Chapter I

EVOLUTION OF CHURCH IN LATIN AMERICA

Integration of Church and State has been a significant feature of traditional Latin American politics from the days of the conquest until recent times. Contemporary political developments in Latin America and the evolving role of the Church in politics have to be viewed in the light of its historical past.

The Iberian Conquest and the Colonial Church

In respect of Church-State relations the Portuguese and Spanish conquest of America typified the fusion of the two powers - the spiritual and the temporal, for long prevalent in Europe. When Christopher Columbus landed at Guanahani in 1492, which he named San Salvador in honour of Christ the Saviour, his first care was to erect a cross proclaiming thereby not only the sovereignty of the Spanish Crown over the new land but the missionary nature of his expedition. In his subsequent voyages to America he took with him missionaries to teach the Catholic faith to the people of the land.

The monarchs of both Spain and Portugal repeatedly and proudly professed that their principal motive in making new
discoveries and acquiring colonies was the dissemination of the Catholic faith.¹ Queen Isabella of Spain in her request to Pope Alexander VI to grant her ownership of half the 'New World' made the missionary objective very clear. She wrote:

Our definite purpose is to use all our efforts to induce the peoples of these new lands to embrace our holy religion, to send them priests, monks, prelates and other learned and God-fearing men who would educate them in the truths of faith and to give them the manners and customs of Christian life.²

The Portuguese Crown began the conquest of the 'New World' on authority received from the Pope. Henry the Navigator claimed that he had received a papal bull in 1430, which gave him authority to bring the new lands under his rule. Two documents signed by Pope Nicholas V in 1452 and 1453, stated that the lands already discovered or to be discovered would be clearly recognised by him as belonging to King Alfonso and his successors in perpetuity.³ In 1479, Pope Calixtus III granted to the King of Portugal exclusive right of trade and colonization in the lands between Cape Bajador and Guinea. The King of Spain agreed to it.

³ Daniel-Rops, n.1, pp.259-60.
Pope Pius III and his successors subsequently confirmed and further enlarged the grants.\(^4\) It was only after the discovery of America by Columbus on behalf of the Spanish Crown that Spain objected to this Portuguese monopoly. On an appeal from the Spanish monarch, Pope Alexander VI (of Spanish origin) in a papal bull of 1493, divided the 'New World' along a meridian passing one hundred miles from Azores and entrusted the lands east of it to the Portuguese Crown, and those west of it to the Spanish Crown.\(^5\)

The concessions granted by the Popes to the Iberian monarchs were not without certain obligations on the part of the latter. The most important of them was their duty to disseminate the Catholic faith in the new lands. The monarchs gladly acknowledged such obligations. In return for the Papal concessions, the Portuguese Crown, for instance, pledged itself thus: "In all places, islands and territories already acquired or to be acquired, to build churches, monasteries and other foundations as well as send out all secular priests who might volunteer, and those belonging to the Mendicant Orders appointed by their superiors".\(^6\) The Spanish Crown too made similar pledges.

\(^5\) Ibid., p.119.
\(^6\) Concordat of Alfonso with Nicholas V (1453), ibid., p.122-23.
The Popes gave authority to the Iberian monarchs to undertake conquest of new territories and colonization on the basis of a theory then prevalent, according to which Popes held supreme power, both spiritual and temporal, and that the civil power was subordinate and subservient to the spiritual power. This fusion of the spiritual and the temporal was advantageous to both the Popes and the monarchs, as was proved in the American colonization. But, often enough, powerful monarchs took advantage of it to exercise control over the Church.

The process of the fusion of the spiritual and temporal had started with the conversion of Emperor Constantine to Christianity in the fourth century. Since then compromise and collaboration between Church and State were prevalent not only in the Byzantine Empire but also in the Armenian and Germanic-Latin Christendoms. From the birth of the Holy Roman Empire in the early ninth century, the Church came to be identified with the organs of political power in feudal Europe until the feudal order experienced the crisis of the fourteenth century. There was thus a close relation between the Church and the Iberian monarchies.

Real Patronato (royal patronage) further tied the Church and State, seemingly, inextricably. The responsibility for

7 Pope Innocent III categorically declared that the Roman Pontiff had the highest authority not only on spiritual but also on temporal matters. Pope Boniface VIII in his bull, Unam Sanctam stated that the secular power was absolutely subjected to the Pope. Ibid., pp.97-98.
planting the faith in the 'New World', as stated above, went to the Iberian monarchs. In turn they received virtually absolute authority over the Church in America through real patronato de Indias (royal patronage of the Indies) granted by the Pope. In fact, it conceded greater jurisdiction to the Crown over the Church in Latin America than has ever before or since been granted by the papacy to temporal powers. All ecclesiastical affairs, especially appointments, were under the control of the Crown throughout Latin America. The history of Latin America throughout the colonial period and, to some extent, in the post colonial period was dominated by this one fact.

Real patronato de Indias is, as Mecham has pointed out, the key to the understanding of the Church-State relations during the colonial period and the Church-State cooperation or confrontation during and after independence from Spain and Portugal. Patronato is generally understood as the power or right to present or nominate a cleric for installation in a vacant ecclesiastical benefice, e.g., the benefice of a bishop. The right of institution of the benefices belonged to the Popes in the case of major ones and to the other concerned ecclesiastical authorities in the case of minor ones. The person who enjoyed the right of patronato, in theory, merely presented a candidate for the vacant benefice and the church authorities made the appointment. But, in practice, it amounted to nomination, if not

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appointment. In the case of royal patronage of the Indíes presentation to the major ecclesiastical benefices (offices) e.g., bishopric, was done by the King, and to the lesser benefices by the vice-patrons. Royal patronage was actually carried out in Spain through the Consejo de Indias, the Spanish department of colonial affairs, which determined the certification, salary, number and assignment of all clerics and missionaries. All such ecclesiastical appointments were subject to the viceroy, the vice-captain of the King or by a delegate appointed by him.9

The right of patronage involved, right of presentation (nomination), honorary rights (rank, precedence, etc), utilitarian rights (first fruits, tithes, and other income from the benefice, and obligations). But, the most important was the first, i.e., presentation or nomination. The other three followed automatically.

There were two schools of thought that held differing views on the origin of the right of patronage. The "canonist" or the "ultramontanist" school held the view that it was spiritual in origin and was inherent in papacy. It was granted through papal concession, and so, rescindable. The "royalist" school

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9 Enrique D. Dussel, Historia de la Iglesia en America Latina: Coloniaje y Liberacion (Barcelona, 1974), p.83. With the help of a diagram Dussel explains the roles of the various actors in the patronato system.
held the view that it was laical in origin and was inherent in
the temporal sovereignty, and therefore inheritable and
transferable and not rescindable. With regard to the royal
patronage of the Indies the "ultramontanists" held that it was
a unilateral concession to the Crown from papacy (suo motu), and
not as a result of any concordat, contract, etc. The Popes,
naturally, upheld this view and contended that the royal patronage
was not inherent in the sovereignty, and therefore, not
inheritable. 10

The royal patronage, as mentioned above, was already
prevalent in Europe, including Spain and Portugal, long before
the discovery of the 'New World'. This system was only extended
to include the 'New World' also. But, it ensured the supremacy
of the Crown over the Church in the 'New World' even more
effectively than in Spain or Portugal itself. A papal bull of
1480 granted Ferdinand and Isabella of Spain royal patronage in
Granada. In practice, however, they came to hold and exercise a
degree of control over the ecclesiastical affairs of Granada far
greater than they possessed in Aragon and Castile, and than what
papacy was normally willing to grant. The papal bull of 1493 of
Alexander VI who drew the line of demarcation between the Portuguese
and Spanish territories in the 'New World', entrusted to the
monarchs of Castile and Aragon the exclusive privilege of

10 The debate came to the fore especially after the
independence in Spanish America.
subjugating, christianizing and civilizing the natives of the new land. But no explicit mention was made of the extension of the right of royal patronage. But, in their actions in America, the monarchs apparently assumed as implicit in the general terms of that bull a prerogative analogous to that which the Spanish Crown held in Granada.

In any case, another bull of the same Pope in 1501 known as Eximae Devotionis explicitly extended the royal patronage throughout the 'New World'. Pope Julius II, his successor, in yet another bull, Universalis Ecclesiae in 1508, conferred upon the monarchs all previous privileges in a perpetual and unqualified grant of universal patronage in the 'New World'. In 1508, Pope Luis XII in his bull, Universalis Ecclesiae Regimini granted to the rulers of Castile in perpetuity the privilege of founding and organizing all churches, and of presenting to all offices and benefices in all overseas territories which they possessed or might acquire in future. This was followed by other papal bulls in 1510 and 1511, regulating the details of the tithes which the crown was entitled to collect and recognizing Seville as the metropolitan Church of Spanish America.

The royal patronage entrusted the Iberian monarchs with great responsibility as well, towards the Church in Latin America which they gladly acknowledged. King Ferdinand, in the

concordat of Burges (1512), described in detail the manner in which he proposed to use his new and wide prerogatives in Spanish America. He donated, in perpetuity, to the Church in Spanish America the entire tithes which he was entitled to collect from there, except one-nineth which he reserved for himself. He thus provided the Church in Spanish America with a permanent income, supported the collection of that income with the weight of royal authority, and ensured that the money collected would be spent by men whom he appointed and according to rules which he approved.

At the time when the royal patronage of the Indies was established its magnitude was not apparent. But, as discovery, conquest and settlement advanced, the sweeping term of the grant "subordinated to the royal will the entire Church of a continent". It was the Crown that sent the bishops and priests to America and fixed their remunerations. No ecclesiastical institution could be created without its sanction. As years passed, the royal patronage became further broadened and extended by usage, often unilaterally, by the Crown. All ecclesiastical institutions and offices, including dioceses, parishes, educational and charitable institutions and religious houses, and even inquisition came under the purview of royal patronage. No direct intervention by the Pope in the affairs of the Church in Spanish America was possible. Even papal documents could not be circulated in America without

12 Ibid., p.36.
prior royal consent. Through the royal patronage of the Indies, Popes practically renounced their authority to intervene in the affairs of the Church in Spanish America. This did not cause any concern to the Popes as their relation with the Spanish Kings was generally cordial, and the interest of the Church in Spanish America, as Vatican perceived it, was taken good care of.

The Portuguese Crown also enjoyed similar patronage (padroado) in Brazil. Through it, the Church in Brazil was controlled by it in the same way as the Church in Spanish America by Spain. Any attempt by papacy to intervene directly in the affairs of the Church in Brazil was strongly opposed and prevented by the Portuguese Crown. Popes could not enforce their teachings and regulations in Brazil except with the concurrence of the monarch.

The royal patronage system gave the Church in Latin America unprecedented influence over the affairs of the State as well Bishops and other Churchmen were as much the King's nominees and his agents as the civil governors and other civil officials. Appointment of clergymen to civil offices, including the highest, was not uncommon. This, naturally, led to overlapping of civil and ecclesiastical authority. Sometimes, it was impossible to know where one branch of authority ended and the other began. This situation, at times, led to jealousy,


rivalry and even conflict between the civil and ecclesiastical authorities.

In the beginning of colonization in Latin America all the missionaries belonged to some religious order, notably, Dominican, Franciscan and Augustinian. As they were "exempt" orders, they came directly under the Pope and enjoyed special privileges. They were sent to Latin America by the Crown on the basis of a special commissioning they received also from the Popes. Their maintenance was the responsibility of the religious order they belonged to, irrespective of the income from the benefices they held. Thus, they were relatively independent of the Crown and the local bishop within whose territory they worked. This relative independence enabled at least some of them to denounce the injustices of the colonial practices, especially the unjust exploitation of the natives, and, at times, even ignore the directions and desires of the bishops. To counteract such tendencies, the bishops appealed to the Crown and with the consent of the Pope, more discipline was enforced on the friars. The Crown decided to send to the colonies secular priests who unlike the friars, were exclusively under the jurisdiction of the local bishops. But, the friars opposed the introduction of the secular priests in the missions considering them unsuited both by character and by training for missionary work among the natives of the colonies. But the Crown decided to send more
secular priests because they could be more effectively controlled by the bishops. A decree of 1533 laid down that secular priests were to be presented to vacant benefices (offices) whenever possible, in preference to the friars. As a result of this policy, the number of secular clergy rose to over five hundred in Spanish America within three years after the decree of 1533. The introduction of the secular clergy in such large numbers had its consequences. Unlike the friars who, because of their vow of poverty, by and large, practiced detachment from wealth and worldly matters, the secular priests tended to seek wealth and a life of comfort and pleasure. They could ensure it with close cooperation with the bishop, civil administration and the aristocracy in general. In such circumstances they could not be expected to come out openly against the misdeeds of any of their patrons, as did some friars. Large numbers were attracted to the ranks of the secular clergy as a means to position and power. As the clergy became increasingly an economically and politically privileged class, missionary and pastoral duties were neglected.

The Colonial Church

In spite of the genuine religious motivation and high ethical idealism of countless missionaries, especially in the earlier period of colonialism, the fact remains that the missionaries in Latin America were never simply agents of the Holy Faith but agents also of the State by which they were appointed
to serve political ends as much, and on which they were financially dependent. In as much as the missionaries served the State they were supported by the State. They served not only to christianize the frontiers but also to aid in extending, holding and civilizing it.

The mission often served as the pioneer agency for reaching the Indians, the immediate object of Spanish conquest and colonization. The Spanish colonialism had three purposes with regard to the native Indian: to convert him, to civilize him and to exploit him. These purposes were primarily realized through the encomienda system. Encomienda (with its tributary types) was a system of tribute with a monetary economy, which appportioned the Indians to masters (encomienderos) and established a social relation of production between master (patron) and Indian (peón). It was basically the right to demand tributes and labour from the Indians of a specified area (encomienda) allotted by the King of his agents to conquistadores (captains of conquests) in return for their leadership in the actual conquests or conquests to be undertaken. In the beginning the natives of the new land were divided among the leading captains and settlers by allocation known as repartimiento (division). Columbus allotted such repartimientos to those who accompanied him. In the beginning it just provided personal servants and labour force. But as the mainland began to be conquered the system came to be known as encomienda with its
implications of duties and privileges. The number of Indians committed in this way to an *encomendero* (the holder of encomienda) varied. Cortes arrogated to himself a vast *encomienda* comprising officially twenty three thousand tributary heads of house-holds, and in fact, much larger than that. *Encomiendas* of three thousand and more were not uncommon.

*Encomienda* was not a system new to the Spaniards. Something similar to that had long existed in territories captured from the Moors, and in the Canaries. It was not all together new to the Indians either. They were used to somewhat similar system known as *mita* which existed in the Aztec and Inca Empires. But, exploitation in it was less severe than in *encomienda*.

*Encomienda* system conferred on the *encomendero* certain rights and privileges as well as duties. He could collect fixed tributes in kind as also labour from those coming under his *encomienda*. But, he had the duty to protect them and to provide for their practice of Catholic faith which they were often forced to embrace. But, the *encomiendas* were not feudal manors. Nor were they slave-worked estates—at least, not in the beginning. The natives were free to engage in their agricultural and other occupations provided they paid their tributes to the *encomenderos* and provided them with their services whenever required. The tributes, often enough, did not satisfy the *encomenderos* and the men who supported the conquests financially. Their greed for wealth led to more cruel exploitation of the Indians in

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mines and stock-ranching which they started later.

Missionaries came in great numbers to the encomiendas to provide spiritual services and schools, such as they were, for the education of the Indians grouped within the encomiendas and to effect their mass conversion to the Catholic faith either by persuasion, if not, by coercion. By the close of the sixteenth century not less than five million Indians lived in about nine thousand encomiendas under the direct rule of some four thousand encomienderos. Thus, the Indians whom the conquistadores could not bring under the sway of the Spanish rule through conquest, the missionaries were able through persuasion and self-sacrifices, as well as coercion, to bring under Spanish dominion.

The Portuguese were content, at least in the beginning, with establishing coastal trading centres. The Spaniards began to penetrate the interior almost from the beginning to build a vast empire and to install themselves securely in the new territories. These conquests were marked by atrocious cruelties and senseless slaughter of the Indians. In the process, they were not only uprooted from their customary habitat, resulting in much suffering, but their population was also decimated.

17 Ibid., pp.41-42.
The conquests resulted in atrocities. The encomiendas became little more than forced labour camps to serve Spanish colonialism. The stated purpose to convert and civilize the Indians clearly became secondary to the exploitation of them. The Church maintained that the treatment of the Indians as idolators was proper if they resisted the Spanish conquest and Christianization. But, significantly, among the missionaries, some voice of protest was raised against the atrocities committed against the natives and their cruel exploitation in the form of enforced labour in the encomiendas. As early as 1510, the Dominican friar Antonio de Montesinos, in a sermon he delivered before the notables of Santo Domingo, publicly reproached the white settlers for their inhuman exploitation of the Indians. He went to Spain and obtained some royal ordinances that mitigated the inhuman conditions of the Indians. But, they were not adhered to by the settlers.

Many other friars also joined Montesinos in his denouncement of the cruel exploitation of the Indians. They were supported by some bishops like Dom Julian Carces of

18 In his papal bull Divini Amore Communiti Pope Nicholas V had explicitly advocated the subjugation and reduction to servitude of the infidels. See Daniel-Rops, n.1, p.256.

Tlaxacala and Dom Vasco de Quiroga of Mohoacan. The latter even declared that he would refuse the sacraments of the Church to those who held the Indians, in near servitude. He also attempted, but not with lasting success, to organize self-supporting Indian communities to protect them from the exploitation by the white settlers.  

A few missionaries served heroically the interests of the Indians, some even at the risk of their lives. However, it was Bartolome de las Casas who became the greatest single champion of the rights of the Indians. Himself an encomiendero at one time, his conscience was stirred when he listened to the sermon of Montesinos in 1511. He gave up his encomienda, became a Dominican friar, and later a bishop, and devoted his entire life for the cause of the Indians. He wrote several accounts describing the atrocities committed by the Spaniards against the Indians. The best known of his writing, *A Very brief Narration of the Destruction of the Indies* was a hair-raising catalogue of crimes against the Indians. He holds that the Spaniards had slaughtered more than one million and three hundred thousand Indians. Though it contained many exaggerations and inaccuracies, it stirred the conscience of many people in Spain and throughout Europe.  

Las Casas undertook several trips to Spain and after much debate and persuasion obtained from the Crown in 1541, *New Laws* 

20 Clissold, n.16, pp.42-43.  
21 Parry, n.15, p.129.
for the Indies' regulating the encomienda and mitigating the suffering of the Indians. But the 'New Laws' were opposed by the settlers. They gradually gathered support from other missionaries who saw in the existing encomienda system an uniquely effective instrument of Spanish colonialism. In 1544, the three religious orders in Spanish America, the Dominican, Augustinian and Franciscan represented to the Crown against the 'New Laws' and as a result some of its provisions were revoked, and the others were never seriously implemented.

The shrinking of the Indian labour force necessitated the import of slave labour from Africa. The Church not only not opposed it but even encouraged it. Even a liberal champion of the Indians like de las Casas, in his single-minded zeal for the Indians, advocated the import of slaves from Africa. 22 Beginning with a royal permission in 1518, to import four thousand slaves, the slave trade rapidly advanced to an average of seventy five thousand a year, by the turn of the century. The Portuguese outdid the Spaniards in the slave business. In Brazil, the African slaves were the chief labour force in the large plantations. They were treated even more inhumanly than the Indians. Some missionaries, notably the Jesuits, tried to alleviate their suffering. Peter Claver was one such Jesuit who

22 Clissold, n.16, p.47.
devoted his entire life to the service of the slaves. Slavery was, at last, formally abolished in the second half of the eighteenth century due as much to the efforts of some humanitarian missionaries as to the enlightened opinion the world over.

The colonial society was based on a hierarchy of classes which had feudal and economic basis. The figure of pyramid showed this social hierarchy clearly. At the top were the Spaniards, at the base the negroes and the Indians, between the top and the base and going up from bottom to top came the mulattos (of mixed negro parentage), mestizos (of mixed Indian parentage), and the creoles (Spaniards born in the colony).

At the very top of the pyramid stood the Spaniards of Spain who monopolised the higher posts in the Church as well as in the colonial administration. Aside from the higher officials and the higher clergy, birth and family positions based on the ownership of lands and mines determined the rank. The prestige attached to birth and to property and the disdain for commercial enterprises, however lucrative, placed businessmen and those engaged in industry in an inferior social rank inspite of their economic power. Stratification sprang less from a desire for feudal systems than from a desire to conserve acquired economic privileges. By the seventeenth century crystallization of society into colonial castes was an accomplished fact. However, population growth and increase of intermarriage between the Spanish born, the creole, the Indian, the negro and the half-bred proved
to be factors of social mobility which overthrew the principle of separation on which the colonial system originally rested.

As for the Church, it not only accepted the hierarchy of classes but also scrupulously observed it. The Catholic Church's teachings not only upheld it but even sanctified it. 23

To sum up, the Church in Latin America evolved as an agent of colonialism. As a colonial Church, it was an extension of the Church in Spain. The real patronato de Indias ensured the closest collaboration among the Crown, the papacy and the Church in Latin America from which all the three benefited. Popes had very little say in the affairs of the Church in the colonies. The integration of Church and State so significant a feature of the politics of Latin America in the nineteenth century was born in the sixteenth and fully developed in the seventeenth century. 24

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23 Pope after Pope upheld the sanctity of the hierarchical structure of society. Even as late as 1903 Pope Pius X reiterated the traditional Catholic teaching and affirmed that "it was in conformity with the order established by God that there should be in human society, princes and subjects, patrons and proletariat, rich and poor, learned and ignorant, nobles and plebians". And seven years later the same Pope told that the Christians "should maintain that distinction of classes which was proper to a well-constituted city, and should seek for human society the character, that God, its author has given it" (Pius P.O. 'Dea, The Catholic Crisis (Boston, 1968), p.78.

Compassion for the poor and the suffering has been a hallmark of the Catholic Church throughout its existence, and the colonial Church in Latin America was not an exception. It did undertake works of charity organizing hospitals and other charitable institutions through which it gave succour to the poor and the destitute. The Church could not but take notice of the poverty and misery of a vast section of the society. But it believed and taught that poverty and suffering was to be in the world for all time because it was so ordained by God. But the poor, the exploited and the persecuted would have their compensation and reward in the life hereafter. References in support of it was not difficult to find in the Bible and in papal teachings. By extolling the virtues of submission, suffering and humiliation it instilled in the poor and down trodden a sense of passivism and fatalism which destroyed their very will to fight against the injustices they suffered, and which persist in many of them even today.

There were many missionaries who devoted their lives to the poor and oppressed, and some who championed their cause. But, it was more out of a paternalistic humanitarianism than out of their perception of the evils of the existing social structures which permitted the cruel exploitation of a vast section of society. Even de las Casas who was the greatest champion of the Indians did not perceive the injustice inherent in slavery. In order to protect the Indians he too advocated introduction of slave labour in the mines and large estates.
The Church had an absolute monopoly of education. But it did not contribute to any socially and economically progressive ideas. On the contrary it discouraged the efforts of the Jesuit scholars to introduce humanism and similar new and progressive ideas in the eighteenth century.

Within the Church there was no division or dissent either in its relation to the State or regarding its attitude towards colonial practices. Elites of differing political or socio-economic perceptions did not exist or did not make their existence felt in the Church and in the society at large during the colonial period.

Role of Church in Independence Movement

With the beginning of the movement for independence in the Spanish colonies in 1810, the Church entered an era with which it was least prepared to deal. The Church had been well established and administered in the continent through dozens of archbishops and bishops, and hundreds of missionaries. Still, there was no Latin American Church. The Church in Latin America was, for all practical purposes, an extension of the Church in Spain. Almost the entire higher clergy (the archbishops, bishops, superiors of religious orders, and other Church dignitaries) and a larger section of the lower clergy (pastors, missionaries, etc) came from Spain. The entire institutional Church was controlled by the Spanish Crown. The Pope had no direct dealing with the Church in Latin America. All the three, the Vatican Spain and the Church in Latin America felt secure with the
existing colonial set up which ensured the closest collaboration among the three.

As an institution of privilege and prestige possessing vast material wealth, for long the beneficiary of the Crown's protection and support, the Church had been its partner in American colonialism for three centuries. The higher clergy selected and sent by the King to the colonies were as much his agents as they were ecclesiastical dignitaries.\(^{25}\) A fierce loyalty to the Crown and its bearer had been traditional among all Spaniards including those in America, both the laity as well as the clergy.\(^{26}\)

In the decades preceding the independence movement, the Spanish government had begun to rely more on the army than on the Church. Its control, on the other hand, through patronato did not diminish. A situation was brought about in which the Church depended more on the Crown than the Crown on the Church.\(^{27}\) This resulted in the decline of the power and prestige of the Church. Sometimes the Crown came into serious conflict with the Church, as, for example, in its quarrel with the Jesuits and the order expelling them from the colonies in 1767. Understandably,

\(^{25}\) Pike, n.14, p.7.; Mecham, n.8, p.29.

\(^{26}\) Parry, n.15, p.353.

\(^{27}\) Dussel, n.9, p.134.
some of the Churchmen even at higher levels were not happy with the then prevailing situation in which the Church was becoming more and more subordinate to the State. Still, as they were indebted to the Crown for their position they remained loyal to it. But, with the commencement of the struggle for independence the colonial Church faced its first critical test.

The movement for independence was basically a creole revolt against the peninsular Spaniards.\textsuperscript{28} It was not an uprising of the natives against the foreigners, except in Haiti, and to some extent, in Mexico and Uruguay. In the beginning the revolt was more against the Spanish-born officials than against monarchy itself. By the close of the eighteenth century, the creoles far outnumbered the Spaniards. But positions of importance both in the Church and in the State, including the army, were all held by the Spaniards. The creoles felt discriminated against. There was discontentment and resentment among them. But within the institutional Church this resentment was not pronounced except in some religious orders where Spaniards were imposed as superiors against the express wish of the members, a vast majority of whom were non-Spaniards.\textsuperscript{29}

\textsuperscript{28} Enrique D. Dussel, History and Theology of Liberation (New York, 1976), p.75.

\textsuperscript{29} Alba, n.13, p.104.
The reorganization and expansion of the army and its enlarged role after the mid-eighteenth century attracted many creoles to it. Through business, industry and hard work many creoles were in command of vast resources. But, in the social hierarchy they occupied a place second to the Spaniards. The monopoly of Spain in trade and the various restrictions were to the disadvantage of the creoles. They believed that their social, economic and political interest would be better served by separating the colonies from Spain.

Not all the creole leaders of the independence movement were led by self-interest, ambition or resentment. In the case of Simón Bolívar his passion for independence grew not from any personal vanity or resentment against any personal slight but from study of French prophets of liberty.

The Jesuit scholars also helped in shaping the creole social consciousness by spreading the humanist ideas of Erasmus and Suarez, a departure from the traditional Catholic teaching but not condemned by the Church, through their schools and religious houses which were the centres of intellectual life. Some historians suggest that this Jesuit humanism which expressed a populist and republican spirit may have been one of the reasons for the expulsion of the Jesuits from the Spanish and Portuguese colonies in the eighteenth century.30 But, after their expulsion

the intellectual void was filled by French liberal ideas of freedom and republicanism.

Though liberalism had been repeatedly condemned by the Catholic Church, yet in the last decades of the eighteenth century it found its way into Latin America from Europe. Many Americans like Simon Bolivar who studied in Europe returned to the land imbued with liberal ideas. In spite of the rigid censorship operated by the Inquisition which had long given up burning heretics, but still continued burning books, liberal literature was available in Latin America. They were either smuggled from Europe or printed in the colonies. Intellectual life had become stagnant after the expulsion of the Jesuits. Liberal ideas from France were something new and stimulating and so found acceptance among many creoles in spite of the condemnation of liberalism by the Catholic Church.

Many liberals both in Europe and in Latin America exhibited pronounced anticlerical tendencies. Because of the very condemnation of liberalism by the Catholic Church, the liberals were critical of it. The intolerance, power, privilege and the material wealth of the Church and the many scandals associated with them were the targets of their criticism.

31 Liberalism was condemned by Pope Pius V in his papal bull, Regnans in Excelsis (1570), by Pope Gregory XVI in his encyclicals, Mirar Vos (1832) and Singular nos (1835). See Ann Freemantle, ed., The Papal Encyclicals (New York, 1959), pp. 143-55.
Though independence from Spain was a political matter, yet for the Church it had also some theological bearing. Catholic theology prevalent in those days taught the divine right of Kings. Kings were supposed to receive their authority direct from God. As they were considered God's representatives on earth, obedience to them was equated with obedience to God. Rebellion against Kings, therefore, was as much a treason as an impious act equated with heresy. Thus it was that Miguel Hidalgo and Jose Moroles, two mestizo priests who initiated the struggle for Mexican independence in 1810 were tried and condemned of heresy by the Inquisition and handed over to the civil authorities for execution.

Apart from the theological considerations the Church also had some pragmatic ones. The privileges and the immense material wealth of the Church were well protected by the Crown. The Church was apprehensive about receiving similar protection in the independent republics. There was the possibility of at least some of them coming under the rule of liberals some of whose leaders were known for their liberal and anti-clerical tendencies.

32 Even after the struggle for independence had achieved significant achievements Pope Pius VII reiterated this teaching and exhorted the Catholics in the colony to maintain with greatest energy the obedience and fidelity they owe to their monarch. See, Alba, n.13, p.104.

33 Pike, n.14, p.9.
The composition of the Churchmen also made it impossible for the institutional Church to take a united stand for or against the independence movement. The higher clergy was composed of peninsular Spaniards, and naturally, they remained loyal to the Spanish Crown and opposed the movement from the beginning. But the sympathy of the lower clergy composed largely of creoles and other non-Spaniards was, by and large, with the creole movement.

As the movement progressed the shifting stances of Vatican also contributed to some confusion in the Church in Latin America. In any case, because of patronato, the Popes could not have communicated directly with the Church in Latin America and given it some direction, independent of Spain, in its attitude towards the movement for independence. At the time the movement got under way, Vatican was quite content with the existing colonial set up in which the Church in Latin America with all its wealth and privileges was well protected and missionary activities flourished. Pope Pius VII had, moreover, his predilection for King Ferdinand VII of Spain. So, Vatican made no secret of its total opposition to the movement and rallied to the support of the Crown. By 1816, Spain seemed not able to suppress the movement. It had already achieved considerable success in some viceregalities. Ferdinand sought the help of the Pope. He responded with a papal document in 1816, in which he extolled the qualities of King Ferdinand and urged the archbishops and bishops in Spanish America.

34 See, Alba, n.13, pp.103-05; and Mecham, n.8, pp.61-87.
to win over the flock under their charge to obedience to him.\textsuperscript{35} The rebel governments had been trying in vain to communicate with Vatican. They were told in 1817 that no communication would be received from them. The Pope exhibited his unreserved support for the King in his willingness to confirm, disregarding the protests of the rebel governments, all the persons presented to him by the King during 1814-1820 for the various vacant sees of Santiago de Chile, Mexico, etc.

By 1820, in the spiritual interest of the colonies, Vatican could no longer ignore the fact of practical achievement of independence. Papal support for Spain was no more unqualified. A new turn of events in Spain in 1820 further alienated Vatican from it. Liberal constitutional government was set up in Spain as a result of the Revolt of 1820. The Spanish Cortes made no secret of its anticlerical tendencies. The anticlerical measures of the Madrid government culminated in the expulsion of the Papal Nuncio from Spain in 1823. This development filled the Pope with apprehension for the Church not only in Spain but also in Spanish America. So, he abandoned his support for the Spanish cause in the colonies. The Spanish Cortes, though liberal and anticlerical, yet, was nationalistic, and therefore, just as determined as Ferdinand had been to keep the American colonies. It repeatedly requested the Pope for support. But, he refused. He declared neutrality in the struggle between Spain and the colonies.\textsuperscript{36}

\textsuperscript{35} Pike, n.14, p.9.
\textsuperscript{36} Ibid., pp.157-58.
The turn of events in Spain alarmed also the bishops in Spanish America. They feared the fate of the Church in Spanish America under the Spanish Cortes. So they too, like Vatican, adopted neutrality. Some of them gave their support to the new governments. In any case, by 1821 independence was an accomplished fact.

In 1824 when absolutist monarchy was reestablished in Spain, the Pope, in the fond hope that Spain would regain the colonies, issued an encyclical urging the bishops and clergy to rally support for Spain. Some bishops heeded the advice of the Pope and tried to recreate loyalty to the Spanish Crown. But most of them were reconciled to the fact of separation from Spain.

The Mexican struggle for independence presented a different situation for the Church. It started with a native uprising in 1810, led by an idealist mestizo priest, Michael Hidalgo. It was one of the very few popular outbreaks of the period. The Indian peasants and mine-workers in the province of Guanajuato rose in revolt against the foreigners who had usurped their land and enslaved them. The creole aristocracy either stood apart or rallied behind the viceregal government. Except for some mestizo and

37 Mecham, n.8, pp.65-66.

38 Earlier, in 1780, another native uprising took place in Uruguay under the leadership of Tupac-Amaru. He was captured and executed in 1782 and the revolt was suppressed.
Indian priests, the Church opposed the movement. Hidalgo was captured, tried and condemned by the Inquisition and handed over to the civil authorities who executed him in 1811.

Jose Maria Morales, another mestizo priest, succeeded Hidalgo and continued a guerrilla warfare for some time. After he was captured and executed the insurgents continued, under the leadership of Guerro who later became President of Mexico, to harass the government in spite of the large army deployed against them. In 1821, in protest against the installation of the liberal government in Spain, Iturbe the Officer commanding the operation defected with his troops and came to an agreement with Guerro for the independence of Mexico. At this stage the creole section in the Church supported it. The bishops either opposed it or remained neutral. The Church in Mexico was nearly crippled as no new bishop came from Spain during the protracted struggle and the ruling bishops died one by one.

Thus, for various reasons, the higher clergy opposed the movement for independence. But, when the movement succeeded in some places a few bishops adopted a neutral stand claiming that their role was purely spiritual. A notable example was Narciso Coll y Pratt, archbishop of Caracas who arrived from Spain just after the patriots had established a new government in Caracas. He quickly took the oath of allegiance to the new government. He refused, however, to issue a pastoral letter against Spain as demanded by the patriots, and was on the verge of deportation.
when the Spanish troops arrived. His neutral stand was not acceptable to them also and so was eventually deported to Spain in 1816. He claimed to the end that he had not gone to Venezuela to be captain general but to care for his flock as archbishop.\textsuperscript{39} In Ecuador some bishops not only supported the movement but also assisted it by protecting and even directing it with their authority.\textsuperscript{40}

In many places the lower clergy was actively involved in the movement and even provided leadership inspite of the pressures from their bishops, some of whom lost their lives either in battle or as a result of execution. The role played by these patriots were gratefully acknowledged by the new republics. In Peru it was a priest, Francisco Javier de Lune Pizarro who presided over the constituent assembly in 1822 in which there were twenty six other priests.\textsuperscript{41} In the first assembly of the republic of Argentina, then called La Plata, there were as many as seventeen priest leaders. In the other republics too priests were associated with the assemblies and councils.\textsuperscript{42}


\textsuperscript{40} See Dussel, n.9, pp.149-52. Dussel gives a country-wise account of the role of the bishops in the independent movement.


\textsuperscript{42} Dussel, n.9, pp.152-54.
As for the laity, the creoles were united in their struggle against Spain. The Indians were not at all involved in the movement except in Mexico and Haiti. They were recruited by both sides for the fight.

Of all the Spanish colonies, it was only in Haiti that the independence movement was a genuinely popular revolt against the foreigners. The natives and the negroes rose in revolt in 1804. The bishops did try to oppose it. But they were not successful because the priests who were aware of the cruel exploitation of the natives and the negroes supported the independence of Haiti which was achieved in 1804.43

In Brazil, the situation was quite different. When the King transferred his throne to Brazil and the Brazilian empire was separated from Portugal in 1822, the entire Church in Brazil rallied to his support. But, the part played by the bishops in the overthrow of monarchy and the establishment of republic in 1876 is clouded by what is known as the "religious question".


44. The "religious question" began over a struggle between the Church hierarchy and freemasonry. The conflict reached its climax in 1874 with the trial and conviction of two bishops, Dom Vital Maria Gonsalves de Oliveira of Olinda-Recife and Dom Antonio de Macedo Costa of Belem de Para. Stunned by the sentences, the Church hierarchy withdrew its support for the monarchy precisely at a time when the republicans were spearheading the republican movement.
Historians hold differing views on the role of the Church in the establishment of the republic. The bishops opposed the republicans mainly because many of their leaders were liberals and some of them at least, were known to have connections with freemasonry that was condemned by the Catholic Church. They were apprehensive about the future of the Church under them. But the bishops were not necessarily opposed to the idea of republic. However once the monarchy was actually overthrown the bishops were prepared to come to terms with the republicans. In a joint pastoral letter in 1890, the Brazilian bishops expressed their willingness for an accommodation with the republicans.  

A large section of the lower clergy supported the republican movement. The humanism of the Jesuit scholasticism contained some elements of liberalism, republicanism and populism. Many priests held those ideas in the absence of any condemnation of Jesuit scholasticism even though the Jesuits had been expelled from Brazil. So, they not only supported the republican movement but also played leading roles. Diogo Antonio Fizo, elected Regent of Brazil (1835-1837), Joaquim Pinto de Campos, José Manuel  

45 The traditional view is that the Church after the "religious question" sided with the republicans in the overthrow of the monarchy. But, some recent historians point out that the bishops opposed only the ministry in power and not monarchy itself. For a discussion on this see George C.A. Boehrer, "The Church and the Overthrow of the Brazilian Monarchy", Hispanic American Research Review (Durham), Vol.48, no.3, August 1968, pp.308-401.
de Carvalho, and Eutychio Pereira da Rocha were some of the well known leaders of the republican party. 46

The independent movement revealed, for the first time, division and dissent in the hitherto monolithic Church. The division was more on what was perceived to be of self-interest than on ideologies or differing perceptions of the Latin American reality of oppression and exploitation. The Church hierarchy, generally, opposed the movement as much due to their loyalty and indebtedness to the Spanish King as to their apprehension about the future of the Church's privileges and vast material wealth. It was not, in any case, prepared to face the situation presented by the movement. It could neither contain it nor give any direction to it. Their concern for the preservation of the Church's wealth and privileges became the hallmark of the Church throughout the nineteenth and early twentieth century.

The lower clergy, by and large, supported the movement for independence led by the creole laity because their ideals and interests coincided. They did not exhibit the same apprehension about the future of the Church and hostility towards liberalism as the bishops did, so they not only actively participated in the movement but even played leading roles in it.

46 Ibid., p.182.
Whatever be the role of the Church in the independence movement, one wholesome outcome was that there came into existence, for the first time, a Latin American Church, loyal to Rome but rooted in the continent. It was no more an appendage of the Spanish Church serving the interest of the metropolis.

The movement for independence was, as already noted above, a creole revolt against the Spaniards and not a popular uprising of the natives against the foreigners. The movement did not really concern the Indians and the negroes. It was in no way an uprising of the oppressed and down-trodden against the oppressors. Independence made no difference to the natives and the other marginalised people, since it meant nothing more than transfer of absolute power to the already powerful creoles. Independence neither conferred power to a new class nor create a new powerful class. The basic structures of the Latin American society remained the same. In this sense, the movement for independence in Latin America can hardly be called a revolution.

Independence, however, revealed for the first time, the emergence of elites with apparently differing political perceptions, the liberals and the conservatives. But their differing political perceptions were not matched by similarly differing social and economic perceptions. In any case, the little difference they exhibited in their political perceptions explain much of the subsequent history of Latin America and the Church State relations.
The Church and the New Republics

During the colonial period it was the patronato that tied Vatican, the Crown and the Church in Latin America that ensured the closest collaboration among them. It was the same patronato that became the bone of contention during the struggle for independence and the years immediately after it, among the Vatican, the Crown and the new republics. This contentious issue created much discontent and animosity in each of them and it prevented an understanding and accommodation between the Church and the new republics.

Even after the separation of the colonies was an accomplished fact Spain refused to be reconciled to it. It still hoped to restore its authority in the Americas. Patronato was the possible link between the Crown and the colonies which could aid it in restoring its rule in the continent. Through patronato it could still control the Church, and through the Church, the affairs of the erstwhile colonies. Renunciation of that right would have amounted to formal recognition of the separation. Spain tried to retain it adducing the montanist view of patronato, and argued that it was inherent in the Spanish monarchy and that it was neither transferable nor rescindable.

The new republics also believed that only the transfer of patronato from the crown to them would ensure total separation from Spain. Besides, it was a sure means to control the Church in the
new states. Whether liberal or conservative all the leaders of the republics wanted to exercise it. They too adduced the montanist view and argued that because it was laical in origin and inherent in the monarchy it was transferable, and, as rightful heirs of the Crown in the colonies the new republics were its rightful heirs, and that it was actually transferred to them along with the transfer of authority from Spain.

Since there was a contention between Spain and the new republics, Vatican's decision was considered crucial. Both the parties began to influence the Pope's decision through their emissaries. Vatican held the canonist view, and not the montanist view of both the contending parties, and argued that patronato was inherent in papacy, and it was only by concession from papacy that the crown enjoyed the privilege, and therefore, it was rescindable and not transferable. Vatican, moreover, was anxious to put an end to the patronato system that had prevented it from dealing directly with the Church in Latin America. But any move for it would have antagonized both the parties. Patronato became as much a religious as a political question. Any religious recognition of the new republics would have tantamounted to political recognition which would antagonise Spain.

Pope Pius VII duly confirmed all the nominations of the Spanish King to the vacant seats in America as per the provisions of patronato during 1810-1814. But, as soon as the new republics
were established they decided to prevent any more nominations by the Spanish Crown. In all the republics, except Argentina, then called La Plata, one of the first legislations was to establish the Catholic Church as the official or favoured faith. The legislation was either accompanied or followed by provisions for assumption of the old royal patronage by the new governments. As early as 1811, the Congress of Venezuela exercised the right even though the first constitution of 1811 had not explicitly mentioned the assumption of patronato. In La Plata, provision for state control of patronage was contained in the statute of 1813, in the resolution of the Congress of Tucuman in 1817, and in the constitution of 1819. In the existing circumstance no new bishop was sent to Spanish America. There were many dioceses without bishops. The Church was getting disorganised and the priests demoralised. Vatican could remain inactive no longer.

In 1823 Vatican broke the impasse by sending archbishop Juan Muzi as the Vicar Apostolic of Chile (later, his authority was extended to the whole Spanish America) with authority to consecrate titular bishops whereever needed, except in any colony where Spanish authority existed, or where there was a probability of its being reestablished. The leaders of the new republics including

47 Mechem, n.8, p.72.

48 A titular bishop did not have claim over the material benefit of the benefice and so strictly did not vitiab the patronato.

49 José Sallusti, Historia de la Missiones Apostolicas de Monseñor Juan Muzi en el Estado de Chile (Santiago, 1906), pp.7-8.
San Martín and Simón Bolívar enthusiastically welcomed the appointment. As expected Spain protested, but Vatican pointed out that Muzi's was a purely religious mission. Muzi was not sent as Nuncio which would have tantamounted to political recognition. In any case, Muzi's mission failed because the republics insisted on exercising the right of patronage and Muzi had not been empowered to compromise on it. But Muzi's mission marked the beginning of Vatican's direct contact with the republics in spite of Spanish protest, and the end of fifteen years of total non-communication with Spanish America. Vatican also began to receive emissaries from the republics not as political but religious envoys.

The restoration of Ferdinand VII to the Spanish Crown altered Vatican's attitude toward Spanish America. At the request of the King, the Pope issued an encyclical in support of the cause of King Ferdinand in Spanish America. This infuriated the republics, and in fact, produced the opposite result. It united the people in their love for and solidarity with the republics. Vatican took notice of the people's firmness to maintain their independence from Spain. The envoys from Mexico and Colombia impressed upon Vatican about the possible danger from Protestantism if bishops were not appointed to the vacant seats. In 1827, to the great

50 See Mecham, n.8, pp.76, 79-80.
satisfaction of Simon Bolivar six candidates presented by Colombia for six vacant dioceses were accepted by Pope Leo XII, ignoring the protest of Spain. The King was so embittered that he refused entry to the Papal Nuncio to Spain. In spite of that the Pope filled up several more vacancies with candidates presented by the republics. In none of these cases, he formally recognised the right of patronage. But, he was willing in fact, to accept the names suggested by the republics. In 1835, formal political recognition to the republics was accorded and Monsignor Buffi was sent as the first internuncio to Granada. Appointment of Nuncios to the other republics followed. Thus, both religious and political relations were established with the republics which were allowed to retain some of the privileges of patronage.

The settlement of patronage did not necessarily usher in an era of understanding between Church and State. On the contrary there were frequent clashes and conflicts between them, in spite of the fact that in all the republics the Catholic Church was either the official Faith or the favoured Faith and no other Faith was tolerated, except in Argentina. In Europe, by the beginning of the nineteenth century, Church and State had come to accept a mutually acceptable relation which evolved through centuries of experiments and conflicts. Moreover, confronted by the Protestant Reformation for years, the Catholic Church in Europe had by then acquired certain adaptive capacities. Neither the Church nor the states in
Latin America had passed through these experiences. It was not possible for the Church and State to attain a balanced Church-State relation overnight which in Europe took centuries to evolve. So in spite of the fact that each and every republic was overwhelmingly Catholic, conflict between Church and State occurred quite frequently.

It was not any differing socio-political perceptions that brought about the conflicts between Church and State. At the root of the conflicts lay self-interest and struggle for power and control. There was constant attempt from the part of both the Church and the State to control each other. The State, whether under the liberals or the conservatives felt insecure until and unless the Church was controlled and its power diminished. The Church also felt the same way toward the State.

During the colonial days the Spanish Crown used the members of the ecclesiastical organization for the government of the Indies. The officials of the Church were as much the King's agents in the colonies as the civil officials were. The clergy was not only permitted but also encouraged to participate in governmental affairs. After independence they continued to participate in politics with greater zeal than before. They believed that the Church now bereft of the protection of the Crown would not be safe unless they controlled governmental affairs through direct participation in politics. Personal ambition of some clergymen also led them to active politics. This was opposed especially by the liberals.
The history of most of the republics was marked by a constant struggle for power between the liberals and the conservatives. Since liberalism was condemned by the Church and since the liberals were generally anticlerical, in these struggles the Church invariably aligned itself with the conservatives, thus inviting the opprobrium of the liberals even more. Often enough the Church found itself on the loosing side. The result was that in countries where the liberals came to power they passed anticlerical legislations with vengeance, to destroy the hold of the Church on society. Confiscation of ecclesiastical property, abolition of tithes, secularization of education, cemeteries, and marriage, suppression of religious orders etc. were, as a rule, acts of vengeance wreaked upon the clergy by the liberals. The objectives of such legislations were more political than socio-economic. They merely sought to deprive the Church of those means and privileges which enabled it to exercise political power.

Some of the liberal leaders who attacked the Church might have done so not merely out of hatred for the clergy but also out of some social concern. Meacham cites the examples of Valentin Gomez Farias of Uruguay and Juarez of Mexico and Jose Manuel Balmaceda of Chile, liberal leaders who did a lot of harm to the

51 Liberalism had been repeatedly condemned by the Popes. Still, some theologians demanded some rethinking. Pope Pius IX condemned in 1854, not only liberalism but even the proposition that "Roman Pontiff can, and ought to reconcile himself and come to terms with progress, liberalism, and modern civilization". Pius IX, "The Syllabers of Pius IX", in Freemantle, n.31, pp.143-55.
Church but who also had genuine socio-economic concern. In any case, the anticlerical legislations of the liberals were not matched by socio-economic legislations. The liberals no less than the conservatives, in the final analysis, represented the vested interests of the oligarchies.

Some of the opposition to the Church was also intellectual. It persistently opposed intellectual and religious freedom, liberalism, rationalism, and all forms of progressive ideas. The Church which in politics was considered to be a bastion of conservatism—it invariably identified itself with the conservatives—was considered equally conservative and even reactionary intellectually because it persistently opposed every progressive idea. The Chilean intellectuals Jose Victorino Lastarria and Francisco Bilbao maintained that the Church was too conservative and archaic to foster any progressive ideas. The Peruvian intellectual Gonzales Prada wrote several articles in the journal *Germinal* which he had founded, attacking the lack of freedom of thought in the Church which, according to him, made men

52 Mecham, n.s, pp.417, 508.
53 See foot note no.51.
slaves. He was also concerned about the social problems, but believed that the Church, because of its conservatism, could not be expected to solve the social question. 55

The wealthy classes, whether conservative or liberal either envied or coveted the immense tax-free land holdings of the Church. The ambitious private citizens found it increasingly difficult to compete with the Church which had extensive land holdings and vast resources. Speculative traders in land found the lands held by the Church against their interests. So, it was the vast land holdings of the Church that were the targets of frequent attack.

Throughout Latin America the most characteristic and basic, but pernicious agrarian system has been the large estates known variously as hacienda, latifundia, finca, rancho, fundo, and (in Brazil) fazendo. The hacienda system was much more than a large estate. It was a kind of society under private auspices, self-sufficient to a great extent, economically and socially. Patron-dependent relationship was the hallmark of this system. The patron was all powerful and could, with impunity, do whatever he wanted to those dependent on him in his land. The patrons were tied to one another through kinship or common interest. Together they controlled the society at large while each one controlled the society under him.

The haciendas were formed by government concessions, by grouping up small holdings and by forcefully driving out the

55 Ibid., p.111.
native Indians. Those who depended upon the landlord were the tenants, the squatters and the landless labourers. The tenants were variously known as inquilinos (Chile), colonos (Brazil and Bolivia) huasipungeros (Ecuador), etc. They were allotted small plots of land, the produce of which they could use for the maintenance of their family—hardly enough for the purpose, and in return they had to work certain fixed number of days in a year in the field of the lord. In practice, they were debt-peons or quasi-serfs. The landless labourers were the lord's peons. The patron was supposed to have certain obligations towards the tenants and the landless labourers attached to the hacienda. The arrangement varied from place to place. But everywhere they led a miserable subhuman life with no proper food, clothing, and shelter. Besides these two groups, there were the squatters towards whom the landlord had no special obligation. They were permitted to settle on his land because they provided cheap labour. They could be evicted any time he wanted. Their condition was even more pitiable than the other two groups.

Theoretically, the workers in the hacienda were free. But their indebtedness kept them in servitude. They could not and would not leave the estate because they did not want to lose what security they had. The tenants did not like to move from the land to which they had been attached for generations. Moreover, because of the understanding among the land owners one who abandoned a patron would not be accepted by another. So in spite of the
miseries and exploitation they continued to be attached to the land-owner for generations.

The hacienda system proved to be a hindrance to economic and social progress as well. There was under-utilisation of land. It was estimated that even in the 1940's the actually cultivated portion of the hacienda was not more than fifteen percent of the arable land in the hacienda system in Latin America as a whole. \(^{56}\) The land-owning class monopolised but not utilised it. The owners of latifundias were not interested so much in productivity as in the social prestige and power the land gave them. They lived in town leaving the responsibility for the exploitation of the land in the hands of managers. Immense stretches of land were often acquired and kept for speculative purposes. Thus, the landowners neither made proper use of the land nor let the land-hungry rural masses make use of it.

The hacienda system impeded the growth of a middle class in the rural areas. Large estates, more over, prevented the growth of intermediary towns. They isolated the rural masses from the urban centres and urban life and thus, from all progressive ideas. When the people fled the large estates for various reasons they had to flock to the metropolitan cities. This explains their phenomenal growth in Latin America. This in turn accentuated more socio-economic problems.

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56 Clissold, n.16, p.41.
The Church was the largest land owner throughout Latin America. Through grant of land by government, gifts and endowments from pious Catholics, through the industry of the Church personnel and even through dubious means, enormous amount of land came under Church possession. It is estimated that in the first decade of the twentieth century the Church in Mexico possessed nearly half of the entire arable land in that country. More, or less similar situation existed in the rest of Latin America. They were, no doubt, a source of income which kept the Church going. The condition of those dependent on the latifundias owned by the Church was not substantially better than those dependent on private latifundia.

It is no wonder then that it was the landed property of the Church that was a major target of attack from the liberals. But the expropriation of the lands of the Church did not contribute to the improvement of the condition of those dependent on the latifundias. It was not the land-hungry peasants who benefited from the expropriations. The lands were either added to the existing private large estates or formed new ones. The evils of the hacienda system were not in any way decreased, on the contrary increased.

58 Lambert, n.43, p.63.
The rivalry and conflict between Church and State became sharper in some republics after the mid-nineteenth century. Severe anticlerical laws were enacted and enforced in Mexico, Colombia, Chile, Venezuela, Guatemala and Ecuador. Church and State were separated in some of them. The first republic to proclaim separation was Colombia, in 1853, though this status proved temporary. The first republic to disestablish the Church permanently was Mexico in 1857. Some of the central American republics followed suit. In Brazil, the alliance of Church and State inherited from Portugal was dissolved in 1890. Some republics like Chile, Cuba and Panama waited till the first quarter of the twentieth century.

Church and State were separated peacefully in some countries (as in Uruguay, Brazil and Chile), and as a result of violent anticlerical movements in others, notably in Mexico. Even when the separation was effected peacefully it was not easy to persuade the Church to accept the new situation. Even as late as 1923 when President Arturo Alessandri of Chile proposed to effect separation of Church and State to realize the ideal of "a free Church in a free State" the archbishop of Santiago in his pastoral letter of 5 May 1923 denounced it as "a public and solemn denial of God, a terrible national apostasy". However, Church and State were separated peacefully in Chile in 1925.

Separation of Church and State in many republics did not necessarily usher in an era of "a free Church in a free State". In spite of the formal separation, the state continued to supervise it and even burden it with oppressive state control as in Mexico. The objective of the liberals was not so much to bring about "a free Church in a free State", it was, rather to exercise total control over the Church or to reduce it to political impotency. Once that was assured even anticlericals did not sometimes insist on disestablishment. With their domination assured, as was the case in Venezuela, they were willing to maintain friendly relations with the Church, and so, made no attempt to alter its nominal status as the official cult. Thus, if certain countries conceded a constitutionally preferred status to Catholicism, as in Venezuela, Argentina etc., this did not represent any important concession to clerical demands. On the contrary, many anticlericals insisted on some kind of a union as a means whereby the State could maintain a strict surveillance over the Church. In countries where the Church continued as the official or preferred faith, the extent of State control on the one hand, and the Church privileges on the other, varied. The status of nominal union contributed little to the advantage of the Church.

When Latin America attained independence, it lacked the social and cultural foundation which would ensure the establishment of democracy as in Europe or the United States. This particular social situation and the virulent centrifugal forces—the feudal caudillismo of the landed proprietors and of military
leaders--brought to power in the new independent republics oligarchies or dictatorships. These dictatorships, both liberal and conservative were seldom enlightened. They restricted liberties and thus, were not able to provide an apprenticeship for democracy. They were interrupted by military dictatorships, also representing private interests. The Church was a party to those dictatorships or opposed them depending upon whether its material wealth and privileges were protected or not. From the second half of the nineteenth century these oligarchic regimes or dictatorships served foreign economic powers and turned the republics into neo-colonial states.

Dussel has noted that the struggle for independence "was a revolt carried out by the Creole oligarchy who struggled to free themselves from Spain and then promptly fell under the sway of another empire". The other empire was the neo-colonial capitalism which gained a foothold in Latin America almost as soon as the wars of independence had ended. England, capitalist state since 1688, thanks to the industrial revolution, replaced Spain as the metropolitan country. The United States convinced of its "manifest destiny" and fortified by the "Monroe Doctrine" (1823), encouraged U.S. companies to establish operations in Latin America. These foreign operations were designed to compliment the import and export needs of the United States irrespective of the harm that

61 Dussel, n.9, p.98.
they caused to Latin America. By the turn of the century the United States, France, England and Germany had substantial holdings in Latin America. Neither the Church elites nor the conservative or liberal elites took cognizance of the evils of neo-colonialism. On the contrary they welcomed it and collaborated with it. The Church however, because it was inward-looking and nationalistic provided, according to Dussel, some basis for opposition to neo-colonialism. 62

To sum up, with the liberation of the American colonies the Church hitherto an appendage of the Spanish Church, entered into a new era as Latin American Church. Though apprehensive in the beginning, of its future without the protection of the Spanish Crown, yet it felt assured of protection from the new republics which promptly recognised Catholicism as the official or preferred Faith. The right of patronage which for a time was a bone of contention among Vatican, Spain and the new republics was eventually exercised by the republics with Vatican's concurrence.

In the ensuing political struggles between the liberals and conservatives the Church, apprehensive of the anticlerical tendencies of the liberals, invariably aligned itself with the conservatives in order to protect its own interests. This contributed to the conflicts between Church and States under liberal rule. Behind the conflicts lay the vested interests of both and not any socially differing perceptions. The actions of

the liberals were not marked by any socially progressive tendencies. Their anti-clerical legislations were not, in any case, matched by socially progressive legislations. The Church on its part did not show any great social awareness. It neither took cognizance of nor denounced the injustices inherent in the latifundia system and the existing social order. The Church being itself in possession of vast landed properties stood to benefit from the existing system which was in keeping with the general Catholic concept of the hierarchical structure of society.

Eventually Church-State separation came about in many republics either peacefully or as a result of violent conflicts. But the separation not always ensured "a free Church in a free State" because some states continued to exercise too much control over the Church. Even in some republics where the Church continued as the official or preferred Faith it was deprived of many privileges and was brought under increasing State control.

The conflict between the Church and the State was the result of conflict of interests rather than the result of differing social perceptions. So also the conflict between the liberals and conservatives was not based on radically differing political, social or economic perceptions. Even their apparently differing political perceptions were not matched by differing perceptions of the socio-economic reality of Latin America. But for their anti-clericalism and opposition to the political role of the Church the liberals did not differ radically from the conservatives in
their political perceptions and practice. They were as much led by the interests of the powerful class they represented as the conservatives. Individual freedom, human dignity, and above all, broad participatory democracy, were all deliberately subverted through partisan and oligarchic regimes and even dictatorships. Elites with radically differing political as well as socio-economic perception were yet to emerge within the Church and the Latin American society at large.