

LESSON 4

Nation Building in Latin America

ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS

- How can innovation affect ways of life?
- How does revolution bring about political and economic change?

READING HELPDESK

Academic Vocabulary

- intervention
- erupt

Content Vocabulary

- creole
- peninsulare
- mestizo
- caudillo
- cash crop

TAKING NOTES

Key Ideas and Details

Categorizing Use a graphic organizer like this one to record places where revolts occurred and the leaders and the outcomes of these revolts. Add rows as needed.

Revolts in Latin America

Place	Leader	Outcome

IT MATTERS BECAUSE

The success of the American Revolution and the ideals of the French Revolution spread throughout Latin America. One by one, the Portuguese and Spanish colonies rebelled and won their independence. Political independence, however, was achieved more easily in the new republics than political stability.

Nationalist Revolts

GUIDING QUESTION *How were nationalist revolts in Latin America influenced by the French and American Revolutions?*

By the end of the eighteenth century, the new political ideals stemming from the successful American Revolution were beginning to influence the creole elites. **Creoles** were the descendants of Europeans who had permanently settled in Latin America. They controlled land and business and were attracted to the principles of equality of all people in the eyes of the law, free trade, and a free press. The creoles especially disliked the domination of their trade by Spain and Portugal.

The creole elites soon began to use their new ideas to denounce the rule of the Spanish and Portuguese monarchs and their **peninsulares** (Spanish and Portuguese officials who resided temporarily in Latin America for political and economic gain and then returned to their homeland). The creole elites resented the *peninsulares*, who dominated Latin America and drained the region of its wealth.

At the beginning of the nineteenth century, Napoleon's wars provided the creoles with an opportunity for change. When Napoleon overthrew the monarchies of Spain and Portugal, the authority of the Spaniards and Portuguese in their colonial empires was weakened. Then, between 1807 and 1825, a series of revolts enabled most of Latin America to become independent.

Revolt in Haiti

An unusual revolution occurred before the main independence movements. Saint Domingue—on the island of Hispaniola—was a French sugar colony. François-Dominique Toussaint-Louverture (too • SAN • loo • VUHR • TYUR) led more than 100,000 enslaved people in revolt. They seized control of all of Hispaniola. On January 1, 1804, the western part of Hispaniola, now called Haiti, became the first independent state in Latin America.

Revolt in Mexico

Beginning in 1810, Mexico also experienced a revolt. The first real hero of Mexican independence was Miguel Hidalgo. A parish priest, Hidalgo lived in a village about 100 miles (160 km) from Mexico City.

Hidalgo had studied the French Revolution. He roused the local Native Americans and **mestizos**, people of mixed European and Native American descent, to free themselves from the Spanish: “Will you be free? Will you make the effort to recover from the hated Spaniards the lands stolen from your forefathers, three hundred years ago?”

On September 16, 1810, Hidalgo led this ill-equipped army of thousands of Native Americans and mestizos in an attack against the Spaniards. His forces were soon crushed, and a military court later sentenced Hidalgo to death. However, his memory lives on even today. In fact, September 16, the first day of the uprising, is Mexico’s Independence Day.

The role of Native Americans and mestizos in Mexico’s revolt against Spanish control frightened the creoles and the *peninsulares*. Afraid of the masses, they cooperated in defeating the revolutionary forces. Creoles and *peninsulares* then decided to overthrow Spanish rule. These conservative elites wanted an independent nation ruled by a monarch. They selected a creole military leader, Agustín de Iturbide (EE • tur • BEE • thay), to set up a new government. In 1821 Mexico declared its independence from Spain. Iturbide named himself emperor in 1822 but was deposed in 1823. Mexico then became a republic.

Revolts in South America

José de San Martín of Argentina and Simón Bolívar of Venezuela, both members of the creole elite, were hailed as the “Liberators of South America.” Bolívar began the struggle for Venezuelan independence in 1810. He also led revolts in New Granada (Colombia) and Ecuador. By 1819, these countries had formed Gran Colombia.

By 1810, the forces of San Martín had liberated Argentina from Spanish authority. In January 1817, San Martín led his forces over the Andes Mountains to attack the Spanish in Chile. The journey was an amazing feat. Two-thirds of the pack mules and horses died during the trip. Soldiers suffered from lack of oxygen and severe cold while crossing mountain passes more than two miles (3.2 km) above sea level.

The arrival of San Martín’s forces in Chile completely surprised the Spanish forces there. As a result, they were badly defeated at the Battle of Chacabuco on February 12, 1817. Chile declared its independence in 1818. In 1821 San Martín advanced on Lima, Peru, the center of Spanish authority.

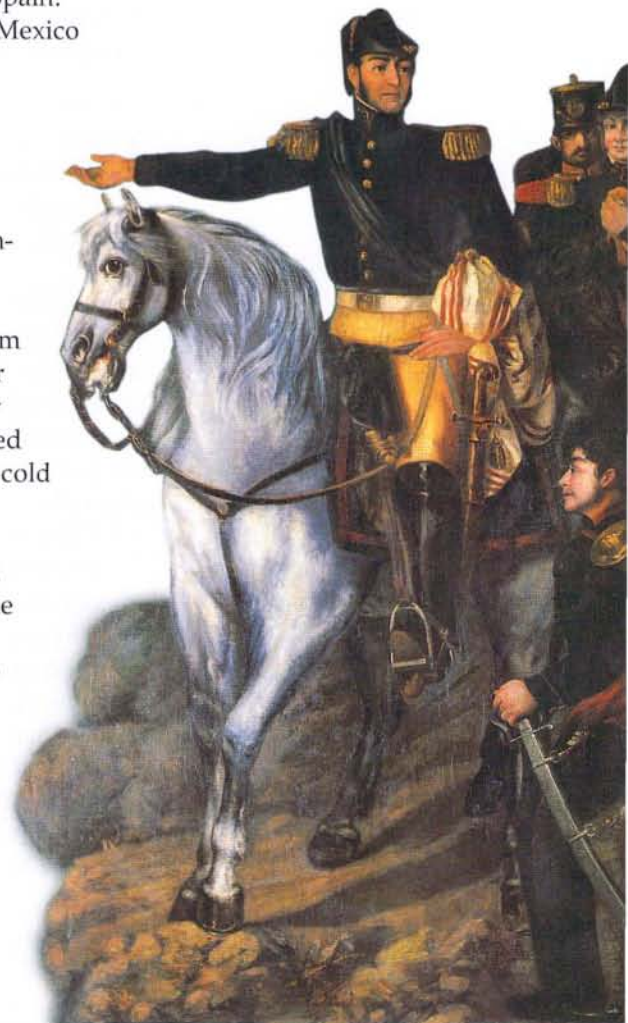
San Martín was convinced that he could not complete the liberation of Peru alone. He welcomed Simón Bolívar and his forces. Bolívar, the “Liberator of Venezuela,” took on the task of crushing the last significant Spanish army at Ayacucho on December 9, 1824.

creole a person of European descent born in Latin America and living there permanently

peninsulare a person born on the Iberian Peninsula; typically, a Spanish or Portuguese official who resided temporarily in Latin America for political and economic gain and then returned to Europe

mestizo a person of mixed European and Native American descent

▼ General San Martín after crossing the Andes in 1817



By the end of 1824, Peru, Uruguay, Paraguay, Colombia, Venezuela, Argentina, Bolivia, and Chile had become free of Spain. Earlier, in 1822, the prince regent of Brazil had declared Brazil's independence from Portugal. The Central American states had become independent in 1823. In 1838 and 1839, they divided into five republics: Guatemala, El Salvador, Honduras, Costa Rica, and Nicaragua.

Threats to Independence

In the early 1820s, one major threat remained to the newly won independence of the Latin American states. Members of the Concert of Europe favored using troops to restore Spanish control in Latin America. The British, who wished to trade with Latin America, disagreed. They proposed joint action with the United States against any European moves against Latin America.

Distrustful of British motives, James Monroe, the president of the United States, acted alone in 1823. In the Monroe Doctrine, he declared that the Americas were off limits for any colonizational efforts, and strongly warned against any European **intervention** in the Americas.

More important to Latin American independence than American words, however, was the British navy. Other European powers feared the power of the British navy, which stood between Latin America and any planned European invasion force.

READING PROGRESS CHECK

Comparing What do Hidalgo, José de San Martín, and Simón Bolívar have in common?

Nation Building

GUIDING QUESTIONS *What difficulties did newly independent Latin American countries face? How did economic dependence on foreign investment influence Latin America through the mid-1800s?*

The new Latin American nations faced a number of serious problems between 1830 and 1870. The wars for independence had resulted in a staggering loss of people, property, and livestock. During the course of the nineteenth century, the new Latin American nations would become economically dependent on Western nations once again.

Rule of the Caudillos and Inequality

Most of the new nations of Latin America began with republican governments, but they had no experience in self-rule. Soon after independence, strong leaders known as **caudillos** gained power.

Caudillos ruled chiefly by military force and were usually supported by the landed elites. Many kept the new national states together. Some were also modernizers who built roads and canals, ports, and schools. Others were destructive.

Mexican General Antonio López de Santa Anna, for example, ruled Mexico from 1833 to 1855. He misused state funds, halted reforms, and created chaos. In 1835 American settlers in the Mexican state of Texas revolted against Santa Anna's rule. Texas gained its independence in 1836 and U.S. statehood in 1845. War between Mexico and the United States soon followed (1846–1848). Mexico was defeated and lost almost one-half of its territory to the United States.

Fortunately for Mexico, Santa Anna's disastrous rule was followed by a period of reform from 1855 to 1876. This era was dominated by Benito Juárez, a Mexican national hero. The son of Native American peasants,

intervention the involvement in a situation to alter the outcome

caudillo in post-revolutionary Latin America, a strong leader who ruled chiefly by military force, usually with the support of the landed elite

President Juárez brought liberal reforms to Mexico, including separation of church and state, land distribution to the poor, and an educational system for all of Mexico.

Other caudillos, such as Juan Manuel de Rosas in Argentina, were supported by the masses. These caudillos became extremely popular and brought about radical change. Unfortunately, the caudillo's authority depended on his personal power. When he died or lost power, civil wars for control of the country often **erupted**.

A fundamental problem for all the new Latin American nations was the domination of society by the landed elites. Large estates remained a way of life in Latin America. By 1848, for example, the Sánchez Navarro family in Mexico possessed 17 estates made up of 16 million acres (6,480,000 ha).

Land remained the basis of wealth, social prestige, and political power throughout the nineteenth century. Landed elites ran governments, controlled courts, and kept a system of inexpensive labor. These landowners made enormous profits by growing single **cash crops**, such as coffee, for export. Most of the population had no land to grow basic food crops. As a result, the masses experienced dire poverty.

Imperialism and Economic Dependence

Political independence brought economic independence, but old patterns were quickly reestablished. Instead of Spain and Portugal, Great Britain now dominated the Latin American economy. British merchants moved into Latin America, and British investors poured in funds. Old trade relationships soon reemerged.

Latin America continued to serve as a source of raw materials and foodstuffs for the industrial nations of Europe and the United States. Exports included wheat, tobacco, wool, sugar, coffee, and hides. At the same time, Latin American countries imported finished consumer goods, especially textiles, and had limited industry.

The emphasis on exporting raw materials and importing finished products ensured the ongoing domination of the Latin American economy by foreigners. Latin American countries remained economically dependent on Western nations, even though they were no longer colonies.

READING PROGRESS CHECK

Identifying Central Issues Why did Latin American countries continue to experience economic dependence after achieving political independence?



▲ Mexican General Antonio López de Santa Anna

erupt to suddenly become active or violent

cash crop a crop that is grown for sale rather than for personal use

LESSON 4 REVIEW

Reviewing Vocabulary

1. **Explaining** Give examples of three cash crops that were grown in Latin America and explain why they were cash crops.

Using Your Notes

2. **Generalizing** Use your graphic organizer on the revolts in Latin America to write a paragraph that makes a generalization about the successes or failures of the revolutions.

Answering the Guiding Questions

3. **Drawing Conclusions** How were nationalist revolts in Latin America influenced by the French and American Revolutions?

4. **Gathering Information** What difficulties did newly independent Latin American countries face?

5. **Identifying Cause and Effect** How did economic dependence on foreign investment influence Latin America through the mid-1800s?

Writing Activity

6. **Narrative** Imagine you are a creole leader in Mexico at the time when Miguel Hidalgo is rousing the Native Americans and mestizos or leading them into battle. Write a diary entry that shows your feelings about the events you witness.