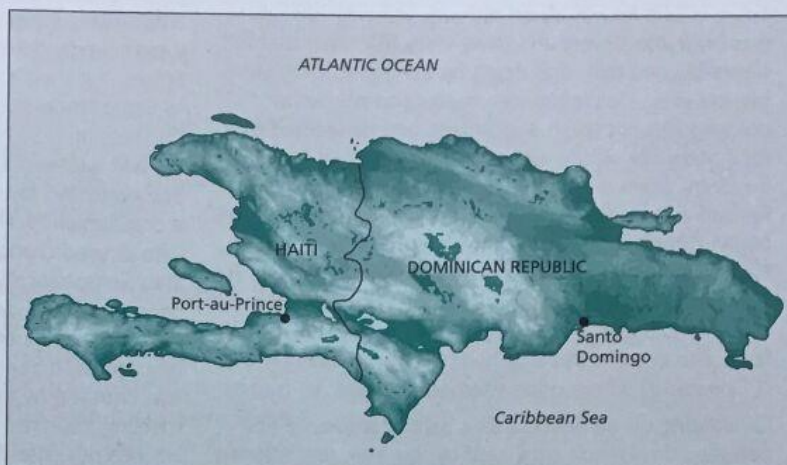


The Caribbean and Latin America: Revolution and independence

The revolution in the United States proved to be the first of a series of revolutions in the Americas that would lead to independence from France, Spain and Portugal, in chronological order. Each revolution had its roots not just in the Enlightenment but in the revolutions that had already occurred. Just like US independence, the Haitian revolution proved to be an important cause of the revolutions in Latin America. More immediately, the French Revolution and subsequent Napoleonic Empire provided the catalysts for change.



This is a modern map of Hispaniola; on the eastern third of the island is Haiti, or the French colony of Saint Domingue; on the west side was the Spanish colony of Santo Domingo.

The Haitian Revolution, 1791–1804

The Haitian Revolution brought forth ideas of racial equality that proved threatening to the rest of the Americas, especially to those regions that depended on slave labor. The revolution took place in the French colony of Saint Domingue, the eastern part of the island of Hispaniola. The island was important to France; it produced the important commodity of sugar and provided two fifths of its overseas trade. It had a plantation economy that relied on slavery to keep its level of production high. On the eve of the revolution, the population of Haiti was divided by race, legally and socially.

Whites were the dominant group in society, with a population of 40,000 that was divided by class, but equal in legal privileges. Similarly, the 30,000 free non-whites (*gens de couleur*) were also socially diverse and only linked by the legal and societal discrimination that they faced. The overwhelming majority of the population consisted of 500,000 slaves. While this might seem like a homogenous group, ethnically they were diverse, and the rights and privileges they had varied from plantation to plantation; some were even granted the right to farm their own land and sell their produce.

In 1789, the French Revolution provided the catalyst for change in the colony. The whites were divided as the wealthy (*grand blancs*) tried to ensure continued dominance for themselves but the middle and lower classes (*petit blancs*) felt it was their right to rule and formed a National Guard to take action. The *gens de couleur* saw the revolution as their opportunity for equal rights, and in 1790 the National Assembly in France granted them political rights. The whites

Discussion point

As a French colony, St. Domingue was part of an absolute monarchy. In such a society, how can there be differences between legal equality and racial equality?

Toussaint L'Ouverture (born François Dominique Toussaint Bréda) (1743–1803)

"I was born a slave but nature gave me the soul of a free man."

There is little known about his early years as Toussaint was born into slavery and there were few records about slaves beyond birth and death dates. Unlike many slave owners in St. Domingue, his master and plantation bosses were not harsh and violent, and he learned to read and write. At the age of 33 he was given his freedom, when he married and rented land to farm for himself and his family. When the slave rebellion of 1791 began, Toussaint recognized the need for the slaves to have military organization to defeat their overlords. In his rise, he temporarily joined forces with the Spanish in 1793 in adjacent Santo Domingo where he achieved fame and success in battle by finding an opening (*L'Ouverture*) where none seemed possible.

Capitalizing on his success as a military leader he first defeated the French army sent by the new, revolutionary government. At this point he turned his attentions to trying to organize and unite the colony through ousting the whites. Although he personally advocated leniency in the treatment of landowners, he was in the minority, and often had to face opposition within the rebel leadership. In late 1793, the British secured an alliance with the Spanish and, taking advantage of the chaos in

the French colony, occupied most of the coastal towns. From 1793 to 1798, the blacks battled and defeated the British forces.

In 1799, the mulattos launched a rebellion against Toussaint and were soundly defeated by his armies. He then turned his attention to Santo Domingo (ceded to France by Spain in 1795) and governed the whole island. He was named the governor-general of St. Domingue and professed loyalty to France but nonetheless issued a constitution for the colony. Although he was a radical who desired change, he governed autocratically rather than democratically. Napoleon feared that Toussaint's constitution and dictatorial manner challenged his authority and renewed warfare against the colony once he concluded peace with the British. In 1802, Toussaint was betrayed by the French who summoned him to a meeting, captured him upon his arrival and bound him. He was put on a ship to France with his family and later imprisoned in the French Alps where he died of apoplexy and pneumonia on April 6, 1803.



"In overthrowing me, you have done no more than cut down the trunk of the tree of the black liberty in St. Domingue—it will spring back from the roots, for they are numerous and deep."

were determined to prevent the implementation of this through their own organization and the development of a colonial assembly. Thus in 1791, when members of the *gens de couleur* organized an armed demonstration to demand that their rights be granted, the leaders were seized and executed by the colonial government. Soon thereafter, the colony faced a series of revolts and riots across racial and class lines. In August 1791, the slaves in the northern part of the island revolted. By November, nearly half of the slaves were in revolt with the goal of ridding the colony of slavery and its white population. They attacked and destroyed the plantations and any whites that they encountered. Slaves who remained loyal to their masters faced a similar fate. The slave revolt eclipsed the conflicts between whites and *gens de couleur*. The whites became equally barbarous in their treatment of slaves and they managed to maintain control of the towns, but not for long. The slaves developed and perfected their use of guerrilla warfare.

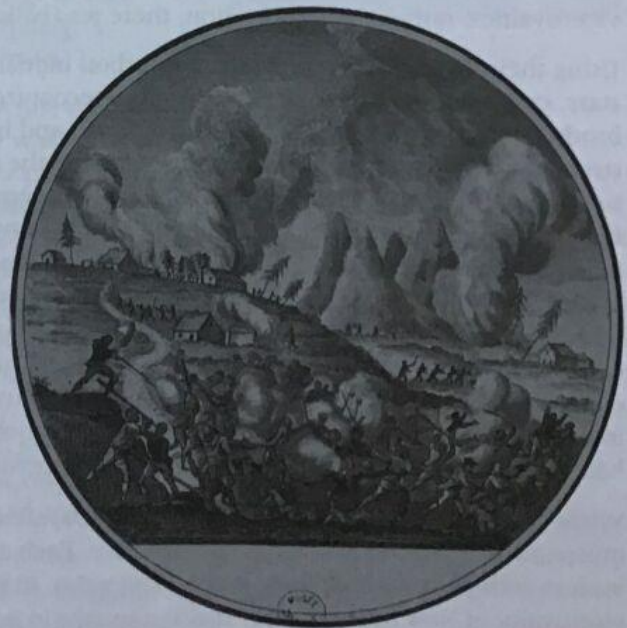
A French attempt to restore order through enforcing the rights of the *gens de couleur* met with failure. In 1792, 6,000 French troops were dispatched to Saint Domingue to enforce French law and impose order on the colony. Instead, the fighting intensified as a number of groups battled against one another in a muddled civil war. In desperation, the French commissioner abolished slavery in 1793. While the French attempted to establish control, a leader of the slaves emerged: Toussaint L'Ouverture.

Toussaint proved to be a strong leader who managed to organize the blacks against the invading armies. After defeating the French, Toussaint thought that their fight would be over, but the British soon arrived, seeking to take advantage of the chaos and underestimating yet again the power of colonial armies. The French had declared war on Great Britain and colonial expansion seemed ripe for the taking. Gaining the support of white plantation owners, the British managed to gain control over key coastal areas but then found themselves fighting against multiple black armies. The invasion turned into a war of attrition that dragged on until 1798. The British leadership saw the fighting as futile and negotiated a peace in which they supported Toussaint in exchange for promises to allow trade to continue and to not send revolutionary expeditions to British possessions.

With British withdrawal the colony was in the hands of Toussaint and his blacks and the *gens de couleur*. These two groups turned against one another and engaged in further warfare. The *gens de couleur* were decisively defeated in 1800 and in 1801 Toussaint then turned to conquer the eastern, Spanish part of the island. The new French government—the Consulate—recognized Toussaint as Governor-General and commander-in-chief of the colony. Also in 1801, Toussaint put into place a constitution for the country. While Saint Domingue nominally remained part of the French empire, this was seen as a bid for independence by the French leader Napoleon. In January 1802, Napoleon sent an expeditionary force to the island to prevent it from breaking free from the empire. Toussaint, after initial resistance, attempted negotiations with the French but instead they arrested him and sent him to France where he was imprisoned. Sent to a jail in the Alps, he died of malnutrition and exposure.

While this happened, the French fought against Haitian guerrillas. In May 1803, the French resumed the Napoleonic war with Great Britain and thus lacked the resources to continue fighting against the Haitian revolutionaries. While the guerrillas besieged the coastal towns the French now had to contend with the British navy, too. Keeping Haiti had been very costly for Napoleon and in November he decided to evacuate the remaining French soldiers.

On January 1, 1804, the republic of Haiti was proclaimed, the name change representing a break with Europe and its traditions. Very few whites remained, and the blacks were in power in the new country. It was governed by Jean-Jacques Dessalines, Toussaint's faithful lieutenant who implemented a ruthless military rule and even crowned himself Emperor of Haiti. His brutality included the massacre of all remaining whites on the island and a return to plantation labor to resuscitate the economy. He co-opted the *gens de couleur* to oversee the plantations as Africans once again worked in the fields in harsh conditions. He immediately faced opposition for this and was



The rebellion of the slaves in Santo Domingo, August 23, 1791, French school, 18th century.

assassinated in 1806. Although the whites were gone, Haitian society remained stratified. The *gens de couleur* replaced the whites as the dominant group. The black masses remained below them. Haiti was a beacon of hope for abolitionists in North America, and a warning for the creole population in Spanish America.

Spanish–American wars of independence

The United States War of Independence recognized the unity of 13 of Britain's colonies against a common enemy, but the Spanish Americans who sought independence did not form a similar united front. Instead, they were divided geographically, and not just into the four **viceroyalties**; in most cases they were further divided and fought not only against Napoleonic France and later Spain but also against each other.

These independence movements began more than 30 years after the US Revolution but had much deeper roots; the creoles' social and economic resentments against the Spanish and *peninsulares*, who dominated after the Bourbon reforms were implemented, sought change. Likewise, in many places the *castas* that resented their secondary status saw an opportunity to press for equality. These wars, therefore, were mired not just in the drive for political independence but also the desire for social equality. The resulting wars were long, bloody affairs that often created further tensions rather than allaying them.

Spanish Americans were encouraged and inspired by both the US and French revolutions. Equally, they were terrified by the results of the Haitian revolution and their own wars of independence were informed as much by a desire to prevent such an uprising as to create new, independent republics. Taking into account the local situation, they sought to create political structures that were workable; this meant the creation of a number of new countries out of the viceroyalties; rather than unification, there was balkanization.

Using their historical loyalties to the Bourbon monarchy and not the state, creoles in the viceroyalties refused to recognize Napoleon I's brother Joseph Bonaparte as the king of Spain and began their struggle with an argument that, without a king, the people were sovereign. Much like their North American counterparts, the creole rebellion began as a push for autonomy, not an outward demand for independence. They thus created their own independent governing bodies that would rule until Fernando VII was restored. These **juntas** were rejected or opposed by peninsular officials who did all that they could to block the establishment of creole bodies, further exacerbating resentment and pushing the creoles towards a drive for independence. The creoles subsequently lost what confidence they had in the remnants of imperial leadership and revolted.

While the risings happened concurrently, the nature of the independence wars varied from place to place. Each area had its own leaders with their own philosophies and agendas. In the northern viceroyalty of New Spain, Father Hidalgo sought to bring about a social revolution; in New Granada (modern-day Colombia), the leaders were trying to preempt a potential slave rebellion like the one they had seen

Viceroyalty After the conquest of the Americas, Spain divided the colonies into administrative units led by a viceroy who ran the territory in the name of the monarch.

Discussion point

Balkanization is the fragmentation or division of a geopolitical entity. Why is this term now used to describe this phenomenon?

Junta A group of people controlling a government, especially after a revolutionary seizure of power.

Discussion point

How and why have juntas been put into place in the Americas in the 20th century?

in Haiti. In both cases the creole leaders were addressing the issues that faced their own region's resources, demography and geography. In 1814, with the collapse of the French Empire, Ferdinand VII was restored to the Spanish throne. This signified an important change, since most of the political and legal changes on both sides of the Atlantic had been done in his name. Ferdinand was an absolutist who disapproved of the political changes undertaken in the Napoleonic period. A similar reverse occurred in the colonies and to address it Ferdinand organized the largest expeditionary force that Spain had ever sent to the Americas up to that time. Ferdinand launched a counterrevolution that, in effect, constituted a definitive break with the autonomous local governments, which had not yet declared formal independence. The governments of these regions, which had their origins in the juntas of 1810, and even moderates there, who had entertained reconciliation with the Crown, now saw the need to separate from Spain.

New Spain and the cause of Mexican independence

The viceroyalty of New Spain had the largest population and was one of the most ethnically diverse colonies. On September 16, 1810, Father Miguel Hidalgo began the Mexican revolution in earnest with his *Grito de Dolores*, a call for independence from Spain that appealed not just to the creoles but to Native Americans, *mestizos*, free blacks and mulattos. He saw not just the political oppression of Spain that the creoles wanted to redress, but also the problems that the lower classes faced: hunger, poverty, lack of land and high taxes. His program called for redistribution of land, abolition of slavery and an end to **Indian tribute**. His plan led to the insurrection of the masses that terrified the creoles and *peninsulares* alike. An estimated 80,000 joined his army, but they were not disciplined or organized and chaos soon reigned. The *peninsulares* and creoles took advantage of this, using both the royal army and local militias to defeat Hidalgo's warriors. Hidalgo himself was captured and executed in 1811.

This did not stop the revolution in Mexico, however. While the royalists managed to control the cities, the countryside was in the hands of a number of insurgent groups. In southern Mexico, another priest became the leader of the revolutionary movement. Father José Maria Morelos fought against the royal army and in 1814 drafted the Constitutional Decree for the Liberty of Mexico, thereby establishing an independent republic. As in the United States, the declaration of independence appeared after the war had begun. Unlike US independence, Mexico's would be infused by Catholicism (the only tolerated religion), and include the abolition of slavery. Like Hidalgo, Morelos was captured and executed, but his ideas helped keep the wars of independence going. Mexico faced years of guerrilla warfare where there were no decisive or clear battles but instead a prolonged war of attrition.

Mexican élites began to recognize that independence was looming and that they could create a state in which they played a dominant role or leave it to the masses. Thus, creoles, the Catholic hierarchy, *peninsulares* and military leaders collaborated to create an

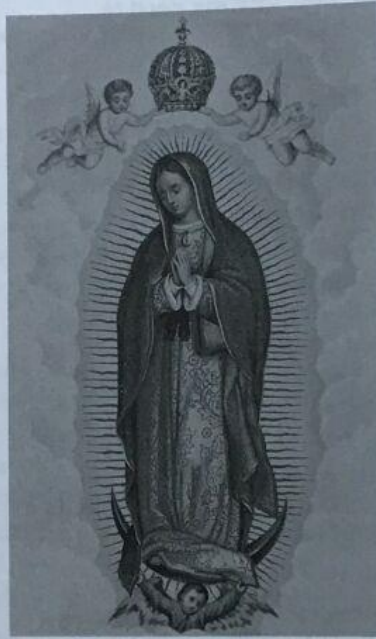
Indian tribute Resources or taxes that the indigenous populations of Spanish America had to pay to the Spanish Crown.

independent Mexico. Led by Agustín de Iturbide, they developed the Plan de Iguala which had three clear guarantees: independence from the Spanish Crown, the supremacy of the Roman Catholic Church and equality for *peninsulares* and creoles. In the meantime, Iturbide's forces succeeded on the battlefield and defeated the royalist forces. He then pressured the Spanish political chief Juan O'Donojú to sign the Treaty of Córdoba that recognized an independent Mexico.

The plan preserved the social order in Mexico—which, ultimately, only delayed civil war—and created an independent sovereign state. It also called for the establishment of a monarchy, but the Bourbons refused to send any family members. As a result, Iturbide became Emperor of Mexico in 1822.

Our Lady of Guadalupe

In 1531, the Virgin Mary appeared to converted Mexican native Juan Diego and this image appeared on his cloak. This icon became the symbol of Mexican masses that rebelled against the Spanish Crown and sought independence and social equality during the Mexican War of Independence. The Virgin is the patron saint of Mexico and remains an important symbol; in the Mexican Revolution (1910–20), Zapata's followers carried the Virgin on standards into battle and today it is common to see her in churches, on t-shirts and even as a tattoo in Mexico and the southwestern United States.



The Republic of Venezuela

In Venezuela, as in Mexico, the creoles were united by class interests in addition to a desire for national sovereignty. There had already been localized calls for independence from Francisco de Miranda, a Venezuelan revolutionary who led a war for independence in 1806. On July 5, 1811, the creoles declared an independent Republic of Venezuela that represented their liberal political agenda and the preservation of their power base. They advocated a franchise based on property and the elimination of the slave trade but not slavery. It became very clear that this was a creole revolution and that non-whites were not included. The royalists capitalized on this and recruited non-whites. The Venezuelan war was not just a war against Spain but also a civil war. A Spanish officer, José Tomás Boves, led a largely mixed-race army that was responsible for some of the bloodiest battles against the creole patriots. In 1814, Boves entered Caracas, instituting a

reign of terror and bringing down the republic. Spain took advantage of the chaos and dispatched 11,000 soldiers to Spanish America and retook Caracas in May 1815.

Spanish occupation seemed to revitalize the Venezuelan independence movement and united the diverse forces. Its leader, Simón Bolívar, reinforced support for the cause of liberation and he welcomed all races into his armies. The need for more support brought equality; non-whites who supported the royalist cause saw their rights repealed and joined the patriots. Understanding that his own personal attitude set an important example, Bolívar freed his own slaves.

The Spanish were fighting in multiple theaters and had to make decisions on where to fight. Forces were split, there was a deterioration of morale and war-weariness was prevalent in the Spanish army. In 1820, events in Spain once again intervened on the patriots' behalf. An army coup led to the restoration of more liberal laws and a weakened Spanish army had to negotiate with the patriots.

The Spanish withdrew but did not recognize the new states; nonetheless, Venezuela had won its independence, initially as part of **Gran Colombia** (modern Ecuador, Colombia, Panama and Venezuela). In 1830, Venezuela and Ecuador both seceded and became independent republics.

Foreign intervention in Spanish America

Foreign assistance was significant but less so than in North America. Although the British had initially supported revolution in Venezuela, Napoleon's invasion of Spain had transformed Spain into an ally of Britain, and the forces pledged to the patriots instead went to fight in the peninsular war. After this, the Venezuelans received no support from Europe or the United States. While individual North Americans provided assistance to Spanish American patriots, and US public sympathy was clearly on their side, there was no official recognition or assistance from the United States government. The patriots did, however, receive support from Haitian president Alexandre Pétion who provided money, volunteers and weapons which enabled the patriots to continue the struggle for independence on the condition that Bolívar expand the fight for independence to include the liberation of slaves, a promise that he kept.

Of greater significance in the armed struggle was the role of foreign volunteers. Fighting under Bolívar's command were the British **Legion** units composed of volunteers that consisted mainly of Napoleonic War veterans as well as some German veterans. In March 1819, Bolívar combined most of his foreign volunteers into a brigade of 250 men with James Rooke as commander. The British Legions consisted of the 1st British Legion led by Colonel James Towers English, the 2nd British Legion led by Colonel John Blossett, and the Irish Legion, led by Colonel William Aylmer. The British Legions played a pivotal role in the Vargas Swamp Battle on July 25, 1819, and Bolívar credited them for the victories at the subsequent battles of Boyaca and Carabobo. Bolívar called them "the saviors of my country".

Formerly the viceroyalty of Nueva Granada, **Gran Colombia** was formed in 1819 during the wars of independence from Spain. It dissolved in 1830 with the secession of Venezuela and Ecuador, and also includes the modern states of Colombia and Panama.

Foreign legions are small military units composed of foreign volunteers. Numerous foreign legions participated in the wars for independence in the Americas.

Simón Bolívar and José de San Martín

Two men provided military leadership that went beyond the borders of their own nations—Simón Bolívar and José de San Martín. They are considered to be the two leading figures in the struggle for Latin American independence. They both understood that independence for part of Spanish America would mean independence for all, and thus they fought on the battlefields not just in their own countries but throughout the region. They met only once, on July 26, 1822, in Guayaquil (Ecuador) and while they had similar objectives they had very different ideas on the organization, structure and forms of government for the new nation states.

Bolívar's political goal was unity for South America and his acceptance of the leadership of Gran Colombia (Ecuador, Colombia, Venezuela) in 1819, showed this determination. He believed that sovereignty belonged to the majority who were non-white, but feared the tyranny of this dominant class and thus established a dictatorial system that he called "able despotism." He imposed a strong executive to enforce legal equality where racial inequality prevailed. He also rewarded military leaders for their service in the war through allocation of land, giving them local dominance. As he was often away fighting the battles of the continent, he needed to delegate authority to strong men whom he hoped would implement his reforms. Frustrated by his inability to change the interrelated race and class systems in Gran Colombia, and wracked with illness, he was disillusioned by the power he wielded. An assassination attempt in 1828 further weakened him and his government had the problems of debt, a disorganized military and civil discontent.

Simón Bolívar (1783–1830)

It is difficult to provide a chronological account of the military and political leadership of Bolívar as he served in both capacities concurrently. The liberator of northern South America, Simón Bolívar was a wealthy creole Venezuelan who was orphaned early in life and educated by private tutors. Like many members of the Spanish-American élite, he lived and studied in Europe from 1804 to 1807, learning from the ideas of the Enlightenment and rejecting the tyranny of Napoleon Bonaparte whose conquest of Europe he experienced. He also toured the United States and observed what he saw as a successful constitutional democracy that could be implemented in his mother country. Upon his return to Venezuela, he helped mobilize his countrymen who desired independence from Spain (now being ruled by Joseph Bonaparte). When the Venezuelans opted for self-government Bolívar was dispatched to Great Britain to gain the support of its government. Upon his return, he found the country in civil war as royalists battled against patriots. He initially fought for the cause of independence but was forced into exile in Jamaica in

1815 after a defeat at the hands of royalist forces. While in exile he wrote "Letter from Jamaica" which was an exhortation to the British for assistance in the Spanish-American battle for independence.



Bolívar also spent time in Haiti where he received promises of assistance from President Pétiion. He then went to New Granada (Colombia) to continue his fight for independence. There he received a commission and 200 soldiers under his command. He attacked royalist forces and battled for independence, first in Venezuela. In 1819 he crossed the Andes and assisted with the conquests of New Granada and Ecuador. This time, he was successful in his battles, steadily taking territory and consolidating northern South America as independent and republican. His final battle was the cavalry battle of Junín, fought for the final liberation of Perú on August 7, 1823.

In 1830, he addressed the Congress, saying, "Fellow citizens, I am ashamed to say it, but independence is the sole benefit we have gained, at the sacrifice of all others." He renounced his presidency and, on December 17, 1830, died from tuberculosis and exhaustion.

"Americans; Let us no longer be the object of the sarcasm of those wretched Spaniards who are superior to us only in wickedness, while they do not excel us in valor, because our indulgence is what gives them their strength. If they appear great to us, it is because we are on our knees. Let us avenge three centuries of shame. War alone can only save us through the path of honor!"

Simón Bolívar,
October 1812, Cartagena.

José Francisco de San Martín Matorras (1778–1850)



San Martín, the Argentine son of a Spanish officer, was the liberator of southern South America. Although born in Argentina, he was sent to Spain in 1786 for formal education and military training. He served in the Spanish army, first in Murcia and later against the French invasion after 1808. He served with distinction in the battles of Bailén (1808) and Albuera (1811) but he could not advance further in the Spanish army; even though he had lived most of his life in Spain he was discriminated against because he had been born in America. He then moved to Cadiz where he met other creoles and was introduced to men advocating independence. In 1811, he resigned his commission in the Spanish army so he could return to Argentina after 25 years in Europe.

As a seasoned, experienced military leader San Martín was given a commission and created the cavalry corps for the Argentine army. The Mounted Grenadiers first faced action in 1813 when they were called upon to fight against recently arrived Spanish forces in San Lorenzo, near Montevideo. He was also given command of the northern army after General Belgrano was defeated in Upper Perú. After such difficult battles San Martín felt that it would be best to attack the royalist forces not in Argentina but in Chile and made a difficult trek with his army to reach the other side of the continent. The Army of the Andes succeeded in its task and joined with Chilean patriots led by Bernardo O'Higgins. The combined army defeated the Spanish at the Battle of Chacabuco in 1817 and liberated Chile.

Although he was offered leadership of Chile, San Martín deferred to the Chilean O'Higgins and continued the battle for independence. In 1818 he won the Battle of Maipú, completing the liberation of Chile and moved on to Perú. His army successfully took Lima in 1821 and he was given the title of "protector" over that country. Bolívar was also advancing his army, and the two men met in Guayaquil in 1822. The subject of the meeting remained a secret but San Martín resigned his commission, abdicated from his position of protector and retired from private life, leaving the final conquest of Perú to Bolívar. In 1824 San Martín went to France where he died impoverished and in exile, in 1850. His remains were later transferred to Buenos Aires.

As Bolívar's forces fought in the north, San Martín's Army of the Andes had crossed into Chilean territory and engaged the royalist army there with the assistance of Chilean leader Bernardo O'Higgins in the Battle of Chacabuco in February 1817. The reason for crossing the Andes was that the strongest of the royalist armies was in Perú and San Martín felt that the liberation of all Spanish America—including his homeland Argentina—was dependent upon expelling the Spanish from the entire continent. Thus, he led his army in a grueling, high-altitude trek through mountain passes, losing one third of his men and over half of his horses.

Realizing that patriot forces had crossed the Andes, royalists raced to the frontier to try to block them from continuing to Santiago. Despite the losses, San Martín's forces outnumbered the royalists 4,000 to 1,500 but the royalists were expecting reinforcements. Royalist strategy was to delay the patriot army until the needed reinforcements arrived.

Bernardo O'Higgins (1778–1842)

Bernardo O'Higgins was the illegitimate son of Ambrose O'Higgins, an Irish-born governor-general of Chile, and Isabel Riquelmes, daughter of wealthy Creoles. Bernardo was first sent to Perú, then Spain and finally England for his formal education. When studying in England, he met Francisco Miranda, one of the earliest proponents of Spanish American independence. Upon his father's death in 1801, he returned to Chile both as a farmer and local politician.



When the Napoleonic wars led to a debate over the future of Spanish America, O'Higgins sided with those who advocated full independence. Lacking in military training, he commissioned Colonel Juan MacKenna to train him, and he formed two cavalry units out of his farmhands. In 1814, his armies were met by defeat at the hands of better equipped and trained royalists and had to retreat to Argentina. At this point he made plans with San Martín as his army regrouped and trained to face the royalists again.

In 1817, San Martín's army crossed the Andes, defeated the royalists and took Santiago. As the highest-ranking member of the Chilean army, O'Higgins was made Supreme Director of Chile (after San Martín graciously declined) and instituted economic, political and social reforms designed to create a new, modern state. He was, however, opposed by the well-connected creoles who resented his changes as he threatened their domination over Chile. In 1823, O'Higgins resigned and left Chile for Perú. Although he was permitted to return to Chile, his health deteriorated substantially and he could not risk the arduous journey. Nonetheless, he remained actively interested in Chilean politics and urged a strengthening of the army and expansion to the Straits of Magellan. He died in 1842 in Lima, and his remains were buried in Santiago, Chile, in 1866.

San Martín knew that he had a narrow window of opportunity and took it. The patriot forces had the assistance of Chilean fighters led by Generals O'Higgins and Soler.

To defeat the royalists, San Martín divided his army in two. The first group, led by O'Higgins, was supposed to divert attention by attacking the left flank of the royalist forces. In the meantime, Soler's group was supposed to attack from the right and encircle the army. By launching simultaneous attacks, they hoped to confuse the Spanish forces. O'Higgins' forces advanced more quickly than expected, but Soler managed to follow through and encircle the Spanish, while O'Higgins continued to hammer away at the front of the army. The royalists suffered 500 dead and 600 captured compared to 12 fatalities for the patriots in battle (although 100 more died of their wounds later). Royalist survivors fled and San Martín and O'Higgins entered Santiago as victors. Although the patriots would have to defeat the Spanish one more time at Maipú in April 1818, this battle gave the Chileans control of their capital and allowed them to begin creating a government.

Brazil's path to independence

Brazil's path to independence was somewhat different. As in Spanish America, the Napoleonic Wars provided the first engine for change. Unlike the other revolutions of this era, the élites that determined the time for independence was at hand did not face imperial resistance and thus did not need to enlist the masses. This was a revolution from above that brought about reforms yet still maintained the social order, including slavery.

Like Spain, Portugal had adopted mercantilist principals so that the mother country would benefit from colonialism. Laws that prohibited manufacturing in Brazil had been passed, and no foreign ships were allowed in Brazilian ports. In commerce, Portugal had long been dependent on Brazilian goods. In the 18th century it established a positive trade balance with other European countries but had a trade deficit with Brazil. Unlike Spanish America, in Brazil there was no competition between the Portuguese and native-born élites: a sense of unity in the empire was fostered by the events of the early 19th century in Europe.

In 1807, Napoleon invaded and occupied Portugal. The royal family fled to Brazil under the protection of the British navy and established the government in Rio de Janeiro which Prince Dom João (regent for

his mother Queen Maria) made the capital of the Portuguese Empire. With the presence of the royal court came privileges and Brazil was provided with a national bank, a library, universities and printing presses. More importantly, Dom Joao opened Brazilian ports to foreign trade and revoked decrees that prohibited certain manufacturing in Brazil.

Even though the British liberated Portugal in 1811, the royal court remained in Brazil. In 1815 Brazil was made a kingdom equal to Portugal and when Queen Maria died, Joao was proclaimed king of both Portugal and Brazil. The élites in society saw real benefits in a dual monarchy in which they were equal to the Portuguese. While the Brazilians seemed complacent with their status, the Portuguese were disturbed and wanted their king to return to Portugal. By 1820, this led to a rebellion that became the Portuguese revolution that created a junta and demanded the return of the king.

Dom João returned to Portugal in 1821 but left his son behind in Brazil as regent. The Portuguese Cortes created wrote a constitution that clearly outlined its plans to re-establish Brazil as a colony. The Cortes then demanded the return of the prince regent, and at that point Brazilians felt that the time had come for independence. They asked Dom Pedro to remain and on September 7, 1822, he declared the independence of Brazil and was crowned emperor in December. In May 1823, he convened a constituent assembly to establish a liberal government.

The assembly created a system of government that limited the power of the emperor more than he liked, so in November he dissolved it and asked his advisors to draft a constitution. The Constitution of 1824 included a bicameral legislature in which the lower house was indirectly elected by male suffrage. The members of the upper house were selected by the emperor and served life terms. The emperor could veto all legislation that was passed by either house and he had the right to dissolve the legislature when he thought necessary. He also appointed the cabinet and could dismiss ministers at will. It created a highly centralized state in which provincial presidents were also appointed by him. Catholicism was the state religion and the emperor was the head of the church. This constitution endured until the end of the monarchy in 1889.

A number of historians have made the argument that Brazilian independence was bloodless, but that is not entirely true. Portuguese troops had been dispatched to reestablish colonial dominance. Their adversaries were generally guerrilla groups whose tactics wore out a numerically superior and better armed army. The situation was so explosive that Dom Pedro asked the British for safe passage and asylum in the event of a full-blown civil war. In the end, there were no major battles in the war, and Dom Pedro turned away subsequent Portuguese soldiers, preventing them from landing in Brazilian ports and sending out supplies so that they could make the return trip.

Discussion points

- 1 What made Brazil different; how did it avoid the lengthy, costly, bloody struggles of the other independence movements?
- 2 "A creole élite led by the Crown prince decided it was necessary to secede from the empire." How far do you agree with this assessment of Portuguese independence?