

## Latin American Revolutionary #1: Toussaint L'Overture

Toussaint L'Overture was an important figure in the Haitian Revolution. A former slave, he became a brilliant general and capable administrator, defeating British, French, and Spanish troops, emancipating the slave population, and overseeing the country's initial attempts at reforming its political and social structure. He also led a successful slave insurrection (1791-1793). In 1801 he invaded Spanish Santo Domingo and freed the slaves there. He briefly maintained control over the entire island, establishing the first Black-led government in the Americas, before being arrested by Bonaparte's agents (1802) and deported to France. His extraordinary efforts at reaching across lines of race and class set him apart from his contemporaries, and his vision of a race-blind, independent country of equals was ahead of his time.



*"In overthrowing me, you have done no more than cut down the trunk of the tree of the black liberty in St-Domingue-it will spring back from the roots, for they are numerous and deep."*

Toussaint L'Overture

*"I was born a slave, but nature gave me a soul of a free man..."*

Toussaint L'Overture

*"Toussaint is a Negro and in the jargon of war he is also called a brigand. But we would like to say that this Negro who was born to avenge the outrage to his race has proved that the character of a man has nothing to do with his colour."*

The London Gazette, 1798

## Latin American Revolutionary #2: Miguel Hidalgo

Miguel Hidalgo was a 57 year old priest whose parish was in the city of Dolores, Guanajuato in Mexico. Hidalgo was born in 1753 on the hacienda where his father was administrator. At twenty years of age he received his Bachelor of Theology degree and lectured in philosophy and theology at San Nicolás Obispo and, after being ordained as a priest, became rector of the school. Hidalgo worked hard to improve the lives of his parishioners, mastering their Indian language and teaching them crafts and skills to improve their economic condition. The date was September 16, 1810. Early that morning Father Miguel Hidalgo y Costilla had the church bells rung to summon the townspeople to the church, where he told his followers that the time had come to expel the Spaniards who had misgoverned Mexico for so long. He, with his “Cry of Dolores” launched the revolution, and the rebel army set forth, armed with machetes, swords, knives, clubs, axes, and a few muskets. As they passed through each town they opened the local jails and recruited the prisoners for their cause. Eventually their numbers grew to sixty thousand.

After six months of fighting, Hidalgo fell into a royalist trap and was captured. Because he was a priest, he was subjected to a lengthy hearing by the Inquisition, after which he was found guilty of heresy and treason, defrocked, and, on July 30, 1811, executed by a firing squad in the city of Chihuahua. His head, along with those of three other revolutionary leaders, was cut off and sent to Guanajuato, where it was put on a pole and displayed for a decade.

His speech, known as the Grito de Dolores, the “Cry of Dolores,” set off the Mexican War of Independence, which resulted in Mexico's becoming an independent country.



*“My children: a new dispensation comes to us today. Will you receive it? Will you free yourselves? Will you recover the lands stolen three hundred years ago from your forefathers by the hated Spaniards? We must act at once... Will not you defend your religion and your rights as true patriots? Long live our Lady of Guadalupe! Death to bad government! Death to the gachupines!”*

Father Hidalgo  
“El Grito de Dolores” speech

### Latin American Revolutionary #3: Simon Bolivar

During the Age of Imperialism (1875- 1914) the European countries came to see colonies as a necessity for economic growth. Spain, a world power at the time, controlled most of Latin America. Due to Spain's influence, there was a sharp divide between the social classes in Latin America, which were unfairly based on birth. The strongest challenge to Spanish rule by Native Americans was led by Tupac Amaru, who claimed descent from Incan kings. He demanded that the government end the brutal system of forced Indian labor. Spanish officials rejected the demand for reform. In 1780, Tupac Amaru organized a Native American revolt. A large army crushed the rebels and captured and killed their leader. Still, the revolt did have some positive effects. The Spanish king ordered officials to look into the system of forced labor and eventually abolished it.

Simon Bolivar was born in Caracas, Venezuela on July 24, 1783, at the same time that the United States secured its independence from Britain. He was tutored by Simon Rodriguez, whose teachings were strongly based on the Enlightenment period. Bolivar became fascinated with the works of Locke, Montesquieu and Rousseau. He was especially interested in any literature regarding the French Revolution. He returned to Venezuela in 1811 at the news of revolutionary activity against the Spanish. At age 28, Bolivar ended his travels, and marched into his first battle holding the rank of colonel. Venezuelan Congress declared its country independent from Spain on July 5, 1811. In 1813, Bolivar marched a revolutionary army into Caracas, to fight against the Spanish troops and Venezuelan royalists. He reconquered western Venezuela, and established a republic. All of South America declared him "el liberator." (The Liberator). However in 1814, the Spanish recaptured Caracas, and royalist forces drove out the revolutionaries. Finally, in 1817, Simon Bolivar gained enough support to take Venezuela back from the Spanish. He recruited an army of llaneros (plainsmen) and European veterans of the Napoleonic Wars. Bolivar's strengthened forces occupied part of the lower Orinoco basin, and drove out the Spanish forces. A congress elected the triumphant Bolivar as the president of the newly freed Venezuela.



*"I swear before God and by my honor never to allow my hands to be idle nor my soul to rest until I have broken the chains that bind us to Spain."*  
Simon Bolivar

*"An army of our brothers, sent by the Sovereign Congress of New Granada, has come to liberate you. We are sent to destroy the Spaniards, to protect the Americans, and to reestablish the republican governments that once formed the Confederation of Venezuela...for our mission is designed only to break the chains of servitude which shackle some of our towns, and not to impose laws or exercise acts of dominion to which the rules of war might entitle us. Moved by your misfortunes, we have been unable to observe with indifference the afflictions you were forced to experience by the barbarous Spaniards, who have ravished you, plundered you, and brought you death and destruction. They have violated the sacred rights of nations. They have broken the most solemn agreements and treaties. In fact, they have committed every manner of crime, reducing the Republic of Venezuela to the most frightful desolation."*

Simon Bolivar

### Latin American Revolutionary #4: Jose de San Martin



San Martín was born on February 25, 1778, in Yapeyú, in the Viceroyalty of the Río de la Plata (now in Argentina). He lived for most of his early life in Spain, where he served as an officer in the Spanish army. Sympathizing with the efforts of Spain's American colonies to win their freedom, he returned to Argentina in 1812 and began to train a revolutionary army to aid the struggle for independence. In 1816, he helped Argentina win freedom from Spanish rule. In 1817 he led a rebel force across the Andes Mountains, defeated the Spanish at Chacabuco, Chile, and occupied the Chilean capital, Santiago. In 1818, following his decisive victory at Maipu, he established a nationalist government in Chile but refused the presidency in favor of his lieutenant, the Chilean general Bernardo O'Higgins.

In 1820 San Martín organized an expedition to liberate Peru from Spanish rule. He defeated the Spanish army at Pisco in December 1820, and then occupied Lima, where, on July 28, 1821, he proclaimed the independence of Peru and was appointed protector of the country. The next year further Spanish resistance forced him to request military aid of the Venezuelan general and liberator Simón Bolívar. The two men disagreed on governmental policy and in September 1822, San Martín resigned his position in favor of Bolívar. In 1824 San Martín went to Europe, where he remained until his death in Boulogne, France, on August 17, 1850.



*"My announcement is not that of a conqueror that tries to create a new enslavement. I cannot help but be an accidental instrument of justice and agent of destiny. The outcome of victory will make Peru's capital see for the first time their sons united, freely choosing their government and emerging into the face of earth among the rank of nations."*

Jose de San Martin

#### **Anthem to the Liberator General San Martín**

Rise the Andes its highest peak; Give the sea the metal of his voice. And between skies and everlasting snows, shall arise the throne of the Liberator.

May trumpets of glory sound clearly and play a triumphal anthem because the light of history aggrandize the figure of the Great Captain.

From the lands of River Plate to Mendoza, from Santiago to genteel Lima, he went, planting laurels along the way in his triumphal journey, San Martín.

San Martín, the lord of war, by secret choice of God, was great when the Sun was shining on him, and even greater in the sunset.

Great father of the Argentine People, Greatest hero of freedom! beneath his shadow the fatherland grows in virtue, in work, and in peace.

San Martín! San Martín! may your name, the honour and glory of the people of the South, assure for ever the fates of the fatherland enlightened by your light.

**Revolutionary #1**

1. Who was Toussaint L'Overture?
2. Why is he considered a revolutionary hero for Haiti?
3. What do the primary sources tell us about him?

**Revolutionary #2**

1. Who was Miguel (Father) Hidalgo?
2. Why is he considered a revolutionary hero for Mexico?
3. What can you learn about him from his speech, "El Grito de Dolores?"

**Revolutionary #3**

1. Who was Simon Bolivar?
2. Why is he considered a revolutionary hero for both Venezuela and South America?
3. What do these primary sources reveal about Bolivar and his efforts?

**Revolutionary #4**

1. Who was Jose de San Martin?
2. Why is he considered a revolutionary hero for both Argentina and South America?
3. After reading the anthem to him, how do you think others viewed him? Why?

