

# November 30, 2012

[Countries](#), [United States](#)



November 30, 2012 Nationalism Essay Nationalism is a form of patriotism based upon the identification of a group of individuals with a nation. In the 1800's, nationalism was common throughout Latin America. In the early 1800s, nationalism was associated with positive ideas like freedom from foreign control. As time progressed, in the late 1800s, new wealth came to Latin America from increased trade and industrialization, but it was the elites who benefited. Many countries, such as Brazil, Colombia, and Bolivia engaged in nationalism. Although it lagged behind these leading countries and the rest of Latin America in the 19th century, Cuba engaged in nationalism as well. Unfortunately, Cuba did not lead many strong nationalist movements. Overtime, however, Cuban nationalism grew to greater extents. Cuban nationalism, and freedom from Spanish rule, is what lead to its modernization. For most of its history, Cuba has been controlled by foreign powers. The struggle for not only freedom, but also a national identity, was a complex affair that began in earnest during the late 18th century and lasted well into the 20th century. From about 1511 to 1898, along with Puerto Rico, Cuba was one of Spain's two colonies in the New World. (Seligman, Grant) At that time, Cuba was progressing from a leisurely growing colony into the world's chief sugar producer. After the respite of the Spanish American empire collapsed, Cuba's colonial government steadily became more tyrannical. The affiliates of the planter class and the intellectuals who had originally opposed independence then began to show their discontent. Some, supporting reform over revolution, designated for demanding sovereignty within the empire. (Perez) The view of businesses from Spain faded out after the botch in April 1867 of the Junta de Informaci3n convoked by the Madrid

government to confer the reforms wanted by the Cubans. Throughout the colonial times, Spain ruled Cuba from afar. Although Cuba strived to gain a true national identity, they kept close ties with Spain. These close ties were kept in order to ensure their crop based economy. Cuba was well aware that without Spain, the country would never become successful. This knowledge is what kept Cuba from rebelling against Spain sooner; however, a revolt was well under way. (Hugh) Towards the end of the 18th century, Jose Marti arose. Marti was a vocally- competent nationalist. Along with others, Marti influenced Cuba to increasingly rebel against their colonizers. In 1894, Marti realized Cuba was in for another movement for independence. By this time, the nationalistic spirit and the influence of figures, such as Marti, had ignited a pro- independence rebellion. Feeling the effect of amplified taxation and a global economic calamity, Cuban patriots sought for independence. (Perez) This pursuit of sovereignty led to the Ten Years' War. After many battles, it became clear that although the Cubans could not overrule the Spaniards, the Spaniards were also unable to defeat the small militia of Cuba. Since the Spaniards were incapable of defeating the rebels and the rebels lacked the assets to exile the Spaniards from the island, the period of time in which these battles would last was unforeseeable. (Lawrence) The United States was compassionate with Cuban rebels fighting for liberation. When the United States showed its concern by directing the battleship Maine to visit Cuba, the ship blew up in Havana harbor. This detonation killed 266 American sailors. The United States immediately blamed Spain for the explosion; thus, Cuba gained the United States as an ally. Over the many years under Spanish colonial rule, Cuba had developed a sharp Spanish type

of society, but a real national tradition had been in the making for many decades. The Cubans were incapable of conquering Spanish authority on the island, but the colony passed away after the strife had ended with a "no-victors" peace. (Lawrence) At the end of the rebellion, the island of Cuba was in ruins. The war, combined with the Spanish- U. S. tariff controversy of the 1890s, had destroyed two-thirds of the country's productive capacity. Cubans had no wealth and were heavily in debt. They were short of the funds needed for the reconstruction of the country. What was left of the depressed sugar upper classes had finally capitulated. Thus, Cuba could no longer depend on the steadying influence of strong civilian elite. The established dictatorial government was undone and Cubans were guaranteed depiction in the Spanish parliament. Cuban society then began to develop toward a more democratic pattern of racial relations. After this democratic pattern was instilled, Cuba's economy became even more meticulously allied with that of the United States. In fact, the United States investment in Cuba greatly expanded in the last quarter of the 19th Century. In 1894, almost 90 percent of Cuba's exports went to the United States, which provided Cuba with 38 percent of its imports; however, Spain acquired only 6 percent of Cuba's exports, providing it with just 35 percent of its imports. Evidently, Spain had stopped to be Cuba's economic metropolis. (Hugh) Although struggling, Cuba was entering a new stage of modernity while Spain was becoming increasingly obsolete. With their newfound freedom, nationalists had a strong drive to participate in a liberal new world. (Seligman, Grant) After gaining autonomy from Spain, Cuba began to modernize, but did not immediately reap the benefits of independence. An ill-advised education

system had inefficiently prepared able Cubans from satisfying positions in growing industries primarily driven by United States interests. Overtime, nationalists began to look upon an independent Cuba. While it was a time for merriment, it would prove to be a challenging transition to complete independence and self-definition. Cuba's national identity has always been threatened and had been under tyrannical foreign control for centuries. With no actual pre-Spanish nationalist tradition to speak of, Cubans would have to rapidly try and ascertain themselves in the modern world. (Hugh) Even with a clear separation of borders and territory, it would not be instantaneously clear what it meant to be Cuban. Although it was unclear, in the years succeeding its independence, Cuba saw substantial economic expansion, but also political corruption and a series of dictatorial leaders. Cuba's independence from Spain, led by the nationalist movement is what led to its identity affirmation, industrialization, and overall modernization. Citations: \* Book. Thomas, Hugh, Cuba: The Pursuit of Freedom, New York: Harper & Row, 1971. \* Book. Lawrence Tone, John. War and Genocide in Cuba, 1895-1898. University of North Carolina Press, 2006. \* Book. Perez Jr., Louis. Cuba: Between Reform and Revolution. New York: Oxford University Press. 1988. \* Website. Seligman, Maya. Grant, Bruce. " Writings: Cuba (Installment 1)." Writings: Cuba (Installment 1). N. p., 19 Sept. 1996. Web. 13 Nov. 2012. .