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Title: “The Two Emperors of Mexico: The Empire Strikes Out”

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Ceitidh (Katie) MacDonald is currently an IPFW senior majoring in Political Science, International Relations, Pre-Med and History. After a 20 year military career, Ms. MacDonald decided to further her academic studies as a precursor to a law program with hopes of a new career in Immigration and Veteran laws as well as Constitutional and International law.

Abstract

At the turn of the 19th century, the power structure of the world was changing. The age of empire and colonies was turning in on itself. As the great powers of the age began warring each other, conflict alternated between hot wars and proxy wars. The greater result was the loss of colonies on almost every side. No longer able to influence the great amount of people in those colonies, both native and colonial, the imperial grip of power loosened enough for the New World to wiggle free. Independence, however, didn't entirely free the western hemisphere from European monarchical models of governance, as the case of independent Mexico clearly illustrates. This paper examines the two short-lived and failed attempts to establish empires in independent Mexico, both of which were thwarted liberal republican resistance. The first attempt was under Emperor Agustin I at the onset of Mexican independence (1821 – 1823), and the second attempt was decades later under Emperor Maximilian I (1864 – 1867), who was invited in by Mexican conservatives after their liberal counterparts had defeated them in the war of the reform at the end of the 1850s. On face value these two empires couldn't appear more distinct. The first was engineered by Iturbide, a leader in Mexico's war for independence against Spain, and the second orchestrated by Maximilian, a foreign invader supported by tens of thousands of French troops. Nevertheless, by focusing on the contentious political climate in which both empires existed this paper finds similar explanations for their failures. In both cases, instability and sharp divisions in Mexico help explain their failures.

Bibliographical Note

Historical papers tend to be more focused on the action of the primary actors instead of the influences that caused them to act as they have. The Mexican Revolution was no different. The actions of the two Emperors of Mexico are scrutinized, but the politics of the time influencing them, gets glossed over. The following references each provide an accounting of the politics surrounding the coronations and the reasons for their ultimate failures: Timothy E. Anna's book, *The Rule of Agustin de Iturbide: A Reappraisal*, and H. Montgomery Hyde's book, *Mexican Empire, The History of Maximilian and Carlota of Mexico*.