

Reading Essentials and Study Guide

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The Reach of Imperialism, 1800–1914

Lesson 4 Imperialism in Latin America, *continued*

IT MATTERS BECAUSE

During the course of the nineteenth century, the new nations of Latin America found themselves dependent on the West. The United States, in particular, was involved with the economics and politics of its southern neighbors. Latin American nations also experienced many social and political inequalities.

The U.S. in Latin America

Guiding Question *What was the impact of U.S. involvement in Latin America in the early 1900s?*

The United States began to intervene in Latin American affairs in the late 1800s. In 1895 José Martí came back to Cuba after some time in exile. He led a revolt against Spanish rule, and the Spanish brutally crushed the rebellion. This action shocked Americans, and it led the United States to declare war against Spain in 1898. This was called the Spanish-American War. As a result of the war, Cuba became a protectorate (a political unit that depends on another government for its protection) of the United States. In the treaty that ended the war, Puerto Rico was annexed to the United States.

In 1903 President Theodore Roosevelt supported a rebellion that allowed Panama to separate from Colombia and create a new nation. In return, the United States got control of a 10-mile (16 km) strip of land through the country. There the United States built the Panama Canal to connect the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans. The canal opened in 1914. The canal was one of the world's greatest engineering achievements of its time. The canal connects the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans. It usually takes a ship about 8 to 10 hours to move through the canal passage.

In 1904 President Roosevelt expanded American involvement in Latin America. At the time, European powers threatened to send warships to Santo Domingo in the Dominican Republic. They wanted to collect debts that the country owed to them. Roosevelt made a statement that became known as the Roosevelt Corollary to the Monroe Doctrine in 1904. He said the United States could intervene in any Latin American nation that could not repay debts. The United States then took over debt collection in the Dominican Republic.

American investments in Latin America were growing. The United States began to practice “**dollar diplomacy**” in the early 1900s. It invested in Latin American development, an action that increased its influence in the area. The United States replaced Europe as the main source of loans and investment in Latin America. Direct U.S. investments reached \$3.5 billion out of a world total of \$7.5 billion.

As a result, the United States wanted to protect these growing investments. They sent military forces to many countries, including Cuba, Mexico, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua, Panama, Colombia, Haiti, and the Dominican Republic. Some forces stayed for years. U.S. Marines were in Haiti from 1915 to 1934. They were in Nicaragua from 1912 to 1933. More and more Latin Americans started to dislike this interference from the “big bully” to the north.

Reading Essentials and Study Guide

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Lesson 4 Imperialism in Latin America, *continued*



Reading Progress Check

Analyzing Ethical Issues In what ways were U.S. actions in Latin America during the early 1900s imperialist?

Revolution in Mexico

Guiding Question *What were the causes and effects of the Mexican Revolution?*

Large landowners in Latin America began to take a more direct interest in national politics and even in governing after 1870. In Argentina and Chile, for example, landholding elites controlled the governments. They created constitutions like the ones in the United States and European democracies. The ruling elites were careful to keep their power, however. They did this by limiting voting rights.

Large landowners supported dictators in some countries. These dictators protected the interests of the ruling elite. Porfirio Díaz, who ruled Mexico from 1877 to 1911, created a conservative, centralized government. The army, foreign capitalists, large landowners, and the Catholic Church were groups that supported Díaz. These groups benefited from their partnership with Díaz. However, growing forces for change in Mexico led to a revolution.

Under Díaz's rule, wages of workers had declined. Ninety-five percent of the rural population did not own land, **whereas** about 1,000 families owned most of Mexico. Francisco Madero, a liberal landowner, forced Díaz from power in 1911. This opened the door to a wider revolution.

Madero made a major effort to handle the revolutionary forces. He put some of the best officials in his administration. He also wanted a balance in dealing with foreign interests. However, his efforts did not succeed.

The northern states were in near anarchy as Pancho Villa's armed bandits moved through the countryside. The federal army was full of stubborn generals who wanted to show their power. Even the liberal politicians criticized Madero because they thought he should have solved all of the country's problems at once.

There was a demand for land reforms. Emiliano Zapata led this new call for reform, and he inspired the masses of landless peasants. He began to seize the estates of wealthy landholders and give land to the people. Madero tried to reach an agreement with Zapata about land reforms, but Zapata refused to disarm his followers.

The Mexican Revolution caused great damage to the Mexican economy between 1910 and 1920. A new constitution was finally in place in 1917. This constitution included many of the goals of the revolution. For revolutionary leaders, the goal of the revolution was political reform, and for peasants, it was about land reform. The constitution established a government led by a president, who was elected by universal male suffrage. It created land-reform policies, and it established limits on foreign

Reading Essentials and Study Guide

networks

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Lesson 4 Imperialism in Latin America, *continued*

investors. The constitution also set an agenda to help workers. The agenda included the right to form unions, set a minimum wage, and limited working hours. The revolution eventually helped create a more democratic, stable Mexico.

The revolution also led to the spread of patriotism throughout Mexico. Intellectuals and artists tried to capture what was special about Mexico and put an emphasis on Mexico's past in their works. They showed their national pride.



Reading Progress Check

Identifying Central Issues How did Díaz, Madero, Villa, and Zapata help incite or prolong the Mexican Revolution?

Prosperity and Social Change

Guiding Question *How did prosperity change Latin America after 1870?*

An age of prosperity began in Latin America after 1870. It was mostly based on the export of a few basic items. These included wheat and beef from Argentina, coffee from Brazil, coffee and bananas from Central America, and sugar and silver from Peru. These items were exchanged for goods from Europe and the United States. These goods included textiles, machines, and luxury items.

Latin Americans also developed their own industries after 1900. They built factories to produce textiles, foods, and construction materials. However, growth in the economy came mostly from the export of raw materials. Latin America's economy remained dependent on Western nations and their foreign investments.

Latin America had grown economically, but old patterns still existed in Latin American societies. Rural elites controlled their estates and their workers. Slavery was abolished by 1888. However, former enslaved persons and their children were at the bottom of society. The indigenous people still lived in poverty.

The increase in exports and in prosperity did help the growth of the middle **sectors** of Latin America society. There were more lawyers, merchants, shopkeepers, businesspeople, schoolteachers, professors, bureaucrats, and military officers.

Middle-class Latin Americans in all countries shared some common characteristics. They lived in cities. They wanted education and good incomes. They also saw the United States as a model of industrialization. The middle class wanted liberal reform, not revolution. They generally sided with the landholding elites once they had the right to vote.

As the export economies of Latin America grew, the working class grew. The labor unions also grew, especially after 1914. Radical unions wanted to use the general strike as an instrument for change. However, the governing elites were able to limit the political influence of the working class. They did this by limiting workers' right to vote.

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Latin American countries needed workers for its industries. They looked to European immigrants. About 3 million Europeans settled in Argentina between 1880 and 1914. They were mostly from Italy and Spain.

As in Europe and the United States, industrialization led to urbanization. Buenos Aires was called “the Paris of South America.” The population was 750,000 by 1900 and 2 million by 1914. About 53 percent of Argentina’s population lived in cities by this time.



Reading Progress Check

Explaining How did an increase in exports change Latin America after 1870?
