

Argentina, & Brazil

TOWARD A GLOBAL COMMUNITY (1900 – PRESENT)



ARGENTINA

- Amongst the all the nations of Latin America Argentina perhaps came closest to resembling the United States at the start of the 20th century (in terms of society & agriculture):
 - A large majority of it's society was of European decent. Throughout the 1800s there was immigration.
 - Limited industrialization did take place.
 - It's climate is temperate, Argentine pampas were similar to the American Midwest. Cattle and sheep were raised and transported across their railroads.
 - By the 1900s Argentines were producing lots of wheat.

- However, politically and economically Argentina reflected other nations in its region.
 - The government typically only represented the interests of wealthy landowners.
 - Foreign companies (U.S. & British) dominated the railroad industry and the nation's public utilities.
 - It was compelled to import almost all of its manufactured goods.



- Trade disruption during WWI weakened the power of landowners. The urban middle class obtained greater influence; in 1916 universal male suffrage was granted.



- However, in 1930 through a military coup General Jose Uriburu overthrew the sitting president and the Argentine government went back to representing large landowners. Little was done to help the middle class or the poor.

- Military officers grasped the reins of the Argentine government and business. During WWII they sympathized with the Axis Powers, but as the war turned against the Nazis their popularity declined.
- This allowed for an uprising to take place within the military led government. Consequently, **Juan Peron** became Argentina's president.



- In contrast to his conservative predecessors, Peron's "popular dictatorship" was more socialist in nature:
 - Money was spent on social welfare projects
 - He sympathized with urban workers
- Peron benefited greatly from his charismatic wife, **Eva Peron**, both of which were idolized by the Argentine masses.
- After Eva's death in 1952, Peron appeared to fall out of favor with the Argentine public and was overthrown in a military coup.



Brazil

- Society was greatly diverse (much more so than Argentina) consisting of people of African and European descent and Amerindian roots.
- Yet similar to Argentina, at the start of the 20th century Brazil remained a rather unindustrialized nation dependent on exporting its raw materials (ex: coffee, rubber, cacao). Most of its industries were also controlled by Europeans.



- Politically (like Argentina) the government represented the country's elites. Money was lavishly spent on palaces in Rio de Janeiro as opposed to making social reforms.
- Throughout the early 1900s student and worker demonstrations took place in protest of the government, but were crushed every time.



- However, the Great Depression rocked export dependent Brazil hard and the weakened government gave way to a coup in 1930.
- **Getulio Vargas** (a state governor) became Brazil's president.
 - State owned companies were promoted
 - Reforms were made that benefited labor unions
 - Parts of the Amazon rainforest were turned into farmland
 - He led the country through a period of industrialization



- However, little was done to help landless peasants. Also as time went on he abolished the constitution (one for which he created in 1930!) in order to remain in power.
- He jailed opposition leaders and showed little respect for due process turning Brazil into a fascist state. In the mid 1950s he was overthrown in a coup.



Comparing & Contrasting Mexico, Argentina & Brazil

- All were dependent on exporting raw materials to more industrialized nations.
- The interests of wealthy landowners came before the large peasantry or small middle class. Due to their revolution only in Mexico did serious agrarian reform take place.
- Popular dictatorships rose in Argentina & Brazil (Remember, in the 1930s the concept of the “strong man” ruler was something that was taking place throughout the world. ← Good global context).
- During WWII Brazil & Mexico aligned with the Allies, Argentina sympathized with the Axis Powers.
- Brazilian society was more ethnically diverse than Mexico or Argentina.