

*The Epic of
Latin America*

FOURTH EDITION

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University of California Press, Berkeley, Los Angeles, London

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA PRESS
BERKELEY AND LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA
UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA PRESS, LTD.
LONDON, ENGLAND

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Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Crow, John Armstrong

The epic of Latin America / John A. Crow
4th ed., expanded and updated.

p cm.

Includes bibliographical references and index.

ISBN 978-0-520-07723-2 (pbk. : alk paper)

1. Latin America—History. I. Title.


F1410.C8 1992

980-dc20

91-34446
CIP

Printed in the United States of America

13 12 11 10 09 08 07 06
15 14 13 12 11 10 9 8

The paper used in this publication meets the minimum
requirements of ANSI/NISO Z39.48-1992 (R 1997)
(Permanence of Paper). 

Preface to the Fourth Edition

This revised and updated edition of *The Epic of Latin America* covers the history of that area from the earliest beginnings. Important recent events that have altered the perspective in our hemisphere are given particular attention. Long-standing inequities south of the border point to a coming explosion in Latin America, but few people in the United States are aware of this, and there is a strong feeling in the southern republics that our government, with one eye across the Atlantic, and the other across the Pacific, has come to regard Latin America merely as its troublesome back yard. Millions of dollars in U.S. aid sent to this region have been used to entrench military establishments and political bureaucrats while economies and hopes for the future deteriorated at a frightening pace.

During the past decade U.S. ventures in Central America have aroused widespread resentment seriously damaging our national image, and relations between the two Americas are now at a crucial turning point. The problems of the present will not be solved by applying equations that might have worked fifteen or twenty years ago. Given impetus by the upheavals that have already taken place in Europe, radical changes are being demanded in Latin America, and our hemisphere is now sitting on a time bomb of threatening proportions. If those who hold power make peaceful revolution impossible, violent revolution will become inevitable.

The date of this book's fourth edition, 1992, marks the culmination of five centuries of Latin American history. The discovery of America in 1492 was one of the most pivotal events in the history of mankind. Within a single generation the entire focus of man's thinking was changed as millions of people and millions of square miles of new territories were added to the Western World. Human beings will not again experience such an exciting penetration

of the unknown until that problematic day when cosmonauts traverse the galaxies and set foot on another inhabited planet.

The early years of conquest and consolidation in Latin America were filled with marvelous exploits, epic in scope. Since then this region has gone through three centuries of colonial rule followed by two centuries of struggling nationalism. These five hundred years in the history of our neighbors were never closely followed in the United States, and to the people of this country Latin American countries became a big blur, all alike, and all dominated by unfriendly, undemocratic, and unprogressive governments. Recent events have done little to change this point of view, and conditions today, unsettled everywhere, call urgently for understanding and attention.

Latin America represents a potential market of more than half a billion people. The population of Brazil alone equals that of the United Kingdom, France, and Italy combined. Our nearest neighbor, Mexico, now has a population approaching one hundred million, and its phenomenal growth continues unabated. Spanish speaking persons in the United States total more than twenty million, and the number is increasing rapidly every year. The nations of Latin America share this hemisphere with us, and their problems are inescapably our problems as well. We are bound together not only by geography but by a common destiny and a common dream.

Latin America today finds itself on the brink of bankruptcy and revolution. The promising growth of ten years ago has gone into a sharp decline: There is extensive and galloping inflation; an enormous foreign debt of more than 400 billion dollars (that will never be repaid) hangs like a deadweight over staggering economies; an explosive population growth has produced added millions for whom there are no jobs and insufficient food. Political instability everywhere obstructs the path of progress; there is a rapidly expanding underground economy of vast proportions; a strong populist movement with leftist leanings presses for drastic social and political reform; big state capitalism is deliberately being replaced by private enterprise; an oppressive bureaucracy thrives both in government and in business. Many countries have a gigantic drug problem; a deeply rooted military establishment holds the key to political power in most republics; and an unhealthy urban growth has sapped the energy of the thinly populated and impoverished countryside.

The cultural achievements of the Latin American nations have always been ahead of their erratic political and economic development. This century has seen a burgeoning of the arts, especially in literature, with its five Nobel Laureates. Also, both music and painting have produced many internationally acclaimed artists. These cultural figures are well known and highly regarded in the United States. There is throughout Latin America, however, a widespread envy and distrust of the United States. This is coupled with a general unwillingness on the part of their own ruling class to guarantee basic human rights and economic justice to the masses. These masses look with longing and hope to the United States as the land of promise.

It will be no easy task for the two Americas to work out an ongoing and productive partnership. The sad fact is that we do not really know one another. I hope that *The Epic of Latin America* may help all Americans to understand better our southern neighbors and the lands they occupy, one of the most important, most misunderstood, and most neglected regions of the world. The future of this hemisphere, now hanging in a precarious imbalance, depends on cooperation, understanding, and mutual respect.

Los Angeles, 1992

John A. Crow

Prologue

By that dark miracle of fate or chance which sometimes alters the destiny of men and of nations, one year in the history of the Iberian Peninsula and of the world saw the fulfillment of events and promises which eight centuries had held in the shaping. The year was 1492. The events and promises were manifold. In 1492 Columbus, searching for the spice lands of the East, dropped anchor off one of the islands of the Antilles and spread before Europe America's virgin wealth. In 1492 Ferdinand and Isabella, after a ten-year siege of Moorish Granada, accepted the surrender of the city and saw King Boabdil "heave the last sigh of the Moor" and depart weeping from the land his people had so long considered theirs. In 1492, after the fires of the Inquisition had already consumed thousands of suspected Jews, the race was expelled in a body from the territory of Spain. In 1492 Antonio de Nebrija, a Spanish writer and scholar, published the first grammar of a Romance tongue, and in his introduction pointed out that language was the ideal weapon of empire. In 1492 a Spanish pope was appointed to occupy the Holy See at Rome. New World horizon, reconquest of old dominion, new "purity" of race, flowering of the national cultures, supremacy of the national religion—such was the significance of 1492 in the history of the Iberian Peninsula.

In both Portugal and Spain the individual rose to exalted heights. It has been said that during the Middle Ages the universe was centered on God, while during the Renaissance it became centered on man. But in Iberia, where the Renaissance was but a projection and a prolongation of the Middle Ages, the axis was inseparably "God and man." The individual who had been submerged in the mass until 1492 now became a symbol of the mass, and as a spark carries flame he carried the mass spirit with him wherever he went, into whatever he did, until the fires he had kindled burned deep in the wilderness of the New World he had set out to conquer and to save; and some of them are burning yet.

When Spain and Portugal came to the New World they brought with them an entirely new fabric of life which was imposed on a great raw continent. New social, economic, cultural, and religious values were transplanted intact and established amidst indigenous semi-civilization or carried into the wilderness. Neither the conquest, nor the colonial regimes following it, nor the motivating forces which brought them about can be understood without some knowledge of what Iberian civilization itself had come to be and why.

As Europe emerged from the chaos and barbarism of the Dark Ages, fifth to eleventh centuries, a new Christian civilization and art were taking shape, dominated by the Church of Rome. With the dawn of the eleventh century, the wealth and power of monastic orders began to express themselves in the building of great abbey-churches and monasteries as well as in the copying of manuscripts and in the study and teaching of the narrow scholasticism of the Church. Architecture which had been Romanesque in character—crude, massive, and powerful—now became in the Gothic, lofty, light, refined in detail, with delicate ribbed vaults, pointed arches, floral carvings, and stained-glass windows. Religion was centered again on the God of Beauty. Europe's magnificent Gothic cathedrals, sometimes two or three centuries in the building, were the cultural mass expression of the late Middle Ages. With the advent of the Renaissance and the revival of enthusiasm for classical and pagan Greece and Rome, a cleavage sprang up in many of the countries in Europe. But in Spain and Portugal this did not occur. In these two countries the Renaissance and the Middle Ages were fused. Their peoples found nothing incompatible between the Old and the New, and under their daily mead of warfare against the Moslems there was no time for the conflicts of art.

War and religion were the controlling forces of the medieval Christian world; the feudal regime and the Roman Church were the means of expression. In Spain and Portugal, where Europe's only large religious minority (the Moors) then existed, these two medieval forces were blended into one which was *religious war*.

During the Middle Ages obedience to the universal authority of the Church had been the rule of life, but the pagan spirit of the Renaissance glorified the individual, and the individual became absolute. Spain and Portugal found a way to fuse these feelings also. While other countries were content to establish themselves under Protestant or mixed Catholic and Protestant regimes which would grow toward religious liberalism, the Iberian countries created the Church-State type of authoritarian absolutism in which government and religious doctrine became inseparable.¹ Other countries made of religion a national expression, but Spain and Portugal maintained unbroken their belief in the holy internationalism of the Catholic Church. This idea was carried to the New World in the last great crusade. Add to this religious conception of the Middle Ages

the trade spirit and lust for gold and capital of a later date, and the Hispanic colonization of America begins to assume those epic proportions of body, mind, and spirit which swept everything, or nearly everything, before it.

At no other time in their history could Spain and Portugal have achieved success on such a grand world-wide scale. In the tenth century or in the twentieth they would have been equally impotent, equally lacking in the drive and vision which must precede all great revolutionary achievements. But at the beginning of the sixteenth century, which marked the tag end of the Middle Ages and opened the door leading to the modern era, they alone of all nations stood on the threshold ready to undertake the impossible. They were not the most populous countries of Europe, nor the wealthiest, nor the most powerful, but they had developed to the highest peak their will to victory and to expansion. After eight centuries of battling for the faith, it is little wonder that, when the final triumph came, a halt could not be called at the borders of the peninsula.

Iberian civilization has never been characterized by orderly growth or progress, but has always expressed itself best in intermittent spiritual convulsions sandwiched in between long periods of relative inactivity. The greatest convulsion in the history of the world was the discovery of America and the consequent fight against every obstacle of nature and man to secure this conquest. Every nation has its day in the sun, and when that day corresponds with a period of unlimited opportunity, the main stream of history lunges forward with the speed of a catapult. Spain and Portugal knew how to take advantage of that moment.

When these two nations came to America they gave of themselves completely. Their practice of racial fusion, their rigorous persecution of all minority thinking, their transcendent ability as warriors, navigators, and explorers, alongside their miserable records as statesmen and economists, all of these things they brought to the New World. With cross, sword, and racial amalgamation, they forced them upon a not too readily receptive continent inhabited by millions of primitive Indians. Their conquest of America was but a parallel and prolongation of their conquest of the Moors. Every institution and every aspect of the national psychology developed during the long Moorish wars later became a part of their colonial policy.

The glorification of the soldier led to incipient militarisms. The propagation and defense of the faith meant national intolerance of minority attitudes of whatever nature. Carried over into political and social thinking, this was bound to result in the general acceptance of authoritarian rule. The weakening of economic institutions, the fusion of Church and State, the exaltation of personal rule and the disrespect for impersonal law, the disdain which every conquering soldier feels for manual labor, the psychology of the aristocrat and the exploiter, these characteristics of Latin-

American life have their roots deep in the Iberian past, and that past must be made clear before we proceed farther with our history.

Portugal reached her maturity before Spain, and before Spain she became a great maritime nation. By 1250 the last Moors had been thrown from her soil and by 1418 her navigators had reached out into the dark Atlantic and colonized Madeira. By the middle of the century she had occupied the Azores and her sea captains were wending their way southward along the African coast. With the discovery of America in 1492, Spain got the jump on her smaller neighbor and the tables were reversed. Portugal did not give up, and six years later her most intrepid explorer, Vasco da Gama, sailed all the way around Africa and found the long-sought sea route to India and the Spice Islands of the East. For a while both countries of the peninsula rode together on the crest of their maritime prosperity, then Portugal began to lose distance. Her smaller size and smaller resources were beginning to tell.

It is no easy task to bring out the similarities and differences between Spain and Portugal. They were born of the same Mother Iberia, were reared in the same house, and shared the same violent destiny. Rome overcame them both and added Hispania to her empire. The Moors invaded them both and for several centuries her caliphs held sway on the peninsula. Portugal first found strength to push out the invader; in 1140 she became an independent nation. But Portugal did not fight the Moslem alone; located as she was on the southwestern extremity of the European continent, she became a stopping-off place for crusaders from all northern Europe on their way to Jerusalem. In 1147 thirteen thousand of them from Flanders, Lorraine, Aquitaine, and England dropped the anchors of their two hundred ships in Portuguese waters and joined their banners with hers, inflicting a disastrous defeat on the Moors and recapturing Lisbon for the Portuguese. Then for four centuries Portugal stood alone with her glory. Gradually she pushed her dominion southward into Africa and grew rich with its commerce. Portuguese ships took down holds full of red caps, hawks' bells, beads, and other cheap jewelry, and "deckloads of horses for which the native chiefs paid extravagant prices."² Many were the imports which her captains brought back with them, bags of pepper, elephant tusks, gold dust, and Negro slaves. Lisbon became the slave-trading center of western Europe. Already cosmopolitan, she now became the crossroads of the continent. All the Mediterranean languages were heard in her streets, and men from every seagoing nation crowded her ships and quays.

The two heroes of this great Portuguese expansion were King John I and his son Prince Henry the Navigator. John the Great, as he was called, was the first king of the house of Aviz under which Portugal for two hundred years enjoyed the highest prosperity and power, and his own reign,

1385-1433, was one of the most glorious in Portuguese history. He consolidated the independence of his country by defeating the Spaniards; married the daughter of John of Gaunt, and thus commenced the long friendship between Portugal and England; took the strategic North African port of Ceuta from the Moors; reformed the administration of his kingdom; and fostered the maritime zeal of his many sons, Prince Henry in particular (1394-1460).

After fighting with extraordinary heroism at Ceuta, Prince Henry withdrew from the Portuguese court and established himself at Sagres, the extreme point of land in Europe facing southwest into the great sea of darkness. Here he constructed an observatory and school for navigation and a naval arsenal (1416) which served as a base for further explorations. He was Grand Master of the Portuguese Order of Christ, and most of the money for his undertakings came from his religious tithes. With "the garb of a monk and the soul of a sailor," Prince Henry lived in a tower of his observatory surrounded by charts and instruments high above "the wind-blown cliffs of Sagres." Here he took up his ceaseless vigil, hoping someday to conquer the great Atlantic into which he stared from paneless windows of intricate Moorish design, while into his face blew the cold, salty winds of unknown distances.³

Navigation was not easy in those days, for only the crudest instruments had been devised. Among these the magnetic compass borrowed from the Vikings was the most important. There was also a wooden astrolabe which served as a clumsy makeshift for the sextant in calculating latitude. The problem of longitude was not yet solved. A rope was flung astern to indicate the ship's leeway. There was no log to measure a day's run, nor any chronometer. The ship's progress was estimated by several modes of dead reckoning. One way, in a calm sea, was to spit over the bow and calculate the rate by timing its speed in passing this comparatively fixed point. Sailing on the dark waters was at best no job to be envied, and for especially dangerous trips peasants who knew little or nothing about manning a ship were sometimes pressed into service. The story goes that some were so ignorant they didn't know left hand from right, let alone larboard and starboard. One captain devised the scheme of tying a huge bunch of onions on one side of the ship and a bunch of garlic on the other. The pilot would then shout to the helmsman an unmistakable "Turn toward the onions!" or "Swing toward the garlic!"

Every year from his base at Sagres, Prince Henry sent out two or three caravels, and in 1418 one of his navigators rediscovered the Madeira Islands and added them to the Portuguese dominions. After that every year, for twelve years, his ships returned or were lost on the seas. Sea captains and sailors began to dodge the prince and came to dread the very mention of desolate Sagres. Prince Henry received both their failures and their fears with patient good grace and rewarded those who had served him well.

Finally, in 1432, one expedition discovered the Azores, where no human being had ever lived before; and in 1434 another captain sailed southward beyond Cape Bojador on the great African bulge. Eight years later a slave-trading post was established on the Guinea coast even farther to the south, and ships now began to return with lucrative cargoes of gold and Negro slaves. Portugal was at last finding the profit of listening to a man of vision. Wealth poured into her coffers, and Guinea became known as the Gold Coast of Africa. The Portuguese had no intention of letting other European nations in on their private preserve and maintained the greatest secrecy about their voyages, the source of their wealth, and the manner in which it was obtained. Portugal realized that she was a small country and that this was the only sure way of protecting herself from the rapacious sea hawks of her larger rivals. Every foreign ship caught in these north-western African waters was at once sent to the bottom.

In 1488—twenty-eight years after Prince Henry's death—Bartholomew Dias rounded the Cape of Good Hope. Following his path in 1498, Vasco da Gama found the sea route to India and ushered in the golden age of Portuguese empire.

Why was it considered so important to find this water route to the Spice Islands of the Indies? Prince Henry spent his life in an effort to reach them; Columbus died believing he had found them; Vasco da Gama knew beyond question that his twenty-three-thousand-eight-hundred-mile, two-year trip had taken him to India and back. The answer is simple. Spices and silks were the greatest luxuries in Europe at that time. In England a pound of cloves was worth two cows. All viands of the well to do were touched up with some favorite flavor. Sugar had not yet come to occupy its place at the head of the list, and spices afforded the only break in the monotonous European winter diet of coarse bread and imperfectly preserved meats. The phrase, "it has no spice," became indicative of lowly living, and with the lack of refrigeration, spices were also widely used as preservatives. Pepper, ginger root, cloves, nutmeg, and cinnamon bark were all costly, rare items which had to be imported, and the demand was always greater than the supply. Before Vasco da Gama found the water route to India these commodities were purchased by Italian merchants from Mohammedan traders, and both groups exacted the last ounce of profit. The precious cargoes were first shipped from India to the Gulf of Suez, thence on a ten-day trip overland to Cairo by camel caravan, next from Cairo to Rosetta down the Nile, and finally to Alexandria. Here a galley from Venice or Genoa would pick them up and transport them to Europe to be sold. After all these exchanges, tolls, and voyages, it is little wonder that prices were exorbitant. Yet so addicted had become the European palate, that spices not only paid for gold cuspidors used by the betel chewers of Calcutta but helped to build the palaces and to paint the pictures which still make Italy the mother of art.

When the first Portuguese set foot in Calcutta, a native indignantly exclaimed, "The hell with you! What brought you here?" And Gama's man retorted with equal vigor: "Christianity and spices!" It was this wealth plus the flicker of the last crusade which inspired Portugal to become mistress of the Eastern Sea. When the news of Gama's discovery reached Venice a chronicler wrote: "The whole city felt it greatly and remained stupefied, and the wisest held it as the worst news that had ever arrived."³

Once and for all Gama had killed the wealth for Venice, Genoa, Milan, and Egypt and for all the Mohammedan entrepreneurs. He rang up the curtain on a new trade which was to radiate from Lisbon, Cádiz, Seville, and finally from Bristol, Antwerp, and Amsterdam. The wealth which had fostered science and art in the Italian city-states shifted to Portugal, the Netherlands, France, Spain, and England, whose people created new art forms and new ideals of which America is the inheritor.³

The year 1474 marks the beginning of our story across Portugal's eastern border, for in that year Castile and Aragon were united and the nation we know as Spain was born. Her period in the embryo had come close to eight centuries. When the Moslems invaded the peninsula in 711, they overwhelmed all of it except a small corner in the northwest. From this refuge in the province of Asturias the reconquest of Iberian territory for Spain and Portugal and for the Holy Catholic Church began. For more than seven hundred years it had proceeded in long, separated waves across the peninsula. Along the border lay the frontiers of Christendom; back of them were the thinly organized, mutually distrustful, many-times subdivided petty kingdoms of the Cross. Two feelings alone spread over this weak fabric the invisible thread of unity which later made the Spanish nation: (1) a love of the land once theirs and now lost to the invader, which heightened to fever pitch the nationalistic urge for expansion; (2) a belief in their Church as the true and only religion, and a faith in their arms as the weapon of God's wrath turned against the foul infidel under its shadow. Despite all outward and visible signs of division these intangibles of nationhood became stronger with each passing century.

Spanish character was fashioned anew under the long arm of this crusade. The Church promised heaven for those who fell in battle, and the spoils of war always enriched the victorious soldier. Men came to die and live for this ideal of the "Christian Soldier." Who would soil his hands with menial labor when marching off to war offered a greater and far nobler reward? Individual prowess and faith became keystones of the new Spanish nation.

Spain emerged slowly from the Middle Ages, and it was not until 1469 that the promise of final victory appeared. Isabella, daughter of John II, whose reign had ushered Castile under the "Portico of the Renaissance,"

looked over the profligate degeneracy of her country and shuddered. Even among the clergy were many who had absorbed some of the Moorish sensuality and were living in open concubinage. The Castilian court was beset with dissension, greed, and rivalries which threatened to overwhelm the kingdom. Eight centuries of reconquest and growing strength which had united one after the other of several petty kingdoms under the Castilian monarch were on the verge of a collapse. Within her borders Isabella saw no hope of regeneration, and when she turned her blue eyes with their faraway stare to the east, they came to rest on the figure of Ferdinand, then Prince of Aragon, second in importance only to Castile itself. Under the shadow of profligacy and with the same keen will which characterized all her actions, Isabella undertook to marry Ferdinand and to strengthen her degenerating kingdom. At the time he was seventeen and she was only sixteen. Ferdinand's odyssey to meet his bride is highly colored in Spanish tradition. Disguised as a shepherd and accompanied by two or three trusted friends, he traveled to Valladolid, where Isabella awaited him. There they discussed the purpose of their union: together they would pursue the war against the Moslem; together as co-rulers—he supreme in Aragon, she in Castile—they would reign over the new Spanish nation. The marriage took place in 1469; five years later Castile and Aragon were formally welded into a single nation with the Catholic sovereigns in dual control. With the passage of time this co-power became more and more centralized, and after Isabella's death it fell completely into the hands of Ferdinand.

The struggle for union was not the only problem besetting the Spanish sovereigns. Darkly outlined on the horizon rose the power of the nobles, the power of the commons, and the power of the Church. How were these to be subordinated to the authority of the throne? Which could be utilized as the natural allies of royalty and which were the enemies? Under the Spanish system the parliament, called the Cortes, was composed of nobles and representatives from the towns. Noblemen were exempt from taxation and were characteristically taken up with feuds and grievances among themselves which they tried to settle by force of arms. As a consequence they were little inclined to participate fully in parliamentary action. They were powerful, but their strength was divided; and this, added to their natural disinclination to associate with commoners or to discuss politics with a sovereign to whom they professed a reluctant loyalty, made possible their subordination to the princely authority. Division and subtle piecemeal attacks upon their privileges eventually turned them into mere shadows around the throne.

In the towns or municipalities, on the other hand, there had grown up a tradition of representative government which was the natural enemy of the nobleman. Certain democratic rights had been won during the wars against the Moors when each town was a fortress and every man had to

bear arms. In the frontier territory, where towns were frequently besieged and isolated, strong measures of self-government and self-dependence were necessities of life. By the same token the inhabitants of many of these towns, while still under the heavy yoke of a seignorial regime, came to look on the sovereign as their natural ally and protector. Economically their greatest compensation was communal ownership or utilization of certain near-by lands, consisting of agricultural terrain, woodland, pasture, and the uncultivated public *ejido*, used for a variety of purposes. These lands made up the village commons and were inalienable. Approximately 12,500 towns and villages participated in this form of public ownership which saved them from landless serfdom. Although their economic situation was sometimes miserable, the inhabitants of these towns had achieved a feeling of free men and of democracy unknown anywhere else in the world at that time outside of England. Occasionally, with the aid of the Church and the Crown, they were able to organize a real war against the nobles. Personal servitude disappeared from Spain and England long before it had in the rest of Europe, but personal or civil liberty reached the peninsula much later.⁴

Eleven years after the marriage of Ferdinand and Isabella some coordination of elements favorable to the throne was accomplished in the Cortes of Toledo (1480). The Catholic sovereigns "put the nobles out of the council and substituted lawyers educated in the Romanist conception of law, favorable to the princely authority, and anxious to curb the power of the undisciplined aristocracy. Henceforth the council, once composed of military leaders and nobles, became civil and bourgeois, active and youthful." A Spanish proverb states the new focus of Iberian life: "Who loses the morning, loses the afternoon; who loses youthfulness, loses life."⁴

Thus strengthened and rejuvenated, the Spanish state began the war of annihilation against the infidel which constituted the greatest minority of opposition in its midst. Already pushed far to the south, the Moors still occupied the fertile kingdom of Granada, rich out of all proportion to its size. The conquest of this land was to be no futile crusade to rescue Jerusalem from the Saracen; it was the final battle to make Europe and Spanish soil forever safe for the religion of Christ. It represented the culmination of a struggle which had been going on for eight long and inconclusive centuries. It was a war for "living room" as well as a war for the faith, for so long as the vine-clad hills and valleys of Granada belonged to the Moors, Spanish hegemony could not grow unchallenged. It was the embodiment of that aspiration toward imperium with its two poles of spiritual and physical strength so often glorified in the literature of the Renaissance. It was the struggle of emerging nationalism to end once and for all the checkered and petty politics of the Middle Ages. It was, above all, a psychological war which would focus upon the enemy the attention of a hitherto divided and mutually distrustful nobility and give common pur-

pose to an otherwise disunited people. While this war was being waged against the Moors absolute unity on the home front was essential. Whatever opposition, division, dissatisfaction, or criticism still survived must be overcome or stifled. And it was on this point that Spain under Ferdinand and Isabella made the same foul decision as Germany under Hitler. She began officially to persecute her minority groups, particularly the Jews, and established the Inquisition for the specific purpose of rooting out all non-conformists.

This was not a sudden decision by any means, nor was it the first time that the Inquisition had blackened the pages of history. The tribunal was organized in 1233 under Pope Gregory IX and was active in ferreting out the heresies of the Albigenses in southern France and those of the Waldensians in northern Italy. It was also adopted by England and Germany and entered Aragon in 1242. But the "iniquitous Spanish Inquisition" did not begin until Isabella asked Pope Sixtus IV to permit its introduction into Castile. The Pontiff issued a bull of authorization in 1478; in 1480 four inquisitors were appointed. In 1481 they began work in earnest with an edict "requiring all persons to aid in apprehending and accusing all such as they might know or suspect to be guilty of heresy."⁶ In that same year an estimated two thousand persons were burned alive by the Holy Tribunal. In 1483 Tomás de Torquemada, whose nefarious name has gone down in history, was appointed Inquisitor General in Castile and Aragon.

Spain had not always been an intolerant country. Under the Visigoths, Moors, and throughout most of the Middle Ages, Spanish Jews had been an accepted and integral part of the national life. Alfonso the Wise and many other famous kings surrounded themselves with Jewish scholars. Hebrew was taught in the universities. Jewish literature and philosophy flourished as never before in history, reaching a peak with Moses ben Maimonides of Córdoba in the twelfth century. But as the national character became sharpened in its reconquest for the faith, tolerance gave way to bigotry and bigotry to fanaticism and persecution. Under Henry II Jews were prohibited from giving their children Christian names, and under Isabella's father, John II, they were prohibited from associating with Christians and from following certain professions. Their residence was restricted to certain districts of cities; they were not allowed to wear luxurious or showy clothes, and were frequently forced to bear a distinguishing emblem on their garments. These were but official recognitions of a popular feeling; the real virus ran deep in the blood. As early as 1391 popular sentiment against the Jew, encouraged by those who owed them money and fanned by many fanatical priests, broke into the open with violent mass assaults on Jewish homes in Aragon and Castile. Confronted with conversion or annihilation, Jews accepted Christianity in droves. In later years many distinguished converts rose to high fortune, married into noble families, occupied positions of trust and prominence, and even achieved distinction

within the Church itself. But these "new Christians" were allowed only a brief respite, for by the time Ferdinand and Isabella got their policy of government well established, certain elements of the popular fancy were again hot on the heels of scandalous "apostates returning to wallow in the ancient mire of Judaism." Even their conversion had not been accepted. Guilds refused to teach their crafts to converts, and several universities refused to grant them degrees. Jewish blood, no matter how diluted, began to be considered a stigma.

Ferdinand, the realist, was easy to convince. He looked with covetous eyes on Jewish wealth which the inquisitors would confiscate. Isabella, for many years loath to take any such drastic action, was finally forced to it by the importunities of her husband and of the priests in whom she most trusted, particularly Torquemada, her private confessor.

There were many in Spain who did not take the Inquisition without protest. At first popular opposition to the Holy Tribunal was as strong as support of it. Many clerics condemned inquisitorial abuses and defended the converted Moor or Jew. Pope Paul III in 1535 and 1537 voiced a similar feeling. In both Castile and Aragon there were untold thousands of ordinary citizens who resisted co-operation. After Isabella's death the Cortes of Castile made a strong official protest. All this was too little or too late, and so came to no avail. It was the brave voice of Spanish minorities shouting in the wilderness, for while opposition to the new authority was scattered and ineffectual, support of it was concentrated and powerful. After eighteen years under Torquemada's efficient ministry the Spanish Inquisition had become an essential instrument of state policy.

The power of the throne was not lessened but extended by the establishment of this Holy Office. Through it centralized authority, which reached its peak under Philip II in the latter half of the sixteenth century, pressed into the very thoughts of the Spanish mind, molding it to a pattern. Spanish sovereigns would brook no interference from the Pontiff which might dilute their own religious authority. Even mild Isabella challenged Pope Sixtus in order to strengthen her control over the church offices. In 1482, after the Pontiff had unwisely lifted his own nephew over the Queen's choice for a Spanish bishopric, the Catholic Sovereigns promptly broke off relations with the Holy See, withdrew all their subjects from the papal dominions, and threatened to call a general European council to inquire into the state of the Church's health, which was admittedly none too savory at that time. The Pope, apprehensive at this prospect, countered with the conciliatory offer of affirming all nominations of the sovereigns to the higher church offices in Castile. Prescott in his *Ferdinand and Isabella* states that the papal mission which was sent to Spain was promptly thrown out of the country. Only after the envoy offered to come alone, waiving all immunities, did the Spanish sovereigns finally consent to receive him.

With this character, then, Spain emerged from the Middle Ages into her new birth as a modern state. The modernity was merely a political illusion, for it embraced only the infancy of progress and not the growth. Spanish society remained feudalistic to the core and the rest of the edifice was raised on that feudal frame. Yet its colors were nationalistic, totalitarian, and later imperialistic to an extent not conceived of since the days of the Roman Empire. To this was added the zeal of religion which spread its imprint over every characteristic of the Spanish state.

Why did Spain alone among modern nations embody most completely these attributes of authoritarian rule? It was because she alone found a way to fuse within herself the Catholic unity of the Middle Ages with the social, economic, and political unity of the Renaissance. In Spain there was no cleavage between the old and the new. Both were found compatible and were fused into one. The Gothic architecture of the Middle Ages was blended with elements of the new style of the Renaissance in the Spanish plateresque. Among the literatures of western Europe that of Spain was the first to become national and realistic, the last to become romantic. In Spain appeared the first grammar of a Romance language, and in Spain there never arose a single Protestant church.

The symbol of Ferdinand of Aragon, epitome of the soldier's strength, was wedded to that of Isabella of Castile, who embodied the whole nation's faith. Under this fusion there was no loophole of weakness save a growing resistance to change which later became the Spaniards' Achilles' heel.

When Isabella died, in 1504, Ferdinand became regent for their daughter Juana in the kingdom of Castile. He added Navarre to his realm and completed the unification of Spain. Then for twelve more years he ruled alone, the most powerful king in Christendom; always engaged in some enterprise, always dividing and deceiving his enemies, always successful in conquest. He was the embodiment of the new Spanish Church-State and an example before his people. It is little wonder that Machiavelli should have chosen him as the prototype of what the ideal prince should be:

"We have in our own day Ferdinand, King of Aragon, at present King of Spain. He may almost be termed a new prince, because from a weak king he has become for fame and glory the first king in Christendom, and if you regard his actions you will find them all very great and some of them extraordinary. At the beginning of his reign he assailed Granada, and that enterprise was the foundation of his state. At first he did it leisurely and without fear of being interfered with; he kept the minds of the barons of Castile occupied in this enterprise, so that thinking only of that war they did not think of making innovations, and he thus acquired reputation and power over them without their being aware of it. He was able with the money of the Church and the people to maintain his armies, and by that long war lay the foundation of his military power, which afterwards has

made him famous. Besides this, to be able to undertake greater enterprises, and always under the pretext of religion, he had recourse to a pious cruelty, driving out the Moors from his kingdom and despoiling them. No more admirable or rare example can be found. He also attacked under the same pretext Africa, undertook his Italian enterprise, and has lately attacked France; so that he has continually contrived great things, which have kept his subjects' minds uncertain and astonished, and occupied in watching their result.

"And these actions have arisen one out of the other, so that they have left no time for men to settle down and act against him."⁶

Had Machiavelli lived to see the heyday of Charles V and Philip II in the sixteenth century he would probably have risen to heights of admiration verging on frenzy.

In both Spain and Portugal the methods to attain statehood—and along with it a "plenitude of imperium" or the governing power—had been essentially the same: to break the political power of the nobles, to make the Church an instrument of political policy, to purge racial minorities, to subordinate every element in the nation to the sovereign will. There was this difference: Portugal was more cosmopolitan, softer, more malleable than Spain. In proportion to her size she had absorbed more than Spain, and in proportion to her size she was able to conquer and to govern more.

Support of the people, lesser allies of the kingly authority, had enabled the throne in both countries to subdue the nobles and to dominate the Church; for the people, as always, held the balance of power. But they had neither the education, the experience, nor indeed the inclination properly to read the scales where their weight was so important, and consequently the common citizen was victimized longer in Spain and Portugal than in any other of the great European nations.

Another strong factor conspired to maintain this state of economic subserviency which replaced personal serfdom. It was the Spanish-Portuguese custom and law of primogeniture, the *Mayorazgo*, by which the eldest son of the family inherited totally and unalienably the father's estate. Economically the patrimony of landownership became as absolute as the prestige of lineage itself. This custom which was legally inaugurated in the thirteenth century meant that although the seignorial regime might be shorn of its political power, as indeed was the case, a new and even stronger economic power would appear in its stead. The noble might disappear, but the landlord would live on forever. The transference of this system to America, where there were vast areas of land at the disposal of the early conquistadores, meant that the fiefs of the Middle Ages, powerful and large as some of them were, would pale into insignificance beside the huge grants made in the New World. Inevitably this gave to the economy only two great classes, landlords and day laborers. The Indian obviously would be the laborer. No large middle class, no backbone of the small farmer, no

development of industry or industrial workers would for centuries be able to challenge the absolute power of landownership concentrated in the hands of a few families. This is one of the main differences between the history of Latin America and that of the United States.

Every characteristic of Spanish and Portuguese society was transferred to the New World. The warrior psychology of the home countries found new fields in America. The victorious soldier soon became the exploiter. The Inquisition, which had begun as a religious instrument of faith purification, became an instrument of state policy. Eight centuries of religious wars against the Moslems plus inquisitorial Catholic thinking led directly to intolerance in political and economic expression. Feudalism in the Old World meant feudalism in the New. The one great ever-present and sometimes overwhelming obstacle was the tremendous preponderance of Indian blood and the powerful roots of the Indian's folk culture which reached broad and deep in the American earth. Into this immense red man's world was poured the fertile seed of Iberian life.

