

LATIN AMERICA

Between the Wars

Overview



- Once we look at the commonalities of the region we will look at four countries: Mexico, Brazil, the largest; Argentina, the most European.
- These countries are similar to other countries that fought for their independence and have struggled economically and technologically.

Diversity Today

- There are 33 countries in Latin America with about half a billion people. 1 of 3 is Brazilian. 1 of 5 is Mexican.
- Most speak Spanish, Brazil speaks Portuguese.
There are some native Indian languages still spoken in various parts of Latin America.
- Most of Latin America is Catholic, close to 90%
- There is a push/pull movement with the population.

Technology, Industrialization, Elites

- In the late 19th century Latin America began to industrialize with investments from overseas. Britain was first, then after WWI the United States was the main investor in the region.
- These investments paid for railways, mining, agriculture and ocean shipping to name a few.
- One example was the closing of the pampas and turning the gauchos into hired hands.

Technology, Industrialization, Elites

- The investments were made with profits in mind.
- Most of the investments were in primary production. This is farming and mining. They were not looking for finished goods.
- The Creole elites treated their countries for their own benefit. Control and patronage mattered. Money was not the main factor.
- Some people felt that democracy was barbaric and that way of the elites was better.

Technology, Industrialization, Elites

- Two groups were in conflict of the caudillos rule and that was businessmen and the army.
- The businessmen wanted a stable government that would allow for growth, industrialization, better education and more independence from foreign investors.
- Immigrants from Italy brought the idea of labor unions to Latin America and industrial development.

Technology, Industrialization, Elites

- The other group was the army, most notable the junior officers. They were from middle-class urban families that have been exposed to modern technology, stable government. They also saw the importance of education.
- In many areas these groups worked together to create reforms and were successful to a point. They failed in one area-land reform.

Technology, Industrialization, Elites



- The reformers were urban people with no sympathy to the rural peasants.
- In 1896 the revolt in Brazil raised the question can the changes that are happening in the economics and industry reach the peasants?

The Mexican Revolution 1910-1920

- 1910 saw an uprising against the dictator Porfirio Diaz. Under Diaz, Mexico had shown signs of advancement. They had mining, oil drilling, railways, and an increase in raw agricultural products.
- The middle class elites had prospered. The urban working class and the rural peasant fared worse.
- 95% of rural peasants owned no land.
- 50% of Mexico was owned by foreign investors and 200 families.

The Mexican Revolution 1910-1920

- Several haciendas were over 11 million acres and sat idle. This was not well received.
- Voting was limited. There was no plan of succession. Diaz continued to run for president. He jailed the challenger. Diaz wins but the rebellion had begun.
- Diaz resigns and flees to Paris. Mexico enters into a civil war. Regional leaders fighting for control.
- Many of the leaders were mestizos (people of mixed race and culture).

The Mexican Revolution 1910-1920

- The two most radical meszito leaders were Pancho Villa and Emiliano Zapata. They advocated significant land reform. They attracted mixed groups of followers.
- 1911, Zapata launched his Plan of Ayala, which called for the return of land to Indian pueblos.
- His view was it was better to die on one's feet than to live on one's knees.
- The revolution was becoming more radical and agrarian.

The Mexican Revolution 1910-1920

- With Diaz gone, Madero became president. He was later removed and assassinated. Next up was General Huerta. He tried to re-create the government of Diaz.
- General Huerta was opposed by all the other leaders including the United States. Huerta was forced out in 1914. Carranza installed himself as provisional president, forcing out Villa and Zapata.

The Mexican Revolution 1910-1920



- Carranza convened a constituent assembly in 1917 to write a constitution. The constitution was to promise land reform and impose restrictions on foreign economic control.
- The new constitution offered many protections for the Mexican worker and placed severe restrictions on the church. The constitution was also against foreigners.

The Mexican Revolution 1910-1920

- Carranza did not last long. He was deposed by Obregon, his military leader in 1920.
- Obregon's first act was to distribute 3 million acres of land to the peasants. The act was seen as a good will gesture. Unfortunately there was no technical assistance offered, so productivity did not increase.
- Obregon did include new groups in the government. This was good.

The Mexican Revolution 1910-1920

- Obregon was a patron of the arts. There were several artists that showed the struggle for all Mexicans.
- Warfare did continue. Mostly between the factions and between the state and church.
- Obregon was assassinated in 1924. Calles became president. Calles and the rest of the caudillos viewed the church as a rival for power.

The Mexican Revolution 1910-1920

- In the 1920's the clericals went on strike, not performing services. The peasants sided with the church. The War of the Cristeros was the result and the government backed down. Calles and the government became more sensitive to the church.
- 1928 saw the creation of the National Revolutionary Party which later became the Party of Institutionalized Revolution (PRI). This was a comprehensive party.

The Mexican Revolution 1910-1920

- Under President Cardenas, the PRI redistributed 45 million acres of land. He started a process that would redistribute 253 million acres by 1984.
- Cardenas nationalized the oil industry in 1938.
- Cardenas did offer compensation to the foreign investors. The United States did not intervene.
- 1940 Cardenas retired from presidential politics. This helped stabilize the structure.

The Mexican Revolution 1910-1920



- The PRI envisioned a one party system that would include all major interest groups. The contest for power would take place within the group.
- Can one party be the answer to everyone?

Post-Revolutionary Mexico

- The Cardenas presidency was the last to attempt reforms on a nationwide scale.
- 1946 saw Aleman become president and large business and agricultural groups have been in power ever since. By 1997 the PRI did lose control of the legislature.
- 1958 women were given the right to vote.
- Mexican economy was growing nicely due to oil. The price drops, the economy suffers.

Markets, Military and Democracy

- During the 1920's the foreign exchange earnings of most countries was based on the export of raw materials. Usually, it was just one or two products.
- The depression caused the market to drop 80%.
- Argentina started a new economic policy called import substituting industrialization. ISI was a policy to diversify productivity and become more internally self-sufficient.

Markets, Military and Democracy

- After WWII, some economies grew very well. Brazil's industry was at 9% and agriculture was at 4%. Venezuela had oil at 8.5% and agriculture at 4%.
- The ISI was not working. Latin America was not becoming self-sufficient. The profits were not reaching the rural workers.
- Workers and peasants protested. Governments responded with violence.

Markets, Military and Democracy

- The military was used to intervene and restore order. By their social background and training, the military favored technological modernization and social order.
- When interest groups sought modernization they did not think about the needs of the workers and peasants. The workers and peasants did not think about the costs associated with their demands.

Brazil



- 1930 saw a military revolution where Getulio Vargas came into power.
- The economy suffered with the crash of the coffee market. Vargas strengthened the economy at the states expense. There were several revolts that Vargas stopped.
- Estado Novo, the new state was the slogan for Vargas.

Brazil



- Vargas had Brazil move into other industries. He started developing mining, oil, steel, chemicals, electricity, cars and airplanes.
- Vargas was getting money from both the US and Germany when they were ready for WWII.
- Business leaders and the military supported Vargas. He knew that he needed the urban labor behind him. He created the Ministry of Labor.

Brazil



- Vargas organized the Brazilian Labor Party. Created a minimum wage, 48 hr work week, vacations, child care among others. The problem was that the reforms did not reach the peasants.
- The army was afraid of Vargas and had him deposed in 1945. New constitution enacted, elections every five years. Literacy test required for voting. Literacy increases.
- Women suffrage in 1932.

Argentina



- 1914 60% of Buenos Aires population was foreign born. Wheat and beef dominated the economy. Industry was small and growing.
- The depression hit Argentina hard. With food exports falling, Argentina felt the depression more than any other Latin America country.
- Politics had been split between the urban industrialists and the rich landlords.

Argentina

- A military coup in 1930 brought forth the ICI plan. Industry was on the rise. During the war, industry grew. Each time industry grew the estate owners became more suspect.
- 1943 saw another coup with Juan Peron taking office. He based his power on the urban working class. Peron was jailed and workers in Argentina united for his release.
- Peron campaigned with the descamisados.

Argentina

- With Peron in office he set forth to bring the country together. He promoted populism and nationalism. He also asked the nation to serve the worker.
- Peron nationalized foreign owned companies. Paid off debts, gave concessions to the workers and crushed independent labor unions.
- His wife, Evita was just as controversial. She related to the masses. Won equal rights for women, including the vote in 1947.

Argentina



- Evita's death in 1952 from cancer hurt Peron. The clashes of interest groups grew and forced Peron out of office in 1955. He remained very popular and won election in 1973.
- Peron died in 1974, his new wife took over till she was ousted in a military coup in 1976.
- The military government was supported by the United States.

US Policies in Latin America

- Latin America has kept the US policies for the region on the front burner. The Monroe Doctrine in 1832 declared the Americas off limits for the militaries of Europe. Britain agreed.
- It was not the Europeans that intervened in Latin America, it was the United States.
- The Texas war of independence, Mexican-American war, Spanish-American war. The US was busy in the region.

US Policies in Latin America

- 1903, had Panama secede from Columbia and then built the Panama Canal.
- The US spent close to 40% of all foreign investment in Latin America.
- Between 1898 and 1934 the US sent troops to Latin America more than 30 times.
- T. Roosevelt proclaimed that the US was a police power in the internal affairs of Latin America.

US Policies in Latin America

- The “Roosevelt Corollary” was used to justify military intervention to collect debts.
- “Good neighbor policy” in 1933. This limited US intervention in Latin America. Put to the test in 1938 with Mexican president Cardenas.
- After WWII, the US and Latin America began to normalize relations. Organization of American States was the first step.

Nicaragua

- In 1909, the US urged revolt in the country and sent Marines that stayed till 1933.
- One Nicaraguan officer, Sandino, rejected American hegemony and fought a guerilla war.
- Sandino was deceived and killed by officers under Somoza Garcia.
- Garcia took over the government with the backing of the US.

Nicaragua

- Conditions under Somoza were horrible, a movement led by students started. The movement called themselves the Sandinista Front for National Liberation named after Sandino.
- In 1979 the Sandinistas gained control. When all was said and done some 50,000 were killed.
- Reagan overturned the policies put in place by Carter. The US backed a group called the contras.

Panama



- 1878 a French company with the agreement of Colombia, began to build a canal across Panama. The US agreed to pay the fee but Colombia refused. In 1903 the US urged a revolt for Panama independence and used warships to block the Colombian army from reaching the battle. 12 days later the US had an agreement for the canal.