation called for major surgery.

An Argentine medical student, later famous as "Che" Guevara, reached this conclusion in the early 1950s. Rebellion ran in Che's family. His mother before him had gained a radical reputation by brazenly smoking cigarettes in public. Che thought that Latin American poverty was linked to, and maintained by, an imperialist international economic system of awesome power. The victims of that system, among whom Che included all the countries of Latin America, could free themselves only by acting together. He began to show his "internationalist" vocation by cycling for thousands of miles to see for himself the poverty and oppression of the indigenous peoples of the Andes. Then, hearing of inspiring reforms underway in Arbenz's Guatemala, Che went to participate. From Guatemala, he escaped to Mexico when US-backed army officers toppled Arbenz in 1954. Che was now a bona fide Marx-

ist revolutionary, "a soldier of America," as he told his father when he left home, and he considered the battle against capitalist imperialism *his* battle, anywhere in the world.

In Mexico, Che met Fidel Castro, a different kind of revolutionary, an intense nationalist immersed in the political traditions and struggles of his own county, Cuba. Castro was the son of a sugarcane-growing family who, as a law student in the late 1940s, was inspired by the idealistic, mildly socialist, and above all, keenly anti-imperialist themes of the student movement. In Cuba, as in Latin America as a whole, 1950s anti-imperialist attitudes focused almost exclusively on the United States, and nowhere were anti-imperialist feelings stronger than among Cuban nationalists. When US diplomats orchestrated the formation of the OAS in 1948 in Bogotá, Colombia, Castro traveled there to attend a parallel anti-imperialist meeting of student activists. In opposing the United States, the internationalist Che and the nationalist Fidel saw eye to eye.

The two met in Mexico because Fidel, along with his brother Raúl and others, had been exiled from Cuba. Their crime was resisting the US-backed military dictatorship of yet another of "our bastards," one Fulgencio Batista. In 1953, shortly after an elected Cuban government was overthrown by Batista, the Castro brothers led a disastrous attack on the dictator's army. But their gesture of defiance, which cost the student rebels many lives, proved popular with the Cuban people. Fidel and Raúl Castro were let out of prison and shipped off to Mexico as a sign of dictatorial benevolence. Within a couple of years, in late 1956, they were ready to launch their next pinprick attack on Batista, whom they regarded—because of his US backing and his staunch support of US anticommunism in the OAS—as an agent of imperialism.

The eighty-two invaders—many of them idealistic, middle-class youngsters—crowded aboard an incongruous assault

vehicle, an old yacht with the unwarlike name, ironically in English, *Granma*. Their landing in Cuba did not go well, partly because local peasants alerted the army, and only a handful of the *Granma's* assault force survived to make history. In the meantime, they made legend, beginning with the magical number of remaining fighters—twelve, the number of Christ's disciples, symbolic of the guerrillas' physical vulnerability and spiritual superiority. Fidel, Raúl, and Che—now amounting personally to a quarter of the invasion force—made it into the Sierra Maestra mountains of eastern Cuba, where they successfully played a deadly game of hide-and-seek with the army for the next two years. A series of highly sympathetic articles about them appeared in the *New York Times*. Even the US government began to qualify its support of Batista, and resistance to the dictator inside Cuba became virtually unanimous. Seeing no future, Batista suddenly left the country on the last day of 1958, and the bearded guerrillas of the mountains met a tumultuous welcome in Havana.

To show that their revolution had only just begun, they did not shave or take off their khakis. The revolutionaries dispensed rough justice against the dictator's henchmen, trying and executing 483 of them in three months. At interminable mass rallies and equally interminably on television, Castro explained his vision of a new Cuba. The revolutionary government retained a high level of popular support. Anyone watching the nationalist revolutions that had swept over Latin America in the twentieth century knew what to expect: measures against "economic imperialism," possibly including expropriation of foreign companies, and, above all, land reform. Land reform began almost immediately, in May 1959.

Which side would the new Cuban government be on in the cold war? That was the US State Department's main question, overshadowing even the very considerable US economic inter-

est in Cuba. The creation of "a Communist beachhead ninety miles from our shores" would be intolerable in their eyes. Was Castro a communist?

Never—not as a student radical in the 1940s, nor as a guerilla leader in the 1950s—was Castro close to the Moscow-line Cuban Communist Party. Nor had the Communist Party played any substantial part in the overthrow of Batista. But when Fidel went on television for his five-hour chat on the structural changes of a "real revolution," the Marxist inspiration of his vision was obvious. The only thing that could reassure people in the United States, it seemed, was a demonstration that the Cuban Revolution would be aligned with the United States against international communism. In their own terms, the Cuban revolutionaries were being asked to betray everything they had fought for: to side with "economic imperialism" against the forces of "national liberation." Fidel and Che never even considered it.

And Castro had a way of rubbing in the point. On a 1960 trip to New York, he delivered a four-hour lecture in the United Nations on the topic of US imperialism. At a Harlem hotel, he met with Malcolm X and other critics of US policies at home and abroad. In February of the same year, he began to arrange an alternative Russian market for Cuban sugar, long sold almost exclusively in the United States, and in June he bought Russian oil, offered at an advantageous price. When Cuba's US-owned oil refineries refused to process this "red" crude, Fidel expropriated them. In July came the US government's response: an end to US purchases of Cuban sugar, responsible for three quarters of Cuba's export revenue. In August, the revolutionary government struck back by expropriating more US-owned property, from sugar mills and mines to telephone and electric companies. In the second half of 1960, the United States declared an embargo on all trade with Cuba, and word

reached Havana of a proxy force being trained and equipped by the CIA to invade the island.

This time, however, the proxy technique failed miserably. Despite their hopes, the anti-Castro Cubans who landed at the Bay of Pigs in 1961 sparked no internal rebellion. The new Cuban army was a direct outgrowth of Castro's revolutionary army of 1956–1958 and totally loyal to him. It quickly defeated these invaders. But they seemed unlikely to be the last invaders. The Cuban military alignment with Soviet Russia, what US policymakers had so dreaded, now took shape as a defense against new invasions from the United States.

In mid-1962, high-flying US spy planes called U-2s began to photograph nuclear missile installations under construction, and in October they got a clear picture of a missile. A few days later, US President John F. Kennedy issued an ultimatum to the Russians: withdraw the missiles "or else." The world held its breath. The Cuban Missile Crisis was one of the most dangerous moments in the cold war. Finally, the Soviets agreed to remove their missiles in return for a US agreement not to invade Cuba. Aside from petty harassment by the CIA—involving such escapades as an exploding cigar and schemes to make Fidel's beard fall out—the military threat from the United States had ended.

The debilitating effects of the US embargo, however, would go on for decades. The intention was to cut off not only US trade, but also all trade between Cuba and countries allied with the United States. Cuban trade with the rest of Latin America was strangled thanks to the US grip on the OAS. Sanctions applied even to Cuba's trade with neutral countries. Any vessel that docked in Cuba would be unwelcome afterward in US harbors. As a result, Cuba's external trade shifted decisively to distant countries aligned with Soviet Russia.

Cuba was expelled from the OAS despite the opposition of

the largest Latin American countries. Here, again, was the power of the many small countries that always voted with the United States in the OAS. Gradually, Cuba became a center for resistance to US policy in Latin America and a training ground for Marxist revolutionaries. Moscow had decided that, in most of Latin America, conditions propitious for a social revolution did not yet exist. But Che Guevara had developed a new theory of guerrilla warfare based on the Cuban experience in the Sierra Maestra mountains. Revolutionary conditions could be created, thought Che, by small, committed guerrilla groups like the *Granma* expedition. These groups would establish *focos*, focal points of guerrilla activity to jump-start a larger revolution. Che himself vowed to repeat the Sierra Maestra experience on a continental scale—to make the Andes “the Sierra Maestra of South America.” His ill-fated Bolivian mission, which began in 1966, was meant to do just that.

Che traveled to Bolivia disguised as a balding Uruguayan businessman and launched his continental revolution with a mere fifty guerrillas—thirty Bolivians and various international (especially Cuban) volunteers. This time, though, the tiny but idealistic revolutionary force did not triumph. Che himself suffered from prolonged asthma attacks that incapacitated him and disheartened his followers. The Bolivian peasants were suspicious of the guerrillas, and none joined the movement. Meanwhile, the Bolivian army picked them off one by one, until only a handful remained; still, when he was finally captured, interrogated, and executed in 1968, Che had become a hero throughout Latin America, not so much for what he did as for how he died trying.

Che had left Cuba partly because of his own frustrations there. Che was a theorist and visionary who believed that, for true socialism to function, money should be abolished and people should work for ideals. But as revolutionary president of Cuba's national bank, then minister of industry in the early 1960s, he found those changes easier to envision than to imple-

ment. Che had been foremost among those insisting that the sugar-heavy Cuban economy must diversify and industrialize. He had shaped the revolution's first assault on the problem of underdevelopment, an impatient “crash” industrialization plan. Grand promises of aid came from Soviet-aligned countries in Europe and also from China. The Soviet government alone pledged to build a hundred factories in Cuba, but it soon changed its tune. Like the United States, Soviet Russia really preferred to exchange its own manufactured products for Cuban sugar. Could the revolution harness sugar—that old dragon, devourer of generations of slaves and other impoverished workers—for the common good? Maybe so, thought stubbornly optimistic Cuban revolutionaries in the late 1960s. The sugar plantations, along with nearly everything else, now belonged to the Cuban state, making them the property of the Cuban people. So, in the years after Che's death, Castro pursued a startling new economic goal—a ten-million-ton sugar harvest.

As the revolutionary government worked feverishly to increase production, middle-class people reluctantly volunteered to blister their hands chopping sugarcane on the weekends. Dissent was not permitted. When a well-known poet was publicly silenced, the news produced unease among revolutionary sympathizers inside and outside Cuba.

Many outsiders were rooting for the Cuban Revolution. In then communist East Germany, university student Tamara Bunke, later better known by her guerrilla pseudonym, Tania, felt that the Cuban Revolution was also her fight. Tania was born and grew up in Buenos Aires, where the Bunke family had fled to escape the Nazis during the 1930s, returning to Germany after World War II. When Che Guevara led a trade mission to East Germany in 1960, Tania was his interpreter. Inspired by the revolution's project to transform Latin America, she traveled to Cuba and threw herself into work brigades, the militia, the literacy campaign—but she wanted something

more heroic. By 1964, she got it, going to Bolivia alone as a secret agent to lay the groundwork for Che's last, doomed campaign. By 1967 she was dead, along with almost all the others. In death, she became a hemispheric symbol of revolutionary commitment and self-sacrifice, much like Che himself. From Argentina to Mexico, baby girls were named Tania in her honor.

There were musical reverberations of revolution throughout Latin America, too. Folk music with protest themes became the international sound track of revolutionary organizing. Undercover in Bolivia, Tania had posed as a folk music collector. The spiritual mother of this "new song" movement was a Chilean woman, Violeta Parra. Parra was not of the sixties generation. In fact, she was old enough to be the mother of the young protest singers who gathered around her in the 1960s. Several were, in fact, her children. Parra, a superb lyricist herself, was steeped in Chilean folk music. Her music was more personal than revolutionary, and personal despair led her to commit suicide in 1967, the same year of Tania's death. But to the sixties generation, her music represented an authentic Latin American spirit of protest. Parra killed herself with characteristic flair in a *carpa*, a tent set up in the tradition of traveling folk performers. The young musicians whom she had inspired soon scattered. Ultimately, Havana would be the international center of the "new song" movement.

By the late 1960s, the Cuban Revolution had become a potent symbol for young people all over the hemisphere. All but the most committed Latin American anticommunists felt immense satisfaction at seeing a Cuban David stand up to the US Goliath. For Latin American socialists—including more and more students, union leaders, and young people in general—the Cuban Revolution had a lot to show. It had vastly increased educational opportunities, making decisive strides toward full literacy and exemplary public health. It had improved housing in long-neglected rural Cuba. It had champi-

oned the full equality of black Cubans, who before the revolution had been legally banned from some beaches to suit the race prejudice of US tourists. Cuban movies and poster art, particularly, communicated the promise of a vibrant, creative revolution throughout Latin America. Cuba's Casa de las Americas offered the region's most prestigious literary prize. Cuban nationalists, so long frustrated by Spain's long rule in Cuba and the humiliating Platt Amendment, gloried in the revolution. For them, Cuba's international prominence helped compensate for what the revolution did *not* offer.

The Cuban Revolution did not offer the individual liberties so central to liberalism, such as the right to speak against the government and to travel outside the country. These received a low priority in revolutionary thinking. Only a small minority in Latin America could afford to travel outside the country anyway, reasoned the revolutionaries. If revolution was major surgery, the operating room would need tight discipline. Why permit anyone to disrupt the team spirit? Restoring hope of a decent life to the destitute majority seemed worth infringing the personal liberties of the most fortunate citizens.

To anticommunists, especially in the United States but also in Latin America, the surgery of social revolution created a Frankenstein's monster—unnatural, powerful, and frightening. Communism challenged not only individual liberties but also older, even more traditional values like patriarchy and social hierarchy. Anticommunists regarded the revolutionary vision as "brainwashing" or the consequence of a viruslike contagion. And suddenly, from the perspective of US anticommunists only recently attentive to events south of the border, the contagion was here, in "our backyard"—"just ninety miles from our shores," in fact. The stage was set for conflict.

COUNTERCURRENTS: *Liberation Theology*



Mass in the rural Andes. Photograph by Severo Salazar. © Panes Pictures/TAFOS

The Catholic Church played no part in the Cuban Revolution, which totally marginalized religion and turned churches into public auditoriums. Historically, the Catholic Church had been, above all, a powerful bulwark of the status quo and therefore a prime target of revolutionaries. But churchmen could be revolutionaries, too. Father Miguel Hidalgo and Father José María Morelos had shown that during Mexico's independence struggle. Friar Bartolomé de las Casas, the early advocate for indigenous people, had led the way in the 1500s.

In the 1960s, Latin America's radical priests again followed the lead of Las Casas. Father Camilo Torres was one. A son of the Colombian upper class, Torres taught Latin America's

most "subversive" academic discipline, sociology, at the National University. Sociologists were seen as "pink" because they talked a lot about social class, a favorite Marxist category of analysis. Torres did sound like the Cuban revolutionaries when he demanded "fundamental change in economic, social, and political structures," something he believed Colombia's traditional Liberal and Conservative Parties could never accomplish. Torres desired revolution, which he saw as "the way to bring about a government that feeds the hungry, clothes the naked, teaches the ignorant, and puts into practice works of charity and brotherly love." Father Torres joined a guerrilla army and died fighting in 1966.

Religious revolutionaries of the early 1960s saw Latin America's problems much as the Marxist revolutionaries did. Only a few joined guerrilla armies, however. Most believed that faith and good works were more powerful than guns. They took inspiration from the work of Paulo Freire, the region's greatest teacher of literacy, then at work among the peasants of impoverished northeastern Brazil. Freire argued that peasants were intelligent adults eager to empower themselves. He believed that methods used with schoolchildren were not appropriate in helping poor adults learn to read. For illiterate adults, learning to read and write meant taking greater charge of their own lives. So Freire developed a method of interactive learning and, to describe it, coined the term "consciousness-raising."

In 1968, when the Conference of Latin American Bishops held a landmark meeting in Medellín, Colombia, the bishops discussed the usefulness of Freire's approach. They agreed that the church should take "a preferential option for the poor," and they discussed the formation of Christian "base communities," in which believers would gather to read and discuss the Bible in something like one of Freire's literacy groups. The bishops also talked of liberating people from the "institutionalized vio-

lence" of poverty. This was not violence in the ordinary sense. Rather, Latin America's Catholic bishops had begun to see hunger, ignorance, and rampant disease as tragically preventable damage to human lives. Governments that failed to prevent that damage were committing institutionalized violence. Its victims often saw the damage they suffered as something natural, an inevitable part of being poor. Consciousness-raising in Christian base communities could unmask institutionalized violence and strip away its seeming naturalness. Here were Catholic teachings designed to undermine, rather than reinforce, Latin America's ancient patterns of hierarchy and hegemony. This new message said nothing about suffering patiently through life to gain heavenly compensation. Instead, it called for soup kitchens, day care co-ops, neighborhood organizing, and demands for government responsibility. In a region well-known for religious fervor, the result might be powerful. That, at least, was the hope of priests and nuns who lived and worked in poor neighborhoods.

"Liberation theology" became the general name for the movement that had crystallized at the 1968 bishops' conference. Liberation theology immediately stirred enormous interest, both for and against. Conservatives pointed to Father Camilo Torres and cried "Communism!" In fact, the religious revolutionaries did have something in common with the Marxist ones. They shared a sense of emergency and the basic premise that Latin America required sweeping, fundamental change. They were equally committed to relieving the plight of the poor. Both believed that existing power structures were stacked against them. Despite the many disagreements between Marxist and Christian ideologies, these revolutionaries could logically see each other as potential allies.

A conservative reaction began immediately within the Catholic Church itself. Exponents of liberation theology have been passionate and eloquent, but never a majority. By the

late 1970s, a new pope, John Paul II, threw the power of the Vatican fully against them. John Paul's formative experience as a Catholic leader in communist Poland made him inexorably opposed to Marxism, and he believed that Latin America's religious revolutionaries had crossed the line. The Vatican's campaign began at the 1978 Conference of Latin American Bishops held in the Mexican city of Puebla. It included the systematic appointment of Latin American bishops hostile to liberation theology and even the official "silencing" of liberation theologians. Likewise, the pope visited Nicaragua in 1983 to support a conservative archbishop against Sandinista revolutionary leaders who were Catholic clergy and exponents of liberation theology. (The Sandinista revolution will be discussed in the next chapter.) "Silence!" shouted the pope three times at the angry pro-Sandinista crowd, in a memorable moment of direct confrontation. Gradually, the liberation theology movement lost momentum in the 1980s before even 1 percent of Latin Americans had participated in a Christian base community.

1-5-88) not not