By the early nineteenth century most of Latin America had been under Spanish rule for almost 300 years. And it was, from the beginning, a colonial rule of the most repressive sort. In the words of Bolívar himself,

We have been harassed by a conduct which has not only deprived us of our rights but has kept us in a sort of permanent infancy with regard to public affairs. . . . So negative was our existence that I can find nothing comparable in any other civilized society.¹

But even in this unlikely environment the stirrings of revolutionary reaction had begun. Napoleon’s invasion of Spain had upset Spanish authority in the New World. In the spring of 1810 a junta rose against the Spanish governor of Venezuela and expelled him. A year later Venezuela declared its independence.

Simón Bolívar had already joined the revolution. He was the son of a wealthy, aristocratic Spanish-Creole family in Venezuela who had been educated in Spain. Bolívar had traveled widely in Spain and in France, where he became acquainted with the liberal political and

In the meantime, in 1812, Spain had sent a massive expeditionary force to deal with its rebellious colonies, and Bolívar had returned to Venezuela to lead the opposition. He repeatedly demanded Spanish evacuation of the country, but the Spanish refused. In the following year he was defeated by the Spaniards, who captured Caracas, Bolívar fled to Jamaica. In this exile there he wrote his Memoirs. Bolívar proposed a series of constitutional republics, each with an elected president. He also established a Supreme Court. The letter from Jamaica, most important political statement, "The Letter from Jamaica," was given the title of El Liberator, and became the battle cry of the independence movement.

Bolívar's health was failing, and in 1830 he was captured by the Spaniards and returned to Spain. This did not deter his efforts. He continued to work for the independence of Latin America, and in 1832 he returned to Venezuela, where he founded the city of Caracas. He died in 1842, but his work continued. Bolívar was a champion of social and political reform, and his ideas have continued to influence Latin American politics. He is remembered as the Father of the Bolivarian Republic, and his legacy continues to inspire leaders in the region to this day.
Memoirs of Simón Bolívar

GENERAL H. L. V. DUCOUDRAY HOLSTEIN

These memoirs were not actually written by Bolívar. It is true that Bolívar was a prolific writer; a lifetime of high public office and military command left a large residue of official papers and correspondence. Some bits of autobiographical matter have been preserved, but, on the whole, Bolívar was much too busy—and too modest—to undertake his memoirs. Rather, this document was written by General H. L. V. Ducoudray Holstein, a friend, colleague, and associate and one of the many foreign officers attracted to Bolívar's cause. He had served as Bolívar's chief of staff and, as the general observed in his preface, "he lived in such intimacy" with Bolívar, "that he slept on various occasions in the same room with him" (p. 7). Thus, the accounts he gives are accurate in their particulars. The narrative excerpted here runs to his first liberation of Caracas in 1813.

Simon Bolívar was born in the city of Caracas, July 24th, 1783, and is the second son of Don Juan Vicente Bolívar y Ponte, a militia colonel in the plains of Aragua; his mother, Dona Maria Concepcion Palacios y Sojo; and both were natives of Caracas, and were Mantuanos. They died; the first in 1786, the latter in 1789.

Young Bolívar was sent to Spain at the age of 14, in compliance with the customs of the wealthy Americans of those times, who usually spent in one year in Europe, the amount of several years income at home; seeking offices and military decorations, that were often put up to the highest bidder, under the administration of Manual Godoy, Prince of the Peace. The young Americans were likewise accustomed to go to Spain, to complete their education, and to pursue their studies in the profession of law, physic, or theology; for, according to the laws of the times, no American was

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2Los Mantuanos, or los familias Mantuanas, were, in Caracas, a kind of nobility, and this is the distinctive title there of rich families of birth. In New Grenada, the opulent families of high birth, were never called Mantuanas; this distinction existed alone in Caracas.—Ed.
He was actually suffering from tuberculosis, from which he finally died. — Ep.

any offsprings; shortly after his lady was taken ill and died, without leaving.
He resided in Paris, and especially at the Palais Royal, where he resided in
and educated, in a refined manner. On their
and his lady 16. They re-

whom he married, one of the

and a yellowish colour, meagre, week
him great injury. He is pale, and of a yellowish colour, meagre, week,

His residence in Paris, and especially at the Palais Royal, has done
be of that enchanting abode, so dangerous to youth.

more, and he spoke and acted with such ardor as showed how fond

pleasures of life, which by a rich young man, with bad examples

From Spain, Bolivar passed into France, and resided at Paris, where

beautiful and striking.

by the valley of Arga, not far from the lake of Valencia, was

and 1500 slaves were regularly kept, before the revolution. His resi-

lected. It was the largest of his possessions, where between 1000

instead of rice, which produced of several consider-

He was of this period he resided in the corps of militia in the plains

true to the study of jurisprudence.

any possible other than that of pleasure, and of satisfying his desires

thus far as the object of young Simon was, to see the world,

home. Without a diploma from a university in Spain, no American

admitted to the bar, and allowed to practice in his profession in the

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Bolivar acquired, in the course of his travels, that usage of the world, that courtesy and ease of manners, for which he is so remarkable, and which have so prepossessing an influence upon those who associate with him.

In the year 1823, Mr. Ackerman published in London, a very interesting monthly periodical in the Spanish language, under the title of "El Mensagero." It is entirely devoted to the affairs of the new Spanish republics. It contains, among other articles, Biographical Sketch of Gen. Bolivar, in which the author asserts that the young Bolivar, during his residence in Paris, gave himself up to all the possible amusements of young men of his age: "Still," said the author, "he was assiduous to obtain the dear object he has had always in view, as the accomplishment of all his wishes, and his ambition, namely, that of making with eagerness, all possible acquaintances which might have been useful to him for the emancipation of his country!"

I must beg leave to assert, that shortly before the revolution of the 19th April, 1810, at Caracas, the names of Gen. Miranda, Don Manuel Gual, the Corregidor T. M. Espana, Narino, Fea, and others, appeared on the list of those who declared their intention to liberate their country from the Spanish yoke. On the memorable day of the 19th April, when the Capt. Gen. Emparan was deposed, and his functions performed by a patriotic Junta, the chiefs of this revolution were the Alcade [Mayor] Don Martin Tobar, Don Francisco Salias, Carlos Manchado, Mariano Montilla, Joseph Felix Ribas, and others; but the name of Simon Bolivar is not among them; he was at his ease, on one of his estates, in the valley of Aragua, and refused to take any part in it, although his cousin, Joseph Felix Ribas, labored to engage him as an active associate. Shortly after, the Junta gave him his option of a civil or military post, under the new patriotic government. Their offer was refused, and the pressing solicitations of his friends and relations were of no avail. Finally, he accepted the appointment of a commission to London, with the grade of Colonel in the militia. M. Luis Mendez y Lopez, who, during several years, was the agent of Venezuela at London, was at this time, his colleague in the mission.

If Bolivar, as stated in Mr. Ackerman's Magazine, had from his youth formed the idea of liberating his country, he would have seized this opportunity of joining the chiefs of the revolution, and would have accepted a post under the government of the Junta, and the Congress. He did neither, although the members of these two bodies in 1810 and 11, offered him any post that might suit his views. On his return from London, he retired to his estate, without taking any part in public affairs.

Mr. Ackerman's Magazine says, secondly, that Bolivar, from the time
General Bolivar entered the western provinces of Venezuela. He was joined by many thousands of his countrymen, who driven to despair by the severity of their suffering, had resolved to die rather than submit to the tyranny of the Spanish. The French army was no better off, and the king was driven to accept the resignation of his minister, who had been sent to negotiate with the royalists. The French army was no better off, and the king was driven to accept the resignation of his minister, who had been sent to negotiate with the royalists. The French army was no better off, and the king was driven to accept the resignation of his minister, who had been sent to negotiate with the royalists. The French army was no better off, and the king was driven to accept the resignation of his minister, who had been sent to negotiate with the royalists. The French army was no better off, and the king was driven to accept the resignation of his minister, who had been sent to negotiate with the royalists.

When the Patriotic Junta assembled at Caracas, its members, under the presidency of Junta, proposed to organize and assume an active command. The orders of the Junta were: (1) to establish a government in their own names, (2) to organize a army, and (3) to choose a capital. The Junta also proposed to establish a government in their own names, (2) to organize an army, and (3) to choose a capital. The Junta also proposed to establish a government in their own names, (2) to organize an army, and (3) to choose a capital. The Junta also proposed to establish a government in their own names, (2) to organize an army, and (3) to choose a capital. The Junta also proposed to establish a government in their own names, (2) to organize an army, and (3) to choose a capital.

The Junta also proposed to establish a government in their own names, (2) to organize an army, and (3) to choose a capital. The Junta also proposed to establish a government in their own names, (2) to organize an army, and (3) to choose a capital. The Junta also proposed to establish a government in their own names, (2) to organize an army, and (3) to choose a capital. The Junta also proposed to establish a government in their own names, (2) to organize an army, and (3) to choose a capital. The Junta also proposed to establish a government in their own names, (2) to organize an army, and (3) to choose a capital.
by the cruelties of the Spaniards, had no choice but to fight, or perish. He divided his forces into two strong corps, gave the command of one to his major general Ribas, and put himself at the head of the other. Both proceeded by forced marches, through different roads to Caracas, crossing the department of Truxillo and the province of Barinas. The Spaniards were beaten easily at Niquitao, Betioque, Barquisimeto and Barinas. At the last place, governor Tiscar, like general Cagigal, thought all was lost, and deserted his troops. He fled to St. Tomas de la Angostura, in the province of Guayana, where, like the other, he found himself in safety.

As soon as general Monteverde was apprised of the rapid progress of the patriots, he rallied his best troops at Lostaguanes, where general Ribas attacked him soon afterwards. The attack had but just commenced, when the greatest part of his cavalry, composed of natives, passed over to the patriots and soon decided the victory in their favor. Monteverde lost some hundreds of his men, and was obliged to shut himself up with the remainder, in the fortress of Porto Cabello.

General Bolivar advanced rapidly upon Caracas, and found very little or no resistance on the part of the enemy, who had concentrated his forces against the column of general Ribas. As soon as governor Fierro heard of the approach of general Bolivar, he hastily assembled a great council of war, in which it was concluded to send deputies to Bolivar, proposing a capitulation. This was made and signed at Vittoria, about a year after the famous capitulation between general Miranda and Monteverde. By this treaty Bolivar promised that no one should be persecuted for his political opinions, and that every one should be at liberty to retire with his property from Venezuela, and go whithersoever he pleased.

While the deputies were assembled at Vittoria, governor Fierro, seized, like Cagigal and Tiscar, by panic and terror, decamped in the night time, secretly, and so hastily that he left, as was afterwards ascertained, a very large amount of silver money. He left also more than 1500 Spaniards, at the discretion of the enemy. He embarked at Laguira, and arrived in safety at the little island of Curacao. The flight of their governor, of which the inhabitants and the garrison were not informed, until day break the next morning, left the city in the greatest trouble, for he left not a single order. The Spanish party being dissolved, every one was left to provide for his own safety. Its principal chiefs, Monteverde, Cagigal, Fierro and Tiscar, acting in conformity, each to his own will, had all placed themselves in safety indeed, but without the least union or vigor: Monteverde remained in Porto Cabello without sending forth any order; Cagigal remained with Tiscar, at Angostura; and Fierro in the island of Curacao.

It was therefore an easy task for Bolivar to enter the capital of his
American patriotism had become standard features of the Latin American history. It was marked by the themes of liberty, progress, and the struggle for independence. The work of Bolivar, a great national hero, went through numerous editions, and for many years it was the standard work. The first documentary, Histoire de la Ligue des Nations, appeared in 1854. It was written and an enormous admirer of Bolivar, His Life of Bolivar, was a distinguished nineteenth-century Venezuela.

Felipe Larrazabal

A Patriotic Appraisal

The means of following him, the means of following him, the means of following him; not only by his followers, not only by his followers, not only by his followers...
In those times of obscurantism and oppression, God took from the treasures of his goodness a soul that He endowed with intelligence, justice, strength, and gentleness. “Go,” He said, “carry light to the mansion of night; to make just and happy those who ignore justice and do not know liberty.”

That soul was Bolivar's; this is the charge that Providence entrusted to him.

A noble and lofty spirit, humane, just, liberal, Bolivar in the virtues and talents of his person was one of the most gifted men the world has known; so perfect and unique, that in his goodness he was like Titus, in his good luck and successes Trajan, in his civility Marcus Aurelius, in his valor Caesar, in his wisdom and eloquence Augustus. Of great and very notable memory, unaffected and sociable with his friends, cultured and moderate in his pleasures, he knew how to join the gracefulness of the pen with the bravery of the sword. In danger he showed himself courageous, in toils strong, in adversity constant, in resolution ardent and of insurmountable integrity. Like Charlemagne, and better-than Charlemagne, he had the skill to do great things with ease and difficult things quickly. Who ever conceived such vast plans? Who carried them out more smoothly? A sure and lively glance, a rapid intuition of things and of the moment, a prodigious spontaneity for improvising gigantic plans, the science of war reduced to a calculation of minutes, immense vigor of conception, and a fertile, creative, inexhaustible spirit... behold Bolivar. Victory in him was always inspiration. Skilled in war, unequaled in counsel, he was neither made proud by triumphs, nor broken by reverses, nor tempted by covetousness (the mortal poison of reason and truth), nor overcome by fatigue, nor stirred up by ambition. Light and perpetual honor of South America, and principally of Caracas his native land, the name of Bolivar will persist as long as the world endures!

If a large part of fortune is for a man to come in his epoch (for eminent individuals often depend on the times), we must confess that Bolivar came in the proper day. From the time he appeared on the grandiose scene of the South American revolution, he excited expectation and symbolized determination. Prompt in thinking as in doing, he combined, as if once again in Caesar, the favors of nature and the splendors of art.

A great excellence, of an intense singularity, that excites the admiration and moves and captivates the will! ...

If there has been a man in whom the passion to command would be excusable; if there was one in whose breast ambition, asleep or in suspense, could powerfully awaken, it was BOLIVAR! ... To have opened the way for himself across the ruins of a powerful empire and
When the party was ended, the Liberator entered his private room with indifference and calm. America, whose gueños and cruel satraps could not be tolerated, was growing. The Liberator attacked Spain, whose gueños and cruel satraps could not be tolerated, with the force of his opinion. His Liberator attacked Spain, whose gueños and cruel satraps could not be tolerated, with the force of his opinion. The Liberator attacked Spain, whose gueños and cruel satraps could not be tolerated, with the force of his opinion.

On a certain occasion, in Lima, (1825), the Liberator was receiving brilliancy of talent. The Liberator received brilliancy of talent. The Liberator received brilliancy of talent. The Liberator received brilliancy of talent. The Liberator received brilliancy of talent.
cas. Abandoned to the intimacy of fraternal trust and speaking to her with his soul on his lips, he said, "Next year I shall go there without fail, to live in retirement and in the delights of domestic quiet. Now America is free and I have no more to do. I loathe command, and the agitation of public life is detestable to me, now that the cause that put the sword in my hands has disappeared. In Caracas, in Anauco or any other point I shall live content."

What words! What simple and sublime style! Now America is free and I have no more to do! . . . It resembles what Moses said: "And God finished His work and rested." . . .

A Modern Bolívar

J. B. TREND

The following excerpt is taken from Bolívar and the Independence of Spanish America by the British historian J. B. Trend. The part of the narrative excerpted deals with the last few years of Bolívar's life and the foiled attempt to assassinate him. In this section the author presents his view that Bolívar was not only the liberator of Spanish America but, in a real sense, its dictator. It is in this regard a thoroughly revisionist work, as far as possible distant from such adulatory books as Larrazábal's Life of Bolívar.

Bolívar had never had any great illusions on the possibility of applying democratic principles whole-heartedly in South America; and some of his biographers have considered that, once in supreme command, he took little trouble to conceal his impatience with doubting liberals. The first thing was to restore order; and he did not hesitate to sacrifice personal liberties in order to do so. To stamp out anarchy, he employed all the forces of reaction; and the chief forces which could serve his purpose, in a country where all political tradition had been lost in the wars of independence, were just those forces which were most damaging to his political ideals: the army and the church. The army was represented by ambitious generals who were hoping to carve provinces for themselves out of the remains of the Colombian Union; there was not one of sufficient stature to dream of succeeding Bolívar. Sucre might have done so, but he was murdered not long before Bolívar's own death. There remained the clergy, supported by
Santander was the vice president of Colombia. The plot in Bogota was
prevented by his enemies as dictatorial. The plot in Bogota was
planned by those enemies, but his personal intervention in any-matters
related to the presidency did not prevent it. The enemies of the
president, however, were not interested in the assassination. The
plot in Bogota was prevented by the personal intervention of the
president. The enemies of the president were interested in the
president's assassination. The enemies of the president were not
interested in the assassination. The plot in Bogota was prevented by
the personal intervention of the president. The enemy of the
president was interested in the assassination. The enemies of the
president were not interested in the assassination. The plot in
Bogota was prevented by the personal intervention of the president.

Presidential Palace — the old Palace de San Carlos — was enough

Bohivar had been warned, but he thought that the usual guard at the
Presidential Palace would not let him cross the border and conspire on
Venezuela's soil.

In Colombia, Bohivar’s enemies took to conspire, though Peas,

Bohivar thought that the Colombian military might still be scared.

Bohivar’s dictatorship was at once acknowledged by Peas. The

like your limits is original size With the church on this side, and the

foundations of authority? and he increased the army to something

like Brittany, which all dictators have inevitably regarded as the

religion of the rich and the exploitation of the poor; and these,
against his dictatorial power. Though the organizers were middle-aged intrigueurs and wire-pullers, the actual executants were mainly young men, with the fanatical faith of storm-troopers, relying on methods of terrorism. "We could not flatter ourselves with the thought of success, except by the impression of terror which the news of Bolívar's death would produce on our opponents." One of the assassins is speaking. Vice-President Santander, without being directly implicated himself, seems to have known that a new attempt was to be made; yet he gave Bolívar no warning, and did nothing to check the movement. He too had been intriguing against the Liberator, as intercepted letters showed. Bolívar had good reason to be discouraged.

On the night of the attempt the conspirators hid in the cathedral till midnight. It had been raining—the climate of Bogotá has been compared to a cold spring in Paris—but there was bright moonlight. One brigade of artillery had been won over by the conspirators; each knew exactly what he had to do, and they felt confident of success. The clock struck 12. They came out of the cathedral and got to work.

In his depression, and the rain, and the chilly afternoon, Bolívar had sent for Manuela Saenz.7 She grumbled at having to go out just then, but duly came to the Palace. Bolívar was having a hot bath. She read to him while he lay in it, and then put him to bed. He seemed to have a feverish cold, and she stayed with him.

Manuela described what happened next:

"It was about 12 when the Liberator's dogs began to bark; and there was a peculiar noise which must have been the fight with the sentries, but no shooting. I woke the Liberator, and the first thing he did was to pick up a sword and a pistol and try to open the door. I stopped him and made him dress, which he did quite calmly but quickly. He said: 'Bravo! Well, here I am dressed; what do we do now? Barricade ourselves in?' He tried to open the door again, but I prevented him. Then I remembered something I had once heard the General say. ' Didn't you tell Pepe Paris,' I said, 'that that window would do for an occasion like this?' 'You're right,' he answered and went over to the window. I prevented him getting out at first, because there were people passing; but he managed it when they had gone, just as the door was being broken open [in the next room]. I went to meet them, to give him time to get away; but I didn't have time to see him jump, or to shut the window. As soon as they saw me, they seized me and said: 'Where's Bolívar?' I told them he was at a meeting, which was the first thing that occurred to me. They searched the outer room carefully and went on

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7Since 1822 and their meeting during Bolívar's conquest of Peru, she had been Bolívar's mistress and the passion of his life.—Ed.
the President of the Republic: mean and loss of military rank, though he too, eventually returned to death, as accessory; but the sentence was commended to one of his-Red Bank, where his wife, Sarah Butler, was condemned to death with him. The General Linnanta had been dined by the President of the Republic, except for two of those who lived to consume another day: rounded up, except for two or three who lived to consume another day; and the President and the President wasahrung's, but he had caught a presidential pardon. The President was crusted, but he had caught a presidential pardon.

The rising was over in a few hours. By 4 a.m.,pillar was back in the palace.

...Sanander and Padilla, with a crowd of soldiers, chariot. Sanander and Padilla, with a crowd of soldiers, chariot...
“I am so worried,” he wrote on November 15th, 1828, “that I shall go away to the country for several months, to a place where there are nothing but Indians... I can’t put up any longer with such ingratitude. I’m not a saint, I’ve no wish to suffer martyrdom. Only the luck of having a few good friends keeps me going in this torture.”

The dictatorship continued, either under Bolívar personally, or exercised by others in his name. Reaction was energetically pursued, centralism accentuated. “The Liberator,” a Venezuelan historian has remarked, “in spite of his understanding of the French Revolution, and his knowledge of British constitutional practice, had become a doctrinaire administrator of the Latin type. He thought in 1828 as if he were living in ancient Rome—the ancient Rome of the eighteenth-century philosophes. He still believed in political ‘virtue’ and held that dictatorship was a sovereign remedy in times of emergency; but in this way he fell into what seem to us now the greatest errors of his public life.” He did not pretend that dictatorship could be a permanent system of government; “his good intentions are as evident as the error in his calculations.” His reliance on the army and the church, and his persecution of liberalism, have already been referred to. Like most dictators since his time, he found himself obliged to interfere with the text-books read in schools and colleges. The books to which his attention was specially drawn were written by an Englishman—Bentham—who had personally sent Bolívar some of his writings, translated into Spanish by a liberal Catalan exile in London. They were removed from the list of works prescribed for study, although afterwards they were reinstated, and held their place for nearly a hundred years.

Other repressive measures against liberalism followed, and by 1829 very few of the liberal principles remained which had inspired the declaration of Venezuelan independence—indeed, throughout the length and breadth of Great Colombia the only revolutionary idea which was still intact was the firm resolve never to return to the domination of Spain.

**Review and Study Questions**

1. Given his background and heritage, why, in your opinion, did Bolívar finally join the revolution?

2. How do you account for the adulatory tone of so much of the Latin American Bolivarian literature?
There are more than 6,000 biographies of Bolivar. The best in English is still certain Manuel Simón Bolívar (Alphonse, N. W., Oxford University Press, 1958).

Suggestions for Further Reading

4. How well taken does Trumbull's revisionism seem to be? Discuss.

3. Was Bolivar a true dictator or only a conservative advocate of central government? Discuss.