

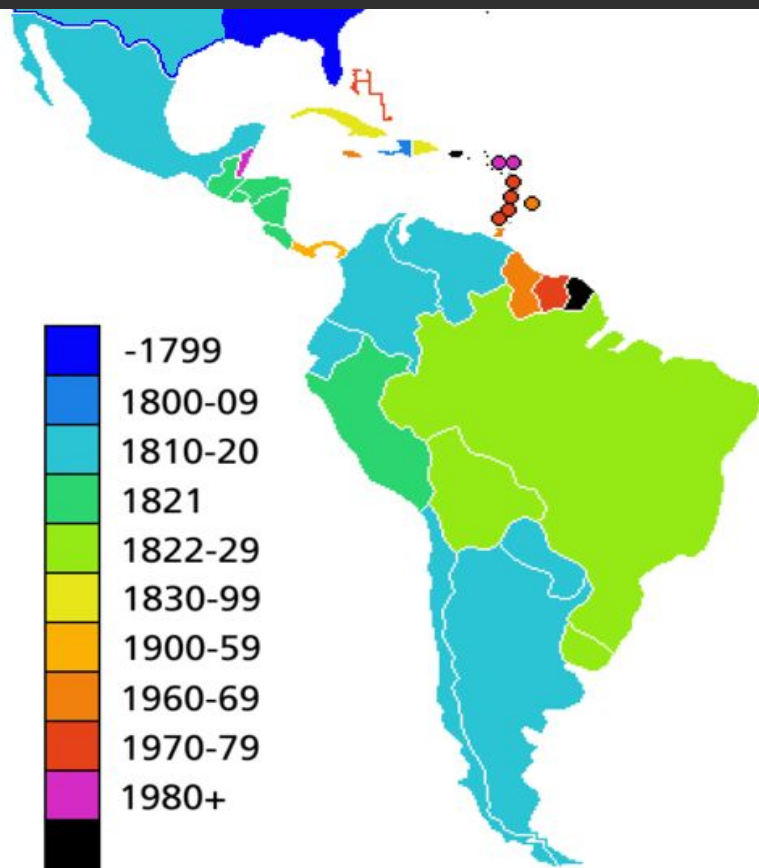
Origins of Revolution: Enlightenment

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Americas Divided ~1750s



Revolution dates



Enlightenment: What was it?

Following a scientific revolution in Europe, new ways of thinking were prompted by scholars and philosophers. Old values of society were beginning to be re-evaluated. Ideas regarding government, religion, economics, and education were all being rethought. These actions led to the Enlightenment.

Monarchical powers became negative public figures throughout the colonies and the churches which granted them power also became subject to defamation. Thinkers like Montesquieu advocated for a separation of powers between state and the church. Many people began to question the validity of religion in empowering those in power.

The Philosophies of the Enlightenment



John Locke:

- Believed that it is human nature to learn from experience and improve one's self. Because of this, humans have the ability to govern themselves, and he criticized the ideals of absolute monarchy.

Baron De Montesquieu:

- Advocating for a separation of government powers, so that no one section of government outways the other in power and no individual within office can gain far more power than any other.

The Philosophies of the Enlightenment



Jean Jacques Rousseau:

- Was passionately committed to individual freedoms. Believing that civilization corrupted the natural goodness in people. And good government, was one that was freely formed by the will of the people. People must give up a certain level of freedoms for the common good of the society.

Benjamin Franklin:

- Core founding father of the United States who advocated for unity among the 13 British Colonies, believing in the creation of one nation. He additionally acted as Ambassador to France, spreading colonial ideals and pushing for support of the United States.

Differences in Enlightenment

Europe

- Church holds significant power in the royal families, and impacts many government decisions.
- Constitutional Monarchies and Absolute Monarchies still control much of Europe.
- Earlier works from scientists previously deemed irrational such as Galileo and Copernicus were re-examined.

American Colonies

- Ideal separation of powers between church and state.
- Constitutional Democratic Republicanism spreads within North American colonies.
- Colleges throughout the country reformed and adopted scientific principles into their curriculum, replacing theology with natural philosophy.
- American culture began to take its own form, with its Federal-style architecture straying away from the traditional Gregorian style.



How the Enlightenment Affected the Revolutions Within the British and French Colonies:

- The British government was seen as having a progressive system, having a parliamentary monarchy. However in the eyes of some in the British Colonies, the government was tyrannical, and ideas of revolution were emboldened by the Enlightenment movement.
- The colonies felt as though they were not gaining the same benefits of those in Europe. With a lack of a European Enlightenment, the colonies started to create their own.
- The philosophies of the Enlightenment laid the structural framework for newly independent governments to be built from.
 - The US Constitution was highly influenced by the ideas of the Enlightenment
- The Spanish colonies, following the footsteps of the French and American revolutions, revolted against Spain to gain independence.



Enlightenment in Latin and Central American Revolutions

- Toussaint, who was one of the main organizers of the Haitian revolution took heavy inspiration from the French revolution. After the initial slave revolt, Toussaint even worked with the new French government briefly from 1793-1801 to help solidify Haitian self rule.
- Latin American colonies had additional tension from the creoles wanting more rights in government, which was a large part of why enlightenment became more popular in Latin America.
- Simon Bolivar was a Creole who studied enlightenment in Europe and the Americas, he began the revolution first in Venezuela while Spain was fighting Napoleon. Bolivar then went on to use enlightenment to liberate Colombia, Ecuador, Bolivia and finally, Peru, this in addition to Napoleon crippling Spain gave an opportunity for the other Spanish colonies to win their revolutions.
- Jose de San Martin followed in Simon Bolivar's footsteps and helped liberate Peru, and being the key figure in the liberation of Argentina and Chile.