

## **LATIN AMERICA: 1500-present**

**The Mayans were an advanced Native American tribe located on the Yucatan Peninsula. The Incas were an advanced Native American tribe located in the Andes Mountains in South America in present day Peru and Chile. The Aztec were an advanced Native American tribe located in Central Mexico.**

**Exploration: 1492: Columbus sailed west in search of a western route to Asia, but instead ran into the Caribbean islands. The island of Hispaniola became a Spanish colony. Spanish conquistadors showed up to conquer land for Spain. Cortez conquered the Aztec, claiming Mexico for Spain. Pizarro conquered the Incas, thus claiming most of South America for Spain. Brazil became the only Latin American colony of Portugal. The religion of Spain, the Catholic Church was spread to Latin America by missionaries, the Jesuits. Most people in Latin America now speak Spanish.**

**The effects of exploration were: Rigid class system and Rule by dictators, Africans brought to Americas as slaves, colonies imitate culture of parent country, Europeans immigrate to the Americas, and diseases killed Native Americans.**

**The Columbian Exchange developed as a result of exploration as well. This was the exchange of goods between the Old and New worlds. It led to cash crops grown in the Americas, race-based slavery, and the plantation system for growing cash crops. Some cash crops were tobacco, sugar, cotton, and coffee.**

**1800's: Influenced by the American and French Revolutions and tired of parent country dominance, Bolivar led many South American to independence. By 1840, most former Spanish colonies were free. Toussaint-L'Ouverture led a slave rebellion in Haiti, thus freeing itself from France.**

**1900's: Governments still often controlled by military dictators.**

**1959: Cuba becomes a communist country led by Castro.**

**1962: USSR tries to put nuclear missiles in Cuba, thus causing the Cuban Missile Crisis (nearly WWII).**

**Today: most Latin American countries are still developing countries and very poor.**