

17. INDEPENDENCE & CHANGE IN 19th CENTURY LATIN AMERICA FRONTIERS IN NORTH AND LATIN AMERICA (4/08/04)

Late colonial “reform”

If think back to when we left off with Spanish empire, some broad similarities in conditions across empire, because laws etc. set in Spain

Indians separate from whites, own communities

Encomienda fades out; Indians more burdened by tribute to state and church

Indians developed coping mechanisms:

- local community the unit of solidarity

- set of institutions developed: folk Catholicism; syncretism; hierarchy of offices

Things got worse in 18th century, largely because colonialism got more efficient, esp. with Bourbons, dynasty after 1713

Famous for “reforms”. Tighten up system.

Throw out Jesuits, too independent minded. Take much of their property.

Local militias to counterbalance royal army.

Get economy going after long slump.

What were the results?:

- Rule much more direct. Indians now reported to a *local* Spaniard.

- More efficient, less leeway.

- Took control of local funds.

- Funds go less to local needs. Bishops and secular leaders siphoning off, esp. with funds that went to things hard to defend, like fiestas, even though they were important for community solidarity.

Also Indian communities being pressed. Haciendas surrounding. Indian population growing.

Independence from Spain

If late colonial period worse, often even worse with independence from Spain.

Huge historical change, cannot cover in depth here.

Complex causes: influences from abroad, like North American rebellion, European enlightenment.

Even more disaffection of Creoles, i.e. American-born Spanish.

Napoleonic wars in Spain. Complicated changes, loss of loyalty.

Encouraged rebellion in Americas.

What did it mean for Indians? Indians sometimes participated in independence movements, sometimes not.

It was an exciting period for Indians, possibility of improvement in their lives.

But things went back and forth: tribute payments abolished 1811, reinstated 1814, abolished again 1820.

New world revolts often pretty conservative, and even when not, sometimes meant strengthening of power over Indians.

Indians participated in first great movement in Mexico, 1810, under Father Martín Hidalgo, but failed. Creoles frightened by popular power.

Liberal reforms

New independent governments impoverished. Had to get funds. So ended special rights as well as duties for Indians. Sold off Indian brotherhood lands, and collective Indian lands, declared them vacant. Encouraged plantations, haciendas.

Often looked to Northern Europe for inspiration: cult of progress, science, development. Chaotic, back and forth. Sometimes breathing space for Indians.

In 1870s esp., many Latin American governments abolished collective landholding, parceled out Indian lands individually. Sometimes Indians effectively participated in redistribution and kept lands individually. Liberals genuinely believed in change, but often redistribution was pretext to screw them out of their land.

Indians had new challenges.

Whites eager for their labor, renewed measures to compel them: debt slavery, sharecropping, laws to force work on plantations.

Liberals believed in unifying, so great pressure to assimilate.

Racial situation

Changing hierarchy. Two caste system had for a long time been complicated by intermarriage and interbreeding.

Apparent difference with North America: absolute white/black and white/Indian lines in North America, many gradations in Latin America. But Latin American elites insisted on "purity of blood" complete whiteness.

Over time, development of large mestizo population, began to assert selves.

Began to assert selves as *the* national population.

In many ways very good, eliminate old caste system, more open.

But in tolerance for Indians and Blacks, esp. those who didn't want to be mixed

Development of capitalism & the extractive economy

19th century also when capitalism, the world industrial/commercial economy developed European manufacturers developed a huge appetite for raw materials

Latin America and other regions were drawn into the world economy, esp. as suppliers of raw materials

Brought new wealth, at least for some, but also meant dependent and at whim of metropole and conditions over which they had no control.

Variety of natural products: sisal for rope, esp. from Yucatan. Cacao, tropical woods, turtleshell, ivorynut for buttons, ipecac for medicine, chicle for gum. Also some farmed and ranched products: cattle.

Coffee: Great spread of production, esp. Colombia and Central America.

Great impetus for dispossession of Indians from remaining lands. Much fraud.

Many foreign owners of coffee plantations.

Also renewed need for Indian labor. Had to devise new mechanisms to force them to work. In Guatemala, new "vagrancy" laws. Rural police to enforce them.

Especially affected the remaining Indians of Guatemala and Southern Mexico who were still living in nucleated communities.

Rubber: huge impact.

Needed esp. for tires of carriages, then cars. Other uses too.

At first, gathered wild rubber. Panama, Central America, esp. the Amazon.

Affected Brazil, Andean countries that backed onto Amazon.

Rubber work, going from tree to tree that tapping, long line of trees. Monotonous, very isolating.

Got both mestizo peasants and Indians to do.

In many places tremendous coercion needed. As later found out, in isolated areas was often coercion, brutality, even horrors like torture and mass killings.

Amazon rubber boom lasted roughly 1875-1920.

Later, the British in effect stole rubber seeds, took them to the far East to plant, where established plantations, even cheaper labor. Broke Amazon boom.

Amazon rubber boom reached peak of brutality when declining, in last two decades at beginning of 20th century.

Indians sometimes workers, sometimes used to coerce mestizo workers or scare rivals

Then huge scandals broke out.

1909 man named Hardenburg brought out horrors, wrote book, esp. on Putamayo in Peru.

1910 Roger Casement sent by British government to investigate. Casement had previously been involved in investigation of King Leopold's depredations in Congo.

Casement confirmed Amazon horrors, estimated 30,000 dead.

Eventually Peruvian investigation confirmed, but worst of guilty escaped.

May have been even worse than Congo, maybe half population died between 1880-1920.

Campaigns against Leopold and Putamayo first great human rights campaigns.

Also, there was a great expansion in 19th century of national populations and economy into marginal areas: plains, some forests. Esp. cattle economy.

Just as in North America, displaced Indians.

-In core areas like Guatemala and Andes, Indians had titles or well established use. So gradually bought, defrauded, etc.

On frontier, not an issue. Lands legally belong to state, called empty. Might have to pay state---significant source of revenue for impoverished governments--but not Indians

Indians responded various ways:

- opt out, go to cities or other rural area, adopt mestizo identity

- communities turn further inward, defend boundaries, absorb surplus

- on frontier: retreat or fight

Some active resistance and rebellion:

Lots of local ones in central America, esp. in 1811-1812 in Nicaragua

Great rebellion 1820 among Quiche Maya

Already mentioned Hidalgo in Mexico.

Participated in other wars, not strictly Indian rebellions

Then greatest, War of Castes in mid-century.

Frontiers

The extractive economy is crucial, but it is only one of the important aspects of the frontier

Historians and others have been fascinated with the frontier.

Famous thesis of Frederick Jackson Turner, said American national institutions and culture have been marked by frontier heritage: escape from European stratification and structures, new egalitarian American culture created.

Great 19th century Argentinean novelist Sarmiento, had opposite thesis: saw frontier as place of degeneration, savagery.

We have seen with missionaries frontier treated as blank slate, place where one could impose designs or plans or utopias from home.

But can also look at as distinctive area with own dynamics.

Edge of more settled colonial areas closer to core, border with less controlled indigenous regions.

Many differences: we used to idea of rapid advance, but sometimes stable for long periods.

Sometimes artificially: British powers restraining American colonists.

Some whole regions, other frontiers patchy, along coast or rivers.

Importance is edge, zone of interaction

Already seen some frontier patterns:

Iroquois, playing off French and British; trying to keep settlers out, treaties, sell out other Indians, finally lose.

"Middle Ground" across great lakes, Ohio, Middle West. Shatter zone, numerous recombinations, shifting alliances, failed attempts to regroup, resist.

Cherokee, defensive modernization.

North American Plains

One of most famous western plains, classic mounted Indians

Image of the mounted Plains Indian is very powerful, even among recent Native Americans: Their dress and ceremonies have spread to other groups.

But of course no horses in Americas before 1492.

Lightly populated region:

- agriculturalists, on edges, along Missouri, corn, some hunting

- nomadic hunters, on foot, hunt buffalo with cliff drives, box canyons, corrals

Initially, Spanish tried to keep a monopoly on horses, they were well aware of military importance. But Indian slaves on northern frontier could watch, learn. When got free, took knowledge.

Southwest Indians were riding by 1630s, Apache mounted raiders by 1660s. Reached Mandan 1739, Lakota or Sioux not until 1760s

So irony that what seen as quintessential Indian way *very* recent.

Caused major changes:

- Buffalo hunting much more efficient, allowed larger groups to live together.

- Very appealing: marginal groups became more important, some agricultural Indians abandoned fields. Also Indians displaced from east participated: Delaware from Atlantic coast ended up on horseback out west.

Some stayed agricultural but benefited through trade with hunters: "Pueblo" Indians in Southwest, Mandan on Missouri. So the Plains became great center of Indian life
Relatively uniform culture, well known: tipi, travois. Emphasis on portable technology.
Graphic art on teepee and shields. Preserved meat. Sacred "medicine" bundles.
Basic unit band of 50-100, right size for buffalo hunting. But waxed and waned, seasonal, occasional groups much larger
-Bands usually had a dominant leader, but little control, depended on reputation, charisma.
-Eventually many groups, even bands multi-ethnic.
-Quite individualistic: emphasis on individual achievement, initiative. Prestige from war, hunting, oratory.
But also communal institutions, strict discipline for hunt and for serious war
Ex-agriculturalists had more communal organization: Cheyenne, Blackfoot, Comanche
War societies: enforced discipline on march, hunt, war
Lots of intercommunication between tribes---multilingualism, famous sign language---
rapid movement of traits, e.g. sun dance, medicine bundles, guardian spirits, ordeals
Became more stratified, less egalitarian---doesn't fit our romantic stereotypes.
Could carry and accumulate more possessions.
And esp. great form of wealth: horses. Started to get rich and poor Indians.

They shared characteristics with pastoralists around world:
Mobile, hard to pin down. Effective warriors.
Became stock raiders as well as stock raisers.
Those near Hispanic frontier raided habitually.
Also mutual raiding and slaving among groups.
Trading chains reaching those further from Spanish.
Typical in Middle East and elsewhere too of pastoralists.

Lasted only short time, c. 100 years. Coming to fruition time of arrival of Lewis & Clark.
Epidemics first destroyed sedentary Mandan, but then on to others.
Very fluid, groups moving, fighting, allying.
Lakota expanding at cost of others.
Of course ended because of white conquest, killing buffalo, boxing in.
Romantic view that Indians were saving buffalo herds, but very likely they were just destroying them at slower rate than whites.

Plains of South America

One of great points of interest was similar development at other end of Spanish empire. In Chile, was population called Araucanians, their descendents mostly known today as Mapuche.
Northern populations dense, relatively easy to conquer.
But below Río Bio-Bio soon learned to fight back.
Used long pikes, with captured Spanish blades, against cavalry. 1553 huge defeat of Spanish.
By 1560s had become horsemen: one rider, one infantryman carried per horse.

Very effective, no decisive results one way or another for long period.
Indians changed their practices: e.g. switched to wheat and barley because corn matured slowly, vulnerable to Spanish raids.

Horsemen and horse complex moved across Andes, out onto pampas.

Widespread mounted warriors, just like northern plains.

lasted a bit longer.

Spanish colony at mouth of Río de la Plata small.

Indians became players in regional politics.

Like Barbarians at edge of Rome, tribute, bribes.

But in 19th century, independent countries moved against them.

Chile 1840s-1850s, massacred and displaced Araucanians; since then poorest and most downtrodden in Chile.

Argentina, 1879-1880, campaign with line of forts, moved down pampas month by month, boxed in and annihilated Indians. true genocide. reduced to handful. Survivors also extremely downtrodden.

The Caribbean: Miskitú and Garifuna

Other areas where frontiers found: Along northern, Caribbean coast of Central America

After 1524, emphasis in Spanish settlement on the far, Pacific side.

So Caribbean side, much of it low and swampy, became marginal, refuge.

Caribbean islands were great stage for fighting out of conflicts between European powers:

Endless wars, especially in 17th and 18th centuries.

Northern Europeans preyed on Spanish wealth, affected Indians.

Growth of buccaneers, pirates. Raid silver route. Some with permits making them semi-legal. 17th century great age. Start to suppress in 18th century.

Black Caribs or Garifuna

One of great points of interest was not only that people adapted, changed, but merging of peoples or origin of whole new peoples: called ethnogenesis.

Fascinating case, starts in Antilles, far eastern Caribbean islands.

Some "Carib" Indians held out for some while against French and British colonization.

Some mostly unmixed Indians; others intermixture of Indians and Blacks: called Black Caribs.

-Spoke Indian language, but biologically and culturally mixed

-Black Caribs finally defeated in 1796. British deported them, dropped them on the island of Roatán, on Honduran coast. Soon moved to coast, have been there ever since, know call selves Garifuna. Peaceful adaptation, many now in U.S.

The Miskitú

Another group below Black Caribs on Central American coast.

probably not distinct people in pre-Colombian era: small groups on rivers.

1640s, slaves from island of Providencia make it to coast, start to mix with Indians.

Again, Indian language but biological mix. probably fewer African cultural traits than with Black Caribs.

New people emerged, called Mosquito or Miskitú.
Cooperate with pirates, settlers.
Demand for slaves on Jamaica, at first couldn't get Africans much.
Miskitú become slave raiders, enslaved other Indians, feared up and down coast, market well into 18th century. Even captured and enslaved Blacks and Spaniards.
Also some captives incorporated into Miskitú society, like Iroquois.
Used by British as mercenaries, put down slave revolt in Jamaica.
As Indian slave trade waned, became traders, middlemen, collected tribute.
System of native leaders, with western titles: king, admiral, etc. really just chiefs.
"Coronation" in Jamaica, British ratification.
Debate about how independent or dependent on British they were
Thereafter went into decline.
Non-Indian Blacks, called Creoles, start to settle, eventually dominate economy, even selection of king.
Nicaragua eventually manages to incorporate coast.
Moravians missionize Miskitú.
Miskitú get caught up as laborers in boom and bust economy.
Gradually reduced to proletarian rural laborers.

With Sandinista revolution late 1970s, great hopes of getting land demarcated.
Effort fell apart, both sides blamed other. War.
Manipulated by U.S., right wing in Nicaragua. Terrible suffering.
Sandinista change of heart, were starting to implement autonomy when Sandinistas voted out.
No war now, but still suffering. As always happens, U.S. has completely forgotten them.

Maroons

Similar processes happened with fully African groups:
Cultural change, synthesis, ethnogenesis.
African slaves in the Americas had few options other than submitting:
Could run away to urban centers, but only if sophisticated, born in Americas.
Could try to pass as freedman.
Massive rebellion, but then better flee.
Or could run away into woods as individuals or small groups. It happened a lot.
Runaways became known as maroons or *cimarrones*.
Happened almost everywhere, Spanish, English, French, Dutch colonies.

Did not just keep running. Only certain distance. In Brazil, sometimes just couple of miles, elsewhere a bit further. Why so close?
Hoped to rescue kin still on plantations.
Depended on technology, esp. steel tools
Raided for food and tools.
As peoples and cultures, the Maroons were a combination, a synthesis:
from different African peoples.
The maroons recruited people with different places in slave system: some fresh off boat, others tough field slaves, sophisticated house slaves. Leaders came esp. from first and

last groups. (Like some of leaders in Indian rebellions; who were mestizos or literate Indians.)

Had to create new society, often new language.

Traits from various West African societies.

Also aspects of plantation culture.

New World synthesis, with strong African roots.

At first, less organized, some despots. later perfect organization, more dispersed authority.

Religion was a very important integrating force.

They had common problems, opportunities:

Had to stay free, hunted by planters.

Indian and Black militias most effective slave-catchers.

New runaways could be spies.

Search for allies, esp. pirates, esp. Francis Drake.

Relations with Indians variable, often edgy. Whites pit Indians against Blacks.

Overall surprisingly successful, were very hard on planters.

Famous book by English mercenary, Steadman, Slogging through swamps in Guianas.

Illustrations by famous artist William Blake. (Examples shown)

So negotiated with maroons, made treaties. Very early in Panama, later elsewhere:

Authorities sometimes paid tribute to stop raids. All got autonomy.

But maroons had to promise not to send back new runaways. Felt as crisis.

In Panama, Jamaica, Brazil, have been at least partly integrated into national society for long time, but kept much of independence in Guianas. 20th century wars in Surinam.

Even for people more firmly within empires, there has been great cultural and linguistic ferment.

Development of new languages called Creoles, often mixture of European and African grammar and vocabulary but also new.