

Unit 5: History and Culture of Latin America

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LESSON 4: POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC CHALLENGES



Daniel Kaesler/Alamy

Key Vocabulary

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- **Dictator:** a leader with complete power over a country
- **Caudillo:** military dictator of nineteenth-century Latin America
- **Communism:** system of government in which the government controls the economy, and people have limited rights to own property
- **Socialism:** economic system under which all land, banks, factories, and large businesses are owned and controlled by the government, not by individuals

As we discuss and read today, please copy this chart and use it to draw a conclusion about the Spanish-American War.

Text Clues	Conclusion

The Rise of Dictators

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- Strong leaders made it difficult for democracy to develop
- **Dictators** of these Latin American nations were often **caudillos**
- Some built roads, schools, and new cities
- Many favored the wealthy over the poor
- Dictators had control over the army
- If a dictator lost control of the army, he would sometimes be removed from power

The Economy Grows

- The growth of industry in Europe and the U.S. created new demands for South America's natural resources
- These demands expanded economies throughout Latin America
- Old colonial seaports grew into booming centers of trade
- These cities were home to a new and growing middle class

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A container ship carrying goods travels through the Panama Canal.

Rising Exports

- As the number of exports grew, many countries began to grow only one or two products
- Price and demand drops of products were often followed by a losses of jobs and incomes
- Foreign investors built ports, roads, and railroads
- Cities increased in size and population and the middle class grew

MEXICO 40.9%	Petroleum and petroleum products, vehicles, engines, cotton, machinery, coffee, fish, fertilizers, and minerals
BRAZIL 22.6%	Iron ore, coffee, fruit, timber, sugar, vehicles, and beef
VENEZUELA 10.6%	Coffee, oil, iron ore, textiles, fruit, and aluminum
ARGENTINA 7.7%	Wheat, corn, rice, meat, hides, and wool
CHILE 7.6%	Copper, iron, fruit, and wood pulp
COLOMBIA 4.1%	Coffee, emeralds, petroleum, coal, flowers, and meat
PERU 3.1%	Copper, lead, fish products, iron, zinc, oil, coffee, llama and alpaca wool, cotton, and sugar

**Share of Major
Latin American
Exports, 2005**

The Spanish-American War

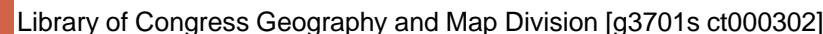
- By the 1890s, Spain had only two colonies in the Western Hemisphere
- In 1895 the people of Cuba began a revolt against their colonial government
- Thousands of Cubans were jailed or killed by Spanish troops

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African American troops took part in the fighting during the Spanish-American War

- In 1898 U.S. President McKinley sent the battleship *USS Maine* to Cuba to protect Americans there
- An explosion sank the *Maine* and killed 260 sailors
- On April 25, 1898, the U.S. Congress declared war against Spain
- The treaty that ended the war gave Cuba independence from Spain and gave the U.S. control of Puerto Rico, Guam, and the Philippines



This map helped Americans keep track of events of the war

Dictators in Nicaragua

- A former Nicaraguan general (Augusto César Sandino) opposed the American-supported government
- The marines left Nicaragua in 1933
- The new army was led by Anastasio Somoza
- Somoza and members of his family would control Nicaragua for the next 45 years

Image Source



The Old Cathedral of Managua, Nicaragua, still stands in the city.

The Somoza Dictatorship

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- Somoza wanted to rule without any opposition
 - Had his army kill General Sandino in 1934
 - Somoza became president of Nicaragua and ruled as a dictator
- During the Somoza dictatorship, the Somoza family became very rich
 - Used his power as president to acquire lands at low prices
 - forced business owners to turn their businesses over to him
- Somoza was disliked by many Nicaraguans
- The Somoza family became richer over time, while most Nicaraguans became poorer
 - Many Nicaraguans did not have jobs, were poorly fed, and were unable to read or write

The Sandinista Revolution

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- In 1972 a massive earthquake destroyed large parts of Nicaragua and created even more tensions
- Small groups of rebels began to form across Nicaragua
 - Called themselves Sandinistas
 - By 1978 their rebellion had become a civil war
- After battling Somoza's army for 18 months, the Sandinistas succeeded
- The war had taken more than 50,000 lives
- Many more people were left homeless

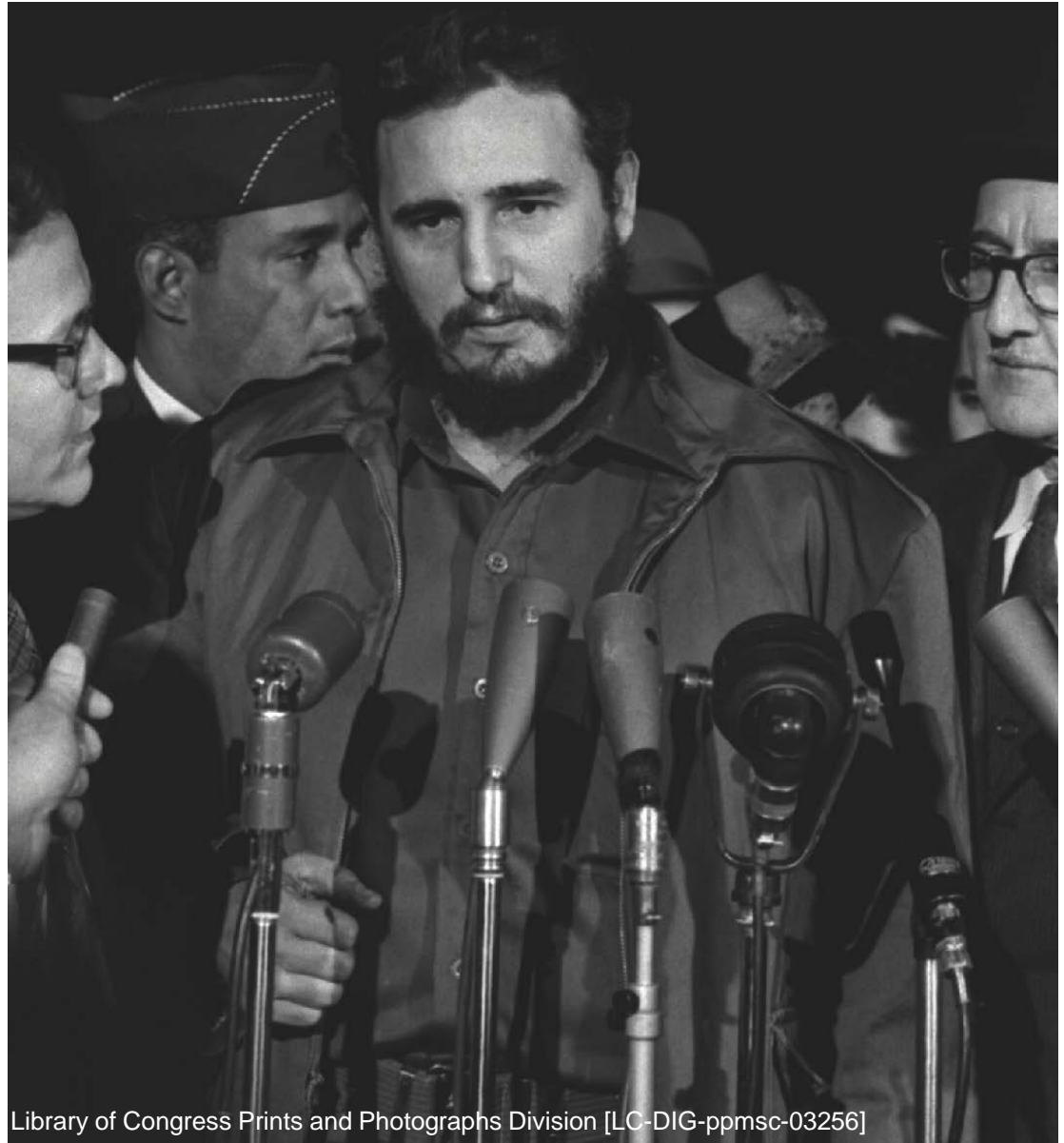
Struggling Economies

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- In many parts of Latin America, economies were controlled by a small number of people
- Owners of big businesses made profits
 - Farmers and factory workers did not share in the wealth
- Poverty was widespread throughout most of Latin America
- Latin American leaders often borrowed large amounts of money from the U.S. and other countries
- This debt seriously weakened Latin American economies
 - Prices rose, wages fell, and people lost jobs

Fidel Castro

- Set up a system of government in Cuba based on **communism**
- Castro ended free elections
- Began to nationalize U.S. companies in Cuba
- The U.S. government banned all trade with Cuba because they were not paid for the property and because of Castro's ties to other communist countries



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Allende and Pinochet

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- Salvador Allende was elected president of Chile in 1970
- Allende believed **socialism** would help solve many of Chile's problems
- Allende nationalized some of Chile's industries and large farms
 - The people in Chile and the U.S. who lost land and businesses did not approve of the changes
- In 1973 the U.S. helped General Augusto Pinochet take control of Chile by force
- Pinochet became a dictator

A Return to Democracy

- By the 1980s, the people of Latin America began to demand a return to democracy
- In many countries, the dictators were forced to give up control to elected leaders
- In some countries, one political party had controlled the government for so long, that it was no longer effective

Image Source



The president of Chile works in the large building called La Moneda.

In the early 2000s, angry voters in Venezuela, Bolivia, Peru, Mexico, and Chile elected new leaders. These leaders promised sweeping changes that would treat the poor more fairly.

Questions and Quick Checks

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- Write about Cuba and Chile using the following terms: **communism** and **socialism**
- Write about why Latin America changed during the 20th century.
- Why were many leaders in Latin America rich dictators?
- What were the Sandinistas fighting for?
- Use the chart from the beginning of the lesson to write about the Spanish-American War.

End of Presentation

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