

THE REPUBLICS OF LATIN AMERICA

Their History, Governments
and Economic Conditions

By

HERMAN G. JAMES

AND

PERCY A. MARTIN

Professor of History, Stanford University

REVISED EDITION



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PREFACE

THE present book is an attempt to bring within the compass of a single volume an account of the history, government, and economic development of the twenty American republics lying south of the United States. To these nations the term Latin America or Hispanic America is applied. The term Spanish America is inexact and misleading, as it embraces only the eighteen states of Spanish origin. The expression Hispanic America—from *Hispania*, the name given by the Romans to the Iberian peninsula—is more accurate as it includes Portuguese-speaking Brazil. It ignores, however, the little Republic of Haiti, whose existence is due to France and whose present-day problems are of such serious concern to the United States. Despite certain well-founded objections to the use of the term it has seemed best to defer to current usage and include our sister republics under the blanket designation of Latin America.

As the title would indicate, the emphasis has been placed on the period subsequent to the achievement of independence. At the same time an effort has been made to describe the foundations on which the national life of the Latin-American states has been built. To an introductory chapter have been assigned such preliminary topics as the European background, the classification and distribution of the most important American Indian stocks with which the Spaniards and Portuguese came into contact, and the period of discovery and exploration. These topics are discussed with such brevity as is consistent with clearness. Thus in describing the European background attention is centered on those basic institutions which were subsequently adapted to New World conditions; while the European conquest, where the story for a time merges into the larger history of the Americas, is sketched only in the briefest outline. The somewhat more com-

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prehensive treatment of the colonial period is largely confined to a discussion of the organs of colonial government, a survey of the economic and religious policies of the Spanish and Portuguese motherlands, and an analysis of social conditions, with particular attention to the relations of the colonists to the Indians. The wars of independence are taken up in a single short chapter. The subjects here stressed are the causes and preliminaries of the struggle, the significant military campaigns, the accomplishments of the two protagonists of the Revolution, Bolívar and San Martín, and the results of the contest. In connection with this last topic an attempt is made to indicate the obstacles confronting the new states on the threshold of their independent career.

Chapters IV to XII constituting the major portion of the text, are devoted to the history and institutions of the individual countries since the achievement of independence. The writers are aware that this method of presentation is not without its disadvantages. It is undeniable, for instance, that those countries whose language and traditions are derived from Spain have substantially the same type of civilization and that their history and development frequently reveal close parallels. With the method adopted occasional repetitions are therefore difficult to avoid. On the other hand, the majority of these countries, at least, have attained such a degree of separateness and have acquired such a strongly marked national individuality as to lend justification, in the judgment of the writers, to the plan followed in the present text. As far as possible the narrative has been kept unencumbered by the recital of minor events or by the introduction of personages of little consequence. Of the numerous civil wars and revolutions so characteristic of the earlier years of the nationalistic period only those have been stressed which left their impress on the political evolution of the countries concerned. Something over half of each of these chapters is given over to a detailed discussion of the constitutions, governments, political parties, and political conditions of the various republics. The existing constitutions are carefully analyzed and comparisons are made between the constitution under discussion and the constitutions of other

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Latin-American countries and the United States. An attempt is made to discover to what extent existing governmental forms and processes are adapted to the conditions and needs of each particular country. The agreement or divergence—as the case may be—between the theory and practice of democratic institutions is pointed out, as are the frequent differences between the government as outlined in the formal Constitution and the government in operation. At the present time there exists no work in which the political institutions, and more specifically the government of the Latin-American states, are treated with equal fullness. Brief sections of the chapters are devoted to the physiography, population, and characteristic products of each country, while statistical summaries supply data on recent economic developments, particularly in the fields of transportation, trade, and commerce.

The concluding chapter consists of a somewhat detailed account of the international relations of the Latin-American states, with special reference to the development of the Monroe Doctrine, Pan-Americanism, and Latin America and the War.

This book has been prepared to meet the needs of college courses in the field of history or government, or in foreign trade courses of the schools of commerce, where an elementary knowledge of the historical background and the political systems, as well as the main features of commercial geography, are recognized as an essential basis.

The lists of selected readings are designed to be of service both to students and teachers and to the general reader. No attempt is made at completeness. Only such works as are readily available and have been found by actual experience to be satisfactory for classroom use and for general reference are included. For this reason comparatively few works in languages other than English are noted. At the same time the references are sufficiently extended to afford the individual instructor wide latitude in emphasizing either the historical or the governmental aspect of the subject as he may see fit. For the guidance primarily of the teacher and research student certain bibliographical suggestions are added which will enable them easily to get in touch

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with important collections of sources, monographic material, and works on special periods or subjects.

The attempt to combine in a text of reasonable size satisfactory accounts of the history and government of our twenty sister republics is one whose difficulties the writers are the first to acknowledge. They willingly concede that few, if any, of their fellow teachers will be in complete agreement with the methods followed or the proportions assigned to each of the major topics. At the same time they venture to hope that the present work will prove of service not only to teachers and students, but also to that larger circle of general readers who are desirous of gaining an acquaintance with the achievements, institutions, and problems of our American neighbors.

PREFATORY NOTE TO SECOND EDITION

THE gratifying reception accorded this book not only by the general reading public but more especially also by instructors in Latin American History and Government in secondary schools, colleges, and universities has proved that with all its admitted shortcomings it has filled a real need in the text book field.

In this second edition the authors have made a special effort not merely to correct typographical and other errors that inevitably escaped detection in the first edition, but also to bring the work as far as possible completely up to date on the statistical side. Figures relating to population, governmental budgets, and economic conditions have been revised in the light of the latest available authentic information, and a note has been added to the "Bibliography" calling attention to the more important works in the field that have appeared since the first edition was published.

The authors wish to acknowledge the helpful suggestions received from many kind friends, too numerous to mention, calling attention to errors or omissions, and indicating other ways in which the book may be made more useful. Many of these latter suggestions the authors hope to be able to incorporate into a later, more completely revised, edition.

November, 1924.

H. G. J.
P. A. M.

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CHAPTER I

THE EUROPEAN BACKGROUND. THE NATIVE RACES. DISCOVERY AND SETTLEMENT

Purpose of the Chapter. The present chapter of our text is designed to serve as an approach to the somewhat detailed study of the history and institutions of Latin America. It includes such topics as a survey of the Spanish and Portuguese background, a brief discussion of the distribution and civilization of the most important pre-Columbian people with whom the Spanish and Portuguese explorers and colonists came into contact, and a summary of the period of discovery and exploration. Particular attention is devoted to those Iberian institutions which were transplanted to and took root in the New World.

The Physiography of the Iberian Peninsula: Its Historic Importance. Although the existence within the Iberian peninsula of two distinct nationalities is due, not to physiographic, but to historic causes the Spanish and Portuguese peoples have in the main been moulded by the same geographical influences. The very location of the peninsula has acted as such an influence. The Atlantic Ocean and Mediterranean Sea which all but surround it would naturally make for maritime expansion. On the other hand the lofty ranges of the Pyrenees on the north would tend to isolate the Iberian peoples from contact not only with France but also with the rest of Europe. Within the peninsula itself the most striking geographical features are the number and configuration of the mountain ranges and the vast expanses of dreary uniformity. The whole north central portion of the

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peninsula is a semiarid plateau of such high elevation that next to Switzerland Spain has a greater average elevation than any other country in Europe. On the northeast this plateau rises into the mountain chain of the Pyrenees, while in the south it falls away to the rich plains of Andalusia. A number of minor mountain chains running generally east and west, and forming the valleys of the chief Spanish rivers—the Ebro, Douro, Tagus, Guadiana and Guadalquivir—divide the country into a number of sharply separated districts, differing in appearance, climate and resources. The extensive rivers, being for the greater part of their length unnavigable, have acted as barriers rather than as highways between these regions. These geographical and climatic conditions have been largely responsible for one of the most fundamental peculiarities of the Iberian peoples—the tendency toward diversification and separatism. This separatistic trend, this pronounced regionalism, runs like a red thread through the history of Spain and its influence extends even to Spanish America.

Racial Elements. Within the veins of the modern Spaniard and Portuguese flows the blood of a number of races widely separated in point of time and origin. The first to appear on the stage of history were the Iberians who at an unknown date, but probably as early as 2000 B. C., crossed the Straits of Gibraltar, and conquered or absorbed the primitive neolithic population. Regarding the Iberians we know very little. They probably belonged to the Mediterranean race and were closely related to the Berbers of northern Africa. There is some reason to believe that the Basques, who for centuries have preserved their racial identity in the mountain fastnesses of northern Spain, are direct descendants of these Iberians. Much later (according to Altamira between the fourth and sixth centuries B.C.) came the Celts as a part of that great western migration which so profoundly affected the racial complexion of Western Europe. The Celts mingled with the Iberians and the resultant racial mixture is frequently spoken of as the Celt-Iberian. It is this racial stock which has so largely entered into the composition of

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the Spaniard of historic times. The Phœnicians, the Greeks and the Carthaginians, who successively gained a foothold in the peninsula during the period from the eleventh to the second century B.C., were neither sufficiently numerous nor widespread to leave any clearly marked racial or cultural heritage. The same could not be said of their successors, the Romans. After driving out the Carthaginians the Romans held sway in Spain for six centuries. Not only did their language form the basis of the later Spanish and Portuguese; not only did they bequeath to Spain and Portugal imposing monuments in the shape of bridges, aqueducts, and highways, but their influence in the domain of law, religion, and even political institutions was deep and permanent. With the collapse of the Roman Empire in the fifth century, the peninsula was overrun by a number of Germanic tribes, one of which, the Visigoths, maintained its foothold for three centuries. But the Visigoths constituted a minority of the population, and cut off as they were from re-enforcements, they gradually succumbed to the superior civilization of the Hispano-Romans. The language, religion, and to a certain extent the laws of the conquered were adopted by the conquerors.

The Moorish Invasion and the Reconquest. The most important single event in the mediæval history of the Iberian peninsula was the Moorish invasion of 711. Within the space of a few years the Saracens conquered practically all of the present Spain and Portugal, crossed the Pyrenees, and were only stopped in their onward march by the Frankish chieftain Charles Martel at Tours in 732. Meanwhile a handful of Gothic nobles, entrenched in the fastness of Asturias, defied the invaders, and implanted the seeds of the kingdom of Castile and León. From this humble beginning dates that great movement known as the *reconquista* or reconquest in which the energies of the Christian inhabitants of the peninsula were to a large extent absorbed during the next five centuries. Only a few of the more striking results of the Moorish occupation and Christian reconquest can here be touched upon. The history of mediæval Castile has been well described as first and foremost the history of a crusade. Yet in spite of

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the antagonism between Christian and Moslem, intermarriage, especially during the frequent intervals of peace, was not unusual and another element was added to the population of the peninsula. The reconquest further accentuated the isolation of Spain and Portugal from the rest of Europe. Engrossed in the task of driving back the Moors, the Hispanic Christians did not participate in the Crusades to the Holy Land nor were they affected by the scholastic movement. The reconquest perpetuated and intensified ecclesiastical influence. The clergy gained in wealth and power through their unflagging support of the warfare against the infidel. The newly liberated Iberian kingdoms became the most ardent defenders of the Papacy and on several occasions paid homage to the Holy See. Nor was the reconquest without its social or political effects. The feudal system never flourished in Spain and Portugal as it did in France or Norman England. Serfdom could hardly strike deep root in a region where all the able-bodied men were needed to fight the Moslems. Since walled towns alone afforded protection against the Moors life became concentrated in the cities; the latter days of the reconquest synchronized with the heyday of the city republics or communes. Five centuries of intermittent warfare was bound to have a brutalizing effect on the participants. Spanish knights not infrequently kept their mounts in their rooms, in order that they might be at all times ready for attack or defense. Though examples of chivalry are by no means rare the struggle was often characterized by cruelty and inhumanity. The Spanish and Portuguese nobles came to look down upon manual labor, especially when practiced by the captive Moor. Thus arose the Spanish *deshonor del trabajo* or contempt for labor, which in time grew to the proportions of a distinct economic handicap to the Hispanic peoples.

The Emergence of Spain as a Great Power. As we approach the end of the Middle Ages it will no longer be possible to treat the peninsula as a unit. Our attention will first be directed to Spain as the larger and more important of the Iberian nations. The period from the union of Castile and Aragon, resulting from

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the marriage of Ferdinand and Isabella in 1469, to the abdication of the Emperor Charles V¹ in 1556, represents the greatest epoch in the history of Spain. It witnessed the merging of a number of weak, ill-governed states into a compact whole ruled over by a dynasty of powerful and able rulers. Coincident with this process of unification and centralization came the emergence of Spain from her mediæval isolation, not only as one of the foremost powers of Europe but as the head of the greatest colonial empire the world had thus far known.

Prior to the accession of Ferdinand and Isabella, Spain was made up of a congeries of states, differing one from another in customs, laws, administrative system, and in some cases language, and all reflecting that tendency toward diversification and separatism so characteristic of Spanish history.

When, in 1474, Isabella succeeded her brother to the throne of Castile, the monarchy possessed neither credit nor power. Brigandage, baronial arrogance, civil war among the great nobles, plots against the crown, were among the problems with which the young queen and her consort had to cope. Fortunately the "Catholic Sovereigns" (*Reyes Católicos*) as Ferdinand and Isabella were called, were equal to the emergency. They were both rulers of unusual ability, and to their qualities of statesmanship was added, in the case of Isabella, at least, a singularly gracious and magnetic personality. Both rulers realized that their most immediate and pressing task was to evolve some kind of order out of the existing anarchy. The sovereigns believed that if the royal authority was to enjoy permanent respect some regular system of suppression must be devised. Fortunately the necessary instrument was at hand. In the latter middle ages various cities and communes had organized leagues of self-defense known as brotherhoods or *hermandades*. These leagues had been employed not only to punish crime but also to protect the cities against the encroachments of neighboring nobles or even royal officials. The Catholic Monarchs determined to make

¹ Although this ruler is known as Charles I in Spain it seems advisable to follow the current usage and employ his imperial title of Charles V.

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the *hermandad* a national institution. In 1476 the Cortes¹ agreed to the creation for a period of three years of a *santa hermandad* or "holy brotherhood." In point of organization and efficiency this new body was far superior to its predecessor. Its nucleus consisted of two thousand horsemen, always under arms, and placed at strategic points along the highways. Criminals and malefactors were pursued without mercy. The *hermandad* anticipates in certain features the extraordinarily efficient *rurales* or mounted police under President Díaz in Mexico.

The Organization and Increase of Royal Authority. The suppression of disorder was only a preliminary step in the organization of the monarchy on a firm and lasting foundation. As a result of the weakness of Isabella's predecessors the resources of the crown had been dissipated and the royal revenues were now entirely inadequate for the needs of the monarchy. The Cortes of Toledo in 1480 proved in the words of a contemporary "a God-given means of remedy and reformation for past disorders." At this gathering the great nobles and churchmen were induced to restore to the crown many of the estates, pensions, and endowments so lavishly granted by former sovereigns. All told the nobles lost and the crown gained through these resumptions an annual revenue of 30,000,000 maravedis. Another and most important increase of the royal revenue came through the annexation of the grand masterships of the three great military orders of Santiago, Calatrava and Alcántara. During the course of the three preceding centuries these orders had become enormously wealthy and their grand masters were among the most powerful nobles in Europe. Not only were the orders' wealth and power a menace to the monarchy, but their usefulness had ceased with the virtual completion of the reconquest. By means of persuasion and pressure Ferdinand induced all three of the orders to elect him as grand master and eventually they were incorporated into the crown of Castile.

¹ The Cortes, the Spanish analogue of the English Parliament, though flourishing in the latter Middle Ages, fell into disuse under the Catholic Sovereigns and had no influence on colonial administration. It is therefore omitted in our survey.

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As time went on an increasing share of the royal revenue was raised from taxation. Of these taxes one of the most lucrative was the *alcabala* or tax on commercial transactions. Ferdinand and Isabella regarded it as one of the most important features of their system. It was definitely fixed at ten per cent, or compounded for by a lump sum by the municipalities. This tax, whose blighting effect on trade and industry is obvious, was later introduced by Spain into the colonies and lasted down to the end of the colonial régime. Another tax, likewise carried over into America where it remained to vex the colonies until the beginning of the nineteenth century, was the *Bulla de la Cruzada*. As originally issued, on the occasion of the war against Granada, it was strictly voluntary, but soon became general and compulsory. While taxes under the Catholic Sovereigns were comparatively mild—in this respect presenting a striking contrast to conditions under the later Hapsburgs—Ferdinand and Isabella never rose to the conception that the interests of the taxed and taxers were in the final instance identical.

Certain other measures by which the royal power was consolidated deserve to be noted. Perhaps the most efficacious means of building up a centralized and absolutist government were the various royal councils. Prior to the accession of Ferdinand and Isabella, the Council of Castile had been an ill-defined body consisting of some twelve members recruited largely from the ranks of the great nobles and higher clergy. Though theoretically its attributions were limited to offering advice and counsel, in reality it acted as an effective check on the crown. In 1480 the council underwent a total reorganization. Most of the nobles and clergy were ousted or deprived of the right to vote. In their place were appointed eight or nine new members known as *Letrados* or lawyers. This latter class were men trained in the Roman law. Of humble birth, they were firmly devoted to the interests of the crown and did all in their power to further the idea of absolute monarchy. The duties of the council were multifarious. As in most of the Spanish organs of government, there were no sharp distinction between functions which in other

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countries are kept carefully separated. It was thus a legislative, administrative, and judicial body. It initiated legislation with the consent of the crown. It advised the king in regard to important appointments. As the supreme court of justice in Castile, it heard appeals from the great regional tribunals or *audiencias*. Early in the reign of Ferdinand and Isabella, the increasing complexity of administration caused the council to delegate some of its functions to committees which in turn became autonomous councils on their own account. Thus arose the Council of Justice, which took over the legislative and judicial functions of the older body; the Council of State, which dealt primarily with foreign affairs, and the Council of Finances. With the expansion of the power of the monarchy it was necessary to create entirely new councils. Thus came into existence the Council of the Hermandad; the Council of the Suprema, or of the Inquisition; the Council of the Military Orders; the Council of Aragon; and the Council of the Indies. An account of the powers and functions of this last body, which exercised control over Spanish administration in the New World, will be found in the chapter devoted to the Spanish colonial system.

The Audiencias. An institution which was destined to exercise great influence both in Spain and in Spanish America was the *audiencia*. The term first appears toward the end of the fourteenth century as applied to an ambulatory court attached to the king. Under the Catholic Sovereigns the powers and scope of this body were more clearly defined. In 1480 it was definitely established at Valladolid, as a tribunal enjoying both civil and criminal jurisdiction. The growth of the royal power and the desire of the crown to relieve the Council of Castile of its judicial duties led in 1494 to the foundation of an additional *audiencia*, at Ciudad Real, with jurisdiction throughout New or Lower Castile. In 1505 the body was transferred to Granada. Subsequently minor *audiencias* were created in Galicia and Navarre. The system of *audiencias* was transported to America where it underwent certain developments unknown to Spain.

The Adelantados. Among the various mediæval institutions

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which succumbed before the centralizing and absolutist policy of the Catholic Sovereigns was the *adelantado*. Under Saint Ferdinand, at the beginning of the thirteenth century, the various provinces into which Castile was divided were governed by royal officials known as *adelantados*. In time of peace their duties were chiefly judicial; in time of war, military. Though nominally appointive these offices tended to become hereditary. Fearful lest the *adelantados*, who were generally recruited from great nobles, might thwart the authority of the crown, Ferdinand and Isabella reduced their power to a mere shadow, although the office long continued to exist. It is worthy of note that the title of *adelantado* was given to Columbus, Pizarro, and several other of the early Spanish explorers as most in harmony with their duties as military governors of newly discovered regions.

The Municipalities. Another institution whose origin goes back to the early history of Castile—and in the opinion of some writers even to Roman times—was the municipality. The growth of town or city life in Castile followed closely on the heels of the reconquest. As the Moslem tide receded inducements were held out to the Christians to settle in the towns wrested from the Moors. The rights of the citizens were guaranteed by charters or *fueros*, some of which date back to the tenth and eleventh centuries. Among the most important of such rights was that of electing municipal magistrates. The freemen who had the suffrage—usually heads of families and property owners—formed the *concejo*. From this body were elected the *alcaldes* or municipal judges, the *alguaciles* or municipal police officers, and finally the *regidores*, who served as general administrative officials. This entire body of magistrates was known collectively as the *ayuntamiento* or *cabildo*. The halcyon days of the municipalities were in the thirteenth century. They were virtually self-governing republics and in point of opulence and splendor may well compare with the city states of mediæval Flanders or Italy. The power and independence of these cities aroused the apprehension of the crown which as early as the fourteenth century began to encroach on the attributes of the *concejo*.