CHAPTER 22

New material on race, women, and rebellion in Cuba, the Dominican Republic, and Nicaragua

CHAPTER 23

More discussion of women and protest in Argentina and Chile

New textbox on music and politics in Brazil

CHAPTER 24

Updated and expanded section on neopopulism and neoliberalism in the 1980s and 1990s, including substantial new material on Chile, Peru, and Argentina

New textbox on women and rebellion at the turn of the twenty-first century

New textbox on first woman senator of Brazil

CHAPTER 25

New document on Cuba's 1990s economic crisis to open the chapter

Extensive new content on democratization in the twenty-first century

More on women leaders, the environment, sexuality, race, migration, violence, crime, and globalization

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The intellectual debts accrued over the years since the first edition of this book cannot be captured in a short acknowledgments section. Decades of conversations and collaborations with hundreds of colleagues fill these pages, whether overtly or implicitly. Some people played immediate roles, however, and we thank the following people for their assistance.

The idea germinated on a train ride from Manchester to London in the spring of 1982, when William Sherman and Lawrence Clayton talked about a textbook in the style of the one you have before you as "long overdue" in Latin American history. Sherman was to contribute the colonial section, which he began but was not able to finish. We owe him an immense debt of gratitude for giving us a standard of readable, exciting prose—especially as evidenced in his widely read coauthored text on Mexican history.

Our thanks go to numerous colleagues and friends along the way who made helpful suggestions for improvements and additions or who helped in other ways. They include Ximena Sosa, Sandra McGee Deutsch, William P. McGreevey, Pamela Murray, Carleen Payne, Samuel Brunk, Paul J. Dosal, Marshall C. Eakin, Ralph Lee Woodward Jr., Felix Angel, Barbara Tenenbaum, Alan LeBaron, Lyman Johnson, Jorge Ortiz Sotelo, Susan Socolow, David Bushnell, Brett Spencer, Neill Macaulay, Frank McCann, Frank Robinson, Anne Fountain, John Britton, Jorge L. Chinea, Douglas R. Keberlein, Stephanie Smith, and Richard Hamm. We also thank Synneva Elthon, who served as images editor. In addition, we are grateful to Heather McCrea and the anonymous UC Press reviewers for their critical reading and helpful suggestions. We would also like to thank copy editor Sue Carter for her careful reading and incisive revisions.

At the University of California Press, we thank Acquisitions Editor Kate Marshall, Development Editor Nic Albert, and Editorial Assistant and Acting Editor Bradley Depew, all of whom shepherded the text into the third edition you are now reading.

Colonial Prologue

Atahualpa and Pizarro

It was November 1532. Earlier, Francisco Pizarro had founded a community, San Miguel de Piura, on the coast, and now the small Spanish expedition that Pizarro commanded, 62 horsemen and 106 foot soldiers, marched south and east, deeper and deeper into the heart of the Inca empire toward the city of Cajamarca. There the Inca emperor Atahualpa was camped outside the city. He had just triumphed in a bloody civil war against his brother Huáscar for dominion of the immense Inca empire. The Tahuantisuyo. The Four Corners of the Earth. It stretched from Ecuador in the north to central Chile far to the south.

On November 15, the Spanish force entered Cajamarca. Atahualpa—together with thousands of warriors, noblemen, women, and courtiers—stayed in his camp outside the city. A small troop of Spaniards approached Atahualpa. Hernando Pizarro, brother of Francisco, said, "Our governor would be delighted for you to visit him." Fearing nothing from these few, although exotic, strangers, Atahualpa agreed.

November 16, 1532. Atahualpa and a lightly armed retinue of five or six thousand noblemen and warriors slowly moved toward Cajamarca. Pizarro's army, pitifully small by comparison, was arrayed for an ambush, hidden in the buildings surrounding the central courtyard. Outside the city, Indians seemed to fill every space as they joined Atahualpa's procession.

"Are you afraid?" young Pedro Pizarro, brother to Francisco, asked an even younger soldier standing next to him in the shadows. The soldier shuddered involuntarily. "No!" he snapped and then quickly followed, "Yes, by God, aren't you? They sound like a swarm of bees out there," he said, gesturing toward the entrance to the city.

"Yes, Bernardo," Pedro said. "But commend your soul to God. He will see us through." Pedro Pizarro crossed himself, and so did his companion. It fortified them. God would not allow Christians to be overcome by pagans.

Atahualpa, carried on a litter, entered the square late in the afternoon. His people soon filled the square completely, squeezing in and pressing against the walls until there was barely room to move. Vicente de Valverde, a Dominican friar, approached Atahualpa. "My governor would like you to come and dine with him."

The Inca shot back at the Spanish friar, "Tell your governor to return everything his men have stolen or consumed since they entered my kingdoms! Then perhaps we can talk."

Valverde ignored the rebuke and called upon the Inca to submit to God and his emissaries, the Spanish. "It is all in this book," Valverde said, handing Atahualpa a prayer book that he carried with him. Atahualpa took the small book and examined it. The Inca then dropped it onto the ground, angry that the priest had handed him something so strange that seemed to question the Inca's intelligence.

Valverde spun on his heel and turned to Pizarro and his men hidden in the low buildings surrounding the square.

"Make ready!" Atahualpa warned his people, rising in his litter as he watched Valverde run back to Pizarro.

"Oh God, oh God," Valverde cried out as he ran back. "See what this Lucifer has done, Your Honor!" he shouted to Pizarro and the other Spaniards waiting in ambush. "Come out, come out, Christians! Come at these enemy dogs who reject the things of God. I absolve you!" A cannon roared from the top of one of the buildings. It was the prearranged signal. "Santiago!" the horsemen shouted as they spurred their mounts out of the buildings straight into the mass of Indians around Atahualpa. Terrorized by cannons and trumpets, by the brutal assault of the war horses, by the slashing of steel swords and lances, Atahualpa's followers reeled under the onslaught.

Atahualpa's litter bearers were cut down. All around him his subjects died, limbs and heads pierced and severed by Toledan steel, trampled and bludgeoned under the war horses, suffocated as they were crushed up against the city walls until finally the walls collapsed. The Spanish pursued the fleeing, terrified Indians into the night, piercing and slashing them in the surrounding fields until a trumpet finally called them off.

"When will you kill me?" the Inca asked his captors that evening.

"Oh, no, Your Highness," Hernando de Soto answered for the Spaniards. "We fight with force and courage, but we don't kill afterward. That's not right."

"You are our guest," Pizarro added.

"But tell me," de Soto inquired of the Inca, "Why did you allow us in so easily? Why did you walk into so obvious a trap?"

Atahualpa smiled ruefully. Perhaps they wouldn't kill him after all. "I meant to capture you," he said.

"God was with us, Your Highness," Pedro Pizarro said quietly.

Indeed, the Spaniards and their Christian God had turned the world on its head for Atahualpa and his people. Cajamarca, and the events therein, marked the end of the Inca empire and the beginning of the Spanish empire in Peru.

The story of conquest, however, did not begin with Pizarro in Peru. It began in Spain and Portugal hundreds of years before Christopher Columbus sailed, and it is to the Iberian civilization that we must turn briefly to comprehend the nature of a people who so remarkably transformed America.

THE RECONQUEST OF SPAIN

Spanish civilization at the end of the fifteenth century was riding a high crest of military success that culminated in the reconquest of the Moorish kingdom of Granada in 1492. For almost five hundred years, an intermittent crusading-style war had occupied the Spanish people as they fought to rid the Iberian Peninsula of Moors from Africa. These African peoples, worshippers of the prophet Muhammad, or Muslims, swept over and conquered much of Christian Spain in the eighth century. The push west across Africa and then north into Europe through Spain marked the high tide of Islam as it rose first in the Arabian Peninsula and quickly spread east and west.

Then, around a thousand years ago, some small Christian kingdoms in the far north along the Cantabrian coast that had survived the Moorish conquest launched a war of reconquest. The Reconquest of Spain lasted until 1492, when the last Moorish ruler, that of Granada, fell to the besieging Christian armies of Queen Isabella of Castile and King Ferdinand of Aragon.

The reconquest was a complicated movement that incorporated many elements—some religious, some of a more secular nature. Basically, Spanish society was permeated with the value of military dominion. It was a society that looked to the warrior as the embodiment of Christian endeavor and worldly fulfillment. Warrior kings, warrior bishops, knights, and other fighting men were admired as the embodiment of the ideal life—fighting Moors for the ultimate end of reconquering Spain for Christianity. There was also another dimension to this society, more secular and worldly. This dimension was the goal of enriching oneself through conquest and the acquisition of booty and slaves. Moorish lands and cities, people and property, all were legitimate spoils of war, and conquest became a way of life for much of Spanish society.

When Columbus returned in 1493 to Spain from his first voyage of reconnaissance and discovery, he came back with some fantastic news—news that he delivered to a king and queen who presided over a warrior people with a deeply inbred conquest mentality. Spanish energies, for so long invested in the Reconquest of Spain, turned to the emerging opportunities in the New World. The warriors formerly engaged in the reconquest swarmed over the newly discovered Americas in the sixteenth century, seeking much the same goals they had sought in Spain: fame and fortune through conquest. They found both in abundance in the New World.

THE AMERICAS

As has been often observed, America was not discovered by the Europeans. It was truly a meeting of two cultures that had not known each other previously. The native peoples of Latin America—stretched as they were from Tierra del Fuego on the southern tip of South America to the immense spaces of North America to the north—were more diverse in culture, lifestyles, languages, and civilization than the Spanish conquistadors (conquerors) who sailed the Atlantic in the sixteenth century in search of adventure and fortune. When Hernán Cortés and his small Spanish expedition of several hundred men reached the capital—Tenochtitlán—of the Aztec empire in 1519, they marveled as they gazed down from the high passes. The Spanish renamed it "Mexico City" during the colonial period.

The indigenous population of the Americas spanned from Stone Age people of the Amazon to the highly developed cultures of Mesoamerica, Mexico, and Peru. The Spanish encountered skilled fishermen and agriculturalists in the Caribbean and the descendants of astronomers and city builders among the Maya of Central America. It is almost impossible to generalize about the Indians of Latin America at the time of the European encounter because they were as diverse in language, ethnic identity, and political and social organization as all of Europe at the time.[1]

There were perhaps 50 million or more Indians in the Americas at the time of the Conquest: 22 million in Mexico alone, another 10 to 12 million under the dominion of the Incas, and the rest scattered across the region. They ranged from nomadic hunters and gatherers to people who had domesticated crops and developed a sedentary agriculture. The latter, freed from the tyranny of hunting and gathering, built complex civilizations, complete with well-developed religious rituals, political organizations, artisans, and cities in Central America, Mexico, and Peru. The Maya developed a written language; the Incas, an efficient state bureaucracy and empire; and the Aztecs, a formidable war machine. When the Spanish arrived in the late fifteenth century, the stage was set for a meeting between European and American civilizations—a meeting that would be the initiating moment in Latin American history and that would also transform world history.

THE CONQUEST

In the simplest terms, the Conquest refers to the subjugation of the indigenous population by Spanish and Portuguese explorers, warriors,

and missionaries from Europe. It was not only a conquest by arms, but also, from the perspective of the Spanish, a triumph of Spanish religion and civilization over pagan Indian peoples. The term "Encounter" is often used to emphasize the balance in the merits of the cultures and civilizations—one American and one European—that "encountered" each other in the seminal sixteenth century. But the Conquest itself devastated the indigenous population and fueled Spain's rise as a world power.

THE DEVELOPING COLONY

By the middle of the century, European diseases, harsh labor demands, dislocation, and the demoralization of defeat had combined to destroy more than 50 percent of the indigenous population of the Americas. In 1650, censuses in Spanish America recorded that populations had been drastically reduced from levels that had existed at the time of Columbus's arrival. In the Caribbean islands, virtually no indigenous inhabitants survived the first hundred years after the Spanish Conquest, while in the central valley of Mexico and along the Andean mountains of South America, 80 percent and in some areas 90 percent of the populations perished.

Early on, the Spanish Conquest also meant the conquest of Indian women. Comparatively few European women made their way to the Americas. Racial mixing occurred on a vast scale, and a new people was born: the mestizos, those children born of unions between Spaniards and Indians. During the course of the colonial period, mestizos became an increasing percentage of the population, especially in the great Indian population centers of Mexico, Guatemala, Ecuador, Peru, and Bolivia. Afro-Europeans (Africans and their descendants already in the Iberian peninsula) also arrived with the Spanish conquistadors, sometimes free, but increasingly as slaves. A generation later, their numbers began to increase dramatically as Spaniards and Portuguese imported first hundreds, then thousands, and finally millions of slaves directly from Africa to the Americas to work the fields and plantations of the New World—a place where Indians had thrived before the demographic decimation of the Conquest.

The Spanish fanned out over much of the continent and found what they sought during the Conquest: fame, wealth, and power. They established for Spain the beginnings of American empires—empires that produced in Latin America its basic character in all the many ways that we measure and describe a civilization, from its religion to its eating habits. Meanwhile, the Portuguese occupied and settled Brazil, gradually forming a unique society and economy. By blending with Indians and Afro-descendants, together they also forged in the New World the beginnings of a civilization distinct from Africa, from America, from Europe. It was an amalgamation of all three. It was, in essence, an expression of something historians have labeled the "Atlantic World"—a paradigm or model for studying the history of how peoples and forces (including economic, social, political, racial, and cultural) of all four major continents bordering on the Atlantic Ocean interacted over the three or four hundred years following the arrival of Europeans to the Americas.

While the Spaniards occupied the apex of American society in the colonial period, there evolved in the colonies a rich and diverse culture. After the initial demographic decline following Conquest, the indigenous population rebounded, especially in heavily populated regions like Mexico and Peru. In these areas, the Nahua and Inca, for example, retained their languages, much of their religion, family practices, and other characteristics—food, domesticated animals, agricultural cycles, and gender arrangements. Some scholars have called this "agency," reflecting how Indians retained much of their ability to determine how they worked, thought, and lived despite the new, European-dominated colonial order.

For example, with the Europeans came their religion, Roman Catholicism. And, as the early European settlement of the Indies occurred in the sixteenth century—a time of deep divisions in Christianity created by the Reformation—the Spanish Catholic Church was completely, and almost fanatically, devoted to the evangelization of all its new subjects in the proper form of Christianity, especially in the face of the rise of the new forms of Protestantism in Europe, all thought to be heretical. It would not do for indigenous peoples to be deprived of eternal salvation as understood by the church, nor to retain any vestiges of their pagan, non-Christian religions that survived the Conquest.

The stage was set for the struggle to enforce Spanish domination not only in the secular world—politics, the economy, and so forth—but also in the spiritual world. Despite the enthusiastic and sometimes forceful evangelization of the Indies by Christian missionaries, many indigenous peoples managed to retain aspects of their earlier forms of worship. They even retained some of their gods, disguised as "saints," which the Catholic Church accepted and venerated in many instances. The Spanish friars learned to tolerate indigenous forms and places of worship as long as they didn't openly question or contradict the central doctrines of the church, such as the sole divinity of Jesus Christ, the meaning of his Resurrection, and so forth. This fusion of indigenous religious practices and Catholic forms of worship was called "syncretism" and represented indigenous agency as European and American civilizations blended.

At the apex of Spanish civilization in America was the sovereign of Spain. Through the Council of the Indies, the sovereign governed the colonies, which were themselves divided into administrative entities called "viceroyalties." The viceroyalty of New Spain included all of Mexico, Central America, and the Caribbean, plus some areas of North America and South America, while the viceroyalty of Peru, with its capital of Lima, extended across the continent of South America, excluding Brazil, which belonged to Portugal. From Mexico City and Lima, Spanish nobles were sent to rule these vast domains as viceroys.

Equal in importance to the viceroys, governors, and other secular administrators were the prelates, missionaries, and priests of the Roman Catholic Church, who arrived in the Americas simultaneously with the conquistadors. The church quickly became—after the government—the most important institution in colonial Latin America, conditioning much of Latin American society in this formative period.

Members of missionary orders spearheaded the church's evangelization of Indians in the sixteenth century. Dominicans, Franciscans, and later Jesuits spread the faith rapidly among their new converts—all of whom had suffered a terrible defeat at the hands of the Spanish conquistadors. Were not the Christian gods (or one god, as the friars insisted), then, better than the Indians' own gods, who had failed them so miserably? The answer was a tentative yes, making evangelization easier for the Christian missionaries.

Missionaries established churches, developed new grammars in indigenous languages to reach the new converts with the basic holy writ in the Bible, and baptized Indians by the thousands. As noted above, many indigenous deities and religious traditions survived the evangelization of the Americas. When these were incorporated into formal church worship, new, syncretized forms of worship evolved. Catholic saints and an assortment of indigenous

deities sometimes coexisted in somewhat unusual harmony, a fact that distinguished the church in the Americas from the stricter, more conservative church of the Old World.

The secular clergy followed rapidly in the wake of the missionaries. These secular priests and clerics were involved in the day-to-day affairs of parish life and eventually replaced the members of the missionary orders. They were sometimes labeled the "regular" church because members of missionary orders such as the Dominicans and Franciscans were governed by a special set of regulations.

The secular clergy was directly under the control of the Spanish and Portuguese monarchs through an arrangement called the *patronato real,* or the royal patronage. This gave the crown immense influence in the operation of the church in the colonies—such as the right to name clerics, establish churches, and collect tithes—while endowing the church with the powerful support of the monarchy. The church prospered not only in a spiritual fashion—by converting millions of Indians to Christianity—but also in a material way, accumulating vast wealth in property over the duration of the colonial period. It was claimed, for example, that by the era of independence, the church owned half of the real estate in the vast colony of Mexico.

Later, in the nineteenth century, the church became a focal point of intense controversy. During and after the Wars of Independence, it was attacked by reformers and liberals who sought to break its power not only as an immense property holder but also as the dominant force in providing education and social services such as hospitals and philanthropy. The church was also the principal money lender in the colonies, and in dozens of other ways it controlled and fashioned the way that people thought and acted. The Inquisition, sometimes called the police arm of the church, sought to enforce orthodoxy in both spiritual and secular matters, seeking out and punishing crimes as serious as heresy and treason. Committing bigamy, soliciting women parishioners in the confessional, and other lesser crimes also came before the courts of the Inquisition in its role of spiritual and moral censor and judge of colonial society.

The liberators, as we see in the following chapter, were anti-clerical for two major reasons. First, they were imbued with ideals of the Enlightenment, or the Age of Reason, which ran the course of the eighteenth century and spilled into the nineteenth. Second, they saw the Roman Catholic Church as the primary religious and cultural embodiment of Spain in the Americas. And Spain had become the target of those leading the Wars of Independence in the early nineteenth century.

Yet, if one were to take an informal poll of those first learning about Latin America, asking them which word or phrase comes to mind to characterize Spain's colonies in America, it would likely not be religion or the church, but rather, silver. Others might say something like the gold galleons, when, in fact, the bulk of precious metal wealth that flowed from the colonies to Spain for over three hundred years was silver, not gold.

With regard to material wealth, Spaniards enjoyed an incredible run of luck in their colonial experience. The Spanish claimed that finding and exploiting the greatest silver mines the world had ever known in Mexico and Peru were acts of divine providence. Spain's European rivals—principally England, France, and Holland—viewed Spain's luck in other terms. Whatever the perspective, by the late sixteenth century, the silver mines of Zacatecas in Mexico and Potosí in Bolivia (then known as the province of Upper Peru) were on the way to making Spain the envy of all Europe. Fleets arrived annually at the port of Seville loaded down with silver. "Vale un Potosí" (as rich as Potosí) became a common phrase in seventeenth-century Europe, a metaphor for vast and easy wealth.

Around the great silver mines, a complex agricultural and pastoral system developed to supply the workers and the mines with food, leather, and other supplies. These estates became the models for land ownership in colonial Latin America: large haciendas owned by a small minority of Creoles (Spaniards born in the New World of Spanish parents; *criollo* in Spanish), an elite who represented the top of colonial society's pyramid of power and influence. Indigenous and African forced labor became the workforce on these estates and, along with commerce and mining, landed estates became one of the three pillars of colonial economy and society.

As the economic basis of the colonies gradually diversified to include the production of other export products, such as sugar, cacao (chocolate), indigo (a dye), and tobacco, for example, the great hacienda system spread throughout Spanish America and Brazil. A great hacienda owned by a Creole family, however, was not the only form of land ownership. Some of the regular orders of the church, such as the Jesuits, came to be among the richest and most powerful estate builders in colonial America, while in many parts of Latin America, especially in Mexico, Central America, and Peru, Indians managed to preserve their communal lands intact in spite of the encroachments of Spanish and mestizo landowners. Nonetheless, the dispossession of indigenous lands by Creoles and mestizos—as well as exploitation in other areas—produced much stress in this colonial society. Occasionally, rebellions flared up—rebellions that grew more pronounced and violent toward the end of the eighteenth century.

THE MATURE COLONY

By the middle of the eighteenth century, we can speak of mature colonies. There was a sense of place and self among colonial Latin Americans that distinguished them from the transplanted Spaniards of the sixteenth century. The Creoles, mestizos (persons whose parents were of European and indigenous ancestry), mulattoes (or *pardos;* persons whose parents were of African and European ancestry), zambos (persons whose parents were of indigenous and African ancestry), and other Americans born of the racial mixture of people originally from Spain, the Americas, or Africa for the most part felt themselves to be Americans or Peruvians, Mexicans or Chileans, for example. They related to the region of their birth much more than to the land of their ancestors. This sense of nationality was more pronounced among the Creole elite and only imperceptibly sensed in those groups largely estranged from power and privilege, such as Indians and slaves. While their sense of identity did not stray far from plantation or village, the Creoles were already developing a proto-nationalism that helped spark the Wars of Independence in the early nineteenth century.

This new sense of nationalism emerged in an increasingly enlightened and complex colonial world. The refined caste categories of the early colonial period had ceded to the reality of a society built from the mixing of Europeans, Indians, and Africans. By the 1700s, mestizos and mulattoes were among the largest social groups, following Indians, and Spaniards increasingly used the term "race" (*raza*) rather than "caste," as the former came to be seen less as a biological category than a flexible social one. Mestizos often played an in-between role in colonial society, serving in occupations ranging from rural farmers, estate managers, or peddlers, to urban merchants and skilled workers. Social class and identity became less and less about one's racial heritage and color and more about habits, language, location of residence, and wealth. As European, indigenous, and Afro-descendant people borrowed each

other's customs and beliefs, they created their own unique cultures in the Americas—not necessarily a single American culture, but no longer simply European or African, either.

The lives of women in colonial society changed along with the increasingly diverse and vibrant economy and society. The predominance of patriarchy meant that there was a sexual hierarchy that placed men above women in both their families and society. Wealthy men, in particular, legally ruled over their households and all who lived within them. Their duty was to protect and provide for those who depended on them, and these dependents in turn were obligated to obey. To protect their honor and that of their families, elite women remained heavily protected and monitored by the males in their family or, if living in a convent, by the church. Their honor—measured by sexual chastity—was key to ensuring the family's purity of blood and therefore the whole family's status and wealth. The majority of elite women married and often had as many as eight to ten children. Widows, however, were much freer and often participated actively in colonial society and economy. Nevertheless, many believed that women should emulate the virtues of the Virgin Mary, including her femininity, tolerance, love, docility, and virginity. The worship of the Virgin Mary, *marianismo,* did not detract from the centrality of Jesus Christ in the Christian faith in Latin America, but did celebrate the virtues of motherhood and resignation, and thus reinforced the traditional roles expected of women. The noble ideal was to be submissive and obedient, given to sacrifice and tolerance, submerging one's own feelings in nurturing the family, which was seen as the cradle of values and morality. Sexual submission and fidelity to one's husband was expected, even as machismo encouraged men, including married ones, to prove their masculinity—embodied in their virility, dominance, and power—through having multiple lovers.

Expectations for behavior were tied to a woman's race and status, and women—as the transmitters of blood and honor—were the lynchpins of the complex colonial racial world. Therefore, white elite women ideally lived secluded lives, which protected their families from racial impurity and social dishonor. Middle- and lower-status women, who were almost exclusively mestizo, indigenous, or Afro-descendant, were seen as needing less protection and often spent a great deal of time in public spaces. Marriage was less common, though a significant proportion of Indian women married, and female-headed households made up a quarter or more of all households in cities like Mexico City, Lima, and São Paulo in the 1700s. Many middle- and lower-status women worked in a variety of occupations, including as market women selling food, flowers, or fruit; weavers, domestic servants, or agricultural workers. Some were slaves.

Economically, too, the eighteenth century represented a period of increasing self-sufficiency. While the colonies exported greater and greater amounts of products from field, forest, and mine to European consumers, coincidentally the American colonies of Spain and Portugal also were producing more and more for themselves—textiles, shoes, ships, and myriad other items—that spoke of economic maturation.

Certain areas of the colonial export economy expanded dramatically in the second half of the eighteenth century. Cattle products from Argentina (salted beef and leather), sugar from Cuba, cacao from Venezuela and Ecuador, indigo from Guatemala and Mexico, magnificent woods from tropical Central America, silver from the rejuvenated mines of Mexico, and other products helped double, triple, and sometimes even quadruple trade between the colonies and Europe toward the end of the century. It was a period of rising prosperity.

But the times were changing. New ways of thinking about the world were changing the old order of things. Revolutions in the United States (1776), France (1789), and Haiti (1791) were—by their example and rhetoric—helping Creoles of Latin America fine-tune their own sense of grievance and injustice at being second-class citizens in the Spanish empire. Instead of getting the plum jobs and appointments in the empire's bureaucracy that they felt they deserved in the decades preceding the Wars of Independence, Creoles were systematically denied such appointments in favor of *peninsulares* (Spaniards from the peninsula of Iberia). It was frustrating and disappointing, and led to strong sentiments of rebellion against the Spanish monarchy—the prelude to independence. In September of 1810, Mexico's Creoles and Indians rose up dramatically against the old order. The results, in Mexico and across the Spanish empire, changed the course of Latin America's modern history.

CONCLUSIONS AND ISSUES

The colonial background to independence was marked by one of the most fascinating endeavors in human history: the making of a new civilization. Previously the American continents had been isolated from the Eurasian and African landmasses for ages, each part of the world developing distinct plants, animals, peoples, and cultures. With the Columbian voyages, European and American cultures came together with a great clash. Principal among the European colonizers were the Spanish and Portuguese. They came with their swords and muskets, with their faith and language, with an immense energy to explore, to conquer, to settle. They encountered equally diverse and energetic indigenous cultures, whose people the Spanish and Portuguese first conquered, then attempted to "civilize" with European values.

The result was the long colonial period. Certainly the Spanish and Portuguese prevailed in political and economic matters, but in the end an immensely varied culture and society developed in Latin America out of the fusion of European, Indian, and African peoples.

Over time, the Spanish and Portuguese empires in the Americas produced an incredibly rich cornucopia of wealth for the colonizing countries. In the Indies themselves, societies developed with the Spanish and Portuguese administrators at the top, closely paralleled by a Creole elite who shared power and resources. Eventually, these Creoles moved to separate themselves from European control, motivated by self-interest, revolutionary models (the American and French revolutions, for example), and the desire to carve out their own destinies.

Discussion Questions

What was the Reconquest of Spain and how did it shape the colonization of the Americas?
What was American society like when the Spaniards arrived?
What was the impact of the Conquest on the indigenous peoples of the Americas?
What role did religion and the Catholic Church play in the Conquest and the colonial period?
Why was the colonial economy so valuable to the Spanish?
What was life like for women in the Americas?

Keywords

Atlantic World
Aztec
Conquest
Creoles
Dominicans
Encounter
Franciscans
Inca
Jesuits
marianismo
mestizos
patriarchy
peninsulares
Potosí
reconquest
Zacatecas

PART

I

INDEPENDENCE AND TURMOIL

Latin America passed through one of its most important historical eras in the first half of the nineteenth century. In a tumultuous twenty-year span, from about 1806 to 1826, almost all of the Spanish and Portuguese colonies broke off from their colonizers and became independent nations. The path that each nation followed to independence was often complicated and marked by fits and starts, periods of intense political confusion, sharp military conflicts, interludes of peace, more battles, and by ethnic and political divisions within the revolutionary movements that defy easy or clear analysis.

In the largest context, the Wars of Independence marked a continuation of the same forces that drove the American, French, and Haitian revolutions of the late eighteenth century, all lumped together into something known as the Age of Democratic Revolutions. In the simplest terms, the old forms of government and rule, largely monarchies across the Western World, were overthrown for republican forms of government. But, as in America, France, and Haiti, the seemingly simple becomes more complex as one probes beneath the surface of these wars in Latin America.

For example, while most of the new nations overthrew the king and replaced political authority with a republic, Brazil did not. It replaced a monarch with another monarch and glided into the nineteenth century without the cataclysmic battles and campaigns that characterized the wars in the Spanish colonies. Other forces at work in the Spanish colonies, especially economic and commercial ones, argued for separating from the crown and getting rid of the monopolies and restrictions long set in place by the monarchy to regulate the colonies. The Creole elites and rising middle classes among the patriots wanted freedom and independence in the growing age of capitalism and new wealth. Ironically, this new age of freedom also fastened slavery even more deeply to some areas of culture and society in Latin America. The age of freedom for the Latin American leaders was also the age of slavery for millions of Africans and their slave descendants in Latin America.[1] But the wars were themselves a liberating agent for the many slaves who fought with the patriots, such as Simón Bolívar, and were given their freedom.

Leaders—mostly Creoles, but also mestizos and mulattoes—in Latin America wished for greater independence and autonomy from Spain. Spain for the most part resisted this wish, and the stage was set for the wars that followed. In some instances, such as in Mexico in 1810, the conflict took on racial overtones that horrified many Creoles. They wanted independence but did not particularly want freedom for all Mexicans, which included a vast majority of Indians, blacks, and mestizos who were subject to Creole domination.

In South America, Bolívar headed the patriot forces of Venezuela, Colombia, Ecuador, Peru, and Bolivia. The long struggle for independence began in 1810 in Venezuela and did not culminate until 1826 in Bolivia. From the south, José de San Martín led patriot armies out of Argentina to sweep up through Chile and Peru, eventually joining with Bolívar's forces in the liberation of Peru.

Brazil marched to its own drummer. Independence came late and largely as the result of the transfer of Portugal's court to Rio de Janeiro in 1807. Brazil became essentially equal with Portugal under the rule of João VI, and when he returned to Portugal in 1821 he left his son Pedro to govern over a colony—Brazil—that now felt itself the equal of its colonizer. In 1822 Brazil declared its independence and accepted Pedro as its first emperor. The ease with which Brazil became independent contrasted vividly with the long and violent road followed by the Spanish colonies.

After independence was achieved, a confusing period of political turmoil followed until about midcentury. Multiple experiments with various political forms of government were initiated, from monarchies to republics, but very few were stable or long-lasting. What did ensue were periods of dictatorial rule by caudillos, such as Antonio López de Santa Anna of Mexico and Juan Manuel de Rosas of Argentina. Caudillos were "men on horseback," self-styled political military leaders who governed by force and charisma and were themselves vulnerable to the competing power of other caudillos. Constitutions seemed to rotate almost as rapidly as caudillos in countries such as Peru and Mexico. Political anarchy in turn stifled economic recovery from the independence wars, and to the observer of the 1830s and 1840s, Latin America appeared chaotic politically and stagnant economically.

Yet, even in this period new forces were at work. Bolívar was among the first to spread a message of nativism, which called for the unity, though not equality, of all American-born men. His desire to unite the former colonies and their people was soon superseded by the emergence of proto-nationalism in many areas, as elites competed to define what it meant to be Argentinian or Venezuelan. Elites then used these new nationalist identities to imagine a whole new political order of liberal nation-states and to support their bids for political authority over them. The Wars of Independence disrupted the old racial and ethnic structures of the colonial period as well. As noted, some patriot leaders, such as Bolívar, emancipated their slaves during the wars, and by midcentury emancipation was in full swing. Liberals desired to free Indians of old bondages such as tribute (a form of taxation levied only on indigenous people) that long chained them to secondary citizenship. The experiments to elevate Indians to equality were, however, marked by as many failures as successes.

Women, too, took part in the Wars of Independence on both sides. From the earliest days of the insurgency, wealthy women eager to support the patriot cause spread anti-Spanish propaganda and used their resources and connections to support the struggle for independence. Women of all classes participated in a variety of roles, at times using the veil of perceptions about female passivity to mask their roles as messengers, propagandists, recruiters, and arms smugglers. Some, typically lower-class, women were camp followers—called *soldaderas* in Mexico or *juanas* in northern South America—who provided support services to the patriot armies, serving as cooks, providers,

laundresses, and nurses. On occasion, they took up arms or created women's battalions. Some women patriots even faced prosecution from the Spanish royalists for their activities. On the island of Margarita off the coast of Venezuela, for example, women helped with the artillery defending against a royalist attack, and their skill and dexterity in working the cannon were much praised. In speaking about the women who supported the patriot cause, Bolívar revealed the multiple views of femininity at the time, with women seen as both suspects and victims in the battles. Bolívar pointed out the savagery that fighting patriotic women had had to endure at the hands of the Spanish royalists.

> Even the fair sex, the delights of mankind, our amazons have fought against the tyrants of San Carlos with a valor divine, although without success. The monsters and tigers of Spain have shown the full extent of the cowardice of their nation. They have used their infamous arms against the innocent feminine breasts of our beauties; they have shed their blood. They have killed many of them and they loaded them with chains, because they conceived the sublime plan of liberating their beloved country.[2]

Whether motivated by a sense of tradition, obligation, or loyalty to their cause, women were deeply involved in the politics and fighting of the independence era, even if more enduring change to the condition of women and gender relations would have to wait.

Commercially, merchants in the Americas took advantage of independence to deepen their ties to each other and to British, French, and American merchants. Despite Spanish commercial regulations and monopolies, English merchants had been trading with the merchants of Latin America since before independence, though often in a clandestine fashion known as contraband trade. After the wars, and no longer dependent on, collaborating with, or governed by a colonizer and its representatives, merchant groups from Mexico to Uruguay and Argentina switched their loyalties to the newly independent states and pursued freer commerce and higher profits. In breaking with the Spanish empire, they helped to transform the Atlantic trading world from one dominated by imperial centers and peripheries participating in a transatlantic mercantilist economy to one increasingly characterized in the nineteenth century by independent states engaging in capitalist trade.

CHAPTER 1

Background to Independence

The "Grito de Dolores"

Father Miguel Hidalgo sought to define the coming insurrection and rally his parishioners and followers with a clarion call to independence that still resounds in Mexico. Father Hidalgo spoke to his congregation early on the morning of September 16, 1810. To this day, the Mexican president reenacts the "Grito" from the balcony of the National Palace in the heart of Mexico City, every September 16. Read the "Grito"—literally a "cry," or proclamation—as if you were a man, woman, or child in the small crowd, excited, listening to the voice of your priest call you to action:

> My friends and countrymen: neither the king nor tributes exist for us any longer. We have borne this shameful tax, which only suits slaves, for three centuries as a sign of tyranny and servitude; [a] terrible stain which we shall know how to wash away with our efforts. The moment of our freedom has arrived; the hour of our liberty has struck; and if you recognized its great value, you will help me defend it from the ambitious grasp of the tyrants. Only a few hours remain before you see me at the head of the men who take pride in being free. I invite you to fulfill this obligation. And so without a patria nor liberty we shall always be at a great distance from true happiness. It has been imperative to take this step as now you know, and to begin this has been necessary. The cause is holy and God will protect it. The arrangements are hastily being made and for that reason I will not have the satisfaction of talking to you any longer. Long live, then, the Virgin of Guadalupe! Long live America for which we are going to fight![1]

The "Grito de Dolores" (Cry of Dolores) had been proclaimed. Mexico was on the road to revolution.

Figure 1.1 Father Miguel Hidalgo, Mexican War of Independence hero who set the independence movement into action with his call to arms on September 16, 1810, in his largely Indian parish of Dolores. Each year the "Grito de Dolores" is again renewed by the president of Mexico from the balcony of the National Palace on the broad, central plaza of Mexico City. In this mural, located in the Government Palace, Guadalajara, Jalisco, Mexico (painted in 1939), his call to arms is portrayed by Mexican revolutionary muralist José Clemente Orozco. Authors' collection.

But people rarely break easily with the past. The forces of wealth, power, and tradition, the security and comfort of timeworn ways, and the fear of reprisal and loss restrain radical thinking, preserve old institutions, and discourage exploration of unfamiliar paths to new relationships, be they political, economic, or social. Thus, for over three hundred years, Spain's colonies in America evolved slowly, with little dramatic change, at least to the eye of the contemporary observer. Life was predictable. Born an Indian peasant, one expected to die tilling the same soil as one's ancestors. Born a Creole, one expected more privileges, perhaps an education and marriage within one's own caste and rank, and, if a man, a comfortable job in the government bureaucracy. There was constancy to life.

From the late eighteenth century through the early nineteenth century, new forces buffeted this stable world of colonial Spanish America. These forces erupted between 1810 and 1825 in a series of wars and revolutions that shattered Spain's colonial world into pieces and then put the pieces together again as new nations. One of the greatest empires in modern history ended, and a new era of political independence began for the peoples of Latin America—

peoples who were hardly homogeneous but rather a constellation of different societies.

CAUSES OF THE WARS OF INDEPENDENCE

Ideas and the Enlightenment

One of the greatest students of revolutions, the historian Crane Brinton, in referring to the French Revolution, wrote: "no ideas, no revolution." In other words, to break with the past, to make a revolution, a people must have an ideology with goals that cannot be fulfilled unless society first changes radically. The desire to achieve these goals must outweigh the risk and trauma of radical change. However, the ideas behind the goals may be largely unarticulated during the early stages of a revolution. When finally formalized, the ideology that emerges may be an ex post facto ("after the fact") justification of what has already happened. When Thomas Jefferson wrote the American Declaration of Independence in 1776, he, in many ways, was justifying what already had happened. By then the American colonists had broken with the king and Parliament, the Minutemen had engaged the Redcoats in Massachusetts; the Declaration was but the final, legalistic break.

In truth, most revolutions—as in the case of the French and the American revolutions, both of which inspired Latin Americans of the era—embody concepts and ideas already articulated by middle-class thinkers and then gain momentum through spontaneous acts by the masses that are not necessarily tied to those ideas. The Latin American Wars of Independence were no different.

Ideologically, the Wars of Independence were born in the eighteenth-century Age of Enlightenment, also sometimes called the Age of Reason or the Age of Democratic Revolution. New ideas challenged old truths and institutions accepted for centuries in Europe. Some ideas were profoundly subversive, like the notion that the ultimate authority in society resides in the people, not with king or emperor. This idea, called popular sovereignty, denied the divine right of monarchs to rule absolutely.

The idea that all people are created equal in nature and possess equal rights furthermore subverted the privileged nobility, whose rank and power derived from birth. The church as the guardian of morality and the enforcer of social order came under attack by enlightened philosophers who favored reason and rejected religious wisdom found in ancient ecclesiastical manuscripts. Instead of an omnipotent god, the Deists, as they were called, envisioned a benign divine presence who had set things in motion but who allowed people freedom to follow their own destinies. This secular trend undermined traditional authority in society.

In science, the new thinkers challenged old knowledge even more decisively. Prior to the Enlightenment, scientific knowledge had been thought to be

complete, immutable, and unchanging; it was usually acquired through study of the teachings of Aristotle and his followers. The enlightened scientists, in contrast, studied nature itself for answers to their questions. For example, Aristotelian thinkers "knew" that the earth was the center of the universe. As this was not borne out by scientific observation, it was cast out by enlightened thinkers. They taught inquiring modern society to observe, to classify, to search for rules in nature rather than blindly to accept hand-me-down "knowledge."

In sum, new ways of thinking produced new points of view, new frames of reference, and new forms of behavior that challenged the old order.

The Enlightenment in the New World

The Enlightenment had considerable impact in the Spanish colonies, although at first it was more evident in philosophical and scientific thinking than in politics. People like the Mexican Antonio Alzate and the Peruvian Hipólito Unanue were committed to reason and progress as the passwords of a new age. They and others like them fostered scientific investigation in medicine, botany, and agriculture, for example. They saw these as useful tools for building a better society. Universities such as San Carlos of Guatemala became relatively open forums for the discussion and dissemination of the new ways, as did societies of civic-minded citizens, most often called Amigos del País (Friends of the Country).

The Spanish crown itself, especially under the enlightened monarch Charles III (1759–1788), encouraged efficiency and the application of enlightened principles in the management of its vast American empire. This had unforeseen consequences for the Spanish empire. Over the years, Creoles had been given, or had bought, access to governmental offices in the colonies from the lowest municipal posts to offices as high as judgeships on the prestigious *audiencias* (high courts with judicial and legislative powers). In the middle and late eighteenth century, the Spanish crown deliberately began to replace Creoles with native-born Spaniards, known as *peninsulares,* in many offices to help centralize and streamline the imperial administration. However wise and enlightened this was from the perspective of the Spanish crown, Creoles saw only an insensitive and offensive monarchy depriving them of their legitimate and hard-earned rights to be leaders in the colonies in favor of the foreign-born.

In this unsettled environment, it was not surprising that headier, more politically volatile facets of the Age of Reason fueled the imaginations of a few Creoles. Activists like Francisco de Miranda of Venezuela, Antonio Nariño of Colombia, Claudio Manuel da Costa of Brazil, and Francisco Javier Espejo of Ecuador immersed themselves in the ideas of the political Enlightenment and,

many years before the eruption of the wars, began to champion the cause of independence and liberty for their homelands. They are called precursors (forerunners) of the independence movement. Although few in number, they exercised a disproportionate influence. They forced their fellow Creoles to think in terms defined by the political Enlightenment, to look to the examples of the American and French revolutions. To them, the writings of the Baron de Montesquieu on the sovereignty of the people and of Jean Jacques Rousseau on the social contract were clarion calls to action.

Wealthy Creoles were not the only ones dissatisfied with the colonial systems of Spain and Portugal. Across the Caribbean and along the coast of Brazil, Afro-descended leaders, some slave but many free, accelerated plans for uprisings against planters and officials. They sought independence and self-government in order to create societies like those of Africa. The vast new arrival of Africans in the late eighteenth century meant that conspirators could recruit veteran soldiers, religious leaders, chieftains, and merchant-kings who enjoyed great prestige among the slave masses. Their uprisings were widespread, and in 1791 the greatest of all the slave revolts, that of Haiti, broke out and forever altered the fate of black people in the Americas. The man who ultimately commanded the victorious Haitian Revolution, former slave Toussaint L'Ouverture, became the most famous black man in the world, both feared and loved by millions and remembered for his fight—a fight that made Haiti the first independent nation-state in Latin America in 1804.

In the Andean highlands, as well, Indian and mestizo laborers and peasants chafed under the oppression of Spanish officials and priests. José Gabriel Condorcanqui, a mestizo descendant of the last Inca king, attempted to redress grievances peacefully through the judicial system. But, pushed by a long series of abuses of power by Spanish and Creole officials of his people, including labor demands and the loss of community lands, he took the ancestral name of Túpac Amaru II and launched the Great Andean Rebellion in 1780. Accompanying him in leading the rebellion was his wife, Micaela Bastidas. Bastidas married Condorcanqui in 1760. Identified in her marriage documents as the illegitimate daughter of Spanish parents, she nevertheless became a respected and capable leader in the rebellion. She played a central role in coordinating and commanding various aspects of the revolt itself, from communications and provisioning to troop movements and recruitment. She and other leaders, some of whom were also women, were caught between trying to motivate Indians to join their cause while also struggling to stop the movement from turning into a caste war targeting the Spanish, not the least because they wanted to attract mestizo and Creole support. Condorcanqui and his family, including Bastidas and a son, were captured and brutally executed in 1781. The rebellion was finally put down in 1783, at a loss of eighty thousand lives, and thereafter Spaniards in the Andes remained wary of further rebellions and bloodshed.[2]

Besides leaders such as L'Ouverture and Condorcanqui, dozens of others struggled to organize liberation movements. In the end, all of these early conspirators failed individually—most were executed or died in prison—yet they paved the way for victory by the next generation of leaders. These precursors are much revered in their countries today. Among the most famous were Hidalgo and José María Morelos of Mexico, Francisco Miranda of Venezuela, Claudio Manuel da Costa and Joaquim José da Silva Xavier (the famed Tiradentes) of Brazil, and Antonio Nariño of Colombia.

Creoles and *Peninsulares*

In the end, wealthy white Creoles led the movements to separate their lands from Spain during the Wars of Independence. Besides the ideology of the Enlightenment, other, more immediate considerations propelled them to action. A diverse set of economic, ethnic, and nationalistic circumstances added to the general level of discontent and frustration among the Latin American population.

Although no one element was more important than another in bringing about the wars, the antagonism and bitter feelings between American Creoles and those Spaniards born in the Iberian Peninsula (*peninsulares*) who came to Latin America either as government administrators or in private enterprise helped ignite the emotional tinderbox that flared in 1810. Creoles felt abused and offended by peninsulares, whom they increasingly viewed as foreigners in the Americas. Peninsulares, in turn, tended to be contemptuous of Creoles, who, in a world dominated by an obsession with purity of blood, they viewed as tainted by virtue of their American birth. This sense of racial and social difference hardened over the years. Creoles claimed that their legitimate aspirations, not only to hold office, as discussed previously, but also to trade freely and to be full citizens within the Spanish empire, were circumscribed and frustrated by an imperial bureaucracy that invariably favored Spaniards over Creoles. Out of this discontent, a sense of Latin American nationalism evolved, a feeling of distinctiveness that the Peruvian historian Jorge Basadre labeled the "*conciencia de sí*," or national self-awareness.[3]

Issues of Trade and Commerce

Creole aspirations to independence were also fed by bread-and-butter issues—issues that added to the already smoldering jealousy and antagonisms marking social and political relations between Creoles and peninsulares. Creoles believed that the Spanish crown and peninsulares unjustifiably favored Spain at the expense of the colonies in matters of trade and commerce. Their dissatisfaction took many forms. In some regions, like those that produced agricultural products for export, Creole landowners wanted free trade and an end to the system of Spanish monopoly and controls. In other regions, the interior provinces of Ecuador and Peru, for example, where local manufacturers had to compete with imported products, Creoles wanted more protection. And in regions like Argentina, there were both factions wanting free trade and factions wanting protection. Argentines in the coastal provinces, especially Buenos Aires, produced many cattle products for export and desired free trade; their brethren in the interior produced wines and other products marketed internally and wished to be protected from cheap European imports that undermined their livelihood. Whatever the Spanish crown did was bound to rub someone the wrong way, further eroding loyalties to the monarchy. The friction caused by these commercial differences was increased by the other circumstances that estranged Creoles from peninsulares.

Creoles and Spaniards

Although the difference in temperament and character between Spaniards and Creoles, and between the different American peoples, was already deeply marked at the end of the seventeenth century, its consequences only began to emerge during the eighteenth century. The mutual antipathy between Spaniards and Creoles blossomed forth with unwonted vigor from the beginning of that century onwards . . . Spaniards and Creoles were linked by their feelings of loyalty and respect for the king; but they hated one another. In 1748 Jorge Juan and Antonio de Ulloa remarked in their *Noticias secretas de América:* "To be a European, or *chapetón*, is cause enough for hostility to the Creoles, and to have been born in the Indies is sufficient reason for hating Europeans. This ill-will reaches such a pitch that in some ways it surpasses the rabid hatred which two countries in open war feel for one another, since, while with these there is usually a limit to vituperation and insult, with the Spaniards of Peru you will find none. And far from this discord being alleviated by closer contact between the two parties, by family ties, and by other means which might be thought likely to promote unity and friendship, what happens is the reverse—discord grows constantly worse, and the greater the contact between Spaniard and Creole the fiercer the fires of dissension; rancor is constantly renewed, and the fire becomes a blaze that cannot be put out."

Jorge Juan and Antonio de Ulloa, *Noticias secretas de América*, as quoted in Francisco A. Encina, *Historia de Chile desde la prehistoria hasta 1891* (Santiago: Editorial Nascimento, 1941–1952), vol. 6, pp. 7–15, which in turn appears in R. A. Humphreys and John Lynch, eds., *The Origins of the Latin American Revolutions, 1808–1826* (New York: Knopf, 1965), pp. 245–46.

The Invasion of Spain

Creole exasperation with overbearing peninsular officials was all the greater because Creoles did not see the geopolitical units of the New World as lesser lands subject to Spain. Just as Spain itself was a group of ancient kingdoms (like Valencia, Castile, Aragon, Granada) united dynastically by their allegiance to the same crown, so the New World with its various administrative divisions (Guatemala, Mexico, Peru, Venezuela, Ecuador, and so on) was conceived of theoretically as a roster of new kingdoms, equal with one another and with their fellow kingdoms in Spain. Each owed allegiance to the crown, and none was subordinate to any other kingdom. Their allegiance to the crown, moreover, was highly personal. That is, it ran from the kingdom to the person of the king, and not to Spain itself. As the nineteenth century dawned, King Charles IV sat on the Spanish throne. His son Ferdinand was his heir apparent. In Europe, by 1800 the armies of the brilliant and ambitious Napoleon Bonaparte were on the march, building an empire across the continent.

In 1807 and 1808, Napoleon's army invaded what by then had become a weakened Portugal and Spain. A British fleet rescued the Portuguese royal family and court and whisked them off to safety in Brazil just days before French forces occupied Lisbon. Spain, too, was overrun. Amid popular unrest, King Charles IV was forced to abdicate in favor of Prince Ferdinand. Both were invited to France, where they remained hostage. Napoleon then crowned his brother, Joseph Bonaparte, as king of Spain. The curtain was up on a great drama; the actors were already in place. A usurper, Joseph Bonaparte, sat on the throne of the kidnapped King Ferdinand VII. Spain's new leader and his government lacked legitimacy. What were Spain's colonies to do?

On May 2, 1808, the Spanish people in Madrid rose up spontaneously against the French army of occupation and the French Bonaparte king. This was the opening salvo of a civil war that lasted almost six years, until Napoleon's empire collapsed and Ferdinand returned to Spain. Other Spaniards formed juntas, or committees, to work for the expulsion of the French and to carry on the affairs of state in Ferdinand's name during his exile. The most important of these was the Central Junta of Seville.

This Spanish junta asked the colonies to join them in resisting aggression. Consistent with their concept of co-kingdoms, the Creoles demanded equality and equal representation. Indeed, none of the Spanish juntas were willing to concede that.

Local juntas sprang up in the colonies—in La Paz, Quito, Santiago, and elsewhere—to consider governing local affairs in the absence of the legitimate monarch, Ferdinand VII. These juntas, largely controlled by Creoles acting through their municipal governing bodies, the *cabildos,* were little disposed to obey self-appointed juntas in Spain that sought to govern the whole empire in Ferdinand VII's absence. When the Central Junta that convened in Spain

attempted to legislate and govern the American kingdoms, the Creoles rejected its authority. They would obey the king but not a group of Spaniards who purported to rule in the name of the king. This was often a ruse, but it maintained a semblance of legality.

In 1810 the Central Junta was replaced by the convocation of a Spanish parliament, the Cortes, which convened in September in the ancient port city of Cádiz. It included representatives from the colonies. The Cortes decreed radical reforms, such as the equality of all Americans, a free press, and abolishment of Indian tribute (tax paid in coin or kind). But the Cortes, radical and liberal in its makeup and actions, came too late.

Between 1808 and 1810, Creoles in Latin America responded to the crisis and the breakdown of authority in Spain by taking matters into their own hands. Across Latin America, they broke with formal Spanish authority, which was usually represented by a viceroy or captain-general in the Americas who now appeared to stand for the usurper Joseph Bonaparte. Creoles determined to govern themselves in Ferdinand VII's name and to await his restoration.

But beneath these acts lay the long history of Latin American grievances. Dissatisfaction had been given ideological form by the Enlightenment, while the crown and peninsulares had thoroughly antagonized Creoles for decades by denying them what they considered legitimate opportunities. Napoleon's invasion of Spain, by suspending colonial loyalty to the Spanish state, touched off the fuse to the powder keg. Isolated military confrontations soon erupted into war.

For fifteen years the Wars of Independence raged across Latin America from the northern deserts of Mexico to the cold, snowy passes of the Andes Mountains, which divide Chile from Argentina in South America. Spain's effort to maintain its rich American empire was overwhelmed by its colonies' fights for autonomy and freedom from colonialism. Spain was pushed violently out of mainland America, and more than a dozen new nations emerged, committed to independence. Portugal, too, was pushed out of Brazil, but the almost peaceful path toward independence in Brazil differed markedly from the long and violent wars of its Spanish-American neighbors.

Although independence was the final result throughout the former colonies, each region followed a distinctive path after 1810. Some, like Mexico, exploded in an ethnic and social revolution. Many Indians, angered by centuries of oppression and inspired by the rhetoric and passion of the moment, waged war against not only Spaniards but also against all whites, including Creoles. In other colonies, like Argentina, the struggle was relatively bloodless, and independence came easily, although deep divisions among Creoles in that region created unique problems.

Thus, as civil war engulfed Spain after 1808, soaking up its energies, the Latin American colonies took things into their own hands. There was little that Spain could do as Creoles and Spaniards in Latin America jockeyed for position all the way from Argentina to Mexico during this temporary, but crucial,

vacuum of power. Matters were complicated by other social, political, ethnic, and economic factors. Perhaps no situation was more complicated than the confusion that reigned in Mexico after 1810.

MEXICO: THE POWDER KEG EXPLODES

In September 1810 a Creole plot to overthrow the viceroy was revealed, and the conspirators were warned to flee for their lives. But one of them, a priest named Miguel Hidalgo y Costilla, decided to go ahead on his own accord. In the dawn hours of September 16, 1810, he sounded the call for arms at his parish church in Dolores.

Mexico now celebrates its independence on the anniversary of this day. Father Hidalgo's "Grito de Dolores" called on his parishioners, mostly Indians, to overthrow "bad government and the Spanish." He tempered his challenge with the slogan "Long Live Ferdinand VII," professing loyalty to the captive monarch while advocating the overthrow of Spanish government in Mexico. In this, he represented a sentiment that was widespread among Mexican Creoles, who might have risen in his support if not for a major miscalculation. What Hidalgo did not foresee was the smoldering anger of Indians in Mexico, which transformed this initial phase of the Mexican independence movement into a violent bloodbath. The Creole leaders of the insurrection witnessed Indians rise against *all* white oppressors, Creole as well as Spaniard.

Mexico, in fact, was a nation of unequals. A white population of about 1 million people dominated the more numerous Indians (about 60 percent of the total population) and mestizos, or people of mixed racial backgrounds, as well as a smaller population of Afro-descended people who had arrived largely as slaves centuries earlier. The castes were separated by cultural and social differences, but mestizaje, or the spatial and sexual mixture of peoples leading to new and blended cultural forms, led to great fluidity.[4] Nevertheless, colonial-era laws, which outlined distinct rights and responsibilities for each caste, defined sharp legal distinctions between different races that, reinforced by beliefs about racial difference and inequality, ensured white elite dominance. Violent extremes in wealth and social position characterized Mexico on the eve of independence, and indigenous protests against tribute, loss of land, and other injustices were common in the 1700s.

Droughts, loss of land, unemployment, and rising food prices added burdens to the Indian population. When Father Hidalgo, who spoke the Indian dialect and sympathized with the plight of his parishioners, issued the Grito de Dolores, the nearby countryside ignited. Indians and mestizos flocked to his cause. The beloved Mexican saint, the Virgin of Guadalupe, was adopted as the patroness of the movement, and before long a ragtag army of sixty thousand was sweeping across the countryside on its way to Guanajuato, a major city in the region.

Inequality in Mexico

Baron Alexander von Humboldt, the German naturalist who traveled through New Spain at the end of the eighteenth century, observed that a "monstrous inequality of rights and fortunes" characterized Mexico. Manuel Abad y Queipo, bishop-elect of Michoacán, identified two groups of late colonial society: "those who have nothing and those who have everything. . . . There are no gradations of man: they are all either rich or poor, noble or infamous."

Alexander von Humboldt, *Political Essay on the Kingdom of New Spain,* trans. John Black (London: Longman, Hurst, Rees, Orme and Brown, 1811).

What happened at Guanajuato was burned into the memories of Spaniards and Creoles alike. Hidalgo's army stormed the Alhóndiga, or granary, where the Spaniards and some Creoles had taken refuge, and massacred the defenders. Pillaging and looting ensued as the rebels lashed out at all whites (although Spaniards suffered more than Creoles).

To Creoles, whether radical or conservative, pro-Hidalgo or anti-Hidalgo, the Guanajuato massacre signaled an unacceptable direction in the independence movement. It threatened their place in society as leaders and put in jeopardy the entire structure of Mexican society, based on the white Creole elite's privileged position. Thus, a great many Creoles and Spaniards alike turned on Hidalgo and his undisciplined mestizo army.

As the revolution proceeded, Hidalgo's decrees to his followers became more and more radical and threatening. He abolished the hated tribute, a centuries-old institution that forced Indians to pay a tax simply because they were Indians. Other acts, such as abolishing slavery and allowing his armed followers to slaughter Spaniards, further alienated Creoles from the Hidalgo revolt. Perhaps it was inevitable that this first great, spontaneous outburst of desire for freedom and justice would be crushed. It was simply too disorganized and too radical to win the support of the Creole elite. Many of them were certainly in favor of independence, but they were unwilling to yield to Hidalgo's radical demands for social and economic justice.

By early 1811 the small royalist army near Mexico City, reinforced and supported by Creole militia, stopped Hidalgo's followers, now numbering eighty thousand, in a decisive battle. Hidalgo retreated, wreaking havoc in Valladolid and Guadalajara as he went. But his army gradually disintegrated under constant blows from the disciplined Spanish-Creole troops. Some months later, Hidalgo himself was captured while trying to escape to the north and was executed. This first bloody phase of the Mexican Wars of Independence came to an end with Hidalgo's death; but the movement that he sparked was by no means dead.

Miguel Hidalgo, Revolutionary

"[There were] two Hidalgos, the symbolic figure and the man," wrote Lesley Byrd Simpson. "Of the two the man is infinitely the more interesting."

> Hidalgo was not a great man before he was caught up in the insurrection and placed at the head of it. He had lived for fifty-seven years without achieving more than moderate distinction. He taught Latin, theology, and philosophy for some years at the ancient (1540) College of San Nicolás in Valladolid (Morelia, Michoacán), and rose to be rector of it. His unorthodox teaching and his reading of prohibited books was resented by the faculty, and in 1792 he resigned from the College and accepted the curacy of Colima. Ten years later he was posted to the parish of Dolores, Guanajuato. . . .
>
> Hidalgo loved words and had the power to move people. He certainly thought he had been relegated to the unimportant parish of Dolores because he was a Creole—in which he may have been right. Then, as he saw the better posts in the Church go to men who had no greater recommendation than to have been born in Spain, his sense of injury grew to a bitter hatred of all things Spanish. His personal grievances and the miseries of his country he laid to the diabolism of the gachupines [peninsular Spaniards]. As his phobia matured, he practiced a number of innocent compensations. He read forbidden books; he raised forbidden grapes and pressed out forbidden wine; he planted forbidden mulberry trees and spun forbidden silk . . . [then] the Literary and Social Club of Querétaro . . . offered him an outlet for his forbidden learning and eloquence. He acquired a taste and discovered a talent for conspiracy. The Rights of Man, the Social Contract, and the rest of the intoxicating doctrines of the French Revolution became woven in his mind into a beautiful fabric of the perfect republic, from which gachupines should be excluded.

Lesley Byrd Simpson, *Many Mexicos,* 4th ed., revised (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1971 [1941]), pp. 209–10.

In 1811 another priest (and a far better general), José María Morelos, assumed the leadership of the independence movement and continued pushing for Mexico's freedom. Meanwhile, in South America, the greatest liberator of all Latin America rose in Venezuela like a comet. Simón Bolívar left a trail of brilliance, creativity, and audacity that still inspires the modern people of Latin America.

CONCLUSIONS AND ISSUES

The Wars of Independence evolved from a number of internal and external causes, some related, some independent of one another. At the top of the list were the grievances that Creoles held against peninsular Spaniards. Deep-seated hostility between the two classes of rulers ultimately led Creoles to break their three-hundred-year loyalty to Spain and to move the colonies toward independence.

Other rebellions and revolutions in the Americas either inspired or shocked Latin American Creoles into action in the early nineteenth century. Certainly the American Revolution of 1776 and the French Revolution of 1789, both driven by ideas born in the Age of Enlightenment, encouraged Creoles to emulate their example. But the Haitian Revolution of 1791, with its deep-seated racial divisions, horrified Creoles, who were accustomed to governing over a subordinate population of Indians and blacks. When Indians and mestizos did join the revolution—such as in Mexico in 1810—they shocked independence-minded Creoles into rethinking the perils of true freedom if it were ever to become a reality.

Finally, the events in Spain revealed the weakness of the monarchy and helped precipitate the independence movements. Napoleon's invasion of 1807, the installation of his brother Joseph as the king of Spain, the Spanish resistance, the rise of revolutionary juntas to resist Napoleon, and the convocation of the liberal Cortes in Cádiz all inspired Creoles to take matters into their own hands. It was the beginning of the end of the Spanish American empire.

Discussion Questions

How did the Age of Enlightenment influence the origins of the Wars of Independence?
What were the grievances of Creoles against Spain and its representatives (peninsulares) in Latin America?
What economic factors divided Spain from its colonies by the early 1800s?
How did events in Europe, especially Napoleon's invasion of Spain and Portugal, spark the Wars of Independence in Latin America?
Why did Mexico's Indians support Father Hidalgo's Grito de Dolores?
Why did Mexico's Creoles ultimately refuse to support the revolt led by Father Hidalgo?

Timeline

1780–83	Rebellion of Túpac Amaru II
1791–1804	Haitian Revolution
1804	Haitian independence
1807–14	Napoleon invades Portugal and Spain
1810	Grito de Dolores
1810–21	Mexican independence movement

Keywords

Age of Reason/Age of Democratic Revolution
Creoles
Enlightenment
Grito de Dolores
Haitian Revolution
juntas
mestizaje
peninsulares
popular sovereignty
Wars of Independence