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John Leddy Phelan *

**PAN-LATINISM, FRENCH INTERVENTION
IN MEXICO (1861-1867) AND THE
GENESIS OF THE IDEA OF LATIN
AMERICA**

Nomenclature in the Americas has often reflected in a symbolic fashion some aspirations of European powers toward the New World. *Las Indias*, a popular designation in the sixteenth century, owes its birth to Columbus' dream of reaching Marco Polo's Asia. In the thought of the articulate Franciscan historian, Gerónimo de Mendieta, the other name for the Indies in the sixteenth century, *el nuevo mundo*, had rather precise connotations. For Mendieta and some of his fellowmissionaries, America was indeed a "new world" in which the Christianity of the Old World could be perfected among the simple and unspoiled Indians.¹ As is well-known, the term America did not become common until the eighteenth century. The coining of the new name by the non-Hispanic peoples of Europe symbolizes their successful challenge of Spain's monopoly of the lands and the riches of the New World.

The topic of this essay is to explore the origins of yet another term, *l'Amérique latine*, in particular to outline the ideological content implicit or explicit in this designation. The name was not created in a vacuum. "Latin America" was conceived in France during the 1860's as a program of action embodying the role and the aspirations of France toward the Hispanic peoples of the New World.

France under Napoleon III had reached a climax in her economic development. The relative decline, which was not arrested until the 1950's, did not begin until the collapse of the Second

* Research for this article was undertaken in Paris (1951-1952) under a grant from Fulbright program.

¹ See my *Millennial Kingdom of the Franciscans in the New World: A Study of the Writings of Gerónimo de Mendieta, 1524-1604* (Berkeley and Los Angeles University of California Press, 1956), pp. 56-65, 74-74.

Empire in the debacle of Sedan. In the 1860's France was the second most powerful industrial and financial nation in the world. England was her only superior, but France's rate of growth was then swifter than England's.² The United States and Germany, both of whom rapidly outstripped France after 1870, were not yet serious threats. The solid and extensive development of her industrial and financial power enabled France under the regime of the ambitious Napoleon III to undertake costly overseas enterprises in such diverse regions as Suez, Mexico, and Indo-China.

One of the first spokesman of the Pan-Latin program was Michel Chevalier (1806-1879). A celebrated political economist with a Europeanwide reputation, Chevalier's interest in the New World long antedated the Mexican enterprise. He had traveled extensively in the United States, Mexico, and Cuba between 1834 and 1836. He had urged in 1844 that France should build an interoceanic canal across Panama.³ The future Napoleon III was equally dazzled by such a project. A prisoner in the fortress of Ham in 1846, he wrote a pamphlet in which he made a plea for the construction of a canal across Nicaragua. The future emperor lyrically predicted that this waterway would become the Constantinople of world trade, an emporium for the commerce of Europe, America, and Asia.⁴

Chevalier's and Napoleon's interest in the American isthmus was not fortuitous. Both men were identified with the utopian socialist school founded by Claude de Saint Simon and Charles

² France's total capital exports for the period 1850-1870 reached the figure of approximately twelve billion francs; that is, between one third and one half of its net realized savings for the period. Such a high proportion is unique in the annals of capital-exporting nations. Rondo Cameron, "The Crédit Mobilier and the Economic Development of Europe," *Journal of Political Economy*, LXI (December, 1953), p. 461.

³ Michel Chevalier, *L'isthme de Panama* (Paris, 1844). A prolific writer on questions of political economy, he held many administrative and political posts of high responsibility as well as a chair at the *Collège de France*. Perhaps the most dramatic event with which his name is associated is the free trade treaty between England and France (1860). Chevalier was the French negotiator and Richard Cobden represented England. For a bibliography of his more important publications, see the biography of Chevalier in *La grand encyclopédie*, x, 1145-1146.

⁴ *Oeuvres de Napoléon III* (3 vols., Paris, 1856-1869), II, 475-543. In 1869 Chevalier acting for French interests signed a contract with the government of Nicaragua for the construction of an interoceanic canal. For the text of the contract, see Chevalier, *Convention pour l'exécution d'un canal maritime interoceanique sur le territoire de la république de Nicaragua* (Paris, 1869). The Franco-Prussian war and its consequent economic dislocations prevented the realization of the project.

Fourier. The utopian socialists were actively concerned with promoting new forms of transportation, in particular, canals. Visionary and realistic, the Saint Simonians were animated by the ideal of serving humanity as well as by the desire to promote profitable business ventures. Their agitation was influential in hastening the construction of the Suez canal.⁵ The Saint Simonian vision of the economic benefits France would derive from building an inter-oceanic canal is one of the mainsprings of that interest in things American at the court of Napoleon III which eventually culminated in the Mexican expedition.

As early as 1855, Chevalier spelled out a geo-ideological program which could serve as a rationale for France's economic expansion in both America and the Far East. What he proposed was that France adopt a Pan-Latin foreign policy. Europe, he contended, is divided into three "racial" blocs: 1) the Germanic or Anglo-Saxon peoples of North Europe; 2) the Latin nations of South Europe, and 3) the Slavic nations of Eastern Europe. The leadership of these three blocks belongs to England, France, and Russia respectively. The unity of "Latin Europe" rests on the common Latin origin of the languages of France, Belgium, Spain, and Portugal. Roman Catholicism is the common cultural tradition that has solidified this linguistic unity, just as Protestantism has cemented the alliance of the Anglo-Saxon peoples founded in a common racial origin. France and Austria, according to Chevalier, are the two "mixed" countries of Europe. Although France has a Teutonic element in her racial makeup, she is racially and culturally oriented toward the Latin nations to the south. Austria is part Latin in that Catholicism predominated and Northern Italy was then under the sway of the Habsburgs. Yet in Austria's heterogeneous population, the Germanic and the Slavic elements bulk large.

The dichotomy in Western Europe between Anglo-Saxons and

⁵ For a discussion of the interest of the utopian socialists in the Suez Canal see J. Charles Roux, *L'isthme et le canal de Suez* (2 vols., Paris, 1901), I, 193-241. Also see André Siegfried, *Suez and Panama* (London, 1940), 57, 63, 239, 240, 382. Siegfried stresses the Saint Simonian inspiration contributing to the formation of the ill-fated French company which actually began construction of a canal in Panama in the 1880's. For a useful background in American canal projects during the 19th century, see Miles P. DuVal, *Cadiz to Cathay* (Palo Alto, 1940), pp. 21-65, and Gerstle Mack, *The Land Divided* (New York, 1944). Both of these accounts mention Napoleon's Nicaragua pamphlet without relating it to the Saint Simonian school which inspired all 19th century French efforts to build an interoceanic waterway in Central America.

Latins also applied in America. The United States was Anglo-Saxon and Protestant, and the Hispanic nations of the New World belonged to the Latin-Catholic bloc of South Europe.

During the eighteenth century, the Anglo-Saxon nations had overtaken the Latin countries, according to Chevalier. Both France and Spain had sustained severe reverses at the hands of the Anglo-Saxons. Russia's recent emergence as the leader of the Slavic nations posed another threat to the Latin world. In the three-way struggle for sharing the world's expanding markets, the Anglo-Saxons and the Slavs threatened to drive out the French in both America and in the Orient.

In order to forestall such a dismal prospect, Chevalier had an emphatic answer. France must reassert in a vigorous fashion that hegemony over the Latin world which belonged to her since the time of Louis XIV. Chevalier exhorted:

Only she [France] can prevent this whole family [the Latin nations] from being engulfed in the double inundation of the Germans or the Anglo-Saxons and the Slavs. To France belongs the role of awakening the Latins from the lethargy in which they are now submerged in the two hemispheres, to raise them to the level of other nations and to put the Latins in a position where their influence can be felt in the rest of the world.⁶

Chevalier stressed that France of all the Latin nation was best situated to absorb the modern methods of science and technology successfully applied by the Anglo-Saxon peoples and to reconcile these methods with the temperament and traditions of the Latins.

Chevalier's Pan-Latinism clearly formulated as early as 1853 splendidly prepared him for the role of the principal apologist of Napoleon III's Mexican expedition (1861-1867). Although Pan-Latin ideas long antedated 1861, the Mexican venture unleashed a veritable barrage of Pan-Latin propaganda. In two articles in the *Revue des deux mondes* (1862), and in his book *Le Mexique ancien et moderne* (1864), Chevalier provided a Pan-Latin rationale for Napoleon's foreign policy.⁷ It was to France's vital inte-

⁶ Michel Chevalier, "Sobre el progreso y porvenir de la civilización", in *Revista española de ambos mundos*, 1 (Madrid, 1853), p. 8. As the title of this review suggests, it tried but it did not succeed in becoming to the Hispanic world what the influential *Revue des deux mondes* was to the French world.

⁷ Michel Chevalier, "L'expédition du Mexique," in the *Revue des deux mondes* (April 1 and April 15, 1862), pp. 513-561 and pp. 879-918. Also see his *Le Mexique ancien et moderne* (Paris, 1864), pp. 494-508.



rests, he believed, to build up the power and the prestige of all the Latin nations. To France fell the leadership of such a block. Napoleon's insistence that Spain be recognized as one of the first-class powers of the concert of Europe was beneficial to France in that such a step added to the prestige of another Latin nation. Napoleon's intervention in Italy, which culminated in the political unification of that nation, created a new Latin political entity: France acquired another ally. Some apologists of the regime, but not Chevalier, applauded Napoleon's diplomacy in Rumania which contributed to the emergence of the *de facto* independence of that Balkan principality. Rumania could serve as a bulwark of Latinity in the path of Pan-Slavism.⁸

For Chevalier the principal objective of the Mexican expedition was to create a strong barrier on the Rio Grande to impede the march of Anglo-Saxonism. French soldiers were in Mexico to save Hispanic America for Latinity. Only a stable government buttressed by French soldiers could provide such a dam. The chronic anarchy that had prevailed in Mexico would inevitably result in the conquest of that land by the North Americans. The American Civil War provided France with her last opportunity to create in Mexico conditions of political stability. A Mexico oriented toward Pan-Latinism was the *sine qua non* for France securing her share in exploiting the riches of the New World. In Chevalier's mind Pan-Latinism and French economic interests in Hispanic America were interdependent.

Although he was obsessed by the prospect of France's diplomatic isolation created by the progressive decline of the Latin nations, his virulent anti-Anglo-Saxonism was concentrated exclusively against the United States. France's only salvation, he thought, lay in playing the United States against England. France must continue the intimate diplomatic co-operation with London, which was one of the cardinal objectives of Napoleon III's foreign policy.

The Orleanist-monarchist opposition to the Second Empire did not question the need to play the two Anglo-Saxon powers against each other. The royalists criticized the Second Empire for abandoning France's traditional policy of building up the weaker

⁸ Prosper Vallofrange, *Le panlatinisme: confédération Gallo-Latine et Celto-Gauloise-alliance fédérative de la France, la Belgique, l'Angleterre, l'Espagne, le Portugal, l'Italie, la Grèce* (Paris, 1862), pp. 147 ff.

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member of the Anglo-Saxon family, the United States, as a counterweight to the more powerful England.⁹

Hindsight reveals that both the Napoleonists and the Orleanists had chosen, to take a phrase from General Bradley, "the wrong enemy at the wrong time and in the wrong place." Of all the so-called Anglo-Saxon powers, France's neighbor across the Rhine was the most immediate danger. Yet the defenders and the critics of the Second Empire seemed oblivious to the German threat. Events in 1870 were to demonstrate the tragic folly of their miscalculation.

Did Napoleon III regard France as the defender of Latinity in the New World? He was once quoted as saying that his project to set up a monarchy in Mexico under the Archduke Maximilian was *la plus belle pensée de mon règne*.¹⁰ In his letter of instructions to General Forey (July 3, 1862), the commander of the French expeditionary force in Mexico, the emperor outlined his *belle pensée*:

There will not be lacking people [Mexicans] who will question you as to why the French are disposed to spend money and men in order to establish a stable government in Mexico.

In the actual state of the world the prosperity of America is not a matter of indifference to Europe, for from the New World come the raw materials to supply our factories and to nourish our commerce. It is to our interest that the republic of the United States remain powerful and prosperous, but it is not to our advantage to allow her to become master of the gulf of Mexico, from there to dominate the Antilles as well as South America and thus to become the sole dispenser of the products of the New World. We realize today by a sad experience how precarious and how defenseless against vicissitudes the fate of an industry becomes when it must search for its raw materials in only one market.

If, on the contrary, Mexico preserves her independence and maintains her territorial integrity and if a stable government is established there with the assistance of France, we shall have rendered to the Latin race on the other side of the ocean both her power and her prestige. We shall have guaranteed the security of our colonies in the Antilles as well as those of Spain. We shall have established our powerful influence in the center of America; and

⁹ In order to dramatize monarchist opposition to Napoleon's anti-United States policy, the Count of Paris (1838-1894), the Orleanist pretender to the French throne, served as a volunteer in the Union army. For his account of the Civil War, see Louis Philippe Albert d'Orléans, Comte de Paris, *A History of the Civil War* (4 vols., Philadelphia, 1875-1878).

¹⁰ Anonymous brochure, *L'empereur du Mexique* (Paris, 1864), pp. 3, 4, 32. Hereafter this is cited as the anonymous of 1864.



this influence shall assist us in creatin immense markets for our commerce and in procuring the raw materials essential to our industry.

Mexico, thus regenerated, will always be favorable to us, not only out of gratitude but also because her interests will be in accord with ours, and Mexico will find in France a point of support in establishing good relations with the European powers.¹¹

This statement, which was often cited in the 1860's by both friend and foe alike, reveals the essential aims of the emperor's Mexican policy.

The utopian socialist and Saint Simonian origin of the Mexican enterprise is apparent. France must have access to those raw materials in the New World essential for her industry. Hispanic America could also provide France with an expanding market for her manufactured goods. France's access to the American markets was threatened by the expansion of Yankee influence into Central America and the Caribbean. Hence the "Latin race" in Mexico had to be buttressed by French might to provide a strong barrier against further American penetration. Once a stable regime had been established in Mexico with French assistance, the ultimate purposes of French policy could then be realized. French capital and technology could exploit the riches of the New World, not only to France's advantage but also to the benefit of the Hispanic Americans themselves. The construction of an interoceanic canal, a cherished ambition of Napoleon III of long standing, could be undertaken. The note of Saint Simonian idealism in the emperor's thinking ought not to be overlooked. Permeating this half-visionary and half-realistic scheme is the conviction that France would be serving the cause of humanity by promoting a more rational development of the resources of America. And for her efforts, France would make a profit in francs.

Christian Schefer has done much to reverse the traditional estimate about the motivations and aims of the emperor's Mexican policy.¹² He has pointed out the inadequacy and superficiality of conventional explanations. The emperor was neither the victim of the sordid financial maneuvers of the duc de Morny and the Mexican bondholders, nor was he seduced by the proclerical intrigues of the Mexican émigrés who had the ear of the beautiful and pious Empress Eugénie. Schefer's conclusion was that the Mexican

¹¹ *Affaires étrangères, documents diplomatiques*, 1862 (Paris, 1863) pp. 190-191.

¹² Christian Schefer, *La grande pensée de Napoleon III, les origines de l'expédition du Mexique, 1858-1862* (Paris, 1939).



enterprise was in most respects ill-advised and poorly directed. But the emperor did have a coherent objective, an ideal of economic development inspired by Saint Simon. What Schefer minimized was Napoleon's deeply felt conviction that France was the savior of the "Latin race" in America. Napoleon III visualized Pan-Latinism as a kind of geo-ideological dam against further Anglo-Saxon penetration behind which France could materialize the Saint Simonian dream of exploiting America's untapped wealth for the greater happiness of mankind and the greater prosperity of France.

Many of Napoleon's apparently visionary projects had enduring results. Others proved abortive. He encouraged French capital, for example, to build the Suez canal, which was inaugurated by the empress in November, 1869. Almost simultaneous with his Mexican campaign, the emperor dispatched an expeditionary force to Indo-China.¹³ This campaign (1858-1863) laid the foundation of French predominance in that region that was not liquidated until the international conference held in Geneva in the Spring of 1954.

In retrospect, the Mexican undertaking seems like a chimera. In the perspective of the 1860's, however, it appeared somewhat more realistic. Mexico was viewed as another link in the grand design, of which the Suez Canal and Indo-China were the other components, by means of which France could secure a larger share of the world's raw materials for her industries and an expanding market for her manufactured goods. Only thus could France hold her own in the intense competition with the Anglo-Saxon and Slav powers.

The Mexican project ended in fiasco and tragedy. The Indo-China expedition was an enduring success. The former was based upon a disastrous miscalculation. The emperor's animosity toward the Union encouraged him to gamble on the victory of the Confederacy. The triumph of the Union, of course, determined the outcome of events in Mexico, and the sudden rise of Prussia in Europe merely provided the *coup de grâce*. In order to consolidate their hegemony in Indo-China, the French did not have to contend with a threat external to that region. Certainly the feeble

¹³ The Indo-China expedition like the Mexican one initially enounced the active support of Spain, for the pretext for intervention was to avenge the murder of a Spanish missionary. A contingent of 1500 soldiers from the Philippines landed with the French expedition. The Spanish troops were later withdrawn, as was the case in Mexico. Gregorio Zaide, *The Philippines Since Pre-Spanish Times* (Manila, 1949), pp. 287-288.

Manchu government of China occupied no position vis-a-vis the French in Indo-China analogous to the North American vis-a-vis the French in Mexico.

In outlining the genesis of the Mexican undertaking, one major problem remains to be explored; that is, the interrelations of Napoleon III and Michel Chevalier. Both were Saint Simonians. Their conception of French aims in Mexico differ not in substance but only in emphasis on French economic interests. Both were acutely conscious of the interdependence of the economic and ideological factors. That the ideas of each influenced the other seems apparent, for the emperor and the publicist were in close contact with each other. Chevalier belonged to that circle of advisers who composed the emperor's "brain trust."¹⁴ Chevalier may actually have aroused the emperor's interest in Pan-Latinism, since the former was an articulate Pan-Latinist as early as 1853. There is no evidence that Napoleon was one as of that date.

That Napoleon III and Chevalier were ardent Pan-Latinists is now clearly established. What remains to be determined is the character and extent of Pan-Latin ideas in France during the 1860's. Three types of sources will provide some answers to this question: 1) pamphlets defending the Mexican expedition; 2) the Paris newspapers, and 3) brochures and critiques attacking the Mexican venture.

The most useful sources can be found in the pamphlet and periodical literature of the decade. *La revue des races latines*, which was published intermittently in Paris between 1857 and 1861, was vigorously Pan-Latin in orientation. This review directed its appeal not only the Latin nations of Europe, but also to the Latin peoples of Spanish and Portuguese America. One of its contributors formulated an argument that was destined to have enduring repercussions in both France and Hispanic America. It was the conviction that the Anglo-Saxons may be superior to the Latins in "material" civilization. The Latins, however, had a higher "spiritual" culture.¹⁵ This notion, popular in France, found its way to Ernest Renan and from him to José Enrique Rodó. The latter's celebrated metaphor of the "spiritual" Ariel of Hispanic-

¹⁴ For Chevalier's close relations with the emperor see Schefer, *op. cit.*, pp. 257-258. Chevalier's role in the genesis of the Mexican policy has never been properly explored. His prestige as a leading political economist and his first-hand observation of conditions in Mexico in 1836 may have played a significant role in influencing the emperor to sponsor intervention.

¹⁵ See Gabriel Hugelmann, "Nos intentions," in *Revue des races latines*, 1 (May 5, 1858), pp. 16-17.

American culture versus the “materialistic” Caliban of North American culture was to dominate the imaginations of that generation of Hispanic-American intellectuals who came to maturity before 1914.¹⁶

In 1862, Prosper Valлеfrange published a book advocating the formation of a Pan-Latin confederation. His proposal was directed against Russian-led Pan-Slavism. He wished to include England in the Pan Latin grouping on the grounds that Great Britain was “semi-latinized.”¹⁷ Hispanic America should belong to the confederation in that “almost all of South America is also Latin.”¹⁸

Six brochures of the period emphatically reflect a Pan-Latin spirit in justifying the Mexican expedition. In various degrees of intensity, all of them echo the Chevalier-Napoleon argument. Four of these works are just of passing interest.¹⁹ Two authors, however, deserve special mention.

Emmanuel Domenech was a French ecclesiastic who served as the press secretary of the Emperor Maximilian. In his *Le Mexique tel qu'il est*, he developed at great length the Chevalier-Napoleon thesis. Another carefully spelled out elaboration of the same argument can be found in an anonymous brochure published in 1864.²⁰

The *abbé* Domenech was a militant Pan-Latinist. For him Yankee expansionism and Pan-Slavism were the dual threats to the Latin world. He quoted with hysterical alarm a sentence of a

¹⁶ Jean Cassou, “Renan et Rodó,” *Revue de l'Amérique latine*, v (July, 1923), pp. 232 ff. Clemente Pereda, *Rodó's Main Sources* (San Juan, Puerto Rico, 1949), pp. 90-98. William J. Berrien, *Rodó: biografía y estudio crítico* (Ph. D. dissertation, University of California, Berkeley, 1937), pp. 150, 159, 169-170.

¹⁷ Valлеfrange, *op. cit.*, p. 7

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 23.

¹⁹ Hilaire Mercier de Lacombe, *Le Mexique et les États-Unis* (Paris, 1863). Achille Poussielgue, *Ce qui va arriver au Mexique* (Paris, 1863). Charles Blanchot, *Mémoires, l'intervention française au Mexique* (3 vols., Paris, 1911). Anonymous, *Maximilien et la monarchie au Mexique* (Paris, 1867).

²⁰ Father Domenech had a colorful if peripatetic career for a French ecclesiastic. A tireless traveler and a prolific author, he published accounts of his voyages in Ireland as well as in the American Middle West. For a period he had done missionary work in Mexico and Texas. Domenech was not an articulate Pan-Latinist in 1862. See his *L'empire au Mexique et la candidature d'un prince Bonaparte au trône mexicain* (Paris, 1862). Yet two years later in Mexico he was preaching with a missionary fervor the doctrine of Pan-Latinism. See his *L'empire mexicain, la paix y les intérêts du monde* (Mexico, 1866). Also see his *Le Mexique tel qu'il est* (Paris, 1867). For another reasoned defense of the Chevalier-Napoleon thesis see the anonymous of 1864, *op. cit.*



Russian journalist to the effect, "When the Russian eagle flies over the Bosphorus and the American eagle flies over México City, there will remain only two great powers in the world: Russia and the United States."²¹

The predication that Western Europe would eventually be engulfed by the Slavs and the Yankees was occasionally voiced in the 1850's and 1860's. Alexis de Tocqueville observed in regard to the phenomenal growth of both the United States and Russia: "Their starting point is different and their courses are not the same, yet each of them seems marked out by the will of Heaven to sway the destinies of half the globe."²²

The anti-Anglo-Saxon spirit of Pan-Latinism is explainable in terms of the historic rivalry between France and the English speaking peoples. The clash between Pan-Latinism and Pan-Slavism was one of more recent vintage. France and England were united in their determination to block Russian aggression against the decrepit Ottoman empire. Such was the underlying cause of the then recent Crimean war. A further factor complicating relations between the Western powers and Russia was the Polish insurrection of 1863 which aroused ardent support in Western Europe. The government-inspired French press was wholly sympathetic to the cause of Polish freedom. Napoleon III scarcely concealed his desire to intervene in Poland. The clash of French and Russian interests in the Ottoman empire and in Poland explain in large measure the anti-Russian flavor of Pan-Latinism in the 1860's.

This situation also elucidates why the governments of Czar Alexander II and President Lincoln maintained cordial diplomatic relations. The sympathy of France and England not only toward the Confederacy but also toward the Polish revolt made the United States and Russia stanch friends. Secretary of State Seward suppressed whatever pro-Polish leanings he may have had, when he rejected an Anglo-French invitation for the United States to join the Western powers in pleading the Polish cause before the Czarist government. Not only did the American Secretary not wish to alienate friendly Russia, but also he realized that American

²¹ Domenech, *op. cit.* 1864), p. 68. Also see Léonce Détroyat, *L'intervention française au Mexique* (Paris, 1868), pp. i-iii. Vallefrange, *op. cit.*, pp. 147 ff. Chevalier was also anti-Pan-Slav. See Note 6. For a discussion of Russophobia among European intellectuals, see Hans Kohn, *Pan-Slavism, its History and its Ideology* (Notre Dame, Indiana, 1953), pp. 84 ff.

²² Alexis de Tocqueville, *Democracy in America*, Phillips Bradley ed. (2 vols., New York, Alfred Knopf, 1945), I, 434.

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intervention in such an exclusively European question would weaken the United States' case against European interventions in the New World, i. e., the French in Mexico and the Spaniards in Santo Domingo.²³

This background helps to explain how a Moscow journalist would link Russian and American expansion and how a French Pan-Latinist would view the prophecy with alarm. One suspects, however, that the often-voiced Yankeeophobia and Russophobia of the Pan-Latinists was a mask. These French publicists did not genuinely fear that Western Europe would be inundated by the Slavs and the Yankees. French interests merely conflicted with those of Russia and the United States. Invoking the "Slavic peril" and the "Yankee peril" provided these French spokesmen with a not totally transparent smokescreen behind which they could defend the policies of Napoleon III.

The Pan-Slavic movement developed in Russia almost simultaneously with Pan-Latinism in France. Pan-Slavism flourished between the end of the Crimean War (1856) and the Russo-Turkish War (1878). Their spokesmen did not single out the Latins as the arch enemies of the Slavic world. Pan-Slavic ideology rested on the Slavophile premise that Europe was divided into two incompatible "worlds" —the Romano-Germanic and the Greco-Slavic. For the Slavophiles, the Latins and the Anglo-Saxons belonged to the same culture the "rooting" West with its glorious past and its dismal future. The Pan-Slavists exhorted Russia, as a part of the Greco-Slavic world, not to imitate the decadent West. Russia's universal mission lay in developing its own Slavic way of life and in promoting the spiritual and cultural homogeneity of all the Slavic peoples of Eastern Europe.²⁴

Not all the defenders of the Mexican expedition were champions of Pan-Latinism. Only six writers were. Eight other apologists avoided invoking explicitly the Pan-Latin argument. Nevertheless, Pan-Latinism was implicit in their frequent but vague

²³ William Appleman Williams, *American-Russian Relations 1781-1947* (New York and Toronto, 1952), pp. 4, 20.

²⁴ Michael Petrovich, *The Emergence of Russian Pan-Slavism, 1856-1870* (New York, Columbia University Press, 1956), pp. 67 ff. Some Pan-Slav spokesmen observed that the orientation of Napoleon III's policy was toward a Latin confederation under French hegemony. The Pan-Slavists did not object. They urged that Russia should sponsor a similar confederation of Slavic nations. *Ibid.*, p. 255.

references to France's *mission civilisatrice* of regenerating Mexico.²⁵

The Paris newspapers of the period may not be taken as reliable guides to public opinion. The French press was then carefully supervised. Opposition dailies such as *Le Siècle* were tolerated provided they confined their criticism inside rather rigidly set limits. Innuendo, sarcasm, and irony, rather than frontal attacks, were the methods most frequently employed by the opposition press.²⁶ All those newspapers, which were militant partisans of the Second Empire and all its works, preached the doctrine of Latin regeneration. Yet most of the expressions of Pan-Latinism in such pro-government newspapers as *Le Moniteur*, *Le Constitutionnel*, *La France*, *Le Pays* and *Le Memorial Diplomatique* are vague and nebulous in comparison to the more reasoned formulations of the pamphlet literature.²⁷ The role of the pro-government press,

²⁵ Anonymous, *Le Mexique et l'intervention* (Paris, 1861). César de Bazancourt, *Le Mexique contemporain* (Paris, 1862). Émile Muraour, *Le Mexique, Conquête du Mexique par Fernand Cortés. Guerre de l'indépendance et république. Expédition française au Mexique, 1861-1863* (Paris, 1863). Anonymous, *La France, le Mexique et les États Confédérés* (Paris, 1863). Mme. E. Dubois, *Le Mexique ou les Français à Mexico* (Rouen, 1865). Anonymous, *L'empire mexicain et son avenir considéré au point de vue des intérêts européens* (Paris, 1865). Adolphe Biarnès, *Le droit des gens, la France et les Yankees* (Nantes, 1866). Paul Gault, ed., *La vérité sur l'expédition du Mexique d'après les documents inédits de Ernest Louet, payeur en chef du corps expéditionnaire* (3 vols., Paris, 1889-1890).

²⁶ Parliamentary and press opposition to the principle of French intervention was not at all effective in the initial formulation of the emperor's Mexican policy, not in preventing its implementation. Neither did this opposition contribute to the eventual abandonment of the project. Frank Edward Lally, *French Opposition to the Mexican Policy of the Second Empire* (Baltimore, John Hopkins Press, 1931), p. 147. In France itself the prevailing attitude toward the Mexican affair outside of political circles was one of apathy. Hence there was little popular enthusiasm for the Pan-Latin thesis. Lynn Marshall Case, ed., *French Opinion on the United States and Mexico, 1860-1867* (New York, 1936), pp. 309-347, 348-401, 351. Although there was genuine alarm in Hispanic America about the "manifest destiny" imperialism of the United States, a condition which might have provided fertile ground for the spread of Pan-Latin propaganda, Napoleon's intervention in Mexico was generally regarded as an unprovoked act of aggression on France's part. Hence this attitude explains the scant success of Pan-Latinism in Hispanic America during the 1860's.

²⁷ For an over-all survey see Lally, *op. cit.*, p. 32. For some characteristic expressions of the doctrine of Latin generation in the press see the following: *Le Pays*, editorials of November 28, 1861; October 2, 1862, January 17, 1863 and July 24, 1863. *La Patrie*, editorials of February 19, 1862, April 18, 1862, May 25, 1862, December 6, 1862, September 5, 1863 and April 13,



nevertheless, in disseminating Pan-Latinism must not be discounted.

The influential *Revue des deux mondes* showed no enthusiasm whatsoever for the Mexican expedition from its inception to its tragic climax. Discretion dictated that the magazine not attack it openly. But the official defense of the regime's policy was seldom represented in the pages of the *Revue des deux mondes*. The notable exception was Michel Chevalier's apologia. By publishing those articles, that magazine could maintain the pretense that it was not an active enemy of the Mexican venture. The inclusion of two pro-Mexican articles provided that review with a shield behind which it could pursue its real policy of studied disdain for the whole Mexican affair.

Perhaps the most convincing demonstration of the depth and the extent of Pan-Latinism in France can be found in the writings of those men who opposed the Mexican venture.

One of the Second Empire's most effective critics, Edgar Quinet, attacked the Mexican enterprise with wrathful rhetoric. He pointed out the incongruity between the base financial intrigues of the Jecker bonds and the regime's self-proclaimed ideal of Latin regeneration. Quinet stressed the self-defeating contradiction between France's paternalistic protection of the Latin race and the methods chosen to implement this program. He ironically asked whether military invasion, the destruction of life and property, and the subversion of a nation's independence was the manner in which the head of the Latin family ought to treat one of the cadet branches of the race.²⁸

Lucien-Anatole Prévost-Paradol, another influential liberal critic, attacked the Mexican policy as the unrealistic whim of the personal despotism of Napoleon III. The emperor's dream of erecting a Latin barrier against the Yankees was as lofty in its conception as it was impracticable in its realization. The success of the Mexican policy depended upon events in the United States. The emperor contented himself with half-measures. French intervention in the Civil War might have insured the success of the Mexican venture. The emperor's failure to do so guaranteed

1964. *Le Constitutionnel*, November 1, 1861, February 18, 1862, May 18, 1862, May 21, 1862, November 7, 1862, August 7, 1963.

²⁸ Edgar Quinet, *L'expédition du Mexique* (London, 1862).

the failure of his visionary scheme to save Latinity in the New World.²⁹

In reviewing the history of the Mexican fiasco, Léonce Détroyat distinguished two fundamental aims motivating French policy. One objective he thought was just and reasonable. The other was false and unrealistic. It may have been historically appropriate for France to assume the protection of the Latin race in America. It was a blunder, however, for France to impose a monarchy upon a nation with republican institutions and thus to intervene in the domestic affairs of another Latin nation. Such flagrant aggression merely served to obstruct the realization of that hegemony over the Latin world that belonged to France.³⁰

Émile Ollivier was long an active leader of the liberal opposition. On the eve of the outbreak of the Franco-Prussian war he made his peace with the regime by accepting the portfolio of justice in a liberal-oriented cabinet. In his memoirs, Ollivier subjected the whole Pan-Latin idea to a careful scrutiny. He scornfully remarked: "In order to create a Latin empire, there must be Latins."³¹ The majority of the Mexican population was Indian and Mestizo. There was, he observed, no Latin race as such in Mexico. The terms Latin and Anglo-Saxon races made sense only in religious terms, that is, Catholic versus Protestant. France was saving not Latinity in Mexico, but Catholicism. He concluded by asking rhetorically why France in the nineteenth century should resurrect "the detestable policy of proselytism which inspired Louis XIV's revocation of the edict of Nantes."³²

Ollivier touched upon two basic weaknesses in the Pan-Latin program. One was the nebulous and contradictory idea of the Latin race. The other was the controversial role of Catholicism. Neither point was ignored by the critics of Napoleon III.

The anticlerical newspaper *Le Siècle* brushed aside the Chevalier vision of France as the leader of a Latin bloc of nations with the following comment: "It is a rather vague and nebulous objective which seems to us to be somewhat difficult to attain."³³ The political principle of nationalities rather than the incoherent

²⁹ Lucien-Anatole Prévost-Paradol's preface to Emile de Kératry's *L'élevation et la chute de l'empereur Maximilien, intervention française au Mexique, 1861-1867*. (Paris, 1867).

³⁰ Détroyat, *op. cit.*, pp. iii-iv.

³¹ Émile Ollivier, *L'empire libéral études, récits, souvenirs* (18 vols., Paris, 1896-1918), v, 240.

³² *Ibid.*

³³ *Le Siècle*, editorial, April 22, 1862.



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instinct of race ought to be the guiding principle of modern civilization, according to that editorial.

In the 1860's, the term "Latin race" was endlessly invoked. In that pre-Darwinian age it could not occur to any foe of the Second Empire to expose the biological absurdity of Latin racialism. No one, for example, went so far as to assert that the Latin race in the sense of ethnic kinship did not exist. The critics of Pan-Latinism confined themselves to two points. One was that the Latin race was a nebulous term. The other was that the existence of vast numbers of Indians and Mestizos called into question the racial Latinity of Mexico.

Although the Pan-Latinists made much of the cultural and spiritual cohesiveness of the Mediterranean world founded on linguistic unity and Roman Catholicism, they also stressed the alleged physical and racial kinship of the Latin peoples. The contemporary Pan-Slavists stood on much firmer ground by minimizing the racial unity of the Slavic peoples and by emphasizing their cultural homogeneity.³⁴

Catholicism was another key component of Pan-Latinism. Friends and foes agreed that Catholicism cemented whatever unity existed in the Latin world. The anticlerical daily *L'Opinion Nationale* once editorialized:

There is one matter that should never be forgotten. It is that there is only one method of regenerating the Catholic nations. It consists in infusing in them a spirit of liberty, of free inquiry and of tolerance . . . If France is at the head of the Catholic Nations; it is because she is less Catholic in the strict sense of the word than the others.³⁵

The Catholicism that the Pan-Latinists rather glibly banded about meant one thing to French Catholics and quite another to the clerical conservatives in Mexico. The French Pan-Latinists equated Catholicism with post-revolutionary France. This was a somewhat enlightened and tolerant Catholicism that recognized at least the need of reaching a *modus vivendi* with the modern world of reason, science, and technology. The Mexican clericals, on the other hand, advocated the preservation of the Spanish colonial Catholicism, untouched by the liberal and rational spirit

³⁴ Petrovich, *op. cit.*, pp. 67 ff.

³⁵ *L'Opinion Nationale*, editorial, May 10, 1862.

of the French Revolution.³⁶ The success of Benito Juárez's anti-clerical campaign drove the Mexican clericals to favor a European prince. To their horror, the Mexican conservatives found out that they had in the Emperor Maximilian a liberal Catholic. He had no intention of restoring the social privileges of the colonial church that Juárez had recently abolished. Maximilian thus alienated his clerical supporters without winning the confidence of his liberal enemies. The emperor's running battle with the clericals was an acute source of weakness to the new regime from its inception to its end.³⁷

If we admit that Napoleon III had a "grand design" in regard to French aims in Mexico, we must also acknowledge that his controversial *belle pensée* was riddled with many of the contradictions and much of the nebulosity characteristic of his enigmatic personality. Most of the flaws were exposed in a striking fashion by the host of contemporary critics of the Mexican enterprise. An outstanding feature of this critical literature is that it illustrates the depth and the extent to which the Pan-Latin spirit had permeated the climate of opinion in France during the 1860's. The majority of the critics did not reject the principle of Pan-Latinism. What they deplored were Napoleon III's methods.

All that remains now is to locate the "certificate of baptism" of the word *l'Amérique Latine*. That proto-Pan-Latinist Michel Chevalier spelled out the idea of Latin America, but he did not coin the new name.³⁸ Prior to the 1860's, *l'Amérique Latine* was

³⁶ Only a few French critics were aware of the deep and wide chasm separating French and Mexican Catholicism. For examples see A. Malespine, *Solution de la question mexicaine* (Paris, 1864). Adolphe Thiers, *Discours prononcé au corps législatif les 9 et 10 de juillet 1867* (Paris, 1867). Thiers, one of the prominent leaders of the Orleanist opposition to the Second Empire, was a vigorous opponent of the whole Mexican affair. He accused the emperor of being deceived by the legend of Mexico's fabulous wealth. Her mineral resources were greatly exaggerated, and Mexico lacked a lucrative export crop like coffee or cotton, he claimed. Actually, the future was to vindicate not the cautious Thiers but the imaginative Napoleon III. The exploitation of Mexico's resources by foreign capital during the age of Díaz (1876-1911) amply fulfilled the French emperor's visionary hopes.

³⁷ Caesar Count Corti, *Maximilian and Charlotte of Mexico* (2 vols. New York, 1928), II, 408 ff., 448 ff., 570 ff., 621 ff., 706 ff. When madness overtook the tragic Empress Charlotte, she was in Rome making a desperate attempt to heal the schism between Maximilian and the Mexican clericals by securing a concordat from the Holy See.

³⁸ Chevalier came close to coining the term by his reference to *Europa Latina*. He did not, however, transpose the adjective to America. Chevalier, *Revista de ambos mundos*, *op. cit.*, p. 6.

to my knowledge never used in the French press or in pamphlet literature.³⁹ The first appearance of the term occurred in 1861. In that year the Mexican expedition began. Nor is it fortuitous that the word first appeared in a magazine dedicated to the cause of Pan-Latinism, the *Revue des races latines*. L. M. Tisserand, who wrote a column on recent events in the Latin world, performed the "christening" ceremony. Between 1861 and 1868 the new designation was used by only six French authors⁴⁰ and two Hispanic-American authors of long residence in France.⁴¹ All six of the French authors were concerned with Mexican affairs. The *abbé* Domenech, when he first referred to *l'Amérique Latine* added, *c'est à dire, le Mexique, l'Amérique Centrale et l'Amérique du Sud*.⁴² The author was aware that he was using a new term whose meaning had to be explained to his audience.

The Pan-Latinism of the 1860's and its semantic symbol *l'Amérique Latine* survived the fiasco of the Mexican enterprise largely because of the disaster of Sedan. After 1870, the Mexican venture was ascribed to Napoleon III personally, as was indeed the case, and not to France as a whole. The rise of Germany after 1870 made the anti-Russian and the anti-American character of the movement increasingly obsolete. The resurgent Pan-Latinism of the *fin de siècle* was primarily directed against Pan-Germanism. In Hispanic America Pan-Latinism still retained most of its initial anti-Yankee flavor largely because Hispanic-American spokes-

³⁹ Prior to the 1860's the commonly used terms in France for Hispanic America were *Nouveau monde*, *l'Amérique du Sud* and *les républiques hispano-américaines*.

⁴⁰ 1) L. M. Tisserand, "Situation de la latinité", *Revue des races latines* (January, 1861), p. 497. 2) Article by A. Malespine in *L'Opinion Nationale*, June 16, 1863. 3) Anonymous brochure of 1864, *op. cit.*, p. 6. 4) Preface by Paul Pradier-Fodéré to Carlos Calvo's *Una página de derecho internacional o la América del sur ante la ciencia del derecho de gentes modernas* (Paris, 1864). 5) Domenech, *Le Mexique*, *op. cit.*, p. 302. 6) Détryot, *op. cit.*, pp. iii. It is quite possible that a few more authors used this term, for no investigation of this sort can be exhaustive in view of the multiplicity of sources involved. Many authors frequently referred to *les républiques* or *les nations latines de l'Amérique*. Such references add further support to the hypothesis that the term, Latin America, was an outgrowth of Pan-Latinism.

⁴¹ Carlos Calvo, *Anales históricos de la revolución de la América latina desde el año 1808 hasta el reconocimiento de la independencia de este extenso continente* (3 vols., Paris, 1864-1867). José María Torrès Caicedo, *Unión latino americana, pensamiento de Bolívar para formar una liga americana; su origen y sus desarrollos*, (Paris, 1865).

⁴² Domenech, *op. cit.*, p. 302.

men used the doctrine as a vehicle of protest against American imperialism.

Pan-Latinism of the 1898-1914 period differed notably from the Napoleonic brand. The essential aim was still the same; that is, to promote the cultural and political homogeneity of the so-called Latin World under the paternalistic leadership of France. Military aggression, however, was renounced as a means toward the end. Just as the *fin de siècle* Pan-Latinism abandoned the nebulous racialism of the 1860's, so did it de-emphasize controversial Catholicism. The new Pan-Latinism was secular, humanistic and liberal in contrast to the clerical Catholic and authoritarian orientation of Napoleon III's time. A more precise analysis of these changes, however, is beyond the scope of this essay.

The contrasts between Russian Pan-Slavism and French Pan-Latinism in the 1860's are more striking than their similarities. Pan-Slavism developed independently of the Russian government. Although the Czarist regime on occasion used the movement for its own ends, the aims of the foreign ministry and of the Pan-Slavists often conflicted. Because Pan-Slavism had an autonomous growth, it was able to arouse considerable enthusiasm in some intellectual circles. Its historical and cultural *mystique* was spelled out in abundant detail and in an extensive body of literature.⁴³

Both the strength and the weakness of Pan-Latinism were the direct consequence of the movement's intellectual paternity. The doctrine of Latin regeneration was a creation of the Second Empire, carefully nurtured by the semiofficial apologists of the regime. Their apparent aim was to provide a rationale for the emperor's policies. Although the *mystique* of Pan-Latinism lacked both the methodological precision and the historical depth and scope of Pan-Slavism, its ideological content was by no means negligible. The intimate identification of Pan-Latinism with the regime enabled its spokesmen to unleash through the press and in pamphlet literature a veritable barrage of propaganda. Yet the alliance of the movement with the Second Empire was transparent, and this fact explains in some measure why the Pan-Latin program aroused such little enthusiasm outside official circles.

The essential ideas of Pan-Latinism had a seductive appeal that not even Napoleon III's sponsorship could discredit. The movement emerged in the 1860's and it survived afterwards as

⁴³ For the development of Pan-Slavism see Petrovich, *op. cit.* Deckert's essay is also useful. Emil Deckert, *Panlatinismus, Panslawismus und Panteutonismus* (Frankfurt, 1914).



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an ideological instrument at the service of French foreign policy. Both Presidents Vicent Auriol and Charles de Gaulle invoked the spirit of Pan-Latinism in their respective state visits to the Hispanic nations of the New World.

For the Americanists the discovery of the parenthood of the idea of Latin America confirms something we already know. As Edmundo O'Gorman has pointed out, America is among many other things an idea created by Europeans, a metaphysical and metahistorical abstraction as well as a practical program of action. These European images of the New World find their appropriate symbols in the various names under which America has come to be known.