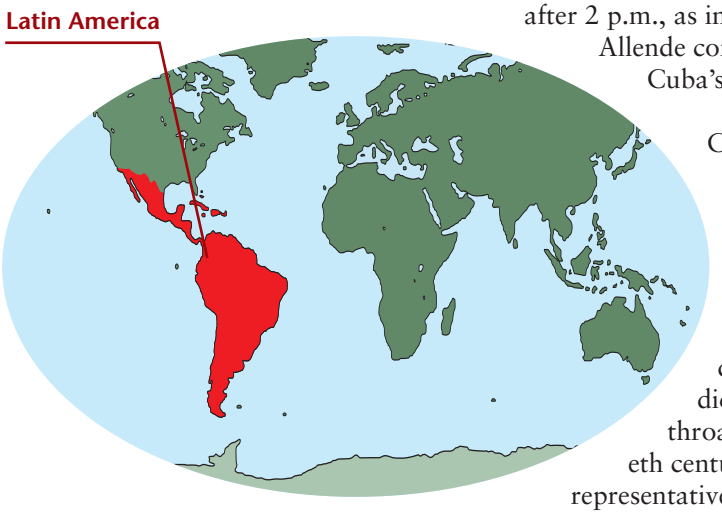
CHAPTER 36

Reform and Revolution in Latin America, 1914–Present

Juan And Evita Perón

Juan and Evita Perón ride through Buenos Aires in June 1951. Evita is wearing her trademark mink coat to ward off the chill of the Argentinian winter. The Peróns were Latin America's ultimate power couple, the most skillful politicians Argentina had ever seen (page 949).

Salvador Allende (*eye-YEHN-dā*), president of Chile, entered his office at the Moneda Palace in Santiago at 6 a.m. Tuesday, September 11, 1973. That was an unusually early arrival for a man who customarily handled paperwork until late in the evening, but this was an unusual day. A military conspiracy was attempting to overthrow his freely elected Marxist government, and Allende wanted to organize resistance as rapidly as possible. By late morning, however, planes were bombing the palace, tanks were clearing the streets of the government's defenders, and the conspirators were offering Allende safe passage out of the country. The president chose instead to remain at his post, and shortly after 2 p.m., as infantry began to storm the palace, Salvador Allende committed suicide, using a pistol given him by Cuba's president Fidel Castro.



Allende's death was only the beginning of the Chilean tragedy. The military regime that replaced him turned Santiago's soccer stadium into a detention, torture, and execution center in the weeks following September 11. Opponents of the regime disappeared by the thousands. Political parties were abolished, the constitution was suspended, and Chilean democracy was extinguished. An authoritarian dictatorship clamped its iron fist around the throat of a nation that, at the outset of the twentieth century, had been widely considered a model of representative government. The explanation of these events is found not solely in Chile's domestic history but in the global situation to which Latin America was connected in the twentieth century.

Latin America and the World Since 1914

The principal nations of Latin America entered the twentieth century in varying stages of political and economic development. For each of them, the century's first four decades proved turbulent. World War II and the Cold War that followed it ended isolationism in the United States and made isolation unworkable throughout the Western Hemisphere. Quickly, every major nation of Latin America became part of a wider and more complex global system.

In the process, Latin American concerns were often subordinated to superpower rivalries. The United States supported brutal military dictatorships in Argentina, Brazil, and Chile in the 1960s and 1970s, largely out of fear that those countries would otherwise fall to international communism. The Soviet Union maintained close ties with Cuba, a communist regime after 1959, as a means of encouraging communist development in other Latin American states.

As the Cold War waned and eventually ended, so did many oppressive Latin American regimes that had been supported by either the United States or the Soviet Union. Argentina in 1983, Brazil in 1985, and Chile in 1990 all returned to democratic rule. But the fundamental problems of modernization, poverty, and inequality that had been ignored during

the Cold War remained unsolved and largely unaddressed. In the final years of the twentieth century, they reemerged to present young democracies with daunting difficulties and to call into question the long-term stability of Latin America.

Connections: Latin America in the Global Economy

When Latin America won independence from Spain and Portugal in the 1820s, the new nations found it difficult to establish links to the world economy. Mexico emerged from the independence period economically devastated, while South American countries found that their remoteness from Europe reduced opportunities for transatlantic trade once the colonial connection was gone. Landowners and manufacturers responded by producing crops and goods for localities and regions rather than for foreign markets.

European industrialization stimulates Latin American economies

By 1900, however, the situation had changed dramatically. European industrialization rapidly increased demands for the resources and food that Latin America could provide. Coffee and rubber from Brazil, tin from Bolivia, copper and nitrates from Chile, sugar from Cuba, wheat and beef from Argentina, and wool from Argentina and Uruguay were shipped to Europe and the United States. In return, Latin Americans purchased large quantities of European-made clothing, tools, and machines. This developing commercial relationship stimulated foreign investment in Latin America, particularly in railways, roads, bridges, and mines. Foreign control of important sectors of the economy became a sensitive political issue in Mexico, Chile, Bolivia, Peru, and other nations in the opening years of the twentieth century.

A coffee bar in Buenos Aires in 1950.

Despite this concern, Latin America's integration into a global import-export economy led to rapid growth and prosperity. Brazilian and Argentine elites grew tremendously wealthy, and their investments in commercial enterprises attracted large numbers of immigrants from Europe to fill labor shortages. Immigration stimulated urbanization and the development of a working class committed to unionization. These immigrants remained excluded from political power because they could not vote until they became citizens, and citizenship, considered not a right but a privilege, was granted to very few. Political elites gained the support of the increasingly prosperous middle classes by granting them access to the political system. Then both upper and middle classes worked together to keep the working classes relatively powerless.

Latin America suffers during the Great Depression

The Great Depression upset this comfortable collaboration. Global demand for Latin American commodities and foodstuffs declined drastically, ending decades of growth and undermining confidence in political leaders who failed to control the damage (Map 36.1). Middle-class citizens broke with upper-class political elites and supported military takeovers, which were attempted in eight Latin American nations between 1929 and 1933. Military and civilian governments alike tried to limit the impact of the Depression by promoting economic diversification through industrialization. If Latin American nations could produce more of their own industrial goods, the new governments reasoned, they would be less affected by global economic fluctuations. New industries would also provide additional manufacturing jobs for their urban working classes.

Countries with small domestic markets and economies built around the production of one or two commodities found industrialization difficult. These included the tin-centered

FOUNDATION MAP 36.1 Commodity Production in South America, 1900

As the twentieth century began, South America's productivity made it a valuable trading partner with Europe, North America, and Asia. Notice the concentrations of commodities: rubber in the Amazon basin of Brazil, coffee in southern Brazil, cattle and sheep in Argentina and Uruguay. What factors account for such concentrations?

economy of Bolivia, the coffee- and banana-based economies of Central America, and the oil-dominated economy of Venezuela. More diversified economies in nations with larger populations were more successful. Argentina, Brazil, and Mexico were able to manufacture their own products to replace those previously imported from Europe or the United States, while Chile applied industrial technologies to improve output in its copper and nitrate mines. As a result of the growing number and importance of these manufacturing jobs, the working classes became increasingly strong and assertive, forming labor unions and offering a new power base for populist politicians. Juan Perón in Argentina, Getúlio Vargas in Brazil, Arturo Alessandri in Chile, and Lázaro Cárdenas in Mexico all appealed to workers and created urban-based coalitions that competed for power with traditional agricultural and landed elites.

Populist leaders build urban coalitions

These populist leaders were unable, however, to build solid economies. By the 1960s Latin America was no longer completely dependent on fully industrialized nations, but it relied on them for some commodities and could be adversely affected by changes in the global economy over which it had no control. Machine tools and large capital equipment still had to be imported, and if global market prices of exports like copper, coffee, beef, and grain declined, so would Latin America's ability to pay for those imports. Increasing exports would only depress world prices and further reduce the region's ability to pay. When such developments occurred, industrial workers suffered greatly, and their unions responded to deteriorating economic conditions with strikes, demonstrations, and in Argentina and Uruguay, urban terrorism.

Loading coffee at a dock in Columbia.

As public order came apart, military regimes took control in Brazil (1964), Chile (1973), and Argentina (1976). In itself, these developments were nothing new. Ever since Latin America won its independence, its military leaders had claimed and exercised the right to overthrow incompetent or corrupt civil governments. But these new regimes, unlike previous ones, did not act quickly to return power to civilians. Instead they abolished political parties and civil rights, imprisoned and tortured their political opponents, and based their continued control on their ability to restore economic prosperity. Excluding the working classes from political and economic influence, the military governments built partnerships with multinational corporations, refinanced their debts, and stimulated their economies by borrowing enormous sums abroad. Between 1970 and 1980, Latin America's foreign debt soared from $27 billion to $231 billion, with interest payments alone rising from $2 billion to $18 billion.

Massive debt incapacitates Latin American economies

For a time refinancing and borrowing worked, and news of the Brazilian and Chilean "economic miracles" encouraged foreign banks to lend them even more money. But during the global economic downturn of 1980–1983, the debt-ridden nations found themselves caught between rising interest payments and a sharp reduction in export earnings. International lenders such as the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund offered help in refinancing massive debt, but only if the debtor nations reformed their economies, cut government expenditures, and welcomed additional foreign trade and global investment. Latin America accepted these conditions, but enormous sums flowed out of the region to repay the debt to the industrialized world, leading to a decade of declining economic output. Discredited military dictators retired and handed the debt problem over to civilian governments willing to accept political accountability and leave office once their terms expired. Though the debt problem remained unsolved, Latin America's connections to global financial markets were rebuilt.

Conflict: Latin America and Global War

When the Great War broke out in 1914, few Latin Americans thought their region would be affected. They assumed that the assassination of the Archduke and the crisis between Austria-Hungary and Serbia were European issues with no serious implications for the Western Hemisphere. But soon two battles took place nearby: in autumn 1914 the German Pacific Squadron defeated the British in a naval battle off Coronel, Chile, and then, on December 8, that squadron was destroyed by more British warships at the Battle of the Falkland Islands off the Argentine coast. More significantly, Britain's naval blockade of Germany, and Germany's retaliation by U-Boat warfare, made Atlantic shipping risky, especially for nations like Chile and Argentina, traditional suppliers of copper, nitrates, wheat, and beef to many European nations.

But the Great War did not seriously affect Latin America until the United States became a combatant in April 1917. After that, Brazil actively participated on the Allied side and earned a seat at the Paris Peace Conference in 1919. Chile's copper and nitrates found a willing buyer as the United States began expanding a small army into a huge force destined for battle in Europe. Chilean prosperity was intense but short lived: the end of the war in November 1918 also ended sizable United States orders for Chilean resources. Most other Latin American nations were relieved as the return to peacetime conditions in the Atlantic reestablished their access to European markets. In sum, the Great War left Latin America on the sidelines, permitting the region to avoid the trauma and death experienced in Europe and, to a lesser extent, in the Middle East and Africa.

European issues affect Latin America

Two decades after the Armistice, the outbreak of World War II placed Latin America in a very different situation. During the 1930s, Germany and Italy demonstrated an interest in the Western Hemisphere. German money financed the Nacista Party in Chile, an imitation of the German National Socialist Party. Germany also underwrote nationalistic German organizations in cities with large German populations, such as São Paulo, Brazil, and Buenos Aires, Argentina, and, in the United States, New York, St. Louis, Cincinnati, and Milwaukee. Italy provided small sums of money and plenty of advice to the fascistic Integralista Party in Brazil. These activities had limited effects, but Nazi and fascist ideologies clearly threatened the entire Western Hemisphere.

Germany's aggression against Austria and Czechoslovakia in 1938 led the hemisphere's foreign ministers, meeting in Lima, Peru, to sign a declaration of hemispheric unity against subversion inside the hemisphere or invasion from outside. The outbreak of war in September 1939 led to a more extensive declaration, creating a neutrality zone extending 300 miles off the coasts of North and South America and providing for inter-American economic coordination. After France, Holland, and Denmark were conquered by Germany in 1940, their colonies in the West Indies and South America became potential bases for German attacks or sabotage against the Panama Canal. The United States was authorized by all hemispheric nations to establish a protectorate over those colonies.

Mexican workers help the U.S. economy in wartime

Japan's attack on Pearl Harbor brought the United States into the war, and most Latin American nations cooperated closely with their northern neighbor. Mexico sent a squadron of fighter pilots to fly in the Philippines in 1944, and 250 thousand Mexicans enlisted in the U.S. armed forces. Tens of thousands of ***braceros***, or immigrant workers, entered the United States to work in factories in place of U.S. citizens called to active duty. Panama worked closely with the United States to protect the Panama Canal. Chile resumed its Great War role as a valued supplier of copper and nitrates. But the most

significant Latin American roles in World War II were played by two South American powers that had long been rivals: Brazil and Argentina.

Brazil made several crucial contributions to the Allied war effort. Its government leased to the United States a large tract of land in Natal, where Brazil juts eastward into the South Atlantic, only 1,900 miles from West Africa. There the United States constructed a huge air base that by 1944 was the busiest in the world. Transatlantic air travel was impossible in World War II because of limited fuel capacities, so U.S. troops and cargo for the invasion of Europe were shuttled from air bases in the United States to Panama, then to Natal, then to West Africa, and then to England. In return for the leasing rights to Natal, the United States gave Brazil a complete steel plant, transplanted immediately after the war from western Pennsylvania to a site in southeastern Brazil named Volta Redonda. The Brazilian government then built South America's largest steel industry around it. Brazil also supplied the Allies with rubber, a vital raw material, after Japan took control of most of the world's rubber by occupying the sprawling rubber plantations of Southeast Asia.

Brazil plays an active role in World War II

In addition to these material contributions, Brazil played an active combat role in the war. When Germany declared war on the United States in December 1941, Washington had made no meaningful preparations to defend commercial shipping along the country's eastern seaboard. During the first five months of 1942, German U-Boats went unchallenged as they sunk U.S. ships. Brazil then sent its own submarines to patrol the seaboard and the Caribbean, freeing U.S. submarines for action against Japan. Brazilians also sent a 25 thousand–soldier infantry division into combat in Italy in 1944. The Brazilian Military Cemetery in central Italy testifies to the scale of Brazil's effort.

Argentina's policies irritate the United States

Argentina's position in World War II was very different from that of Brazil. The Argentine army overthrew the civilian government in 1943 in order to prevent a declaration of war against Germany. Most Argentine officers had been posted to Germany for military training in the 1920s and 1930s, and they were convinced that the German Army was invincible. Although it became difficult to maintain that belief in 1943, Argentina remained neutral until April 1945, when it declared war on Germany and Japan in order to qualify for membership in the newly established United Nations Organization. After the war ended, Argentina permitted tens of thousands of German bureaucrats, soldiers, and war criminals to enter the country under assumed names to escape Allied military courts. These policies earned Argentina the hostility of the U.S. government for the next decade, while its archrival Brazil prospered economically and was seriously considered for a permanent seat on the United Nations Security Council.

Connections and Conflict: Latin America and the United States

Late in his presidency, Porfirio Díaz of Mexico lamented: "Poor Mexico! So far from God. So close to the United States." Latin America's geographic proximity to the United States has been a source of connections and conflicts for two centuries. The **Monroe Doctrine** of 1823 committed the United States to defend the newly created Latin American states against any European efforts at recolonization. For the next fifty years, the United States was deeply involved in its own westward expansion (or manifest destiny) and its bloody Civil War. Thereafter, the United States began constructing commercial links with its southern neighbors, spearheaded by entrepreneurs like Minor Cooper Keith, who built

U.S. President Theodore Roosevelt running a steam shovel during construction of the Panama Canal, 1906.

railways across Central America and helped create the United Fruit Company, and W. R. Grace and Company, which underwrote telegraph networks, financed the Brazilian rubber industry, and sold manufactured goods throughout Latin America.

Then, in 1895, revolution broke out in Cuba, one of Spain's few remaining Western Hemispheric colonies. The United States expressed outrage at Spain's brutal suppression of Cuban revolutionaries, but was also tempted by the prospect of seizing some of Spain's Caribbean possessions as a prelude to building a canal across Central America. Two months after an explosion of unclear origin destroyed its battleship *Maine* in Havana harbor in February 1898, the United States declared war on Spain. By August 1898 the war was over, leaving the victorious United States in possession of Guam, the Philippines, and Puerto Rico. Cuba became independent in principle, although the Platt Amendment, passed by the U.S. Senate in 1901, gave Washington unprecedented rights of intervention there.

The United States gains an empire through the Spanish-American War

Building on the Platt Amendment, U.S. President Theodore Roosevelt extended the right of intervention to the entire Caribbean basin. His 1904 **Roosevelt Corollary** to the Monroe Doctrine asserted the right to intervene in the internal affairs of nations when Washington found evidence of "chronic wrongdoing," including an inability to pay debts, keep order, or dispense justice. Between 1901 and 1928, the United States intervened militarily in Mexico, Central America, and the Caribbean more than fifty times. This aggressive behavior, called **gunboat diplomacy**, infuriated Latin Americans and helped bring to power military dictators who promised to maintain order and protect the investments of United States citizens and companies.

Gunboat diplomacy gives way to the Good Neighbor Policy

In the late 1920s, this policy began to change. Reuben Clarke, legal counsel to the U.S. Department of State, argued in a 1928 memorandum that gunboat diplomacy and the Roosevelt Corollary violated the intent and spirit of the Monroe Doctrine by destabilizing weaker states and making foreign intervention more rather than less likely. Five years later, Theodore Roosevelt's distant cousin Franklin became president of the United States and committed that country to "the policy of the good neighbor" with respect to Latin America. In one of his folksy "fireside chat" radio addresses, Franklin Roosevelt observed that while a good neighbor does not remain indifferent to dangers threatening the house next door, neither does he break the door down whenever his neighbor does something he does not like. Roosevelt's **Good Neighbor Policy** ushered in a new era of U.S. policy toward Latin America, in which the United States claimed it would respect the laws of its neighbors, refrain from military or political influence in their affairs, and restrict itself to economic investment and diplomatic persuasion. Interestingly, however, United States intervention in Latin America actually increased during Roosevelt's presidency. The forms of engagement were more subtle and respectful, and connections were preferred to conflicts, but the engagement remained active and strong.

Workers at a banana plantation owned by the United Fruit Company, Nicaragua.

Latin American support for the United States during World War II seemed to solidify the Good Neighbor Policy. But the end of World War II did not end global conflict. Serious tensions developed between capitalist and communist states, taking the form of a long struggle known as the Cold War (Chapter 34). At first, Latin America played a minor role in this confrontation. The principal capitalist nation was the United States, a country so powerful that no state in the Western Hemisphere was willing to oppose it openly. In Argentina, President Juan Perón spoke vaguely of a "Third Way" between

capitalism and communism but never attempted to implement his ideas. Other nations of Latin America supported the United States through the Organization of American States, a hemispheric association dominated by Washington.

Then, in 1958, Cuban guerrillas led by Fidel Castro mounted a serious challenge to that island's dictator, Fulgencio Batista (*full-HEHN-see-yō bah-TEE-stah*). The United States, viewing Castro as an honest, idealistic young hero, gave him some support by embargoing arms shipments to Batista. But after Castro came to power in January 1959, U.S. President Dwight Eisenhower discovered that Castro was far more radical than he had suspected. Castro quickly imposed his own dictatorship, shooting thousands of Batista's supporters and nationalizing industries and United States–owned corporations.

Fidel Castro and supporters, February 1959.

Castro's leftist policies immerse Cuba in the Cold War

The United States responded vigorously to Castro's leftist policies. It trained a paramilitary force of Cuban exiles to invade the island and overthrow Castro, but that force was disastrously defeated in an April 1961 landing at the Bay of Pigs in southern Cuba. The invaders were captured, the U.S. role was exposed, and a triumphant Castro drew closer to the Soviet Union, proclaiming himself a communist.

Soviet premier Nikita Khrushchev called Cuba an "unsinkable aircraft carrier in the Caribbean" and supplied the island with oil and machinery, but he feared a second U.S. invasion. Addressing this and other concerns, including the U.S. superiority in nuclear weapons and the continued western presence in Berlin, Khrushchev in 1962 placed medium-range ballistic missiles in Cuba. When U.S. spy flights revealed their presence, President John F. Kennedy placed a naval quarantine line around Cuba and demanded their removal. The Cuban Missile Crisis lasted 13 days and brought the world to the edge of nuclear war, but ended peacefully when Khrushchev removed the missiles in return for Kennedy's public pledge not to invade Cuba and private pledge to withdraw obsolete U.S. missiles from Turkey.

The Cuban Missile Crisis brings the world to the brink of war

The Cuban Missile Crisis affected the Cold War profoundly (Map 36.2). Kennedy and Khrushchev, shaken by their brush with catastrophe, installed direct electronic communication between the White House and the Kremlin and signed a limited nuclear test ban treaty in 1963. Later that year Kennedy was murdered by an assassin linked to a pro-Castro organization, and in 1964 Khrushchev was removed by Soviet leaders exasperated by his adventurism in placing the missiles in Cuba in the first place. Castro remained in control of Cuba into the twenty-first century, protected by Kennedy's pledge and by the U.S. realization that it could, after all, survive in the same hemisphere with a communist state.

But Cold War issues continued to affect relations between Latin America and the United States. In 1965 the Johnson administration landed Marines in the Dominican Republic to suppress a reformist revolution that Washington wrongly believed to be communist. Between 1970 and 1973, the Nixon administration waged economic warfare against the freely elected Marxist government of Salvador Allende in Chile, destabilizing it and giving the Chilean armed forces a reason for overthrowing it, as described in this chapter's opening. And in the 1980s, the Reagan administration confronted a grass-roots leftist governing coalition in Nicaragua, the **Sandinista Front for National Liberation**, which overthrew dictator Anastasio Somoza in 1979 and established close ties with Cuba and the Soviet Union. The United States tried unsuccessfully to arm counterrevolutionary forces and isolate Nicaragua within the hemisphere. However, the Sandinista government

Map 36.2 Cold War Confrontations in Latin America, 1954 –1992

The Cold War struggle between capitalism and communism was waged in several regions of the world at the same time. Note the number of confrontations in the small geographic area of Central America and the Caribbean Sea. Why did these Latin American nations play such a prominent role in the Cold War?

was eventually removed in 1987, not by subversion but by losing a free election and quietly withdrawing into political opposition.

U.S. attitudes toward Latin America change when the Cold War ends

The end of the Cold War in 1990 and the collapse of the Soviet Union the following year removed the communist-capitalist confrontation from the troubled relationship between Latin America and the United States. In this more relaxed international atmosphere, economic and cultural connections that had remained strong but submerged during the Cold War suddenly resurfaced. U.S. and global investment in Brazil, Chile, and Mexico flourished, enhanced by the establishment of the **North American Free Trade Area** (NAFTA) linking Canada, Mexico, and the United States in 1993. Washington supported other efforts to lower trade barriers across Central and South America. Immigration into the United States from Latin American countries increased greatly, and people of Hispanic descent became the largest U.S. minority population group in 2005. In the process, U.S. cuisine, music, and entertainment became latinized to an extent inconceivable only twenty years earlier.

These developments laid the foundation for a more productive and mutually respectful relationship between the United States and Latin America. The regional and global

conflicts of the twentieth century gave way to the potentially beneficial connections of the twenty-first. For the first time, interhemispheric relations were largely determined not by those states' responses to events set in motion by external forces but by their own reactions to each other.

Democracy and Dictatorship in Latin America

During the twentieth century, Latin America nations were faced with the same choice between dictatorship and democracy that confronted Europe, Asia, and Africa. Argentina, Brazil, and Chile experienced different types of dictatorships before democratizing near the end of the century. In Mexico, a political and social revolution between 1910 and 1920 changed the nation's governing structures and replaced one-man rule with one-party rule.

Argentina: The Failure of Political Leadership

Argentina's nineteenth-century political system (Map 36.3) was dominated by an elite of wealthy merchants, large estate owners, and military officers (Chapter 28). Reformers created a political movement, the Unión Cívica Radical (**UCR**, or Radical Civic Union), which rebelled several times between 1890 and 1910 in an effort to crack this elite's power. Finally, in 1916, a change in Argentina's election laws made possible a reasonably honest election, which was won by the UCR candidate, Hipólito Yrigoyen (*hih-PŌ-lē-tō ear-ih-GŌ-yen*).

The UCR fails to improve the condition of Argentine workers

Yrigoyen was an effective candidate but a poor president. His UCR promoted working-class wage increases and improvements in working conditions. But in 1919, as wages stagnated while food prices rose as a result of increased demand from war-ravaged Europe, Argentina was swept by strikes. Yrigoyen's government broke the strikes, shooting hundreds of demonstrators in the capital city of Buenos Aires and alienating its working-class supporters. This action permanently weakened the UCR, and a coalition of conservatives and military leaders overthrew the government in 1930. This coalition ruled Argentina for the next 13 years, reversing progress toward democracy. Then the Argentine army took over the government in 1943, and two years later Colonel Juan Domingo Perón (*peh-RŌN*) had emerged as the nation's leader.

Juan Perón builds a working-class political base

Perón's Appeal to Argentines. Juan Perón was a modern-day *caudillo*, ruling through a combination of charm, magnetism, and cunning. He understood that the UCR had recognized the growing political leverage of the Argentine middle and working classes and that Yrigoyen had alienated the working class through strikebreaking and indifference. Perón, resolving not to make the same mistake, built a political power base within the working class.

Perón's affection for working people was both genuine and calculated. He showered them with benefits: minimum-wage and maximum-hours legislation, paid vacations, the "thirteenth month" (a Christmas bonus of one month's pay), and, most important, the security of knowing that their welfare was foremost in his mind. While addressing his beloved ***descamisados*** (*dez-cah-mē-SAH-dōz*, or "shirtless people," Argentina's manual laborers), Perón would take off his own shirt and tie and stand before them bare-chested, flashing his magnificent smile and assuring them of his affection for them. They repaid him

Map 36.3 Argentina

Argentina is the second largest nation in South America and is five times the size of France. Observe that the country extends for two thousand miles from north to south. What impact would this have on Argentina's climate?

Document 36.1 Eva Perón Discusses Why She Joined Juan D. Perón

The people's enemies were and remain Perón's enemies.

I have seen them approach him with every kind of malice and lie.

I want to denounce them definitively.

Because they will be the eternal enemies of Perón and of the people, here and every place in the world where the flag of justice and liberty is raised. We have defeated them, but they belong to a race that will never die definitively.

Perón's enemies . . . I have seen them up close and personal.

I never remained in the rearguard of his battles.

I was in the front line of combat, fighting the short days and the long nights of my zeal, infinite like the thirst of my heart. And I carried out two tasks—I don't know which was more worthy of a small life like mine, but my life in the end—one, to fight for the rights of my people, and the other, to watch Perón's back.

In this double duty, immense for me, armed with nothing but my ardent heart, I met the enemies of Perón and my people.

They are the same!

Yes! I never saw anyone from our race—the race of the people—fighting against Perón.

But I did see the others. They cannot be near the people or the men whom the people elect to lead them.

And they definitely cannot be the leaders of the people.

The leaders of the people must be fanatics for the people.

If not, they grow dizzy at the top—and they do not return!

SOURCE: Eva Perón, *In My Own Words: Evita* (New York: New Press, 1996), 55–57.

with their loyalty and their votes, providing him with the margin of victory in the elections of 1946 and 1951. Perón thereby built a strong base of support that lasted for decades after he was driven out of office in 1955.

Evita Perón becomes Latin America's most influential female leader

Perón was ably assisted by his wife Evita (*AY-VĒ-tah*), an exceptionally shrewd politician known for her fur coats and platinum-colored hair (see page 937). A mediocre film actress and radio "weather girl," María Eva Duarte met Colonel Perón in 1943 and married him two years later (see "Eva Perón Discusses Why She Joined Juan D. Perón"). More radical than he in her political thinking, perhaps because of her own impoverished childhood, Evita encouraged lower-class resentment for the wealthy, while her magnificent wardrobe inspired the poor to think that if a destitute girl like her could become rich, one day they might do the same. This blend of anger and hope made her the idol of millions of Argentines. When she died of cancer in 1952 at age 32, two million people attended her funeral. And, at a time when only twenty million people lived in Argentina, a petition with six million signatures was presented to Pope Pius XII, asking for her canonization as a Catholic saint.

Perón dominates Argentine politics even after his overthrow

When Perón fell from power in 1955, the causes were of his own making: gross mismanagement of agricultural policy and the squandering of Argentina's huge postwar credit balances. In addition, in a bitter quarrel with the Catholic Church over its refusal to make Evita a saint, he decided to penalize it by legalizing divorce. The military leaders who sent Perón into exile in Spain thought they were rid of a typical Latin American dictator, despite his two victories in free elections and his undeniable personal popularity.

They were mistaken. The succession of military and civilian governments that followed Perón proved even less capable of handling Argentina's problems. Meanwhile, the exiled former president urged his followers to cast blank ballots in Argentine elections to demonstrate support for him. The totals were high enough to embarrass the government: in one case, the winner actually ran second to "blank." Perón's support *grew* while he was exiled, as younger people who could not remember his mistakes fell in love with his legend. "Peronism without Perón" haunted Argentine politics as the destabilization caused by blank ballots led to military dictatorships, which in turn were fought bitterly by urban terrorist groups like the **Montoneros** (*mawn-tawn-AIR-ōz*).

Urban terrorism plagues Argentina and Uruguay

Urban terrorism became a disturbingly common feature of Latin American political life in the late 1960s. Argentina's Montoneros, Uruguay's **Tupamaros** (*too-pah-MAH-rōz*), and less effective bands in other South American states robbed banks, dynamited power plants, and kidnapped and murdered government officials. These groups stood far to the political left, considering traditional communist parties to be tools of the establishment. The Montoneros hated the police, the military, executives of large companies, and U.S. and European diplomats, all of whom they characterized as oppressors. When several Montoneros kidnapped and killed an Argentine general in 1970, the army realized it had to come to terms with Perón. Only he seemed to have the personal prestige to stabilize the country, and they expected his return would split the Montoneros, some of whom considered him an oppressor, while others fondly remembered his kindness to the working class.

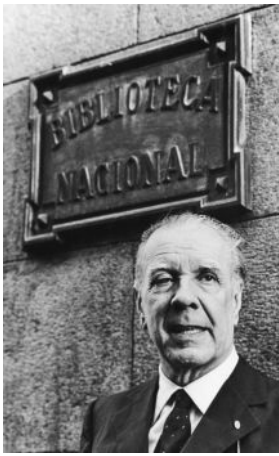
ARGENTINE ARTISTRY: JORGE LUÍS BORGES. As social and political difficulties wracked Argentina, the nation's most famous literary figure entered the final decades of his exceptionally creative life. Jorge Luís Borges (*HOAR-hā loo-EES BOAR-hāz*, 1899 –1986), born in Buenos Aires, was of mixed Argentine-English ancestry and spoke English as his first language. Educated in Geneva, Switzerland, he moved back to Buenos Aires in 1921 and quickly became an influential literary figure. From 1937–1946 he worked as a cataloguer at a branch of the Buenos Aires Municipal Library, a job that bored him but that gave him ample opportunity to hide in the stacks and read. Like Einstein in the patent office in Bern, Switzerland (Chapter 32), his mundane work gave him time to think and write.

In 1946 Borges was fired by Perón because of his anti-Peronista political leanings. During the Perón years, he wrote many of the short stories that earned him an international reputation as a master of that craft. When Perón was overthrown, Borges became director of the National Library of Argentina; with 900 thousand books at his disposal, he promptly went blind from an eye condition inherited from his father's side of the family. He continued to write, however, and had won virtually every significant literary award in the world, except for the Nobel Prize for Literature, by the time of his death in 1986.

Borges had his opinions about Argentina's political turbulence, and those opinions got him into trouble with Perón, but they seldom appear in his poetry or fiction. Most of his stories embrace universal themes: the search for meaning in life, the relationship between time and space (again reminiscent of Einstein), and the concept of infinity. Borges' fiction suggests that there is no such thing as material substance; the sensible world consists exclusively of ideas, which themselves exist only as long as they are perceived within people's minds. The human search for meaning in an infinite universe is futile. Since material things

do not exist, time is not restricted by them, and there are multiple strands of time coexisting at once, some intersecting and others paralleling each other.

All of this might seem overly philosophical, but Borges' short stories, few of which are more than six pages long, are both fascinating and haunting. In *The Aleph*, a man finds in a cellar a small, bright sphere in which all the places in the world, seen from every conceivable angle, coexist at once. In *The Book of Sand*, a peddler of bibles sells a man a book that has neither beginning nor end, and no page of which, once examined, ever appears again. In *The Other*, Borges himself, seated on a bench by the Charles River in Cambridge, Massachusetts, in 1969, discovers to his horror that the man seated next to him is also Borges, seated on a bench by the Rhône river in Geneva sometime between 1914 and 1921. This master of short fiction lived in Argentina during times of upheaval, but in many ways stood apart from his society, writing vividly of abstract concepts that his words made concrete.



Jorge Luis Borges in front of the National Library, Buenos Aires.

ARGENTINA AFTER PERÓN. Borges was not the only Argentine dismayed when, in 1973, after months of negotiations, the 78-year-old Perón returned triumphantly from exile to become president again. But his death the next year left the presidency to his fourth wife, Isabel, who had run as his vice president in 1973. Mystified by the duties of the presidency, she began consulting astrologers. In 1976, as inflation rose to 4,640 percent per year, she was removed by the military. The new military dictatorship waged a "**dirty war**" against Peronists, Montoneros, and Communists, imprisoning people without trial, torturing them to death, and disposing of the bodies in unmarked graves. More than 25 thousand people disappeared this way between 1976 and 1978.

The Argentine military dictatorship wages war against leftists

Every Thursday morning between 1977 and 1983, the **Mothers of the Plaza de Mayo** (*MĪ-yō*) marched around that square in front of the Casa Rosada, the presidential residence in Buenos Aires, to protest the disappearance of their husbands and children. At first the regime ignored them and the economy turned prosperous. But in 1982 the military leadership broke off negotiations with Great Britain over the future of the Falkland Islands (which Argentines call the Malvinas), claimed by both countries since 1833. Argentine soldiers invaded the islands on April Fool's Day, 1982, quickly finding that the joke was on them. Rather than let the rocky, windswept islands go, British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher launched a massive military expedition to retake them. The British won the Falklands War, Thatcher was triumphantly reelected, and the Argentine military dictatorship collapsed.

Borges protested the "dirty war" and ridiculed the Falklands conflict, calling it "two bald men fighting over a comb." He welcomed the restoration of civilian government in 1983 as Raúl Alfonsín (*ahl-fahn-SĒN*) of the UCR was elected president. Generals who had conducted the "dirty war" were put on trial and convicted, but lower-ranking officers were exempted in 1987 to avoid the threat of a military revolt. Meanwhile the trauma of those whose relatives "disappeared" continued to haunt Argentine society. Yet Perón's political successors won office in their own right and proved to be ordinary politicians, neither magical nor charismatic.

Brazil's currency devaluation wrecks the Argentine economy

Argentina's most vexing problem after 1990, however, was neither the military nor the Peronistas but the economy. Burdened with a huge foreign debt, a commercial system that failed to modernize after World War II, and a legacy of bitterness between management and labor, Alfonsín was unable to control triple-digit inflation and a shrinking

Gross Domestic Product (GDP). In 1991 Argentina, Brazil, Paraguay, and Uruguay established **MERCOSUR**, the "Common Market of the South," in an effort to imitate the success of the European Community. But in 1999 Brazil devalued its currency, raising the cost of Argentine products in Brazil and creating in Argentina a massive trade deficit. The following year the Argentine currency collapsed. Argentines were forbidden to take money out of the country, banks closed for indefinite periods, and one of the world's potentially richest nations resorted to barter for ordinary transactions. Modest stability returned late in 2002, but Argentina's underlying economic problems remained, calling into question not only the nation's financial health, but also the long-term survival of its democracy.

Brazil: Development and Inequality

Brazil emerged from the Great War as South America's most powerful and prosperous nation (Map 36.4). But this prosperity depended on high world market prices for two principal commodities, rubber and coffee. In the early 1920s, competition from Southeast Asia cut world rubber prices by 95 percent and bankrupted many Brazilian rubber planters. Then, in 1929, staggering political and economic mismanagement caused coffee prices to collapse. The next year, politically progressive military officers joined forces with politicians resentful of Brazil's powerful coffee-growing states, São Paulo, Minas Gerais, Rio de Janeiro, and Rio Grande do Sul, to overthrow the Brazilian Republic in the Revolution of 1930. Now an unimposing provincial governor from southern Brazil, Getúlio (*jeh-TOO-lē-yō*) Vargas, began a 24-year reign as that nation's most capable twentieth-century leader.

Pressures on Brazilian coffee and rubber lead to revolution

GETÚLIO VARGAS AND MODERNIZATION. Brazil's presidents had long been weak, and real power rested with governors and strongmen of the country's most important states. Vargas surprised everyone, however, by moving swiftly to remake Brazil. He removed the governors of every state except one, replacing them with federal "interventors" reporting directly to him. This move provoked an armed rebellion in the state of São Paulo, which the army suppressed after four months' intense fighting. By defeating the Paulista Revolt of 1932, Vargas discredited advocates of state power and strengthened the central government. He used his opportunity to press for extensive bridge and road projects and to grant women the vote in 1932, endorsing the demands of the Brazilian Federation of Feminine Progress and its suffragist founder, the botanist Bertha Lutz.

Brazil was then drawn into the global upheavals of the 1930s by its large Italian and German immigrant communities. The Integralistas, a fascist organization led by Plínio Salgado, a well-to-do young politician who altered his appearance to resemble Adolf Hitler's, fought in the streets with the communist-dominated National Liberation Alliance. Vargas used fears of a radical takeover to move against both extremes and suspend constitutional guarantees in 1937. He replaced democratic government with a military-backed dictatorship called the ***Estado Nôvo*** (*ess-TAH-dō Nō-vō*), or New State.

With Congress exiled and democratic processes discarded, Vargas could act as he pleased. His new state included elements of fascism, but Vargas was a pragmatist indifferent to ideology. He saw the world heading for war and seized the opportunity to position Brazil advantageously on the side of the United States.

Using the *Estado Nôvo*'s centralized executive powers, Vargas aggressively pursued economic development. Labor and management were placed under state control, appointments to civil service positions were based on merit, and the federal government created a number of state-owned manufacturing enterprises. Most of the groundwork

Vargas uses his dictatorial authority to remake Brazil

Map 36.4 Brazil

Brazil is the largest nation in South America and the fifth largest nation in the world. Notice that although most of the country is inland, most of the principal cities are near the seacoast. What factors account for this distribution of population?

Rio de Janiero in the 1940's.

for Brazil's remarkable economic expansion of the late 1950s was laid under the Estado Nôvo. But even a smooth political operator like Vargas could not conceal the fact that Brazilians fighting for democracy in Europe were governed by dictatorship at home. In October 1945 the military returned from the war, removed Vargas from office, and sent him back to his ranch in southern Brazil. Free elections followed.

MODERNITY AND ITS STRESSES, 1954–1964. Vargas' legacy was both personal and substantive. An engaging, warm-hearted man who had always cared deeply for Brazil's land and people, he was also a clever, manipulative politician. He had recognized the need to modernize Brazil by developing its transportation network, improving its harbors, and encouraging the growth of its local industries. In 1955 one of his protégés, Juscelino Kubitschek (*hoo-seh-LĒ-nō KOO-bih-check*), won the presidency with the slogan "Fifty Years of Progress in Five," a commitment to build on the foundations Vargas had laid.

Kubitschek's program modernizes Brazil at the cost of massive inflation

Kubitschek's administration built roads, bridges, and hydroelectric plants, erected immense public-housing complexes, and granted extensive subsidies to developing industries such as steel and automobiles. In the process, however, inflation spiraled out of control, and by 1960 Brazilians were working harder than ever, yet enjoying *less* purchasing power. Brazil's constitution prohibited its presidents from seeking immediate reelection, and although Kubitschek remained personally popular, he was replaced in 1960 by a popular young candidate, Jânio Quadros (*HAH-nē-ō KWAH-drōss*).

Quadros, the energetic reforming mayor of São Paulo, won the election by appealing to Vargas' political opponents. But in Brazil presidential and vice-presidential races are separate, and the vice president elected in 1960, João Goulart (*ZHWOW goo-LAHRT*), was a Vargas supporter and, in the eyes of many, a dangerous leftist. When Congress refused to enact Quadros' huge budget and the impulsive president resigned, the Brazilian military considered deposing Goulart. This standoff was broken by a compromise, but Goulart proved less successful at running the economy than he was at plundering it through graft, corruption, and cronyism. By April 1964 the army overthrew him and replaced him with a military government. For modernized Brazil, this action seemed to belong to an earlier age, and when it was not followed by the long-established practice of returning control to civilians, Brazilians were shocked.

MILITARY RULE, 1964–1985. The 21-year dictatorship that followed was notorious for its brutal violation of human rights. The regime abolished freedom of speech, freedom of the press, and free elections, and systematically tortured and killed its opponents. But an economic boom between 1967 and 1974 helped the new government greatly, promoting foreign investment in the northeast and the Amazon valley and making vast sums available for highways and industrial development. Brazil's economy grew at an average rate of 10 percent over that seven-year period. By 1974, manufactured goods exceeded coffee as the nation's most valuable export. Purchasing power rose for nearly all classes of Brazilians during those years, and prosperity encouraged many to overlook the military oppression.

The Brazilian military installs a two-decade dictatorship

Military rule creates an economic boom

Brazil's experience inspired imitation, as both Chile (in 1973) and Argentina (in 1976) were taken over by military dictatorships that revoked human rights and stimulated economic growth. But Brazil's economy began to slow down in 1975, when a killing frost—highly unusual for Brazil—devastated the coffee crop and sent world coffee prices soaring. As competitors such as Nigeria and Colombia took advantage of the situation, Brazil lost a significant share of the world coffee market. The global recession of

1974–1975, brought on by an Arab oil embargo (Chapter 37), also depressed the prices of Brazilian exports. At the same time, the country's huge foreign debt was burdened by rising interest rates. The military regime, having borrowed heavily abroad to finance its economic reforms, was now unable to pay the installments. Inflation reached 100 percent by 1980, hurting the middle and working classes and the poor, and strikes swept through Brazilian factories.

Brazilian Artistry: Pelé. Before, during, and after the two decades of military rule, the aspect of everyday life that most united Brazilians was their national sport: soccer. The game was introduced to Brazil in 1894 by Charles Miller, a Brazilian teenager of English descent. Only whites could play in organized leagues until 1923, but by the 1930s the sport was fully integrated. It quickly became a national obsession, punctuated by Brazilian victories in the World Cup tournaments of 1958, 1962, 1970, 1994, and 2002.

The appeal of soccer was grounded in several factors. There was no other organized sport in Brazil to compete with it. It could be played on any level stretch of ground, without expensive apparatus: all that was needed was a ball and a couple of orange crates to mark the goals. It rewarded improvisation and individual skill, and the rhythms of soccer reminded many Brazilians of their most popular dance, the samba. By 1950, when Brazil hosted the World Cup tournament, Rio de Janeiro boasted the world's largest soccer stadium, seating 175 thousand people, with standing room for 42 thousand more. Every Brazilian city supported numerous soccer clubs.

Brazilian soccer stars were adored like movie stars in Hollywood, and many of them either adopted "stage names" or went by a single name. Leônidas, the "Black Diamond," invented the bicycle kick in the 1930s; the maneuver involves performing a backward half-somersault while kicking the ball in the opposite direction, over your head or shoulder. The fabled Mané Garrincha, whose legs were deformed by vitamin deficiencies and malnutrition, capitalized on his disabilities to dribble the ball through and around baffled defenders; he was a mainstay of the World Cup championship teams of 1958 and 1962. But the most famous soccer artist of the twentieth century was Edson Arantes do Nascimento, whose friends called him Pelé. Born in 1941, he played on all three Brazilian World Cup championship teams between 1958 and 1970.

The Brazil side that won the 1958 World Cup, with Garrincha (first from left) and Pelé (third from left) in the front row.

Pelé had every skill required not only for success but for stardom. Joseph Page says it best: "He had it all: speed, mobility, a sense of oneness with the ball, uncanny vision, a fearsome shot off either foot, and, the crowning touch, an audacious, instinctive creativity." Pelé was both an amazingly productive goal-scorer and a marvelous passer who made all his teammates look spectacular. Films of his games show a man who dominated the field as though the sport had been invented for his personal fulfillment. Beyond this, his sunny disposition and expansive personality made him the ideal ambassador for soccer, a star who loved people and would talk with anyone. An artist with a soccer ball and a captivating person, Pelé and his exceptional teammates gave Brazilians ample reason to feel proud during the difficult decade of the 1960s.

Return to Democracy . . . Again. By the late 1970s, economic problems encouraged Brazilians to question the government on other grounds. Its human rights policy alienated the powerful Catholic Church, which denounced the government through the National Council of Brazilian Bishops and supported striking workers. Even former supporters of the military dictatorship began calling for a return to civilian rule, and the regime had

Economic pressures force the military to return power to civilians

little choice but to liberalize. Gradually it eased restrictions on personal liberties, and in 1985 Brazil held its first free presidential election since 1960.

Civilian rule was welcomed throughout the country, but the two-decade military dictatorship had traumatized everyone. The people no longer viewed the army as an impartial guarantor of good government, though a younger group of generals tried to reassure civilians that the military would no longer intervene in politics. Yet the new civilian leaders proved no more capable of handling the economy than their military predecessors. Inflation exceeded 200 percent in both 1985 and 1990, wiping out the economic gains of 1967–1974.

In 2000, of Latin American nations, only Argentina's economic situation was worse. Then in 2002 the Brazilian presidency was won by Luís Inacio da Silva (*ē-NAH-sē-ō dah SEAL-vah*), who called himself Lula. A former auto mechanic, he was the first president in Brazilian history to come from a nonprivileged background, and his career as a labor organizer and leftist politician led wealthy Brazilians to view him as a dangerous radical. But once in office, Lula and his economic team rescued Brazil from the brink of financial default, revised the public pension system, and made significant progress in reforming the nation's antiquated, inequitable tax structure. His practical policies raised the possibility that Brazil might begin to close the gap between rich and poor and reach its economic potential.

Chile: Socialism, Militarism, and Democracy

For Chile, the early decades of the twentieth century were disruptive. The country's institutional framework had come apart in the Revolution of 1891 (Chapter 28), and politicians in Chile's capital of Santiago had been unable to reassemble it. The country was troubled by wildly fluctuating copper and nitrate prices after World War I. Reformers such as Arturo Alessandri tried to modernize but were periodically replaced by military regimes that proved no more capable of stabilizing the nation.

The Great Depression cripples Chile

In the 1930s, the Great Depression devastated Chile. Exports of copper and nitrates, as well as their prices on the world market, declined steeply. The military regime, unable to cope with the social chaos caused by the Depression, called Alessandri back to office in 1932. He drastically reduced government spending, and the gradual global economic recovery in the mid-1930s helped stabilize Chile's economy. But the nation's rigid class structure, dominated by ancient families of Basque origin, kept the majority of its citizens on the edge of poverty. World War II temporarily eased social tensions by increasing demand for Chile's minerals, but the end of the war reduced that demand and plunged the "shoestring republic," one of the planet's most geographically isolated nations, into the Cold War.

CHILE AND THE COLD WAR. At first Chile seemed an unlikely place for Cold War confrontation. Despite the country's deep class divisions, which seemed ripe for Marxist analysis, neither Moscow nor Washington considered the country particularly important until a Marxist economics professor named Salvador Allende began running for president every six years, from 1952 through 1970.

Allende, a dumpy, bespectacled man, preached a message of social equality and redistribution of wealth that caught the imaginations of many lower-class Chileans. After Fidel Castro's revolution in Cuba, the United States came to view an Allende victory as a

potential propaganda disaster for capitalism. Such an event would be the first instance of a Marxist candidate winning a truly free election, and would stamp communism as the "wave of the future" in Latin America. Chile therefore took on a significance out of all proportion to its actual status in international affairs. In 1964 the United States poured millions of dollars into the campaign of Allende's opponent, Eduardo Frei (*FRĪ*). Frei won the election, but his moderate reform programs did not achieve the "Revolution in Liberty" he had promised. The next elections, in 1970, were widely viewed as a showdown between capitalism and Marxism.

Chilean miners drill for nitrates with jackhammers.

Once again the United States spent heavily to influence the outcome, but this time, in a three-way race, Allende won the presidency by a narrow margin. He promised that at the end of his six-year term he would leave office willingly and turn power over to his legal successor. Yet communist governments did not permit free elections, and although Allende was a Socialist, much of his support came from communists. The Chilean military, recalling its unsuccessful efforts to govern the country in the 1920s and 1930s, initially supported Allende as the rightful president, preventing would-be revolutionaries from taking action.

Allende's election leads to U.S. destabilization efforts

Allende's Marxist Experiment. The United States, however, was determined to remove Allende from office. The Nixon administration cut off Chile's sources of credit and pressured foreign lenders to call in their debts. At the same time, Allende miscalculated drastically. He authorized huge wage increases for Chilean workers, hoping that a sharp increase in the demand for manufactured goods would stimulate industrial production. All it stimulated was runaway inflation, which rose to 566 percent annually by 1973. In rural areas, landless Amerind and mestizo peasants seized lands from their owners and refused Allende's demands that they return them. By mid-1973 Chile was plagued by a series of strikes, the most serious of which were two work stoppages by truckers, indispensable movers of goods and services in that oddly shaped land. The military had backed Allende for nearly three years despite strong U.S. pressure, but it finally decided to remove him after the second truckers' strike.

On September 11, 1973, Chilean air force planes bombed the Moneda Palace, and as tanks shelled the building and infantry broke in, Allende committed suicide. More than two thousand people died in the bloodiest military takeover in South American history. Power passed to a four-man *junta* composed of chiefs of the Chilean armed services. The dominant member, General Augusto Pinochet (*ō-GOOSE-tō pē-nō-SHAY* or *pē-nō-SHET*), had supported Allende until his final month in office. Pinochet, following the model of the Brazilian military dictatorship, refused to return power to civilian officials and ruled Chile for 17 years.

Chilean Artistry: Pablo Neruda. Watching these events in horror was Pablo Neruda, Chile's finest poet and the 1971 winner of the Nobel Prize for Literature. Born in Santiago in 1904, Neruda began writing poetry at the age of nine. Three years later he met the Chilean poet Gabriela Mistral, herself a Nobel Prize winner, who encouraged his ambitions and urged him to read British and American poets. Neruda soon discovered the writings of the American Walt Whitman, who became the major influence on his work.

After completing his education, Neruda joined the Chilean foreign service in 1927 and was posted to several South and East Asian and Eastern European countries, where he became, as he later recalled, "a citizen of the world." By the 1930s he was a dedicated communist, and was in Spain during the Spanish Civil War, when as a Chilean diplomat

he looked on as the international brigades of volunteers entered Madrid to assist the leftist Spanish Republic against the Fascists of General Francisco Franco (see "Pablo Neruda, 'The Arrival in Madrid of the International Brigades'"). Returning to Chile in 1938, he left the foreign service and became a professional writer and poet, as well as an active communist politician.

Neruda remained a communist until Nikita Khruschev's Secret Speech in 1956 (Chapter 34) disillusioned him and forced him to critically examine his earlier adherence to Marxism. But he never lost his sympathy for the condition of the working classes in Chile and elsewhere, and he used his 1971 Nobel acceptance speech to call attention to their plight. Only Borges matched him in international fame among Latin American writers, and the two men were friends for many years, despite their disagreements about many current issues. Ill with heart disease for years, Neruda died sud-

Document 36.2 Pablo Neruda, "The Arrival in Madrid of the International Brigades," translated by Jodey Bateman.

One morning in a cold month
In an agonizing month, spotted with mud and smoke
A month that wouldn't get on its knees, a sad
besieged, unlucky month
When from beyond my wet window panes you could
hear the jackals
Howling with their rifles and their teeth full of blood
then
When we didn't have more hope than a dream
of more gun powder, when we believed by then
That the world was full of nothing but devouring
monsters and furies,
Then, breaking through the frost of that cold
month in Madrid, in the early morning mist
I saw with my own eyes, with this heart which looks out
I saw the bright ones arrive, the victorious fighters

From that lean, hard, tested rock of a brigade.
It was the troubled time when the women
Carried an emptiness like a terrible burning coal,
And Spanish death, sharper and more bitter
than other deaths
Filled the fields which until then had been honored by
wheat.

Through the streets the beaten blood of men had joined
With water flowing out of the destroyed hearts of houses
The bones of dismembered children, the piercing
Silence of women in mourning, the eyes
Of the defenseless closed forever,
It was like sadness and loss, like a spat-upon garden
Comrades,
Then
I saw you,
And my eyes even now are full of pride
Because I saw you arriving through the
Morning mist, coming to the pure brow of Spain
Silent and firm
Like bells before daybreak
So solemn with blue eyes coming from far, far away
coming from your corners, from your lost homelands,
from your dreams
Full of burning sweetness and guns
To defend the Spanish city where freedom was trapped
About to fall and be bitten by beasts.

Brothers, from now on
Your purity and your strength, your solemn story
Will be known by child and man, by woman and old one,
May it reach all beings who have no hope, may it
descend into the mines corroded by sulphuric air,
May it climb the inhuman stairways to the slave
May all the stars, all the wheat stalks of Spain and the
world
Write your name and your harsh struggle
And your victory, strong and earthy as a red oak tree.

Because you have given new birth by your sacrifice
To the lost faith, the empty soul, the confidence in the
earth
And through your abundance, your nobility, your deaths,
Like through a valley of hard, bloody rocks
Passes an immense river of doves
Made of steel and hope.

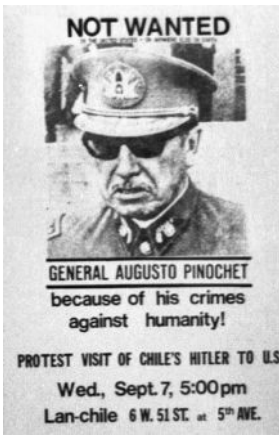
www.motherbird.com/arrival_brigades.html

denly on September 23, 1973, twelve days after the overthrow of Allende, whom he had supported vigorously.

Pinochet installs a brutal military dictatorship

Pinochet's Brutal Dictatorship. In a series of violent outbreaks during the first five months of the military dictatorship, Neruda's home was looted and vandalized after his death. This was only one way in which Pinochet's government attacked its opponents. Suspects were beaten, tortured, held without bail or notification to families, and in many cases simply disappeared. Some were buried in mass graves in remote areas; others were thrown alive out of airplanes over the Pacific, after having their bellies slit open so the bodies would not float. The regime, acting on its belief that authoritarian government was superior to popular sovereignty, set out to destroy Chilean democracy, declaring all political parties illegal, dissolving Congress, and suspending the constitution.

Pinochet turned Chile's economy over to economists from the University of Chicago, and in the late 1970s Chile experienced impressive prosperity. Social programs were either slashed or abolished, and the lower classes were placed on what amounted to an austerity program. Inflation declined to 32 percent in 1978 and 10 percent in 1982. Chile's economy grew at an average rate of 7 percent from 1976 through 1981, although purchasing power declined and the gap between rich and poor widened dramatically.



Anti-Pinochet poster, 1977.

In 1980 Pinochet drew up a new constitution extending his presidential term to 1990. But a recession in the early 1980s dampened public enthusiasm for his regime, and the Latin American financial crisis of 1982, brought on by Mexico's decision to default on its foreign debt, hit the Chilean economy hard. Unemployment soon reached 30 percent of the work force, and the regime was forced to confront urban demonstrations on the 11th of each month, beginning on September 11, 1983, the tenth anniversary of the takeover.

As the economy slowly recovered, international pressure on the regime mounted. Pope John Paul II, for example, visited Santiago in 1986 and refused to appear in public with Pinochet. The Pope, who advocated democracy in Poland and other Soviet bloc nations, could not appear to endorse the man who had destroyed Chilean democracy. The United States continued to support the dictatorship because of Pinochet's anticommunist policies, but most European states urged Pinochet to step down.

In 1988, apparently convinced of his own popularity, Pinochet held a special election: a "yes" vote would retain him in office until 1997, while a "no" vote would call for a return to civilian rule. Opposition forces created an alliance called the ***Concertación*** (*kahn-sair-tah-sē-ŌN*), which orchestrated television advertisements complete with rock music proclaiming "The Moral Supremacy of the No." The alliance also rented a large network of computers to monitor the election for vote fraud. By a 55–43 percent margin, "no" defeated "yes," and after some cautious bargaining, Pinochet accepted the verdict. His democratically elected successors were committed to restoring democracy, working for social justice, and promptly investigating human rights abuses that had occurred during the military dictatorship. By 2007, Chile's democratic institutions had been reinvigorated, and the nation's economy was the most stable in South America.

Mexico: The Legacy of the Revolution

Mexico, which had been dominated by dictators for most of the nineteenth century (Chapter 28), changed dramatically early in the twentieth (Map 36.5). The dictator Porfirio Díaz had worked hard from 1876 to 1910 to modernize the nation, attracting foreign

Map 36.5 Mexico

Mexico stretches 2,100 miles from northwest to southeast. Although it is nearly four times the size of France, it is the smallest of the three nations of North America. Observe the short distance (only 150 miles) across the Isthmus of Tehuantepec, separating the Gulf of Mexico from the Pacific Ocean. Why is this short distance significant for Mexican trade?

investment, building a large railway network, and working closely with scientists and technicians to develop an industrial base. But social and political repression remained, with most Mexican peasants working as a landless class and voting rights limited to a very small number of property-owning men. Many educated Mexicans believed that economic modernization could not succeed without social and political reform. Díaz was driven out in a violent revolution in 1911, and the leader of the rebels, Francisco Madero, became president of Mexico.

THE REVOLUTION OF 1910–1920. In 1911 it appeared that the Mexican Revolution was over, but it lasted nine more years. Madero, focusing on political democracy, underestimated the severity of Mexico's social and economic problems. Rival leaders Emiliano Zapata and Pancho Villa (*VĒ-yah*) took up arms against him on behalf of vast numbers of impoverished Mexicans. In 1913, elements in the Mexican army that had previously supported the Díaz dictatorship took advantage of these divisions to overthrow and murder Madero. Mexico then endured seven years of turbulence, civil war, and U.S. intervention before the revolution finally ended in 1920.

Mexico embarks on a social revolution

The Mexican Revolution developed into a more radical social movement than observers had expected in 1910. The Constitution of 1917 provided a means for far-reaching land redistribution to the peasants. It also placed severe restrictions on the Catholic Church (whose leadership, like that of the military, had supported Díaz), and granted unprecedented rights to organized labor. If implemented completely, it would revolutionize the ownership of property and the exercise of power in Mexico. But it was so radical that even its partial implementation brought on recurring cycles of rebellion, civil war, and political assassination, with displaced elites fighting radical reformers for control of the country.

In the midst of this chaos, the government commissioned some of Mexico's most prominent artists to paint educational murals on the walls of public buildings. The purpose was to display great events in Mexican history to the three out of four adults who, in 1920, could not read, but the consequence was to create an artistic school known as Mexican muralism. Its chief practitioners—José Clemente Orozco, David Alfaro Siqueiros, and Diego Rivera—quickly became famous throughout the world for their strikingly innovative use of vivid colors and dramatic techniques. Rivera's wife, Frida Kahlo, while not herself a muralist, also became a powerful nationalistic artist in her own right. Together their work publicized the sufferings and achievements of Mexican historical figures as well as populist themes.

Dream of a Sunday Afternoon in the Alameda Central by Diego Rivera (1947). Frida Kahlo is to the left of the figure of death.

Rivera's highly realistic and colorful murals conveyed a clear social message—that it was time to return the Amerind to the mainstream of Mexican society. Rivera and Kahlo, as well as Siqueiros, were communists, and their leftist politics and social activism typified the radicalism of many who experienced the Mexican Revolution. It was that sort of radicalism that those who wished to institutionalize the Revolution hoped to channel into stabilizing activities.

Institutionalization: The PRI. The development of the Institutional Revolutionary Party, or **PRI,** ended social and political turmoil. Claiming to embody the true spirit of the Mexican Revolution, it was so successful in winning elections that it was nicknamed the "Factory of Presidents." The PRI's corporate structure guaranteed representation for peasants, workers, middle class, and military, thus tying it closely to the principal elements of Mexican society. With widespread support, the PRI found it easy to elect candidates, but it also resorted to vote fraud in those few instances when popularity was not enough. From 1929 to 2000, its dominance gave Mexico one of Latin America's most politically stable governments.

The PRI brings stability without genuine democracy

This political stability, however, concealed serious social and economic inequalities. Even though the Constitution of 1917 had been designed to alleviate poverty, by 1929 most Mexican peasants still had no hope of owning enough land to feed their families. During the presidency of Lázaro Cárdenas (1934–1940), this situation was partially corrected. Cárdenas nationalized foreign oil companies and transferred farmland from large landowners to collective farms, similar in some respects to those in Soviet Russia. He became the most popular president in Mexican history, a revolutionary icon whose faded photograph still hangs on the walls of dwellings throughout Mexico.

Political and Economic Strains. The Cárdenas presidency marked the most radical phase of the Mexican Revolution. When World War II began and Mexico sided firmly with the United States, radicalism and even egalitarianism were suppressed. In the immediate postwar years, the PRI restrained all domestic opposition and increased its power through corruption and favoritism. When Fidel Castro seized power in nearby Cuba and

attempted to export communism to other Latin American countries, Mexico reacted sharply, fearing both communist action and U.S. reaction. Mexican apprehension grew even stronger in the 1980s, when leftist rebellions in Nicaragua and El Salvador sent refugees fleeing into Mexico, threatening to destabilize a nation for which political stability, won with such difficulty, had become an end in itself.

Mexico maintains good relations with the United States

Mexican relations with the United States remained close. In 1963 the Kennedy administration agreed to return a disputed border region to Mexico. Thirty years later, the creation of the North American Free Trade Area appeared highly beneficial to the Mexican economy, which had grown consistently between 1958 and 1973 but had been depressed since the mid-1980s by low crude oil prices. A U.S. loan of $20 billion (repaid with interest two years later) lent support to Mexico's economy in the mid-1990s, and NAFTA, which reduced tariffs between the United States, Mexico, and Canada, promised to stimulate economic growth for all its participants.

These developments might have worked to the PRI's advantage, but the party was damaged by three scandalous events. First, President Gustavo Díaz Ordaz ordered the army and police to shoot hundreds of student demonstrators in Mexico City just before the 1968 Olympic Games. The students had been protesting the authoritarian nature of Mexico's allegedly democratic government, and this "Tlatelolco Massacre" proved that they were right. The slaughter undermined PRI's reputation and credibility. Second, revelations that Carlos Salinas (*sah-LĒ-nahss*), president from 1988 to 1994, had embezzled hundreds of millions of dollars from the federal treasury forced him to flee the country following the end of his term. The scandal spotlighted PRI corruption and cost the party much of the legitimacy it had earned through more than six decades of reasonably competent rule. Third, the PRI candidate for president claimed to have won the 1994 election despite the widespread belief that Cuahtémoc (*kwah-TĀ-mock*) Cárdenas, son of Lázaro, had actually won, and that the PRI had stolen the election through massive vote fraud. By the late 1990s the PRI was under serious challenge.

Scandals bring down the PRI

For the first time since the 1920s, other parties presented competitive alternatives to the PRI, and in 2000 one of them, the Partido del Acción Nacional (PAN, or National Action Party), elected its presidential candidate, Vicente Fox, in the most stunning Mexican political upheaval in eighty years. Mexico then embarked on a transition from one-party government to multiparty democracy, the outcome of which depended largely on Fox's success or failure as the first non-PRI president since 1929.

Fox had a difficult time in office. The PRI remained in control of Congress, blocking most of his initiatives. Extensive illegal immigration to the United States troubled relations between the two neighbors. Even NAFTA, which had been implemented with such high hopes, fell victim to globalization of the world economy. Although many jobs from the United States relocated to Mexico because of its cheap labor, many more relocated from Mexico to China, where labor was even less expensive.

Six Regional Transitions

By the early twenty-first century, the principal nations of Latin America had begun to emerge from long, difficult struggles with their authoritarian heritage. Argentina, Brazil, Chile, and Mexico had developed democratic institutions and had committed their

societies to making those institutions work. The region seemed more politically stable than at any other time since the era of independence. Yet it still faced critical social and economic transitions, six of which are considered here.

A Peruvian couple, late 19th century.

Gender Roles

For centuries, Latin American women were largely confined to the home and the care of children, placing them outside the public sphere. The Spanish and Portuguese conquests had brought the Iberian concept of **machismo,** the praise of masculine virility and power, into Amerind societies already dominated by men. Iberian-American women were expected to be models of spiritual and moral superiority and purity, models that do not allow active participation in the sometimes corrupt aspects of public life.

Women such as Evita Perón broke with this model in some ways, but not in others. Evita exercised immense influence in Argentina between 1945 and 1952, but that influence derived largely from her ability to depict herself as "the mother of the people," thereby retaining traditional feminine attributes while projecting her energies into the public sphere. When she fell ill with uterine cancer, her physician was too embarrassed to disclose to her the true severity of her illness, because it was a female disorder—and Evita, observing the same convention, never asked about her condition until it was too late.

Latin American women face systemic challenges

Evita Perón's example reveals one dimension of the challenge facing Latin American women. In the twentieth century, they gained access to higher education and pursued careers in various professions, including medicine and law. But while they began to play public roles in areas such as human rights, education, and economic security, they did not address issues such as workplace equality and reproductive rights. Many Latin American women remain uncomfortable with those and similar issues, in part because action in such matters requires a level of political activism that might compromise the spiritual and moral purity associated with womanhood.

Inequality

Latin American societies were highly stratified, with tremendous inequalities of wealth between upper and lower classes. In the sixteenth century, Iberian social structures were imposed upon Amerind societies that were themselves hierarchical. The Spanish and Portuguese kings simply replaced the Aztec and Inca emperors, and Iberian conquistadors replaced Amerind nobles. After independence, Iberian-descended owners of large landed estates and prosperous merchants and bankers formed a new aristocracy based on wealth. They restricted their ranks by limiting other groups' access to higher education and legally barring them from land ownership.

These inequalities continue to trouble Latin America in the twenty-first century. Although Mexico and Argentina allow access to higher education based on merit, Brazil, the region's largest and potentially most prosperous country, continues to view higher education as solely for privileged elites. Fewer than 1 percent of adult Brazilians have college or university degrees, a figure that demonstrates how difficult it is for lower-class Brazilians to attain upward social mobility.

Amerinds from Tierra del Fuego, Chile.

Debt

To reduce debt, Latin American nations struggle to increase economic productivity, but the two aims often work against each other. Argentina, Brazil, and Mexico, in particular, are burdened with huge indebtedness to foreign lenders, most of it occurring recently. As the new civilian governments took charge of their nations' economies, they took responsibility for existing debts but also increased them. In the 1990s, Latin American nations finally began to achieve some prosperity, as massive foreign investment reduced inflation and produced solid economic growth. Yet the region remains highly vulnerable to fluctuations in global demand for its exports, as well as to sharp swings in world financial markets: Mexico's financial system crashed in 1994, and Argentina's in 2000.

Debt continues to hamper Latin American economies

During this economic turmoil, international agencies such as the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank lent large sums to Latin American countries to help them cover interest payments on existing debt. This new money came with conditions: recipients were required to open their economies to foreign investment, reduce inflation, and minimize government's role in economic life. The last of these promoted democratization by encouraging military leaders, most of them wedded to governmental control of the economy, to turn their powers over to civilians. But it also increased the size of the debt it was helping to service. Without significant increases in economic productivity, Latin American debt will continue to weigh heavily on the region.

Population

The skyline of Sâo Paulo, Brazil's largest city.

The prospects for sustainable economic growth and meaningful social change in Latin America are profoundly affected by population growth. Demand for resources, availability of jobs, and provision of adequate social services are all population dependent. In the 1960s it was frequently stated that Latin America's "population explosion" would doom the region to perpetual poverty if drastic measures were not taken to control the size of families. In 1970 the average number of children per Latin American family was six. Three decades later, access to contraception and improvements in education for women had helped reduce the number of children per family in nations such as Mexico and Brazil to 2.5.

Demographic pressures hinder Latin America's development

Yet because children and youth constitute such a large proportion of Latin American populations, in coming years millions will be ready for the workplace but unable to find employment. This situation will have a negative impact on Latin American productivity and ability to pay interest on debts. It will also promote emigration. Progress has been made in controlling population growth, but decades of sustained effort will be required to stabilize that growth at economically beneficial levels.

Poverty

The four transitions already discussed must be successfully completed if Latin America is to emerge from the cycle of poverty that has plagued it for centuries. Poor people cannot afford to educate women, cannot struggle effectively against inequality and for social justice, and cannot contribute to their nations' efforts to reduce indebtedness. Nor can the poor be counted on to reduce population growth, since many of them see large numbers of

children as insurance for old age, not as obstacles to economic advancement. As long as Latin American elites, who control the productive capacities of their nations, fail to grasp the importance of distributing wealth and purchasing power more equitably, their societies will remain poverty ridden and weak. Poverty, in turn, will negate the best efforts of democratic governments to modernize those societies and improve living standards.

Religion

As Latin America entered the twenty-first century, its religious allegiance was changing significantly for the first time in nearly five hundred years. The Iberian conquest installed Catholicism as the only religion permissible under colonial rule. Iberian Catholicism, rich in tradition and ritual, proved attractive to Amerinds, whose own religious practices were often highly ritualized. Until the 1960s, no other religion enjoyed a significant following in Latin America.

Latin American Catholicism begins to lose some of its influence

Then reforms in the Roman Catholic Church diminished its appeal to Latin Americans. The Second Vatican Council, held from 1962 to 1965, brought together Church officials and theologians from around the world to try to modernize Catholicism in response to total war, the Holocaust, the emergence of Marxism, and other upheavals of the twentieth century. The Council's changes in the Catholic Mass, designed to simplify the worship service and increase popular participation through the use of local languages, troubled many Latin Americans who cherished the complex rituals they had known since childhood. Some turned to evangelical Protestant Christianity, which since the early 1970s has been growing rapidly in Latin America, in part because it provides the ceremony and mystery that many Latin American Catholics expect in their religious services.

In addition to simplifying the Mass, Catholicism addressed the appeal of Marxists like Cuba's Castro and Chile's Allende by advocating improvement in the conditions endured by the poor. Latin American bishops and cardinals were expected to take the side of the poor against the wealthy elites, and to stand firmly for social and economic justice. Theologians from Mexico and Brazil developed a concept of **liberation theology**, which held that Jesus of Nazareth had preached not only a message of love but also a message of opposition to unjust government. Liberation theologians urged cooperation between Catholics and Marxists against Latin American upper classes that kept the poor impoverished. That message was sometimes dangerous to deliver, as evidenced by the assassination of Roman Catholic Bishop Oscar Romero of El Salvador by a right-wing death squad in 1980.

Mayan ceremony on the steps of a Catholic church, Mexico.

Despite such risks, liberation theology flourished from 1968 through 1979, but after that a new Catholic leader, Pope John Paul II (1979–2005), restrained its practitioners. The new pope, who supported anti-Marxist liberation throughout Eastern Europe, was not unmoved by cries for justice. But he believed that the Catholic faith and Marxism, which denies that anything spiritual can exist, could never be reconciled, and that cooperation between the two was shortsighted and dangerous. Catholicism's abandonment of liberation theology nonetheless disappointed many Latin American Catholics. Efforts by Catholics and evangelical Protestants to develop a theology that addresses Latin American realities testify to religious transitions ongoing in the region.

Chapter Review

Putting It in Perspective

Latin American countries passed through many dramatic changes during the twentieth century. Each of the region's main nations—Argentina, Brazil, Chile, and Mexico—endured either violent revolutions or brutal military dictatorships. Each entertained fresh hopes for the consolidation of democracy as the century ended. Cuba played a surprisingly significant role during the Cold War because of Fidel Castro's Communist revolution, but its ability to destabilize the region waned with the end of that conflict and the Soviet Union's collapse. By the early twenty-first century, Latin America seemed politically stable, poised to fulfill its sizable potential and improve living standards for its hundreds of millions of people.

Latin American societies remained profoundly traditional, however, burdened with inequitable social hierarchies and with deeply held convictions about the subordinate role of women and the irrelevance of higher education for both men and women. Important progress had been made in limiting the pace of population growth, an achievement that required the alteration of long-standing religious beliefs and social conventions, but economic and social inequalities remain as challenges to prosperity.

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ASK YOURSELF

1. In what ways were Juan Perón's presidencies beneficial to Argentina, and in what ways were they harmful? What circumstances undermined Argentine stability after Perón was gone?
2. How did Getúlio Vargas attempt to modernize Brazil? How successful was he? What obstacles prevented further success?
3. How did the Cold War, and the Castro regime in Cuba, affect Latin American stability? Why did Salvador Allende's government appear so disturbing to the United States?
4. Why did military regimes in Argentina, Brazil, and Chile eventually relinquish power to civilians?
5. How did the Institutional Revolutionary Party stabilize Mexican politics?

GOING FURTHER

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Key Dates and Developments

Argentina

1916	Yrigoyen (UCR) elected president
1930	Military coup overthrows President Yrigoyen
1943	Military coup overthrows President Castillo
1946–1955	First presidency of Juan D. Perón
1952	Death of Evita Perón
1973–1974	Second presidency of Juan D. Perón
1976–1983	Military dictatorship and "dirty war"
1982	Argentina defeated by Britain in Falklands War
1983	Raúl Alfonsín elected president
2000	Argentine currency collapses

Brazil

1919	Brazil participates in Paris Peace Conference
1921	World rubber prices collapse
1929	World coffee prices collapse
1930	Revolution brings Getúlio Vargas to power
1930–1945	First presidency of Getúlio Vargas
1937	Creation of the *Estado Nôvo*
1942	Brazil declares war on Germany
1946	Volta Redonda steel plant opens
1950–1954	Second presidency of Getúlio Vargas
1958, 1962, 1970, 1994, 2002	Brazil wins Soccer World Cup
1964–1985	Military dictatorship
1967–1974	Brazilian "Economic Miracle"
1975	Freeze destroys Brazilian coffee crop
1985	Democracy returns
2002	Luís Inacio de Silva ("Lula") elected president

Chile

1920–1924	First presidency of Arturo Alessandri
1932–1938	Second presidency of Arturo Alessandri
1964–1970	Presidency of Eduardo Frei United States begins to intervene in Chilean politics
1970–1973	Presidency of Salvador Allende
1973	Overthrow and suicide of Allende
1973–1990	Augusto Pinochet's military dictatorship
1988	Referendum rejects Pinochet's rule
1998–2000	Pinochet arrested in Britain
2000	Socialist Ricardo Lagos elected president

Mexico

1910–1920	The Mexican Revolution
1928	Creation of the "Official Party" (PRI in 1945)
1934–1940	Presidency of Lázaro Cárdenas
1963	U.S. returns El Chamizal to Mexico
1968	Tlatelolco Massacre
1993	Creation of NAFTA
2000	Vicente Fox elected as first non-PRI president since 1924