

retreated from Lima into the mountains. San Martín took control of the Peruvian capital and declared Peru's independence on July 28, 1821. There was no Peruvian equivalent of Sucre or O'Higgins, so San Martín was named the "Protector" of Peru. He was, however, unable to subdue the interior and defeat the Spanish forces. Nearly a year after his triumphant entry into Lima, he sailed north to Guayaquil, Ecuador, to confer with Simón Bolívar.

San Martín's failure to finish off the struggle in Peru led to one of the pivotal moments in the liberation of Spanish South America—a historic meeting of the two principal figures of the wars—the Liberator and the Protector. By the time they met, San Martín's fortunes were in decline and Bolívar's ascending. San Martín had been bogged down in Peru, and forced to retreat from Lima, while Bolívar was coming off the conquest of Quito and the liberation of Ecuador. For several hours on July 26–27, 1822, the two met, alone. Neither of the two left a direct account of the encounter. Afterwards, Bolívar hosted a grand banquet toasting "the two greatest men in South America, San Martín and myself." San Martín withdrew, leaving the liberation of Peru in the hands of Bolívar. "For me," he wrote to Bolívar, "it would have been the height of happiness to end the war of independence under the orders of a general to whom America owes its freedom. Destiny orders it otherwise, and one must resign oneself to it." San Martín later described Bolívar as "a man of extreme fickleness of principle and full of childish vanity." He left South America for Europe, and a self-imposed exile. José de San Martín, the Protector, died in Paris in 1850 at the age of 72.

Having cleared the field of his major rival, Simón Bolívar moved on to complete the liberation of Spanish South America. He sent his trusted lieutenant, José Antonio de Sucre, into Peru. Bolívar arrived in September 1823, but fell deathly ill, possibly his first major bout with tuberculosis. At this very moment, events in Europe took a crucial turn as absolutism reemerged in Spain and Portugal and threatened to reenergize the loyalist cause in Latin America. First England, then the United States, responded, announcing their opposition to European involvement in the Americas. In December 1823, President James Monroe made a statement (written by John Quincy Adams) announcing his opposition to any "foreign" intervention in the Americas. This later became known as the Monroe Doctrine, a bold statement for a young nation—one that was unenforceable without the cooperation of the British Navy.

A series of crucial battles finally broke the back of royalist resistance. In August 1824, Bolívar defeated the royalist forces at Junín after yet another epic march through the Andes. On December 9, 1824, Sucre conclusively defeated the royalist forces at Ayacucho. This was to be the last great battle in the wars for independence in Spanish South America (although the last

Spanish troops on the mainland of South America would not surrender until January 1826). Bolívar was now President of Colombia and Dictator of Peru. He bestowed upon his fellow Venezuelan general the title of "Grand Marshal of Ayacucho." Sucre would move on to liberate Upper Peru in the final battles of the Spanish American wars in April 1825, and he presided over the creation of a new nation, called Bolivia in honor of the Liberator. Bolívar was named president, but left Sucre to rule in his stead, and he returned to Colombia. Sucre was assassinated by enemies of Bolívar in June 1830.

But what of Simón Bolívar in the aftermath of final victory? In early 1826, Bolívar was 42 years old. He had led the liberation of five new nations in 15 years, covering territories larger than Europe. He had established himself as one of the greatest military figures in the modern world. At least in theory, he was the head of state in Bolivia, Peru, Ecuador, New Granada, and Venezuela. Amidst the threat of civil war, he returned to Bogotá in 1826. Waiting for him was the beautiful Manuela Sáenz, the second great love of his life. In September 1828, some of his enemies tried to kill Bolívar, but he was saved at the last minute by the intrepid Manuela, who was beaten badly by the attackers. (He subsequently called her "the liberator of the Liberator.") Bolívar decided to go into exile. As he headed for the Caribbean coast, he received the news of the assassination of Sucre. Devastated by the death of his protégé and his inability to forge a political consensus, he wrote the following famous (pessimistic) lines, "I have arrived at only a few sure conclusions: 1. For us, America is ungovernable. 2. He who serves a revolution ploughs the sea. 3. The only thing we can do in America is emigrate. 4. This country will eventually fall into the hands of the unbridled mob, and will proceed to almost imperceptible petty tyrannies of all complexions and races." It was a bitter conclusion to a life of exceptional achievements. On December 17, 1830, he died on the Colombian coast at Santa Marta, probably of tuberculosis. He was 47 years old.

MEXICO AND CENTRAL AMERICA

Mexico and Central America took paths very different from those taken in Spanish South America. Mexico was the richest colony of Spain and its elites had more at stake in the struggle for independence than in any other colony in the Americas. Since the sixteenth century, its large Indian labor force and rich silver mines had produced great wealth for Spain and the colonial elites. With a population of some six million in 1800, the Viceroyalty of New Spain contained *one-third* of all the inhabitants of Spanish America. New Spain covered an immense expanse from Mexico southward to Guatemala, and north into much of what today is the

Southwest of the United States, from Texas to California. Mexico City was the largest urban center in all of the Americas, with a population of nearly 170,000 in 1810. Indians made up 60 percent of the population, another 20 percent were racially mixed (the *castas*), and the rest were whites. European-born Spaniards probably numbered around 15,000, less than one-half of 1 percent of the population, but they controlled the political and administrative machinery of the viceroyalty. Half of those *peninsulares* (or *gachupines*, as they were derogatorily called) were soldiers. New Spain was the classic Spanish American colony, where several thousand peninsular Spaniards ruled over a million creoles who in turn ruled over five million Indians and mestizos.

By the end of the eighteenth century, Mexico provided Madrid with enormous profits and created the richest family fortunes in the Americas. At the same time, the masses suffered greatly through ten major famines in the century before 1810. Terrible drought in 1808-9 and famine in 1810-11 produced conditions very similar to Old Regime France in 1789. Mexico's revolution in 1810, like the one in 1910, had its roots in the hunger and desperation of the poor Indian masses.

In the aftermath of the Napoleonic invasion of Spain in 1808, with the creoles discussing the formation of a junta to rule in the name of Fernando, the *peninsulares* were alarmed that the viceroy was sympathetic to creole wishes. In a conservative coup d'état, they forced him out and sent him back to Spain in September 1808. They proceeded to arrest and imprison the major creole radicals. One had been so daring as to assert that "authority came to the king from God, but not directly, rather through the people." The first wave of revolution was led by a parish priest, Miguel Hidalgo y Costilla. A creole and the son of a hacienda manager, Hidalgo was born in 1753 in Guanajuato. He received a university education in Mexico City, and was ordained a priest in 1788. One of the great Mexican historians of the period described him as a man "of dark complexion, with lively green eyes, rather bald and white-haired." In 1803, he became the parish priest in the town of Dolores in the arid Mexican north. Along with other creoles in nearby Querétaro he hatched a conspiracy to oust the Spanish. They had the radical notion of mobilizing local Indians and mestizos to join their cause, and they (mistakenly) believed the Indians could be controlled.

Hidalgo triggered the war for Mexican independence on September 16, 1810. At mass on Sunday morning, Hidalgo called for rebellion with the so-called *Grito* (or Cry) *de Dolores*. In the following weeks, some 60,000 peasants, primarily Indians, rallied to his call, chiefly armed with bows and arrows, lances, and machetes. Their rallying cry was, "Long live independence and death to the Spaniards!" His call to seize the property of Europeans, abolish Indian tribute, and to invoke the support of the Virgin of Guadalupe had enormous appeal to the poor masses. The Indians were

especially devoted to the Virgin and she became the rallying symbol for the assertion of their own identity. This army of poor peasants converged on the mining center of Guanajuato in September 1810, brutally annihilating creoles and *peninsulares* who had barricaded themselves in the massive stone granary in the center of the city.

Hidalgo's agrarian radicalism and the racial and social nature of the revolt alienated both creoles and *peninsulares*. His was a classic revolutionary movement of the masses. Very quickly the cry of revolution became "independence and liberty." Hidalgo called for the abolition of slavery, the end of Indian tribute, and, ultimately, for the redistribution of land to the dispossessed Indians. Hidalgo's radicalism turned creoles into supporters of the colonial government, and as the creoles became more conservative, he became more radical. The fighting became increasingly brutal as both sides executed prisoners. After hesitating on the outskirts of Mexico City with some 80,000 men, Hidalgo was defeated. Betrayed and ambushed, Hidalgo was captured and executed in March 1811. His head and those of three of his fellow key conspirators were hung from the four corners of the granary in Guanajuato as a lesson to those who might seek to challenge royal authority.

With the death of Hidalgo, the leadership of the rebellion passed to another parish priest, José María Morelos, who was even more closely attuned to the life of the Mexican masses than Hidalgo. Born in 1765 in Valladolid, Michoacán (now named Morelia in his honor), he came from a poor mestizo family. Morelos joined up with Hidalgo within weeks of the uprising and, within a year, he had created a small, but highly effective, guerrilla army south of Mexico City. Morelos presented a manifesto that set out the principles of his movement to a rebel congress at Chilpancingo in September 1813. The "Sentiments of the Nation" contains 22 brief articles beginning with one that declares "That America is free and independent of Spain and every other nation." His thought was radically egalitarian, devoutly Catholic, and fiercely nationalist. In one proclamation he declared that, "All the inhabitants except Europeans will no longer be designated as Indians, mulattoes or other castes, but all will be known as Americans."

Unlike Hidalgo, Morelos tried very hard to rally the support of creoles. Like Hidalgo, Morelos was too radical for them. Eventually captured in November 1814, he was handed over to the Inquisition, charged with heresy, defrocked, and then tried and condemned of treason. Morelos's execution by firing squad on December 22, 1815, effectively ended the armed uprising. Hidalgo had begun in September 1810. The first wave of the war for Mexican independence, a potential social revolution, died with Morelos. The fear of race war and social revolution had forged a powerful unity among creoles and *peninsulares*. As in the early stages of

the revolution in Haiti and Venezuela, race trumped the grievances of the creoles and their anger at the *peninsulares*.

After the defeat of Hidalgo and Morelos, the royalists developed effective means to blunt the thrust of revolution. Royalist forces probably numbered as many as 85,000 by 1820. This was not, however, a peninsular army occupying New Spain, but rather a creole and mestizo force. Ninety-five percent of the royalist military forces were Mexicans. In January 1820, a liberal revolt in Spain forced Fernando VII to restore the Constitution of 1812 and convene a parliament (*cortes*). This new Cortes was more radical in its liberalism than its predecessor in 1812 and it soon angered the powerful in Mexico. In true liberal fashion, the Cortes abolished special privileges that the Church and military had long enjoyed, privileges (such as special courts and tax exemptions) known as *fiefos*. At the same time, the Cortes refused to accept the creole proposals for greater political autonomy and free trade. There was something here to alienate everyone with power.

The principal figure in Mexican independence was Agustín de Iturbide. Hardly the equal of Bolívar or San Martín, Iturbide was a tragic and weak character. Born in 1783 (the same year as Bolívar), he came from a wealthy family in western Mexico. He was a model Mexican creole: fearful of social revolution, devoutly Catholic, and staunchly nationalistic. The Spanish appointed Iturbide commander of the royalist army in the south in 1820. Although he was charged with defeating rebels led by Vicente Guerrero, he soon formulated a plan to join forces with them. In what the Canadian historian Timothy Anna calls "a calculated act of treason," Iturbide consulted with rebel and royalist leaders and drew up a document that Guerrero accepted. The two commanders joined forces and others allied with them. There was something for everyone in this brilliant, pragmatic declaration, which was ultimately impossible to fulfill. On February 24, 1821, Iturbide issued his *Plan de Iguala*, a call for constitutional monarchy, and the protection of "union, religion, and independence." The plan was quickly supported by the Church, the army, and the upper classes, as well as liberal creoles.

On September 28, a ruling junta issued a Declaration of Independence of "the Mexican Empire." In a staged demonstration led by Iturbide's own troops, the "masses" pressured the new congress to name him emperor. The congress caved in and "elected" Iturbide "Constitutional Emperor of the Mexican Empire." He crowned himself Agustín I in an elaborate ceremony on May 21, 1822. In the words of the skeptical Simón Bolívar, Iturbide had become "emperor by the grace of God and of bayonets." Iturbide's reign was short-lived. Disgruntled military commanders began to plot a revolt led by one of the truly extraordinary and bizarre characters in Mexican history, Antonio López de Santa Anna. In the words of John Lynch, "short on revenue, allies and ideas, [Iturbide] abdicated on March 19, 1823." Mexican independence was achieved, and social revolution averted.

Stability, however, would be elusive, as centralists and federalists would battle each other for control of the country. For the next 50 years, Mexico would suffer from civil wars, foreign invasions, and the loss of nearly half of its territory.

The independence of Central America is one of the least dramatic and least violent episodes in the age of revolution. Central America had long been one of the most isolated regions of Spanish America. The northern end of the region—Chiapas, Guatemala, El Salvador, and Honduras—has been the center of the ancient Maya empires and had large indigenous populations. At the southern end, Nicaragua and Costa Rica had been conquered by Spanish expeditions launched from Panama and they had sparse Indian populations. In all these regions, the main population centers were inland, often in mountainous highlands away from the coasts or either the Pacific or the Caribbean. By the beginning of the nineteenth century, small but well-developed regional elites and identities had emerged in Guatemala, El Salvador, Honduras, Nicaragua, and Costa Rica. The population of the Kingdom of Guatemala (as Central America was then called) was not much over a million. The majority, especially in the northern regions, was composed of Indians, and most of the rest of the inhabitants were mestizos. The economy was primarily subsistence and export agriculture with some small-scale mining. The region produced cotton, cacao, cattle, and indigo dye for export. The principal preoccupation of the creole elites was access to trade with the British, to sell their products, and to buy cheap British manufactured goods, especially textiles. Contraband was widespread, especially along the Caribbean coast where the British had enclaves at what is now Belize, and on the "Mosquito Coast" of Nicaragua and Honduras.

The creoles of Central America talked of independence even less than the Mexicans. The powerful elite families, especially in the dominant and populous Guatemala, were most concerned with issues of trade and how to stimulate it. They wanted improved transportation, and other infrastructural improvements. Like the Mexican and Andean elites, they had little interest in creating political conflict that might unleash the indigenous and poor masses. José de Bustamante, president of the *audiencia* of Guatemala from 1811 to 17, represented the last surge of Spanish absolutism. Fernando VII attempted to appease rising liberal sentiment in the region by removing Bustamante. The region freely traded with the British by 1818. With the news of Iturbide's proclamation of independence, the Central Americans were compelled to respond. The newly arrived Captain General, Gabino Gaínza, convoked a meeting of local notables on September 15, 1821 in Guatemala City. The assembly voted to approve a declaration of independence written by a Honduran lawyer, José Cecilio del Valle. In a sense, nothing had changed—Spain no longer had the

ability to send in troops to challenge the declaration, and the local elites who had controlled power in the region still controlled it.

The other provinces of Central America reacted to the vote in Guatemala. Both El Salvador and Nicaragua declared their independence from Spain and Guatemala. A revolt broke out in Honduras, and the Costa Ricans (supposedly under the rule of Nicaragua) declared their own independence. In June 1822, a small army from Mexico marched into the region occupying El Salvador. When Iturbide's Mexican Empire collapsed in March 1823, the invasion fizzled. In July 1823, a constituent assembly declared the creation of the United Provinces of Central America. The five provinces (Guatemala, El Salvador, Honduras, Nicaragua, and Costa Rica) joined together under a federalist constitution in 1824. (Chiapas chose to join its fortunes with Mexico.) For the next 15 years, Liberals and Conservatives would battle across the isthmus until the confederation collapsed into five independent nations.

By 1824, the wars for independence in Mexico and Central America had ended. The social revolution that Hidalgo and Morelos had pursued in Mexico had been crushed, as creoles and *peninsulares* united in a counter-revolution. The conservative actions of the creoles in both Mexico and Central America ultimately moved them to break with Spain, but only when the metropolis could no longer protect them or offer them any visible benefits. Revolution produced counterrevolution, and the result was a conservative coup against an impotent foreign monarch. The social structure remained intact and creole elites replaced peninsular elites in the administration of the new nations.

PORTUGUESE AMERICA

In Portugal and Brazil, the path to independence took a decidedly different turn. As in Spanish America, in Brazil a small white population was at the top of a social and economic pyramid made up overwhelmingly of non-white peoples. The Portuguese mixed freely with Africans and Indians, producing a rainbow of peoples with a broader color spectrum than any other region in the Americas. The free mulatto population expanded dramatically and composed perhaps a quarter of the inhabitants of the colony by 1800. The Portuguese colony consisted of a few enclaves along the Atlantic coast, with the exception of the gold mining center of Minas Gerais some two hundred miles to the north of Rio de Janeiro. Bahia on the northeastern coast and Minas Gerais in the southeast were the economic and population centers. Rio de Janeiro had become the colonial capital in 1763 because of its role as the gateway to the gold fields.

In 1789, the reassertion of imperial control and the imposition of new taxes sparked an abortive revolt by colonial elites in Vila Rica, the capital

of Minas Gerais. An early sign of Brazilian nationalism, the Minas Conspiracy (*Inconfidência Mineira*) involved very prominent elite figures as well as military officers. Treason was not a crime treated lightly by absolute monarchs, and royal tribunals sentenced most of the conspirators to prison or exile. The only nonaristocratic member of the conspiracy, a military officer by the name of Joaquim José da Silva Xavier, became the scapegoat. Best known by his nickname, *Tiradentes* (Toothpuller), he was hung and then drawn and quartered in 1792. The Crown placed parts of his body on pikes on the road leading into Vila Rica as a warning to others who might contemplate challenging royal authority.

Wisely, Lisbon recognized the roots of colonial discontent and employed persuasion along with power to co-opt as well as crush challenges to the imperial system. Over the next few decades (in contrast to the Spanish and British empires), the colonial elites and the government in Lisbon worked to strengthen their interdependence. Without Brazilian gold and sugar, Portugal faced economic ruin. Without the support of Portuguese troops, Brazilian miners and planters faced the specter of rebellion by the slave majority. The Haitian Revolution gave white planter minorities nightmares throughout the Americas. Brazilian slave owners, living amidst a slave majority, understood the fragile repressive line between order and chaos, and they were not overly anxious to challenge established authority.

For at least a decade, the Portuguese monarchy had anticipated a French invasion, and when it came, in 1807, the Crown did not accept the surrender and imprisonment that would be the fate of the Spanish monarchy. Recognizing that Brazil was the Portuguese economy, and preferring exile to imprisonment, the Portuguese monarchy fled Lisbon shortly before French troops entered the city. Ten thousand Portuguese joined the royal family on British ships in November 1807 for an unprecedented voyage across the Atlantic. With the help of their British allies (Napoleon's bitter enemies), the Portuguese monarchy transferred the center of the empire to Rio de Janeiro. For the first—and last—time in Western history, a European monarch would rule his empire from the colonies. Prince Regent (and later King) João arrived in Brazil in early 1808 and for the next 13 years ruled Portugal's Asian, African, and American colonies from the "tropical Versailles" he constructed in Rio de Janeiro. While the Spanish American colonies warred with Spain for their independence, Brazil flourished as the center of the Portuguese empire. João established the cultural and political institutions of an imperial center, institutions that Brazil had sorely lacked. By 1821, 150,000 of Brazil's 3 million inhabitants lived in Rio. Slaves probably comprised half the colony's population, the racially mixed accounted for another quarter of the inhabitants, and the Portuguese-born (known as *mazzombos*) probably numbered about 100,000. In 1815, João elevated Brazil to the status of a kingdom, placing it on an

equal footing with Portugal. The presence of the monarchy and the court in Rio brought Brazilian and Portuguese elites together, and it paved the way for a gradual transition to independence.

The end of the Napoleonic wars in Europe in 1815 opened the way for the monarchy to return to Lisbon, but João remained in Brazil. In 1821, a new and aggressive Portuguese parliament (the Cortes) produced a constitution that restricted the king's power, and also returned Brazil to colonial status. Threatened with the loss of his crown, João VI reluctantly returned to a divided Portugal. Legend has it that he left his twenty-three-year-old son, Pedro, in Brazil with some sage advice: João recognized the desire of Brazilians for self-rule and saw that the Cortes wanted to return to the old imperial system. Wishing to avoid the bloodshed that had fragmented the Spanish American colonies, he warned Pedro not to fight the rising movement for independence. Instead, he told him to join and lead the movement if it became powerful. The king, in effect, told the crown prince to rebel against the monarchy in the event that conflict emerged. Better to have father and son on two thrones than to lose Brazil to revolutionary leaders.

Pedro followed his father's advice. His refusal to return to Portugal, and his defiance of orders from the Cortes, cemented his role as the leader of independence. On September 7, 1822, while traveling in the interior near São Paulo, Pedro stopped by a small stream (the Ipiranga) for a brief rest. A messenger arrived with letters from the Cortes that once again challenged his authority. With this came a letter from his closest Brazilian advisor urging Pedro to seize the moment and to break with Portugal. According to one witness, Pedro threw down the letter from the Cortes, ground it under his heel, and drew his saber. With a flourish, he waved the sword and declared, "Independence or death! We have separated from Portugal!" The day on which the "Cry of Ipiranga" was uttered has been celebrated by Brazilians ever since as their independence day. With few troops in Brazil, and civil war erupting between absolutists and constitutionalists at home, Portugal could do little to counter Pedro's unilateral declaration.

England acted as the midwife in the birth of this South American nation. The English had long dominated Portugal's economy and its foreign policy, and the split between crown and colony left the British government in a difficult but pivotal role. Wanting to protect its interests on both sides of the Atlantic, Britain handled negotiations between Lisbon and Rio de Janeiro. Pedro secretly agreed to pay Portugal two million pounds sterling (roughly US\$10 million) in compensation for royal properties in Brazil. He also made some formal public concessions in exchange for official Portuguese recognition of Brazil's independence. For their part, the British established themselves (through treaties) as Brazil's dominant trading partner.

CARIBBEAN VARIATIONS

We have now seen about a dozen cases of successful wars for independence from Spain, France, and Portugal. Some of the American colonies, however, did not achieve independence in the Age of Revolution. Some chose not to rebel or the uprisings were weak and relatively easily crushed. Canada and most of the West Indies (French, British, and Dutch) would not follow the path of the United States and most of Spanish and Portuguese America. Some of the islands of the Spanish West Indies came close to becoming part of the United States in the early nineteenth century. In one case (Puerto Rico), an island in the Spanish Caribbean *would* eventually become part of the United States. From the eighteenth century on the greatest ties and connections between the United States and these islands was trade, especially in sugar, molasses, rum, and slaves. On the eve of the American Revolution, one-third of all the ships leaving New York and Boston went to the West Indies.

Slavery and geography directly contributed to the failure of independence movements in Cuba and Puerto Rico. Much like the U.S. South and Brazil, the elites in the slave societies of the Caribbean were reluctant to pursue wars that might trigger another Haitian Revolution. Both Cuba and Puerto Rico had emerged as rich sugar and tobacco plantation economies in the eighteenth century. Puerto Rico and Cuba had been settled in the first years of the Conquest in the sixteenth century. Puerto Rico became a presidio or military outpost, the Indians died off in droves from disease, and the population remained small for centuries. Cuba, on the other hand, as the largest island of the Greater Antilles, became the principal gateway to the Spanish Empire in the Americas, "the pearl of the Antilles." Havana was the entry and exit point for most traffic, and one of the most heavily fortified cities in the Americas. Cuba had a population of 170,000 in the 1770s, black and mulattoes accounted for about 40 percent of the population, and about two-thirds of them were slaves. Despite an intensification of the slave trade at the turn of the nineteenth century, the white population in Cuba and Puerto Rico was much larger, proportionally, than in the other West Indian islands, with Saint Domingue at the other extreme. (All the British island combined at this time had a white population of less than 60,000.) Just 10 percent of Puerto Rico's inhabitants were slaves, but free blacks and mulattoes comprised nearly 45 percent of the entire population. Its population, however, was small—only about 150,000 in 1800.

The first great shock to the colonial system in Cuba was the British capture of Havana in 1762–63. Spain got Cuba back in the Peace of Paris in 1763, but had to give up Florida in exchange. In the twists and turns of the imperial wars and changing alliances of the late eighteenth century, foreign shipping

both legal and illegal, expanded dramatically. The few who chose to speak of serious reform or autonomy in Cuba and Puerto Rico were quickly suppressed in the early nineteenth century. As in the rest of Latin America, the winds of the Enlightenment blew through Cuba and Puerto Rico. Some extraordinary intellectuals produced a vibrant local press and publications. A few even dared to speak of themselves as "children of colonial despotism." The Haitian Revolution, however, shook the elites in the West Indies profoundly. French planters escaping nearby Saint Domingue brought with them hair-raising horror stories of atrocities. They also brought with them capital and expertise. Beginning in the 1790s, the Cuban elites pushed an ambitious, and very successful, program to expand sugar and slavery.

The Napoleonic invasion and the imprisonment of Fernando VII unleashed the same forces in Cuba and Puerto Rico that they did in the rest of Spanish America. As war raged in Spain, the Cubans and Puerto Ricans discussed options, called councils, and formed juntas. The young United States had acquired Louisiana in 1803 and Florida in 1819. Many U.S. political leaders, including John Quincy Adams, believed that Cuba would also eventually be purchased and annexed to the United States. Thomas Jefferson quietly made inquiries about purchasing Cuba from Spain to prevent it from falling under French or English control.

The wars on the mainland also produced a steady flow of loyalists seeking refuge in Cuba and Puerto Rico. Some 20,000 arrived in Cuba in the 1820s, reinforcing the royalist cause on the island. Havana and San Juan also became bases for troops moving from Spain to the wars in the mainland colonies. In the words of one Cuban historian, Cuba and Puerto Rico became "the barns and bastions of the metropolis in the New World." In a sense, the question for the Cubans and Puerto Ricans was threefold: to stay with Spain, to seek independence, or to join the United States. As the mainland colonies of Spain achieved their independence, the government of Fernando VII managed to hold on to Cuba and Puerto Rico. By 1818, they both had achieved, for all intents and purposes, free trade. Spanish troops helped guarantee the social peace, and reassure nervous planters.

The Dominican Republic is perhaps the most complex case of all the movements for independence in the Americas in the nineteenth century. The site of the original Spanish colonial settlements in the Americas, the island of Hispaniola was supplanted by Cuba as the great administrative and commercial center in the Caribbean. After the late seventeenth century, Santo Domingo's history was forged in a tense relationship with Haiti to the west. The rapid growth of the sugar and slave complex in Saint-Domingue overshadowed the less populous Spanish colony on the eastern end of the island. The outbreak of the Haitian Revolution initiated a half-century of struggle in Santo Domingo. From 1791 to 1803, the French, English, and Spanish fought over the entire island. In 1800, Toussaint Louverture occupied

Santo Domingo on two occasions. Although the Haitians ousted the French in 1803, Napoleon's troops remained in Santo Domingo until 1809. The junta in Seville reclaimed the territory in the name of Spain when the French left. The Haitians far outnumbered the Dominicans (nearly ten to one) and they invaded in 1822, led by President Jean Pierre Boyer. Haiti would dominate the entire island until 1843, when Boyer fell from power. Juan Pablo Duarte led the fight for an independent Dominican Republic and is today recognized as its national hero. Independence was proclaimed on February 27, 1844.

The Spanish West Indies—Cuba, Puerto Rico, and Santo Domingo—provide counterexamples to the successes in the wars for independence across the Americas. They clearly demonstrate that, despite the converging forces of intellectual, political, and economic ferment, independence in colonial America in the early nineteenth century was neither inevitable nor unavoidable. The history of this period from the 1770s to the 1820s shares common traits because all of these nations had their roots in a common process of conquest and colonization. The colonial elites all read, discussed, and exchanged the ideas of the age. Yet, despite this shared culture, they went their different ways. While the U.S. revolutionaries engaged in a war of political ideas and principles, the Latin Americans were less interested and engaged in debates over political discourse. This is clear when we look at how we now tell the histories of the wars: the war for independence in the United States is a story of disagreements over political principles. The story in Latin America is not about liberty and equality, or how to define them, but about who will control power. Much of U.S. history in the aftermath of the revolution is about how to implement the political ideals of the founding moment. In Latin America, the discussion of liberal ideals and principles is very weak and minimal, and the focus is on war and maintaining elite control. Despite the liberal principles behind the wars for independence in Latin America, these principles do not flourish in the aftermath of independence.

The wars for independence in most of Latin America ended in the mid-1820s, having lasted nearly two decades. Without significant assistance from outside the region, with a divided colonial elite, and always facing the possibility of race and class warfare, the wars for independence had succeeded in most (but not all) of Spain and Portugal's old American colonies. As the "Americans" took power across the region and Spanish, Portuguese, French, and English control receded, the new nations embarked upon the difficult task of nation-building. The creation of new nations in Latin America would prove to be much more difficult than the wars for independence. Establishing peace would be more difficult than making war.