

Events Leading up to Latin American Independence:

•events in Europe:

1788: King Charles III of Spain died

1793: Spain, part of a larger European coalition, went to war against France after the execution of Louis XVI

1795: however, after suffering defeats and running out of money, Spain ended the war; this "unilateral ending of hostilities" angered England, who attacked Spanish shipping; Spain, in turn, signed an alliance with France and declared war on England

1797: England blockaded the port of Cádiz, a move which resulted in increased free trade between Spain's American colonies and "neutral" countries, notably the U.S.; in the meantime, because of constant involvement in wars, Spain turned to colonies more and more as a source of revenue to be exploited

1807: Napoleon captured Lisbon in 1807, but the Portuguese royal family had fled a week earlier to Brazil with an entourage of 10-15 thousand, the royal treasury, archives and a printing press; they would remain in Brazil until 1821, and would achieve independence when the king's son, Pedro, refused to return to Portugal, preferring to stay in Brazil and declare its independence

1808: Napoleon forced the Bourbon king off the throne and crowned his brother king of Spain; this provoked the constitutional crisis that would greatly impact the colonies (authority of Joseph was not recognized, juntas were formed, liberal constitutions were written which included representation by the colonies)
→but all this recognized as "just rhetoric" by 1814.

•two phases of movements for Spanish American Independence:

1. 1808-1814: many do not want independence per se, but more representation in the new, more liberal gov't being created in Spain

2. after 1814: Ferdinand returned to power, declared constitution of 1812 null and void, and reinstated absolutist gov't; in 1815 he sent 10, 500 troops under command of Pablo Morillo to Venezuela to squash insurrection; as a result more and more creoles saw Independence as their only alternative

Discussion Question: What do you see as the driving forces behind the movements for independence in Latin America? Are they ideological? political? economic?