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Latin America pressured by Western empires



The formation of empires in the *era of capitalism* was always linked to the dominion over territories and countries. This process was born in the sixteenth century, with *mercantilism*, an era that extended until the eighteenth century. America, as a continent, was colonized by great European powers, at the head of which was placed Spain, a unified and centralized kingdom precisely in 1492 by the Catholic Monarchs. Spanish colonial rule permanently had England and France as adversaries, although conflicts were minor with Portugal and other European monarchies. Mercantilism in Europe and colonialism in America were two sides of the same coin.

The mercantilism/colonialism relationship was the basis of what K. Marx called *the original accumulation of capital*, which prepared the emergence of capitalism as a consolidated system from the First Industrial Revolution. In that consolidation came the Revolutions of France (1789), which represented the rise of the bourgeoisie and the end of

feudalism, as well as the American Revolution (1776), which expressed the triumph of a nation to end colonialism and establish a sovereign country under the republican-democratic form. In the historical framework of the emergence of the Contemporary Age, there were also the independence revolutions in Latin America, which began in Haiti (1804), continued with the phase of the Juntas (1809-1812) and continued with the prolonged wars, until 1824. The result was the birth of the various Latin American states, which eventually adopted the republican-democratic form of presidential governments (the empires in Mexico and Brazil proved temporary), following the political model of the US.



Under capitalism world relations acquired a new structure. During the nineteenth century England maintained hegemony; but in the twentieth century it turned and the US consolidated its imperialist expansion. Latin America, which had dreamed of its own sovereign path once independence was achieved, was a region that inevitably affirmed the bonds of dependence on hegemonic powers.

In this framework, traditional historiography sought the common features that identified Europe with the USA and, in addition, with Latin America, in order to generate the idea of belonging of the three regions to the same world. The pioneering work of historians [Jacques Godechot](#) and R.R. Palmer in *Le Problème de l'Atlantique au XVIIIème siècle* (1955) already spoke of an "Atlantic community" that specifically linked Europe and North America, without referring to Latin America. Under the conditions of the Cold War a new criterion was forged, with a Manichean division: Europe, the USA and Latin America, belonged to the "free world", to the world of "democracy", while the USSR, Eastern Europe, China, and in our continent Cuba, were part of the "communist slavery". The idea of a civilizational sphere located in the Western world, which was to guide the historical path of all the other corners of the Earth, was fixed.

The commemoration of the Latin American independence bicentennials was the opportunity for the development of a renewed historiography that has served to clarify, understand and expand knowledge and explanations about the anti-colonial revolutions. But there were also works that have tried to argue that the Creole revolutions were a kind of reflection of events in Europe (an idea that goes back to Hegel) or that they were simply part of a special moment in the development of the Hispanic community omnipresent until today. [In reinforcement of Hispanidad, Borja Cardelús' book *América Hispánica*](#) (2021) exalts the legacies of Spain in America, something unquestionable; But the historical magnitude of the independences, which broke with colonialism at the dawn of capitalism, is not understood. And in these historiographical contexts the idea that independence was part of the processes of the "Atlantic community" and even of the "*Atlantic revolutions*" has matured.



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Finally, the war in Ukraine has caused the ideology of Westernism to be resumed, to try to align Latin America in the conflict, but in favor of Europe and the U.S. Even [Zelenski seeks to win Latin America's support](#) for his cause and would try to propose a summit with the rulers. Under the assumption that our region belongs to the same historical sphere of the Atlantic, of the West, of Hispanidad or of the free and democratic world, the imperialisms of the present are not willing to understand or admit that Latin America is defining its own sovereign positions in the face of the conflict, which have been led by Presidents Andrés Manuel López Obrador in Mexico and Inácio Lula da Silva in Brazil.

It should be clear that Latin America condemns the war in Ukraine, does not support Russia, nor NATO, does not have an "indefinite" position, but demands concrete actions that do not escalate the conflict, but that solve it under the guidance of peace as a guiding principle of Latin American diplomacy. The very principle of peace as an international policy is correlated with the recognition of the multipolarity that advances unstoppable in

the world and that allows the region to maintain growing economic ties with China. The non-alignment resumes, with current scope, the ideals that moved the Third World since the Bandung Conference in 1955.

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