

STUDY PACK 14

LATIN AMERICAN NATION STATES

“The poverty and instability that has plagued Latin America resulted from the union between church and state and the power over government which Rome, having enjoyed in Europe for centuries, brought to the new world in the name of Christ. The Roman clergy were like little gods lording it over the natives, who became their servants. The revolutions in Latin American countries have been in large measure created by the contrast between the poverty of the people and the wealth of the Roman Catholic Church and the evil dictatorships it supported. Liberation Theology was spawned in Latin America by radical Catholic priests and nuns whose aroused consciences could no longer justify the oppression of the masses by both Church and state.”
~ David Hunt, *A Woman Rides the Beast*, p. 56-57 ~

I. LATIN AMERICAN COLONIZATION

Most of Central and South America was colonized by the Spanish. The Portuguese colonized Brazil. France, Holland and Great Britain established small colonies, mostly in the Caribbean.

II. NATIONALIST MOVEMENTS

Many regions of Latin America began to develop reactions to _____. Natural _____ formed boundaries for future nation states. Simon Bolivar united revolutionary forces in several areas. San Martin also united armies from several regions. These movements were designed to overthrow European colonial governments. There was no unity. _____.

The people of the United States greatly sympathized with these movements. Americans remembered their own struggle for freedom from colonial control.

The British government supported these movements as a way _____. By 1825, there were _____ in Latin America.

III. BANANA REPUBLICS

Spanish control of Latin America left little chance for people to develop _____. The Spanish and Portuguese established the Roman Catholic Church as the state church of all these regions.

There were high rates of illiteracy among Latin American people. The Catholic Church _____ Catholic church taxes helped to trap people in poverty. Entire Latin American nations were trapped in poverty by high taxation.

It was often easy for “strong men” to become virtual dictators. Nations which maintained a form of elections but which _____ were known as _____.

IV. THE LATIN AMERICAN ECONOMY

Latin America possesses abundant, natural resources. It should have a vibrant economy. Agricultural imports are plentiful in South America. Wheat, beef, sugar, bananas, coffee and chocolate are all exported around the world. _____ is employed in agriculture. One third of the worlds _____ are in Latin America.

Socialism, high taxes, inflation and national debt have prevented most Latin American countries from living up to their economic potential.

V. ERA OF AMERICAN ECONOMIC INFLUENCE

From the 1870's until the 1930's, Latin America developed deep economic ties to the United States. The day to day lifestyles of Latin Americans rose all throughout the region. The Great Depression slowed down this process.

VI. MEXICO

- A. In 1854, a revolt led to the formation of _____. This was opposed by the Roman Catholic Church which excommunicated anyone who took _____. This was followed by the War of Reform from 1857-1860.
- B. Napoleon III of France, taking advantage of the American Civil War, invaded Mexico and took control of the government.
- C. Benito Juarez, supported by the United States, led a civil war against the French government. He established a new government and was elected to the presidency four times.
- D. Porfirio Diaz seized control and ruled Mexico for 35 years. His policies promoted economic growth and many personal freedoms, though not political freedoms. His government was popular and the time is referred to as the "Pax Porfiriana."
- E. The Pax Porfiriana was followed by 29 years of virtual anarchy. Bandits ruled large areas of Mexico, the most famous being Pancho Villa.
- F. The NPR (National People's Republic party) established control over Mexico and instituted socialism. This led Mexico _____.

VII. THE CARIBBEAN

- A. The Tribal Period

Most islands were dominated by one tribe. The Caribs were a ferocious cannibal tribe. They raided all over the Caribbean area.

B. The Age of Discovery (1492-1580)

All of the islands were claimed by European nations. Most native peoples were enslaved and decimated. African slaves were imported and became the main population base for almost all of these islands. _____ and _____ became the mainstays of the island economies.

C. The Pirate Era

The islands were so dependent upon trade that they became a profitable area for pirates. European wars resulted in many changes of ownership of particular islands.

D. The Haitian Revolution

Several slave rebellions failed to overthrow the French government of Hispaniola. Under Francois Dominique Toussaint (1743-1803), the French government was overthrown and a British invasion was resisted. Former slaves established a new government. It has remained the poorest country in the Western Hemisphere ever since.

E. United States Involvement

After the Spanish-American war, Cuba and Puerto Rico came under U.S. control. Cuba became an independent country.

F. Independence

From the 1960's through the 1980's, most former European colonies became independent countries. In 1959, a communist rebellion, under Fidel Castro, took control of Cuba. Communism destroyed the once fine economy of Cuba.