

Section I



The Age of Transformation and Revolt, 1780–1825

The age of transformation and revolt stretched from 1780 to 1825, beginning with peasant and slave revolts that offered radical alternatives to the European colonial systems (best represented by slaves taking over in the new nation of Haiti). The era culminated with *creole*-led forces seizing power in one region after another in order to establish independent republics and forestall a complete overthrow of the political, economic, and social systems. Imaginings of nationhood, citizenship, and political rights began to appear, and they motivated debate, new leaders, and mass movements. Over the course of decades, people from a wide array of class and ethnic backgrounds chose to replace centuries-old empires with nations and imperial subjects with citizens. However, not everything changed: Iberian-descended *creoles* retained many of the colonial-era hierarchies in the new republics, and the economies continued to depend on the exploitation of indigenous people, *castas*, and slaves. In fact, access to courts and legal rights to land, property, and control of children declined for indigenous people and women with the creation of independent nation states in Ibero-America.

This era of change and warfare sprang from a prolonged period of rising class-race tensions and economic hardship. Between 1772 and 1776, Spain's Bourbon monarchy raised the *alcabala* (sales tax) from 2 percent to 4 percent and then to 6 percent. Furthermore, tax collectors installed new customs houses along the Spanish colonies'

principal trade routes and began to collect these levies more vigorously. Officials ignored local exemptions and extended the taxes to indigenous-style products—like corn and textiles—angering most colonial residents. Royal courts and officials failed to resolve vigorous protests over the new fiscal measures and tax collectors and magistrates' increasingly frequent practices of imposing their cronies and other outsiders on indigenous communities. Indians, *castas*, and even Spanish *creoles* began to unite more frequently in revolt against what they all denounced as “bad government.” Peasant rebellions also increased in both New Spain (Mexico) and Peru: In central Mexico, at least 142 short-term uprisings occurred, mainly in native villages, between 1680 and 1811, and native Andean people rose violently against colonial authorities over a hundred times between 1720 and 1790.

As revolts intensified and grew in size toward the turn of the century, a sense grew within both elite and popular sectors that the government should be responsive to the demands of the populace. Dissatisfied subjects often identified their primary loyalties with administrative regions that would later become nation states. They imagined different ways that politics might be structured, and some envisioned breaking away from Spanish rule altogether. Some of the earliest examples of the potential of these new movements and ways of thinking appeared in Peru. North of Potosí, an illiterate Aymara Indian peasant leader, radicalized by

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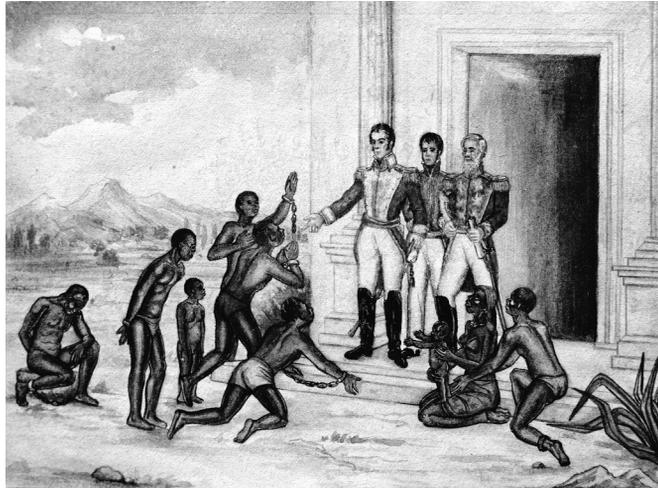
repeated abuses, drew on democratic communal customs of decision making to fight back. In Cuzco, Tupac Amaru II, an educated and Hispanicized indigenous elite, and his wife, Micaela Bastidas, drew on a colonial revival of enthusiasm for the pre-Hispanic Incas to rally Indians and non-Indians to fight the imperial state's impositions. Divided loyalties, however, led royalist Indian nobles, terrified *creoles*, and Spaniards to combine forces to defeat the rebels. Nevertheless, Andean peoples continued to imagine alternatives to foreign domination. Even in the very regions where indigenous leaders and their allies were defeated in the 1780s, Marión's chapter demonstrates that non-elite Andean peoples continued participating in politics and rejoined the fight against foreign rule in later struggles.

Along with the revolt that Tupac Amaru II and Micaela Bastidas started in Peru, the Haitian Revolution (1791–1804) exemplified the potential and transformative nature of these early movements. The revolution in the French Caribbean plantation colony of Saint Domingue (later Haiti) played a huge role in how Iberian *creoles* and people of African heritage viewed independence. With the outbreak of the French Revolution (1789), French colonists fell to fighting each other over the ideas of The Revolution. These divisions provided slaves and ex-slaves an opportunity to revolt in 1791; they cast off their chains of servitude and demanded rights as French citizens, destroying the plantation system in the process. Eventually the military and political leadership of Pierre Dominique Toussaint L'Ouverture and Jean Jacques Dessalines helped definitively end slavery, defeat slave owners and a succession of European powers, and secure full independence. In 1804, Haiti became the second republic in the Americas and the first one ruled by non-Europeans (albeit mostly those of middle or elite sectors). For slave owners and *creoles*, Haiti represented the explosive potential of revolt from below and the danger of elite divisions, opening the way for radical revolution. Throughout the Americas, including the United States, these hopes and fears influenced political and economic decisions. These first anticolonial rebellions proved to be the most radical, and they shook the colonial world.

The wounds were barely healed from these wars when new events in Europe shattered Iberia's hold of its colonies and forced people of varying ethnic and class backgrounds across the Americas to act decisively. Napoleon Bonaparte occupied Portugal in 1807 and Spain in 1808, forcing out the Bourbon monarchs in both kingdoms and placing his brother Joseph on the Spanish throne. *Creoles* rejected Joseph and claimed that sovereignty reverted to the people. Resistance grew in places like Buenos Aires and Caracas, where provisional governments were set up in 1810 claiming to govern for the deposed king. In Caracas the famous *creole* leader, Simón Bolívar, persuaded an 1811 congress to declare full independence; for the next fifteen years he fought and defeated royalist forces, setting up *creole* rule in the republics that would eventually become the nations of Venezuela, Colombia, Ecuador, Peru, and Bolivia. Chapter 2 in this section examines Bolívar's pronouncements and plans for government and nationhood. These documents allow readers to follow Bolívar's thinking about how to treat different groups in society, which influenced several republics' new "social contracts" with their citizens.

In Mexico, the 1808 Napoleonic invasion sparked rebellion and loyalist reaction. On the one hand, royalists seized control of the colonial government on behalf of the deposed king. On the other hand, critics of monarchical rule began to plot. One group of plotters included the *creole* priest, Miguel Hidalgo y Costilla; when his fellow conspirators were detected and captured, he rang his church bells and called on his parishioners to join him in launching a rebellion. Mexican *campesinos* (rural farmers and agricultural workers), long frustrated with late colonial policies, were primed to come together under a leader and take advantage of the apparent divisions among *creoles*. Thus, in 1810, central Mexico's indigenous and *mestizo* peasants rose up first under the banners of Father Hidalgo y Costilla and then continued fighting under the command of a *mestizo* parish priest, José María Morelos. The opening chapter on Morelos focuses on his vision for an alternative to Spanish rule; he appealed to

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Dated July 20, 1810, this watercolor depicts *creole* revolutionary general and statesman Simón Bolívar (1783–1830) literally liberating slaves. Initially, Bolívar saw no contradiction between independence from Spain and continuing slavery, but he changed his mind by the second half of the 1810s. Bolívar offered male slaves liberty if they joined his rebel army, but many slaves refused to pursue this perilous route to freedom. After the independence, he expressed fears that Afro-Latin American demands for equality would impose non-white rule and exact revenge on *creoles*. Nevertheless, Bolívar advocated gradual emancipation, resulting in abolition in Venezuela, Peru, and Ecuador in the 1850s. Full emancipation required an extended struggle, involving slave resistance, to overcome the opposition of slave owners and merchants. How is the liberation of the slaves portrayed here? What is the relationship between the slaves and the liberators? What message might this work of art have conveyed in 1810? How does that message relate to the actual progress of slave emancipation in Ibero-America?

Source: Casa-Museo, 20 de Julio de 1810, Bogota, Colombia/The Bridgeman Art Library International.

both progressive *creoles* and poor *campesinos*. *Creoles* and Spanish officers commanded a coalition of militias that eventually suppressed the revolt in 1815, although resistance in many areas was never fully stamped out.

Brazil followed a different path to independence. First, the colony provided a refuge for the Portuguese monarchy and court, fleeing Napoleon; from 1807 until 1821, the Portuguese Crown ruled its empire from Rio de Janeiro. During this time, commerce flourished with the opening up of trade, and the colony developed key institutions like banks, universities, and printing houses. Brazilian *creoles* welcomed these changes, although they resented Britain's domination of trade. When in 1808 the French were driven from Iberia, an

assembly of Portuguese *liberals* wrote a new constitution demanding the return of the monarchy, the reinstatement of Lisbon's trade monopoly, and rolling back Brazilian autonomy. Brazil's landowners and urban professionals opposed this "recolonization" and succeeded in persuading the prince regent, Dom Pedro, to remain in Brazil. They convoked a Constituent Assembly and created an independent monarchy in Brazil (1822–1889). In the following years, debates over many issues continued, among them slavery and the status of free people of color. Schultz's chapter brings to life one of the assembly debates in 1823 over race and citizenship in the Empire of Brazil. Although some fighting occurred, Brazil avoided the protracted and destructive wars fought in Mexico and the Andes.

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Furthermore, Brazil's *creoles* prevented any fundamental change in the socioeconomic structure in the new nation.

The letters, decrees, and accounts collected in this section reveal how political thought and actions functioned at many levels of society and how many people within these American societies ceased to think in terms of subjects and empires and began to think and act as citizens of nations. Military service in *creole*-led independence movements allowed many *mestizo* men to secure status as citizens alongside their *creole* commanders. Indians, women, and blacks, however, fared much worse, because colonial-style hierarchies endured and became central organizing principles in the new Latin American republics. As the colonial period waned and anticolonial and independence struggles spread, indigenous, *creole*, and *mestizo*

elites began to envision politics and society after European rule. Race relations loomed large in their thoughts, and most independence leaders called for an end to colonial racial divisions and the establishment of equality before the law. In practice, however, independence prolonged legally sanctioned racial inequalities, despite the existence of more egalitarian alternatives. The groups that defended alternative national visions continued their struggles by resisting elite impositions. Historian John Tutino summed up this shift by stating "As the colonial rule ended the contested process of nation-building began."¹

¹John Tutino, "The Revolution in Mexican Independence: Insurgency and the Renegotiation of Property, Production, and Patriarchy in the Bajío, 1800–1855," *The Hispanic American Historical Review* 78, no. 3 (August 1998): 367.

Chapter 1



Father José María Morelos and Visions of Mexican Independence

Erin E. O'Connor, Bridgewater State College



Parish priests leading a violent, multiethnic uprising to overthrow the Spanish colonial government might surprise many readers. Officially, the Catholic Church was supposed to support colonization and keep the populace loyal and obedient to the Crown and its colonial administrators. Fathers

Miguel Hidalgo y Costilla and José María Morelos of New Spain (soon to become Mexico) did just the opposite, and their bid for independence earned them enduring fame as the first leaders to imagine and fight for a Mexican nation. Although the priests' actions may have been more extreme than those of other religious

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officials in the colonial era, there was a long history of priests in colonial Spanish America who were concerned with the plight of the poor and exploited. Still, Hidalgo and Morelos adhered to a more radical vision than other socially concerned priests, calling for an end to slavery and *tribute*, and reforms that would establish Mexico as an independent and representative government. This chapter introduces readers to one of the most important surviving documents from this first struggle for Mexican independence: Morelos's 1813 "Sentiments of the Nation," in which he outlined his vision for the national government he hoped to establish.

The Hidalgo-Morelos movement resulted from a complex set of political, economic, and social factors in early nineteenth-century New Spain. Initially, *creole* responses to the 1808 Napoleonic takeover of the Spanish throne were mixed. Although some powerful Mexico City *creoles* remained loyal to the Crown, other *creole* elites plotted to rise up against the colonial government. One such plot was underway in the Bajío region north of Mexico City in 1810. When authorities discovered the plot, one of the main conspirators, Father Miguel Hidalgo y Costilla, made a preemptive call to arms in his now-famous *Grito de Dolores* (Cry of Dolores) on September 16, 1810. A well-educated *creole* parish priest in the town of Dolores, Hidalgo expected other *creoles* to join his protest when he made his call to arms. Instead, indigenous and *mestizo campesinos* answered his call, and his army quickly swelled to tens of thousands.

The agrarian poor in the Bajío consisted mainly of workers on large estates with some autonomous peasant communities mixed in. Racially, this was mostly a *mestizo* region, and even indigenous peoples living there were fairly Hispanicized in their language, customs, and dress. Although it had not been one of the more tumultuous regions during the colonial period, eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century changes made the Bajío potentially volatile. Eighteenth-century population growth put pressure on peasants and rural workers, who competed with each other for limited land and jobs. These problems were compounded in the early nineteenth century when estate owners expelled some resident workers following a series of crop failures. Former estate workers resented both regional elites and the colonial system that failed

to provide them with relief. Hidalgo's proposals offered a more tolerable government system that would provide tangible benefits for the poor, such as the abolition of slavery and *tribute*, and land reform. For *creole* elites, the Hidalgo insurrection brought to life their greatest fears: that the exploited majority might rise up against their so-called superiors. *Creole* and Spanish elites set aside their differences and banded together to defeat the insurgents. In March of 1811, loyalist forces captured and executed Hidalgo, but his army marched on.

Father José María Morelos took charge of the movement after Hidalgo's death until his own capture and execution in 1815. Morelos, sometimes referred to as a *mestizo* and at other times as an Afro-*mestizo*, was born to a poor family and worked as a muleteer before studying to become a priest. He joined Hidalgo's cause in 1811 and rose to prominence as an intelligent and able leader. Morelos tried, with some success, to bring greater order to the committed but largely undisciplined rebel forces. Less effectively, he also attempted to draw more middle- and upper-class *creoles* into the movement. *Creole* elites considered the insurrection an unruly "Indian" mob, despite Morelos's attempts to win them over with familiar political ideals. In December 1815, loyalist forces caught and executed Morelos, bringing an end to the first phase of Mexican independence. When independence finally came to the nation in 1822, under the military and political leadership of the Spanish officer Agustín Iturbide, it was a profoundly *conservative* movement that proposed to establish a monarchy and maintain the colonial social hierarchy.

The document "Sentiments of the Nation" allows readers to explore the political ideals through which Morelos attempted to broaden his support base. Although Morelos failed to win over moderates with "Sentiments," and royalist forces defeated the uprising, Hidalgo and Morelos strongly influenced the course of Mexican history. The central issue of land reform that drew so many poor *campesinos* into their armies remained unresolved throughout the nineteenth century, and land conflicts worsened over the long term. Nineteenth-century presidents and Mexico's congress focused on ideals of equality before the law and emulation of European models in politics and the economy while simultaneously

pursuing policies that allowed large estates to expand at the expense of indigenous and *mestizo* peasants. Rising *campesino* frustrations with unresponsive governments resulted in a true social revolution in Mexico from 1910 to 1940. Though the 1910 Mexican Revolution fell far short of its promises to the rural poor, it produced land and labor laws that, at least initially, benefited the Mexican poor.

As Mexican politics and society changed from 1821 to 1940, the images of Hidalgo and Morelos also transformed. In order to claim Hidalgo and Morelos as rightful heroes of the independence period, yet without questioning the elitism of nineteenth-century nation state formation, nineteenth-century artists played down the more radical elements of the movements. They often portrayed Hidalgo and Morelos alone, rather than with the poor followers who made up the majority of the movement. They also presented the two leaders in poses similar to those in portraits of more *conservative* independence leaders in Latin America. Consider the first image of Hidalgo, an 1895 etching from the publication *Patria e independencia*. Hidalgo is standing at a desk, surrounded by books and papers to emphasize his scholarly background. In the second image, a “Mexican School” painting of the nineteenth century, Morelos was presented in a calm pose in full and formal attire. In contrast, the image of Hidalgo from Mexico’s era of revolutionary state building emphasized the radical and insurgent nature of these movements and heralded the leaders as avenging. It was also painted by one of the most famous muralists in early twentieth-century Mexico, José Clemente Orozco. The mural in which the Hidalgo image appears is located in Guadalajara’s Palacio de Gobierno (government palace). Hidalgo appears quite different in the twentieth-century image than in the nineteenth-century portrait, for it was precisely his role in leading Mexico’s poor in a radical movement that made

him an ideal hero during the process of revolutionary state building.

The document and images in this chapter capture the complexity of Mexican independence. In particular, they show that Mexico’s rural poor were neither fully included in this radical independence movement nor were they summarily defeated at its conclusion. In Mexico, as elsewhere in Latin America, poor non-Europeans were aware of politics and engaged with the struggles and ideals of their times, but they would have to wait at least a century to see elements of their own versions of liberty and justice implemented.

Questions to Consider:

1. What kind of government did Morelos envision? How did he propose that citizenship, rights, and obligations be determined in the new nation?
2. Historians often comment on ways that Morelos infused this document with elements of colonial-style hierarchy. Where do you find such elements in the document? What do you make of the tension between equality and hierarchy in the document?
3. Morelos led a very different kind of movement than Bolívar. How similar or different were his political ideas? Did the two leaders’ ideas correspond clearly to the kinds of movements they led? Why or why not?
4. Look carefully at the painting of Morelos. To what extent is Morelos’s *Afro-mestizo* heritage apparent in this nineteenth-century portrait? Why?
5. Consider the radical messages of the revolutionary-era painting of Hidalgo. To what extent do you see this radicalism reflected in “Sentiments of the Nation”?

José María Morelos, “Sentiments of the Nation”²

1. That America is free and independent of Spain and of all other Nations, Governments, or Monarchies, and it should be so sanctioned, and the reasons explained to the world.
2. That the Catholic Religion is the only one, without tolerance of any other.
3. That all the ministers of the Church shall support themselves exclusively and entirely from tithes and first-fruits (*primicias*), and the people need make no offering other than their own devotions and oblations.
4. That Catholic dogma shall be sustained by the Church hierarchy, which consists of the Pope, the Bishops and the Priests, for we must destroy every plant not planted by God: *minis plantatis quam nom plantabit Pater meus Celestis Cradicabitur*. Mat. Chapt. XV.
5. That sovereignty springs directly from the People, who wish only to deposit it in their representatives, whose powers shall be divided into Legislative, Executive, and Judiciary branches, with each Province electing its representative. These representatives will elect all others, who must be wise and virtuous people . . .
6. [Article 6 is missing from all reproductions of this document.]
7. That representatives shall serve for four years, at which point the oldest ones will leave so that those newly elected may take their places.
8. The salaries of the representatives will be sufficient for sustenance and no more, and for now they shall not exceed 8,000 pesos.
9. Only Americans³ shall hold public office.
10. Foreigners shall not be admitted, unless they are artisans capable of teaching [their crafts], and are free of all suspicion.
11. That the fatherland shall never belong to us nor be completely free so long as the government is not reformed. [We must] overthrow all tyranny, substituting *liberalism*, and remove from our soil the Spanish enemy that has so forcefully declared itself against the Nation.
12. That since good law is superior to all men, those laws dictated by our Congress must oblige constancy and patriotism, moderate opulence and indigence, and be of such nature that they raise the income of the poor, better their customs, and banish ignorance, rapine, and robbery.
13. That the general laws apply to everyone, without excepting privileged bodies, and that such bodies shall exist within accordance with the usefulness of their ministry.
14. That in order to dictate a law, Congress must debate it, and it must be decided by a plurality of votes.
15. That slavery is proscribed forever, as well as the distinctions of caste, so that all shall be equal; and that the only distinction between one American and another shall be that between vice and virtue.
16. That our ports shall be open to all friendly foreign nations, but no matter how friendly they may be, foreign ships shall not be based in the kingdom. There will be some ports specified for this purpose; in all others, disembarking shall be prohibited, and 10% or some other tax shall be levied upon their merchandise.
17. That each person’s home shall be as a sacred asylum wherein to keep property and observances, and infractions shall be punished.
18. That the new legislation shall forbid torture.
19. That the Constitution shall establish that the 12th of December be celebrated in all the villages in honor of the patroness of our liberty, the Most Holy Mary of Guadalupe. All villages shall be required to pay her monthly devotion.
20. That foreign troops or those of another kingdom shall not tread upon our soil unless it be to aid us, and if this is the case, they shall not be part of the Supreme Junta.

²Source: From Gilbert M. Joseph and Timothy J. Henderson, eds., *The Mexico Reader: History, Culture, Politics* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2002), pp. 189–191.

³Source: This article referred to the fact that Morelos did not want *peninsulares*, or men born in Spain, to hold public office in the new nation.

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21. That there shall be no expeditions outside the limits of the kingdom, especially seagoing ones. Expeditions shall only be undertaken to propagate the faith to our brothers in remote parts of the country.
22. That the great abundance of highly oppressive *tributes*, taxes, and impositions should be ended, and each individual shall pay five percent of his earnings, or another equally light charge, which will be less oppressive than the *alcabala* [sales tax], the *estanco* [crown monopoly], the *tribute*, and others. This small contribution, and the wise administration of the goods confiscated from the enemy, shall be sufficient to pay the costs of the war and the salaries of public employees.
23. That the 16th of September shall be celebrated each year as the anniversary of the cry of independence and the day our sacred liberty began, for on that day the lips of the Nation parted and the people proclaimed their rights, and they grasped the sword so that they would be heard, remembering always the merits of the great hero, señor don Miguel Hidalgo y Costilla, and his *compañero*, don Ignacio Allende.

Chilpancingo, 14 September 1813



Father Miguel Hidalgo y Costilla.

Source: Picture Desk, Inc./Kobal Collection.



Father Miguel Hidalgo y Costilla mural by Jose Clemente.

Source: PhotoEdit Inc.

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Father José María Morelos.

Source: Museo Nacional de Historia, Mexico City, Mexico/The Bridgeman Art Library International.

Suggested Sources:

There are few primary source documents available by either Hidalgo or Morelos beyond “Sentiments.” A short (paragraph-long) series of reforms that Hidalgo decreed in 1810 is available in Benjamin Keen, Robert Buffington, and Lila Caimari, eds., *Latin American Civilization: History and Society, 1492 to the Present*, 8th ed. (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 2004),

267. Other short documents can be found in Joseph M. Gilbert and Timothy J. Henderson, eds., *The Mexico Reader: History, Culture, Politics* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2002) in the chapter on independence, including conservative views, such as Iturbide’s “Plan of Iguala” and Lucas Alamán’s description of the Hidalgo followers’ siege of Guanajuato.

There are excellent scholarly studies of Mexican independence viewed from below. See John Tutino’s pioneering study, *From Insurrection to Revolution in Mexico: Social Bases of Agrarian Violence, 1750–1940* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1989), in which he discusses how threats to *campesino* security led to their support for the Hidalgo-Morelos insurrection. For an update of some of Tutino’s analysis that discusses the role of gender in the insurrection, see his article “The Revolution in Mexican Independence: Insurgency and the Negotiation of Property, Production, and Patriarchy in the Bajío, 1800–1855,” *Hispanic American Historical Review* 78, no. 3 (1998): 367–418. For the foundations of agrarian protest in early nineteenth-century Mexico, see Eric Van Young’s *The Other Rebellion: Popular Violence, Ideology, and the Mexican Struggle for Independence, 1810–1821* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2001). Although independence benefited mainly *creole* elites, Mexican peasants were actively involved in the transition from colony to republic. For more information on peasants and politics in early nineteenth-century Mexico, readers should refer to the works of Peter Guardino, including *The Time of Liberty: Popular Political Culture in Oaxaca, 1750–1850* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2005).