

The Consolidation of Latin America, 1830–1920

From Colonies to Nations

- Latin American *creoles* were increasingly critical of the policies of their home countries. Criticism was also voiced by the mass of their fellow colonists.
- The American and French revolutions inspired revolutionaries in Latin America. The rebellion of Haiti, led by **Toussaint L'Ouverture**, impressed both those who desired change and those who feared violent upheaval. The trigger for change was French intervention in the Iberian peninsula. Napoleon put in his own rulers, raising questions of legitimacy.
- Three centers of independence movements emerged. In Mexico, **Father Miguel de Hidalgo** raised support among Indians and mestizos. Under **Augustín de Iturbide**, the creoles joined the uprising and in 1824 Mexico gained its independence. Led by conservative creoles, a monarchy was established. In South America and the Caribbean, colonies gained independence in reverse order of colonization: Argentina and Venezuela were first, Cuba and Puerto Rico last. In the north, the new nation of **Gran Columbia** was formed, led by **Simon Bolívar**. In Buenos Aires, **José de San Martín** led the movement for independence of the United Provinces of the Rio de La Plata. San Martín then moved to Peru. All of Spanish South America was independent by 1825.
- Brazil stood apart from the rest of the continent because of its size and economic clout. Its leaders feared that a push for independence would be accompanied by a slave uprising. However, the Portuguese royal family arrived in 1807, fleeing Napoleon's invasion of the peninsula. **Dom João VI** ruled from Brazil until 1820. He then left his son Pedro as regent and returned to Portugal. In 1822, Pedro claimed the title of constitutional emperor of an independent Brazil.

New Nations Confront Old and New Problems

- The leaders of the newly independent Latin American nations had many ideals in common. Division appeared, however, concerning the role of the church and slavery. The economies of some countries were deeply dependant on slave labor. The place of Indian populations was another divisive issue. The society of *castas* had not disappeared.
- Politically, Latin America can be divided into regions. Mexico chose monarchy, until the republic was established in 1823. The rest of Central America formed a short-lived union. By 1838, however, the union dissolved. The Caribbean islands slowly gained their independence. Gran Columbia fell apart in 1830, the

year of Bolívar's death. Similarly, the United Provinces of Rio de La Plata, led by Argentina, fragmented. Peru and Bolivia tried to unite, under **Andrés Santa Cruz**, but then went their own ways. Chile maintained an independent course. Huge distances and geographic barriers made unions difficult.

- Long wars facilitated the rise of **caudillos**. Their bases of support varied from country to country. Rafael Carrera, ruler of Guatemala, was a staunch advocate of the Indian majority. Everywhere, struggles emerged between **centralists** and **federalists**, and between liberals and conservatives. In general, liberals and conservatives rallied against and for the Catholic Church, respectively. Across Latin America, the place of the church was a key issue, although the centrality of Christianity was not questioned. Liberal and conservative parties emerged everywhere. Still, it was the individual leadership of such men as **Juan Manuel de Rosas** and **Antonio López de Santa Anna** that drew adherents. Latin America was thus a volatile mix for decades after independence. Rapid changes brought down governments, although some areas such as Brazil were relatively stable, politically.

Latin American Economies and World Markets, 1820–1870

- As Latin American colonies became independent, they entered international affairs. Spain attempted to turn back the clock and seize control, while Britain and the United States supported independence. In the **Monroe Doctrine**, the latter claimed that the Western Hemisphere was off limits to outside interference. Britain was nevertheless successful in becoming the dominant economic power in the region. Dependence on foreign producers weakened Latin American domestic industries.
- The period 1820–1850 saw economic stagnation in Latin America. Cuba, still under Spain, was the exception. From 1850, new exports—coffee, beef, hides, grains, and minerals—brought regrowth. At the same time, transportation problems were eased by railroads and steamships. Patterns of change include widespread attempts at liberal reforms, and a conservative response.
- The end of the 19th century saw a surge of reform. Based largely on **Auguste Comte's** ideology of **positivism**, the new wave was made possible by economic growth. Leaders focused on joining the ranks of capitalist countries. Post-1860 governments were generally led by men who believed in progress but distrusted their citizens. Economic growth benefited landowners at the expense of peasants.
- Mexico's new republic was based on a constitution inspired by those of France, the United States and Spain. However, the place of Mexico's large Indian population was unresolved. Santa Anna, a typical caudillo, depended on personal, autocratic rule. Mexico was threatened by foreign intervention. North American settlers in Texas attempted to gain autonomy. Suppressed by Santa Anna, the movement led to war with the United States. The **Mexican-American War** ended with the **Treaty of Guadalupe-Hidalgo** in 1848, in which Mexico lost half of its territory. Santa Anna now faced political challenges, especially by **Benito Juárez**, a Zapotec Indian. **La Reforma** brought in liberal reforms and a new constitution. However, Juárez's attempt at land distribution backfired, and

Indians were dispossessed of what little remained to them. A conservative backlash again followed. Napoleon III was asked for support and **Maximilian von Habsburg** took the title emperor. The emperor was assassinated, and Juárez took office again. He was the central figure in Mexican politics until his death in 1872, when Porfirio Díaz succeeded him.

- Argentina's attempt to dominate the United Province of Rio de la Plata failed when the union dissolved. Liberal reforms and conservative responses followed, as in Mexico. Juan Manuel de Rosas, a federalist, supported ranchers and merchants. But his despotic leadership roused a coalition that forced him from power in 1852. Influenced by Juan Bautista Alberdi, a new compromise constitution was promulgated. The **Argentine Republic** began a period of growth, while presidents pushed reforms similar to Mexico's Reforma. Economic prosperity was built largely on ranching. Victory over Indians to the south solidified Argentine feelings of achievement.
- While Brazil was stable for much of the 19th century, it had not resolved critical issues. Dom Pedro I abdicated in favor of his son in 1831. The regency that followed was divided by revolts. Dom Pedro II began his personal rule in 1840. Coffee plantations—**fazendas**—came to dominate export trade. Coffee growing depended on slave labor. A growing infrastructure opened the interior of the country, while growing professional groups, and working and middle classes changed the political makeup of the country. Large numbers of immigrants allowed the abolition of slavery in 1888. This, along with other changes, reduced support for the monarchy. Pedro II was deposed in 1889. All of these changes brought dislocation for some groups, provoking backlash uprisings.

Societies in Search of Themselves

- As Latin American countries freed themselves of Spain and Portugal, they were more open to other influences. European culture was popular, influencing literature and the arts. Romanticism inspired the works of António Gonçalves Dias and Martín Fierro. Later in the century, realism was more influential, with novelists depicting the bleaker side of life. The culture of the mass of Latin Americans showed great continuity.
- Social changes were slow in coming. Women gained little ground, either at home or as professionals. An important exception was in schools, where girls as well as boys received public education. The schools also created a demand for teachers, which women often filled. The society of *castas* remained largely in place. Indians were often at odds with central governments, in spite of some attempts to better their situation. Politics and the economy were still controlled by a small group of white leaders.

The Great Boom, 1880–1920

- The decades between 1880 and 1920 saw enormous economic growth in Latin America. Based primarily on exports, it was supported by a growing alliance between established wealth and new urban leaders. In each country, a specialty crop in high demand brought in plentiful revenue, but made the national economies dependent on international markets. Moreover, neighbors went to

war to control key commodities. Rapid expansion in the economy drew foreign investors, creating another area of dependency.

- Mexico and Argentina illustrate responses to economic expansion. Porfirio Díaz was elected president of Mexico in 1876. Centralization allowed the building of an industrial infrastructure. Positivists, **científicos**, influenced Díaz's policies. Progress came at the expense of improvements in the rural sector. Díaz ruled for 35 years, during which critics were methodically suppressed. Argentina took a different approach. Buenos Aires dominated, with one fourth of the national population. European influence was extensive, producing a distinctive culture. Socialist and anarchist groups emerged, inspiring strikes and walkouts. A Radical party came to power in 1912, demonstrating the flexibility of Argentina's political structure.
- Following the end of the American Civil War in 1865, the United States was increasingly involved in Latin America. U.S. investors were heavily involved in Cuba's sugar exports. The **Spanish American War** was fought over Spain's remaining colonies of Puerto Rico and Cuba. The war ended with American occupation of the two islands. The United States supported Panamanian independence, and then gained rights over the **Panama Canal**. While the completion of the canal was a source of pride for the United States, Latin Americans viewed the expanding power to the north with suspicion.

Multiple-Choice Questions

1. Which group led the independence movements in most of Latin America?
 - (A) Spanish and Portuguese officials born in the Iberian peninsula
 - (B) American-born whites or creoles
 - (C) Indians
 - (D) Mestizos, or people of mixed Indian and European descent
 - (E) Mulattos, or people of mixed African and European descent
2. Haiti's independence differed from other Latin American movements in that
 - (A) it began as a slave revolt against slave owners and led to independence.
 - (B) the British landed troops to assist with the movement for independence.
 - (C) the United States supported the Haitians in their revolution with supplies.
 - (D) France and Napoleon welcomed and recognized Haiti's independence.
 - (E) Spain supported the movement for independence.
3. Leaders of Latin American independence revolts were generally
 - (A) monarchists, who wanted monarchs to govern their states.
 - (B) radicals, who supported the ideas of the French Jacobins.
 - (C) moderates, who wanted some democratic institutions but feared the masses.
 - (D) liberals, who wanted universal male suffrage.
 - (E) conservative republicans, who favored the church and rich landowners.
4. Brazil's independence differed from the rest of Latin America in that it was
 - (A) the result of a successful slave rebellion.
 - (B) not supported by the locally born European population.
 - (C) much earlier than the other Latin American revolutions.
 - (D) declared and led by the Portuguese regent in Brazil, who became emperor.
 - (E) extremely violent with conflicting armies led by different factions.

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5. Throughout Latin America, the Indian population
 - (A) generally supported the new republican governments.
 - (B) remained largely outside the national political life.
 - (C) revolted against Europeans and later the new governments.
 - (D) acquired rights in some countries but not all.
 - (E) was indifferent to whoever ruled.
 6. The new maps and divisions of Latin American countries after 1820 reflected
 - (A) old Indian languages and cultures.
 - (B) racial and linguistic divisions.
 - (C) no relationship to old colonial boundaries.
 - (D) geographic barriers, the great distances and isolated regions.
 - (E) years of warfare between the newly independent states.
 7. What statement about 19th-century Latin American politics is a fact?
 - (A) Centralists supported local autonomy and states' rights.
 - (B) Liberals wanted a centralized government with absolute control.
 - (C) Federalists wanted tax and commercial policies set by local governments.
 - (D) Conservatives supported equal rights and the franchise for all citizens.
 - (E) Most Latin Americans were monarchists and wanted royal dynasties.
 8. The Monroe Doctrine
 - (A) was supported by Europeans eager to acquire lands in Latin America.
 - (B) supported a return of Latin America to Spanish and Portuguese control.
 - (C) encouraged European intervention in Latin America.
 - (D) was initially resented by Latin Americans, who felt the United States was a bully.
 - (E) was proclaimed by the United States and supported by British navies.
 9. Brazil was different than most Latin American nations in the 19th century for all of these reasons EXCEPT:
 - (A) it was a monarchy until 1889.
 - (B) Africans, mestizos, and mulattos outnumbered people of European descent.
 - (C) Brazil remained a centralist state with few local autonomous institutions.
 - (D) slavery was only abolished in 1888.
 - (E) Brazil experienced high immigration from Europe after 1850.
 10. After independence, Latin American nations
 - (A) emancipated women and granted them rights denied during colonial times.
 - (B) ended legal systems of discrimination but strong social barriers persisted.
 - (C) gave Indians the right to reclaim their lost lands.
 - (D) prohibited educational opportunities for women and Indians.
 - (E) saw increased conflict between the old, landed elite and the commercial middle classes.

Free-Response Question

What impacts of Spanish and Portuguese rule endured in Latin America in the post-colonial period?

ANSWERS AND EXPLANATIONS

Multiple-Choice Questions

- **1. (B) is correct.** The independence movements were largely influenced by the ideas of the Enlightenment and the French and American revolutions, which were most influential with creoles.
- **2. (A) is correct.** Haiti's independence was gained not by creoles inspired by ideology, but by a successful slave revolt.
- **3. (C) is correct.** Those who called for independence in Latin America feared unleashing the uncertain political power of large groups, such as had occurred in Haiti.
- **4. (D) is correct.** Independence in Brazil was won under the leadership of the legitimate regent, on the advice of the monarch.
- **5. (B) is correct.** The political changes that came with independence made little change to the place of Indians, who remained outside the political system.
- **6. (D) is correct.** Geography played a large role in forming the boundaries of the new nations, because of the immense distances between population centers.
- **7. (C) is correct.** The other answers are false, while C describes the Federalist platforms.
- **8. (E) is correct.** Although the Monroe Doctrine was in a sense anti-European, the British supported it because it would allow them to trade in Latin America.
- **9. (C) is correct.** All are true except C; Brazil's monarchy ruled strongly from the center out.
- **10. (B) is correct.** Although legal barriers were generally abolished, social divisions lasted into postcolonial Latin America.

Free-Response Essay Sample Response

What impacts of Spanish and Portuguese rule endured in Latin America in the post-colonial period?

The colonial legacy included social barriers, and economic patterns that lasted long after independence was gained. The plantations and mining industries that were the main economic activity of the Spanish and Portuguese continued uninterrupted in many countries. Argentina is an example, however, of a country that made some changes, with the move to cattle ranching as refrigerated transportation became available. The hierarchical society based on race was perhaps the most profound legacy, since it affected politics and economic developments, as well as social interactions. The distinction between creole, mulatto, mestizo, Indian and black created nearly impermeable barriers that, in turn, created political divisions.