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W. O. Maloba

LATIN AMERICA

Over the past five hundred years, Latin America has experienced three and possibly four periods of colonization, all of which gave rise to anticolonial movements. The first period symbolically began with Christopher Columbus's arrival in the Americas on 12 October 1492, launching three centuries of Spanish, Portuguese, and British colonial control over the hemisphere, with the French, Dutch, Danish, and other European powers competing for slices of the action in the Caribbean. In most of Latin America, this period came to an end with the wars of independence from about 1810 to 1825. Political independence ushered in a second period (known as

neocolonialism), in which the countries of Latin America were still subject to foreign economic control—this time largely by the British. During the third period, corresponding to the twentieth century, this economic dependency shifted from the British to the United States, and anticolonial responses increasingly assumed anti-imperialistic characteristics. The twenty-first century arguably introduced a fourth period of neocolonialism, in which Latin America has become subject to control through the maquiladora system to transnational capital not necessarily rooted in one country and in which the export commodity is labor rather than raw materials.

Independence

The Latin American movement most closely associated with anticolonialism corresponds to the period at the beginning of the nineteenth century during which most of the region gained its political independence from European colonial powers. This "postcolonial era began before many territories became colonial," Robert Young notes, and "before some European imperial powers, such as Germany and Italy, had even become nations themselves" (p. 193). As in the United States, independence represented a shift of economic wealth and political power from a colonial elite to a domestic elite. In Latin America, this was expressed as a struggle between *peninsulares* (those born on the Iberian peninsula, i.e., Spain and Portugal) and *creoles* (those born in the New World). Independence did not result in any corresponding shift in social relations, nor did it result in the abolition of slavery or more rights for women. In fact, without the paternalistic protection of the European crowns the position of peasants and Indians actually worsened.

The 1780 Tupac Amaru uprising in the South American Andes is one of the largest, earliest, and most significant anticolonial movements in the history of Latin America. The leader of this uprising, José Gabriel Condorcanqui (d. 1781), a descendant of the Incas, first attempted to petition for the rights of his people through legal channels. When legal attempts failed, he took the name of the last Inca ruler (Tupac Amaru) and led an uprising that quickly spread throughout the southern Andes. The insurgents sacked Spanish haciendas and *obrajes* (textile mills), driven by messianic dreams of a renewed Inca empire that would free the indigenous peoples from hunger, injustice, oppression, and exploitation. The Spanish captured Tupac Amaru and other leaders of the uprising six months later and executed them in Cuzco, the former capital of the Inca empire. This did not end the rebellion but shifted its focus south to Bolivia, where under the leadership of Aymara people it entered a more radical, violent, and explicitly anticolonial phase. In this phase, the insurgents captured and held the city of La Paz for several months and threatened the silver mines at Potosí—a direct challenge to Spanish wealth and power. The Spanish finally captured and executed the leaders and the uprising eventually collapsed. This revolt has sometimes been seen as a forward-looking antecedent to the successful creole independence movements that came forty years later and sometimes as a reactionary messianic movement that sought to return to the time of the Inca empire. Sinclair Thomson positions these uprisings in the context of local struggles against abusive colonial practices and for self-determination



Christopher Columbus coming ashore at San Salvador. Columbus's arrival in the New World in 1492 gave rise to the first period of colonization of Latin America. Spain, Portugal, and Britain proceeded to control the region, which didn't achieve independence until the early nineteenth century. © BETTMANN/CORBIS

and equality. Although the uprising ultimately failed, it reveals a widening gap between the colonial elites and the subaltern masses, as well as a refusal of indigenous peoples to passively accept their marginalized role in society.

The Haitian slave revolt provides another stark contrast to the creole independence movements and in essence underscores the lack of a compelling anticolonial discourse in those events. Haiti was a French colony, and its production of sugar, cotton, and indigo made it one of the most important colonies in the world. Soaring sugar profits for French planters in the eighteenth century led to a dramatic increase in the number of African slaves they imported to work the plantations. By the end of the century, about 80 percent of the Haitian people were overworked and underfed slaves. Nevertheless, Haitian independence movements began in 1789 not as a slave revolt but from the small elite class of planters, who had been influenced by the French Revolution's rhetoric of "liberty, equality, fraternity." For the planters, liberty meant home rule and freedom from French tariff structures. The whites armed the slaves to fight the French, but instead, under the

leadership of Toussaint L'Ouverture (1743–1803), slaves took advantage of the opportunity to revolt and destroyed the old society. The result was perhaps one of the few true social revolutions the world has ever seen, in which members of a mass movement completely obliterated the *ancien régime* and claimed power for itself. By the time Jean-Jacques Dessalines declared Haitian independence in 1804, the sugar economy had disappeared, having been displaced by subsistence agriculture. The example of a black slave republic sent a terrifying chill through creole elites, which had begun to agitate for independence elsewhere in Latin America. The only other independent country in the hemisphere, the United States, refused to recognize the Haitian government. The dangers exemplified by the first successful anticolonial movement in Latin America put the brakes on other independence movements, delaying their completion by perhaps a generation.

Neocolonialism

By the 1820s, most of Latin America had gained political independence from its colonial masters. With Iberian mercantile restrictions gone, northern European (and particularly British)

capital flooded the region. As critics have noted, a legacy of colonization was a blocking of moves toward industrialization, which would have represented little gain for colonial powers. This trend continued with the British (and later the United States) extracting raw materials from and importing finished goods into the region. The infrastructure, such as the railroad systems, was designed to transport products from mines and plantations to seaports rather than to integrate a country. The economic benefits of this trade accrued to foreign powers, with wages and living standards remaining depressed as resources were drained away from the domestic economy. Neocolonialism also led to cultural shifts. For example, predominantly Catholic Latin American countries implemented freedom of religion in order to encourage foreign investment from Protestant powers. Despite formal independence, external economic forces determined many of the domestic policies in Latin America. This irony has come to be known as neocolonialism.

Nineteenth-century examples of neocolonialism include the export of Peruvian guano and Chilean nitrates, which fueled an agricultural boom in Europe. Neocolonialism, and Latin America's subsequent falling behind relative to economic growth in northern industrial economies, was not inevitable nor was it the only possible option. In *The Poverty of Progress*, E. Bradford Burns points to Paraguay as a viable example of autonomous economic development. The country's leaders eliminated large estates and emphasized domestic food production, and they restricted foreign penetration of the economy. Rapid economic development without outside foreign development alarmed the elitist governments in the neighboring countries of Argentina, Brazil, and Uruguay, who feared the model Paraguay offered to the poor in their own countries. Their opposition led to the War of the Triple Alliance (1864–1870), which devastated Paraguay and destroyed this alternative model to neocolonialism.

The concept of formally independent countries that remained economically dependent on outside powers first was articulated in Marxist circles in the 1920s, though the term *neocolonialism* was not introduced until the 1960s. It has always been closely associated with anti-imperialism, as was demonstrated at the 1966 Tricontinental Conference in Havana, Cuba, which linked anticolonial struggles in Asia, Africa, and Latin America. Although U.S. neocolonial control is largely a twentieth-century phenomenon, it is rooted in the 1823 Monroe Doctrine, which declared Latin America to be part of the U.S. imperial sphere of influence.

Anti-Imperialism

When the Haitian sugar economy collapsed with the slave revolt at the end of the eighteenth century, much of this production shifted to the neighboring island of Cuba. As a result, while other colonial economies stagnated, leading to elite discontent with European rule, the Cuban economy took off, undercutting any impetus for a serious anticolonial movement. As a result, the island remained a Spanish colony until the end of the nineteenth century. José Martí (1853–1895) perhaps best represents Cuban anticolonial movements. Born to *peninsular* parents (his father was a Spanish official), he was a teenage rebel who was exiled to Spain for his political activities and later

worked in the United States as a journalist. He was killed in battle on 19 May 1895, when he returned to the island to join the anticolonial struggle. Much of Martí's ideology emerged out of the context of nineteenth-century liberalism, but his contact with radical movements in the United States also imbued his anticolonialism with aspects of social revolution. Rather than seeking to merely change one elite for another, as had happened when colonialism ended in most other American republics, he wanted true social changes. He was an anti-imperialist and a revolutionary nationalist who worked against economic dependency as well as for political independence. Martí, like Venezuelan independence leader Simón Bolívar (1783–1830) before him and Argentine-born guerrilla leader Ernesto "Che" Guevara (1928–1967) after him, called for a unified America to confront the common problems left by a legacy of European colonization.

After Martí's death, with Cuba on the verge of gaining its independence in 1898, the United States intervened in order to control the economic wealth of the colony for its own benefit and to prevent the establishment of another black republic on the Haitian model. Disguising its efforts as altruism, the U.S. Senate passed the Teller Amendment, which declared that the United States would not recolonize the island. Although this legislation thwarted the imperial intent of the United States to annex the island, the 1901 Platt Amendment declared "that the government of Cuba consents that the United States may exercise the right to intervene for the preservation of Cuban independence, the maintenance of a government adequate for the protection of life, property and individual liberty" (Bevans, pp. 116–117). This led to a unique colonial situation, in which Cuba had a civilian government but not one that could be called a democracy. The island became an extension of Miami, and U.S. intervention promoted and perpetuated corruption, violence, and economic stagnation. This set the stage for the successful 1959 Cuban Revolution, which freed the country from economic colonization, much as independence in 1898 had freed it from Spain's political colonization. After the triumph of the revolution, Cuba became a global leader in postcolonial anti-imperialist struggles.

Although the Teller Amendment prohibited the annexation of Cuba to the United States, the legislation stood mute on Spain's few remaining colonial possessions in the Caribbean. Most importantly, this led the United States to occupy the island of Puerto Rico, a territory it continues to hold in the twenty-first century. In fact, after Namibia was freed from South African control in the 1980s, Puerto Rico became the sole remaining item on the agenda of the United Nations's decolonization committee, although anticolonial struggles continue elsewhere, notably in French Polynesia. For the United States, Puerto Rico remains an unresolved and seemingly irresolvable colonial question. In the early twenty-first century the island is an *Estado Libre Asociado* (literally, Associated Free State, but defined by the United States as a commonwealth), which means that it is an unincorporated territory that belongs to, but is not part of, the United States. This leaves Puerto Rico subject to the whims of the United States, and its residents with few legal avenues through which to address offenses committed against them. As an example of the colonial relationship, residents on the island were made

U.S. citizens during World War I so that they could be drafted to fight in Europe, but even in the early twenty-first century they do not have the right to political representation in Washington. However, the economic advantages of their status, including the ability to migrate freely to the United States to work, create a situation where only a small percentage of Puerto Ricans favor independence for the island, but resentment at the island's colonial status is nonetheless widespread and deeply felt.

Anticolonial sentiments in Puerto Rico flourished during the second half of the twentieth century, and in part gained a focus around political campaigns to halt U.S. naval bombing practice at Vieques Island. In 1941, with World War II on the horizon, the United States military acquired most of the land at Vieques as an extension of the Roosevelt Roads Naval Station in order to develop a base like Pearl Harbor for its Atlantic fleet. Noise from bombs and low-flying airplanes engaged in practice maneuvers disturbed inhabitants and disrupted the fishing economy. The later use of napalm, depleted uranium, and other experimental weapons left the area heavily contaminated. The imperialist nature of the military's occupation of Vieques quickly gave rise to popular sentiments against the navy's presence and calls for them to leave. Finally, on 19 April 1999, two off-target bombs destroyed an observation post, killing David Sanes Rodríguez, a local civilian employee. This triggered a massive civil disobedience campaign that finally forced the navy to leave Vieques on 1 May 2003. Independence leaders such as Pedro Albizu Campos and Rubén Berríos Martínez provided leadership to the campaigns, seeing Vieques as an important part of an anticolonial and anti-imperialist struggle. Their slogan became "Today Vieques, tomorrow Puerto Rico."

Non-Spanish Caribbean

European colonization of the Caribbean began with Columbus's arrival in 1492, and the region was so highly valued that it remained under the control of various European empires longer than any other part of the hemisphere. Spain maintained—and then lost—control over the largest and most populous islands of Cuba, Hispaniola, and Puerto Rico, known as the Greater Antilles. Other European powers, including the British, French, and Dutch, intruded into the Spanish domain and established a significant presence, particularly on the smaller islands, known as the Lesser Antilles, where descendants of African slaves and Asian indentured workers imported to replace the decimated indigenous population led many of the anticolonial movements.

As they did in Africa and Asia, modern nationalist anticolonial movements in much of the Caribbean emerged in the aftermath of World War II, with its emphasis on the values of democracy and self-determination. As Cary Fraser argues, independence movements in the Caribbean must be understood in the context of these broader decolonization efforts. During the second half of the twentieth century, some of the islands gained their independence, although the British, French, and Dutch still retained colonial control over several smaller islands. Many of the residents benefited economically from access to European welfare systems, which dampened anticolonial agitation.

Even after independence, many of the colonies maintained close relationships with their mother countries, leaving imprints on their political culture that marked them as significantly different from Latin America. For example, the former British colonies remained part of the Commonwealth and retained the British queen as their monarch.

As the European empires collapsed, U.S. economic, political, and ideological interests gained increased hegemony over the Caribbean. Tourism and providing tax havens for foreign banks and corporations became the area's primary roles in the global economy. An example of the United States' ambiguous commitment to self-determination and its growing neocolonial control was its successful efforts to unseat Cheddi Jagan and his People's Progressive Party from the presidency of British Guiana in the early 1960s. United States opposition to Jagan, who was influenced by Marxist ideology and maintained friendly ties with the communist world, indicated that the Caribbean (as well as Latin America in general) would remain within the U.S. sphere of influence.

See also Anticolonialism: Africa; Anticolonialism: Middle East; Anticolonialism: Southeast Asia; Colonialism; Neocolonialism.

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MIDDLE EAST

Between the early nineteenth century and the outbreak of World War I, much of the area between Morocco and what is now Turkey came under different forms of European colonial rule. Thus France began the conquest of Algeria in 1830, took over Tunisia in 1881, and (in partnership with Spain) took over Morocco in 1912. Britain occupied Egypt in 1882, formalizing the occupation by the declaration of a protectorate in 1914, and Italy began its conquest of Libya in 1911.