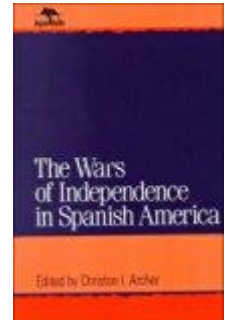


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Latin America's 'Forgotten' Wars

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Another in Scholarly Resources' Jaguar Books series, Christon Archer's *The Wars of Independence in Spanish America* continues the tradition providing edited volumes containing primary and secondary documents on singular topics for reference and teaching. In this volume, Archer includes examples of recent research, earlier views, contemporary interpretations, and translated documents to illustrate his major point that the rebellions, insurgencies, and counterinsurgencies that led to independence for Spanish America were wars in every sense of the word. This point has sometimes been forgotten by earlier studies that focused on diplomacy, politics, and the creation of constitutional systems or military studies that tended to focus on the creation of national armies in the last decades of the nineteenth century.

Archer organizes his collection of thirteen chapters into four sections on origins, New Spain, South America, and Spain's defeat. The first section includes Archer's coherent and well-organ-

ized introduction, a great aid for anyone who has to lecture on the confusing period of independence in Latin America. It also contains Brian Hamnett's previously published article on the sources of conflict in Colombia, colonial New Granada, focusing on governmental weakness in outlying regions, such as the llanos, the coasts, and the Pacific south. (A depiction that sounds eerily familiar today.)

The second section covers New Spain and includes a translation of another previously published article by Virginia Guedea detailing an incident involving a worker in rural New Spain, illustrative of the many people caught up in the insurgency and counterinsurgency and compelled to serve either side without any ideological attachment. However, as excerpts from Peter Guardino's recent monograph on the region that became Mexico's Guerrero state demonstrate, peasants and local elites could and did share interests and approaches allowing for a common program. The royalist response to this situation is found in Archer's translation of Felix Calleja's 1811 regulations

that militarized Mexico and of a March 1818 report by Viceroy Juan Ruiz de Apodaca which optimistically overemphasized the effects of pacification on Mexico's regions and amnesty programs for insurgents, since such regions and fighters shifted back and forth.

The third section on the wars in South America opens with two contemporary views of Venezuela, the cockpit of the conflict. The first, by British Major George Flinter who, as Archer notes, supported the royalist cause and reported the views of many American royalists who opposed major changes to colonial society that would raise the status and position of the *castas*. In the second document, Jose de Cevallos, the captain general of Caracas in colonial Venezuela, did not agree with such views and emphasized the need to gain and maintain the support of the *castas*. Such ideas, however, soon lost favor and the royalists quickly lost the support of the *casta* fighters. Thus, as shown in an excerpt from Stephen K. Stoen's monograph, General Pablo Morillo was unable to recover New Granada, even though he captured Cartagena and seized control of the coastal regions. Without the support of the *casta* populace, Morillo's force melted away and Morillo attempted to do the same, requesting transfer back to Spain. Simon Bolivar, who Archer notes was the most important figure in the independence of South America, like him or not, responded to *casta* aspirations and ended royalist control in the region with their help. Archer juxtaposes two contemporary reports on Bolivar, one by Daniel Florencio O'Leary, Bolivar's Irish-born aide-de-camp who supported Bolivar, and the other by H.L.V. Ducoudray Holstein, a self-appointed general from Germany with French military experience who bitterly criticized Bolivar noting his opponents' ineptness provided most of Bolivar's successes. Archer also includes O'Leary's account of the meeting between Bolivar and Jose de San Martin at Guayaquil in 1822 which remains an enigma to historians to this day.

The final section deals with Spain's defeat in the Americas. Archer presents an excerpt from Timothy Anna's monograph on the fall of royalist Peru, the last stronghold of Spain. Peru was divided between republicans and monarchists and over independence. The arrival of San Martin and Bolivar was unwanted and the motivations for intervention by Colombians and Argentines questioned. The issue was still undecided upon de facto independence after the final Royalist defeat. Archer also reprints Rebecca Earle's article on disease and death in the Spanish American revolutions. Earle details the destruction of Morillo's force in Venezuela and Colombia from yellow fever, smallpox, venereal disease, altitude sickness, and skin diseases. The health care system was ill equipped to deal with these issues and many soldiers and officers sought to escape the slow certain death by transfer, desertion, or rebellion. Archer concludes with Margaret L. Woodward's seminal article on the Spanish Army and the loss of America. Due to the factors as described by Earle, many in the Spanish Army desired peace, valuing survival over glory. With the restoration of Ferdinand VII in 1814, officers began to request transfers back to Spain, closer to the patronage of the Crown. With the 1820 revolt in Spain by an American-bound expeditionary force that restored the 1812 Constitution, the army could no longer conceive of sending troops to die in the Americas. Spain's empire in the Americas, except for Cuba and Puerto Rico, came to an end.

Ultimately, Archer put together an excellent set of essays for classroom use in general courses on Latin America or more focused ones on revolutions and rebellions. Many of the 'problems' that dominate our discussions of nineteenth-century Latin America have their roots in the Independence period. Many of the conflicts of that occur in the twentieth century also have a basis in this period. Finally, the nature of the independence wars, the prevalence of guerrilla tactics, the ethnic component, and the near breakdown of civil society should sound uncomfortably familiar to read-

ers who have been witnesses to the horrific conflicts in the Balkans, Africa, Central Asia, and Central and South America over the last decades. These are often referred to as 'low-intensity conflicts' or 'ethnic conflicts,' denying their effects by not calling them wars. When war is used, it is often as 'new wars' or 'post-modern wars,' as if such conflicts have not happened before. Archer's collection should rapidly disabuse our students and ourselves of such notions. Latin America's forgotten wars need to be remembered today more than ever. Archer has provided us with the means to begin to do so.

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