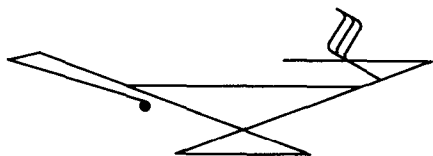


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LATIN AMERICA

AN ANNUAL FESTIVAL begins with a religious procession at Cuzco, the ancient capital of the Incas in the Peruvian Andes. The Roman Catholic celebrants carry icons through an arch that dates from the Spanish colonial period.



CORNELL CAPA, FROM MAGNUM

The term "Latin America" is usually applied collectively to 20 of the independent republics of the New World. They include the 18 countries whose national language is Spanish; Brazil, where Portuguese is spoken; and Haiti, where the national language is French. These nations cover over 95% of all territory in the Western Hemisphere lying south of Mexico's northern border.

The population of Latin America exceeded 250 million by 1970. Brazil accounted for more than one third of this total and Mexico for nearly one fifth. The other Latin American nations, in descending order of their populations, are Argentina, Colombia, Peru, Venezuela, Chile, Cuba, Ecuador, Guatemala, Bolivia, Haiti, the Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Uruguay, Honduras, Paraguay, Nicaragua, Costa Rica, and Panama.

Sometimes the meaning of "Latin America" is extended to include the more recently independent, English-speaking countries of the Caribbean—for example Jamaica or Trinidad and Tobago. But the standard list of 20 nations remains the most widely accepted, largely because these nations share much in the way of common experience, including a long period of independence, a Roman Catholic religious heritage, and a culture

deriving largely from the traditions of the Roman Mediterranean, whence came the bulk of the area's explorers, conquerors, and colonists.

It can be argued, however, that the differences among these countries more than outweigh the similarities. Populations vary from black to mulatto to Indian to "Caucasian." Economic conditions range from bare subsistence, with the threat of starvation in lean years, to the highest levels of comfort and convenience known to man. And political systems vary from anarchy tempered by tyranny to well-entrenched constitutional democracy.

Regional Distinctions. A fruitful way of generalizing about the area without falling into oversimplification is to regard Latin America as a set of regions. The interaction of historical and geographic factors has shaped a distinct pattern of economic, ethnic, and social structures that vary with the land. As a result, Latin American societies may be divided roughly into those of the highlands, those of the plains, and those of the lowlands.

Regional differences had already arisen among the peoples that occupied the area before the arrival of European discoverers and colonizers. In

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the highlands, stable societies were created, based on the planting of food staples such as corn, beans, and potatoes. Large populations developed there, and complex civilizations evolved. In the plains areas, there developed a nomadic form of life based primarily on hunting. In the hot lowlands, economic activity consisted of informal agriculture and fishing, and society and civilization remained simple.

With the European conquest of the area, the distinction between these types of regions was maintained. In the mineral-rich highlands, mining activities developed, and the Spanish conquerors established themselves as feudal overlords of the masses of Indian farmers and herds-men. In the sparsely populated plains areas, the nomadic Indians were driven off or killed, and the raising of cattle, horses, and sheep was established. In the hot lowlands, tropical crops such as sugarcane, tobacco, and, eventually, cotton and bananas were grown for European markets. However, the lowland Indians refused to adapt to a plantation regime of forced labor and rapidly died out, either from overwork and disease or in combat. To replace them, black slaves were imported from Africa.

Thus geographical, economic, and historical circumstances gave rise to the typical social and economic structures that characterized the "classic" Latin America of the 19th and early 20th centuries. In the sierra, or highland, areas of Mexico, Guatemala, Ecuador, Peru, and Bolivia, a local version of late medieval feudalism existed, complete with lords of the manor and Indian serfs, together with extensive mining. In these highly stratified societies, a tiny upper class commanded great resources while the masses remained impoverished.

In the temperate plains areas of southern South America—Argentina, Uruguay, and the extreme south of Brazil—relatively small numbers of European immigrants enjoyed high living standards based on the high returns of an animal-raising economy. Social conditions were more equal and literacy was general.

In the islands of the Caribbean and the surrounding coastal lowlands, and in northeast Brazil, plantation economies continued to produce for West European and North American markets. The end of slavery in the 19th century brought an increase in social mobility. Class distinctions

continued to be correlated with racial differences, but the social distance between the "white" man and the black-skinned or brown-skinned man became less extreme than social distinctions in most of the highland Indian countries, where classes were also separated by greater gulfs of language and culture.

Economic Patterns. The economies of the Latin American countries have traditionally been divided into two sectors, one producing primarily for local consumption and the other primarily for export. The exports have typically consisted of only one or two major items, whose prices have fluctuated as supply and demand conditions in the world market have changed. This has contributed considerably to economic instability and thus to political turmoil.

The reason that countries concentrate on producing a single item that they are well equipped to produce is because it pays. The revolutionary government of Cuba found this out in the early 1960's when, after attempting a radical diversification of the economy away from sugar, it had to face the fact that Cuba could earn more by growing and selling sugar than by doing anything else. Nevertheless, it is clear that diversification is desirable as an economic stabilizer, provided that the new items are produced in addition to, not instead of, the traditional products.

Excessive dependence on Western European and North American markets has often resulted in a state of economic colonialism. The foreign headquarters of a large agricultural or mining company frequently controlled a Latin American economy through its decisions on production and marketing. Often, it exerted an undue political influence in the country of operation, either directly or through pressure on its home government to intervene in the country's affairs. Although open and direct political meddling of the traditional type is now rare, backstage influence is still very much a factor.

Political Development. Traditionally, political life was the province of a small minority of the population—usually those with a better education, greater wealth, and a more European ancestry. These traditional ruling groups, or oligarchies, were never completely exclusive. A poor boy from a humble rural background might work his way up—usually through the army—to a position of wealth and influence. But this was a rare event that always stood out as a special case. The masses as a whole continued to be excluded from power.

The oligarchies were cosmopolitan in outlook. They did not object to the large role played by foreign capital. In fact they acted as the representatives or trading partners of foreign interests. Many members of the oligarchy had been educated abroad and tended to be more interested in the culture of France, Spain, or Britain than in what was going on among the Indians or the poor of their own countries.

Formal constitutional arrangements were based on democratic institutions and phraseology copied from Europe and North America. But the entrenched system of minority rule and a rigid class structure made genuine democracy quite impossible, and actual politics were based on the rivalries of oligarchic families and military cliques. Revolts and coups d'état were as likely to bring about changes in government as were elections.



LATIN AMERICA TODAY

The "classic" Latin America of the oligarchies and the foreign companies is changing, and at an increasingly rapid rate.

Trade Expansion. The development of domestic manufacturing enterprises, stimulated by shortages of foreign goods during the world wars of the 20th century, has reduced the area's heavy dependence on agricultural and mineral products. But—except perhaps in Brazil—domestic markets are not large enough to promise such support for diversified national industrial establishments, and the economic growth of the region depends therefore on the expansion of exports.

Discriminatory tariffs and quotas have limited Latin America's access to West European and, to some extent, North American markets. The Soviet Union and eastern Europe offer some possibilities, but these are limited by payments problems. In the early 1970's, Japan appeared a promising trading and investment partner.

In addition, the Latin Americans have turned to each other in the attempt to expand their trade. The Latin American Free Trade Association (LAFTA), which consists of the 10 republics of South America plus Mexico, has met with only minimal success, however. Since ratification of the pact in 1960, the smaller countries have found that they cannot industrialize in competition with the major economic powers—Mexico, Argentina, and Brazil—and that goods bought from these countries often cost more than those available in western Europe and United States.

The Central American Common Market (CACM), established in 1961, has been much more successful. By creating a market of over 14 million people, CACM has made it possible for the Central Americans to develop industries that could not have been profitable had they been forced to produce only for tiny national markets. Even in this market, however, one of the less developed countries—Honduras—was unable to improve its growth rate. It withdrew from CACM in 1971.

The Andean trading bloc, called the Andean Pact, was launched in 1969 and included Colombia, Ecuador, Peru, Bolivia, Chile, and (later) Venezuela. Chile withdrew in October 1976 after differing with other members over regulations governing foreign investments and import tariffs.

The New Problems. Latin American economic prospects appear mixed. The countries' rates of population growth, ranging up to 3.5% per year, are among the highest in the world. Nevertheless, average per capita income has grown continuously in almost all countries of the area since the early 1950's.

The greatest economic problem facing Latin American government today is probably urban unemployment and underemployment. The enormous growth of national populations has been accompanied by colossal migrations to the cities, which has strained urban services, overloaded the housing supply, and led to a crisis in the provision of urban jobs. Clearly, the solution here can only lie in the development of industry, and it is in this context that the expansion of Latin American trade, both within the region and outside its borders, has become so important.

The New Politics. Population growth, urbanization, a revolution in communications that has seen transistorized radio receivers appear in the most remote parts in Latin America—all have had

their effect on the region's politics. The masses are more and more aware of political life. They increasingly demand that public policy reflect their needs and wishes. Latin American politics has always been turbulent, but today's turbulence has new social content. Newly formed classes and interests press demands on a political leadership that lacks the resources required to do all of the things that need doing.

Increasingly, Latin governments attempt to be responsive to popular needs. But reformist governments face not only inadequate resources and oligarchic obstruction but also the ever-present danger of overthrow by the military if military officers come to believe that the government is incompetent, or the country too disorderly, or the forces of communism too strong.

Actually, communism as such is not at all strong in Latin America. The traditional Communist parties of the area are led mainly by timid old men who are quite out of touch with the contemporary scene, except in Chile, where a strong Communist party participated in the coalition that took office under President Salvador Allende in 1970. However, Allende's attempt to build socialism was ended in 1973 when a military junta seized control after a coup d'etat.

The presumed military threat to non-Communist countries posed by Cuba after 1959 disappeared in 1962, when President Kennedy forced Premier Khrushchev to withdraw Soviet missiles from the island. Although guerrilla movements in other countries of Latin America were encouraged and financed from Cuba in the 1960's, the threat of continent-wide guerrilla warfare expired with the capture and execution of the revolutionary theorist Ernesto Che Guevara in Bolivia in 1968. The possibility that communism would exercise attractive power because of the economic successes of the Cuban experiment evaporated when these failed to materialize.

However, Latin American military officers are not known for their political sophistication. Power continues to be seized by soldiers who believe that patriotism and discipline are enough to solve complex political and economic problems, despite a dismal record of ineptitude and abuse of power by past military regimes.

It seems clear that the best hope for the Latin American future lies in the difficult middle ground of economic and social development within a constitutional framework, with the assertion of economic independence coming gradually, not precipitously on a wave of popular emotion. This is surely not a fast or an easy way to political and economic development, but in view of the dangers inherent in such likely alternatives as military rule or sudden rupture of traditional economic relations with the United States, it seems the most practical.

Latin America and the United States. In its international relations, Latin America threw off Spanish control only to fall into the sphere of influence of the "Colossus of the North"—the United States. Through the late 19th and early 20th centuries, only Brazil and Argentina were strong enough to pursue a completely independent policy, while Mexico found herself frequently at odds with its northern neighbor, losing territory in unsuccessful wars and suffering several military incursions. The smaller countries of Central America and the Caribbean were also forced on several occasions to submit to the presence of a U. S. occupying force.

Often enough, the U. S. government has been willing to forget democratic ideology in its relations with Latin American states. Where it has not simply ignored the area, its policies have oscillated between two inconsistent goals. During the early days of the Alliance for Progress in the 1960's, the United States attempted to channel the forces of change within peaceful, constructive, and democratic channels, with the help of substantial financing from U. S. government sources. At other times, the United States has seemed to be guided by the belief that social change could be prevented—by supporting existing governments, no matter how unsavory, by condoning military seizures of power, or even by intervening directly with U. S. troops or by sponsoring exile invasions. The weight of evidence suggests, however, that U. S. intervention by force in Latin America has, in the long run proved to be either ineffective or counterproductive.

Pan-American Cooperation. The Pan American Union (PAU), founded in 1889–1890, promoted cultural and commercial exchange among the 21 independent republics of North and South America while never really questioning U. S. dominance. This did not change after the PAU was absorbed in the Organization of American States (OAS), founded in 1949. The OAS occasionally assumed an active political role in disputes between smaller countries, but it has never challenged the fundamental power relations in the area.

The Latin American countries did, however, play an important part after World War II in the United Nations General Assembly, where their 20 votes constituted an important bloc, and habits of regional cooperation developed. Although the Latin nations almost always aligned themselves with the United States on major political questions for more than a quarter of a century after the war, the growth of a common consciousness on the part of the underdeveloped countries led to greater Latin American assertiveness towards the United States on questions of trade and economic aid, and a clear anticolonial line in relation to Great Britain, which retains some colonies and associated states in the Americas.

Given continued U. S. predominance in the hemisphere, it would be unrealistic to expect the Latin American states to become genuinely unaligned in major world-power confrontations. But increasingly they may be expected to take positions that differ from those of the United States. The United States, for its part, will increasingly have to work at maintaining good relations with Latin America and will no longer be able to take the area for granted.

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1. The People

Latin America's population represents an exceptionally complex racial and cultural mosaic. In a primary sense, it is the product of the coming together of three racial streams—the American Indian, the Mediterranean white, and the African Negro—but each of these streams was itself a mixture of racial and cultural elements. Adding to the diversity of the patterns are the considerable variations that occurred from one area to another in the relative proportions of



J. ALLAN CASH, FROM RAPHO GUILLUMETTE

WIDE BOULEVARDS, such as the Avenida 9 de Julio in Buenos Aires, add grace to many Latin metropolises.

Indian, European, and black inhabitants, in the degree to which the strains became mixed, and in the relative social and economic status of the different races and mixtures.

An unusual factor in the demography of Latin America is the geographic distribution of its population. The Spaniards who conquered and settled most of the region and the Portuguese who colonized Brazil were waterborne and heavily dependent on a two-way traffic with their homelands. Furthermore, they found the interior with its forbidding mountain ranges, dry plateaus, and steaming jungles both difficult of access and inhospitable to settlers. As a result, most great Latin American cities and a vast majority of the people are concentrated along the coasts or in areas not far from the sea. Until the 20th century, Latin American capitals were in closer touch with the ancient metropolitan centers of Europe than they were with each other.

Since World War II it has become clear that one of the principal threats to the future well-being of the people is the tremendous increase in their numbers. The population of Latin America is growing more rapidly than that of any other region in the world. The most explosive growth rates are in the cities and in the squatter settlements that surround them.

American Indians. The original peopling of Latin America was achieved by the descendants of migrants from Asia who began to cross from Siberia to Alaska perhaps 25,000 to 30,000 years ago, during the late phases of the Pleistocene, or last Ice Age. According to current archaeological evidence, man was in Mexico by about 20,000 B. C. and was as far south as Peru not later than 12,000 B. C.

At the time of the first Iberian incursions into the New World at the end of the 15th century, the Indian population in Latin America was very large. Estimates based in part on available historical documents and depopulation ratios for the years that followed European contact, put the pre-Columbian population at more than 80 million. Of these people some 30 million Indians, mainly Aztec, were concentrated in Mexico; some



(LEFT AND BOTTOM RIGHT) DORKA RAYNOR, FROM NANCY PALMER. (TOP CENTER) CARL FRANK. (TOP RIGHT) CORNELL CAPA, FROM MAGNUM. (BOTTOM CENTER) STAN WYMAN, FROM RAPHO GUILLUMETTE.

11 million, mainly Maya, in Central America; and another 30 million in the Andean area of South America where the Inca ruled. Marginal South American tribes may have numbered 9 million Indians, and the Caribbean Islands probably supported somewhat less than half a million.

Even if such estimates are assumed to have a magnitude of error of 25%, it seems reasonable to conclude that the aboriginal population of the region in 1500 was at least equal to the total population of Latin America in 1900, which was about 60 million.

Physical and cultural differences among these peoples were extreme. Some Indians were more Mongoloid in appearance, others less. Some were short, stocky, and broad-headed. Others were taller and leaner, with narrow heads. Linguistically, the situation was far more complex than that in Europe. Over 250 languages, most of them mutually unintelligible, are known to have been spoken in the area between northern Mexico and southern Guatemala. Hundreds more were spoken in South America.

The Indian groups also differed greatly in their techniques of subsistence, in complexity of social and political organization, and in ways of life. The first groups the Spaniards met were Indians of the Caribbean Islands and the Caribbean shores of South and Central America. They practiced an efficient and intensive horticulture, lived in fairly permanent villages, and supported populations that were often quite large. Their social systems were sometimes quite complex, and they made and traded objects of gold, copper, and alloys. Nothing that the Spaniards observed in these areas, however, could have prepared them for the tremendous populations and elaborate sociopolitical and religious patterns that they encountered later among the high civilizations of Middle America and the Andes. See also Section 11. *History* and the articles *AZTECS*, *MAYA*, and *INCA*.

Elsewhere, as on the Brazilian coast, in the Guianas, and in the Amazon and other tropical forests, the Europeans found people now classified as tropical agriculturalists, who practiced slash-and-burn cultivation and were semi-nomadic. Finally, scattered through the more remote reaches of the New World, were the so-

called marginal tribes—usually nomadic or semi-nomadic hunters and gatherers who were grouped in small units or bands and possessed a sparse material culture.

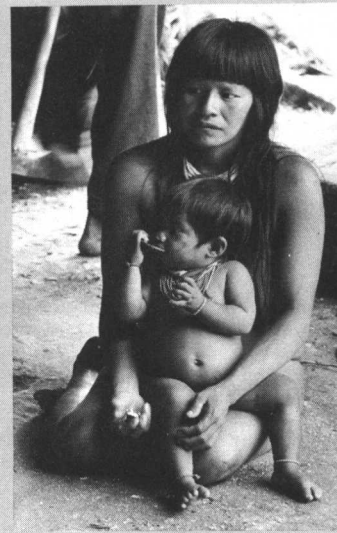
The Conquest. The effects of European contact on native populations were catastrophic. Many Indians died fighting the invaders. Even more perished as a consequence of Spanish and Portuguese efforts to use them for slave labor. But the most devastating Indian population losses—resulting in their near extermination in many areas—were due to their exposure to epidemic diseases, principally smallpox and measles. Immunologically unprepared for such diseases, Indians died by the thousands, and eventually by the millions. It has been estimated that the Indian population fell to 5% of its preconquest level by 1650.

European conquest took various forms and had different effects in various parts of the region. In areas of relatively high population density with agricultural systems that could produce surpluses, such as southern Mexico and the Ecuador-Peru-Bolivia area, the native peoples were subjected and their land exploited. Here existing ways of life were modified but not completely destroyed, and native culture survived in some areas.

Along the coasts, however, the Europeans generally expelled or destroyed the Indians. As the newcomers penetrated into zones other than the strategic seaboard and the densely populated high-culture areas, the result was usually the flight or elimination of native peoples and their replacement by European colonists, African slaves, or transplanted cooperative Indians.

Some exceptions to patterns of subjugation, extermination, and expulsion occurred—most notably in Paraguay, where a mutually dependent relationship developed between Spaniards and Guaraní Indians and a hybrid culture evolved. Finally, some tropical forest peoples of South America were never conquered. In the Amazon Basin, particularly, various tribes continue to live in partial or complete isolation from the outside world.

European Influx. Although Spanish America attracted colonists from virtually every part of Spain, most of the earliest Spanish migrants



(LEFT) CARL FRANK. (TOP CENTER) TIM KANTOR, FROM RAPHO GUILLUMETTE. (BOTTOM CENTER) DORKA RAYNOR, FROM NANCY PALMER. (RIGHT) MATT HERRON, FROM BLACK STAR.

came from the provinces of Andalusia, Extremadura, Old Castile, and New Castile. These provinces were the prime source of many of the Spanish artifacts and customs that became incorporated into the mestizo, or mixed, Spanish American culture. These include plow forms, fishing nets, certain folk crafts and arts, modes of dress, variants of Castilian Spanish, and the social patterns that accompany godparenthood customs. Because high-level representatives of church and state often came from Castile, many Spanish American governments are still burdened with archaic, cumbersome forms and procedures that stem from Castilian administrative practices.

In Brazil the imposed European culture was that of Portugal. It was eventually diluted, less by mixture with Indian cultures than by the absorption of African elements.

African Peoples. Spain and Portugal, the European nations that launched the African slave trade, were also among the last to give it up. Cargoes of slaves were still being brought to Cuba and Brazil in the 1870's, after the slave trade had been legally abolished everywhere. It has been estimated that over a span of nearly four centuries, more than 5 million African slaves were imported into Latin America. Of these, over two thirds went to Brazil and the remainder to almost every area of Hispanic America.

Most slaves came from the west coast of Africa. The earliest arrivals included many from Senegal, but the great mass of slaves in the 18th and early 19th centuries were from the area that now encompasses Nigeria, Ghana, and Dahomey. During the last 50 years of the trade, Angola and the Congo were the prime recruiting grounds.

Mestizo Culture. It is often difficult to distinguish in Latin America between racial interbreeding, on the one hand, and the mixture or blending of cultures, on the other. Three countries—Argentina, Uruguay, and Costa Rica—may be described as “white”—that is, peopled largely by persons of European stock—and their cultures have virtually no components of Indian or Negro origin. One country—Haiti—is racially largely black, though its culture is hybrid and difficult to characterize simply. The rest of the region presents a true racial and cultural kaleidoscope,

in which pure and mixed elements are often intricately interwoven. The term “mestizo culture” has been proposed as a broad label to describe most of these societies.

In much of Latin America the term “mestizo” is applied to a person of mixed Indian and European ancestry. Mestizo culture, formed by centuries of Spanish-Indian interchange, is neither Spanish, Indian, nor modern Western but a vigorous blend of all three.

The mestizo element predominates in seven countries—Honduras, Nicaragua, El Salvador, Colombia, Venezuela, Paraguay, and Chile. Five countries—Mexico, Guatemala, Ecuador, Peru, and Bolivia—have large Indian populations and functioning Indian cultures but are moving in-

A PLAZA in Santa Cruz, Bolivia. State aid to local farmers has attracted many Indians to this old city.

CORNELL CAPA, FROM MAGNUM



exorably toward the predominance of a mestizo culture. In three countries—Brazil, Cuba, and Panama—the significant components are the European and the Negro, although two of these nations—Brazil and Panama—also have substantial Indian minorities.

Geographic Distribution. All but a small portion of Latin America's vast population is concentrated along the Atlantic, Caribbean, and Pacific coasts within a strip seldom more than 200 miles wide. While overpopulation has become a serious threat in many parts of this coastal band, the interior remains very much underpopulated. The enormous interior of South America, for example, had a population density of fewer than 2 persons per square mile in 1970.

Most of Latin America's major cities lie at or near the ocean's edge. With few exceptions, those that do not are largely oriented toward the sea. This reflects the original pattern of Iberian settlement and resource exploitation, which reversed the internal orientation of the large Indian population of pre-Columbian times.

Population Growth. Latin America's most pressing problem may be that of runaway population growth. The overall rate of increase in the 1960's was nearly 3% per year, with the rate approaching 3.5% in many countries. This compares with overall rates of increase of 2% in Asia, 2.4% in Africa, 0.9% in Europe, and less than 1.5% in the United States and Canada. A precipitous 20th century decline in death rates, combined with high fertility or birthrates, are principally responsible for the high rate of growth.

Though immigration was a factor contributing to population increase in some nations in the past—particularly in Brazil and Argentina during most of the 19th century and part of the 20th—

only a negligible portion of the current population growth may be attributed to immigration. Whereas the 19th century flood of immigrants to the east coast of the United States had spread across the continent within a few generations, contributing to an energetic development both of agriculture and the industrial-urban complex, immigrants to Latin America clustered in only a few places in only a few countries. The system of landed estates was nearly everywhere a barrier to any influx of independent agriculturalists. At the same time few openings were, or are now, provided for European skilled workers and technicians, due to the Latin governments' generally perfunctory approaches to industrial development.

Similarly, emigration has never played an important role in the region. Even where it has occurred—as in Mexico, Puerto Rico, and Cuba in the 20th century—its effect in drawing off excess population or reducing growth rates has been relatively minor.

Fertility data are unreliable for many Latin countries, since gross underreporting of births is known to occur in rural areas and among the urban poor. Nevertheless, birthrates are known to be unusually high. For the region as a whole, the birthrate in the 1960's was calculated at 41 per 1,000 population per year. This rate has remained relatively stable since about 1930, dropping in Argentina, Chile, Uruguay, Cuba, and Puerto Rico but remaining unchanged or rising somewhat in most other countries.

The decline in death rates began gradually throughout the region during the early decades of the 20th century, gathered momentum after 1930, and continued at a rapid pace after 1950. In Mexico, El Salvador, Costa Rica, Chile, and

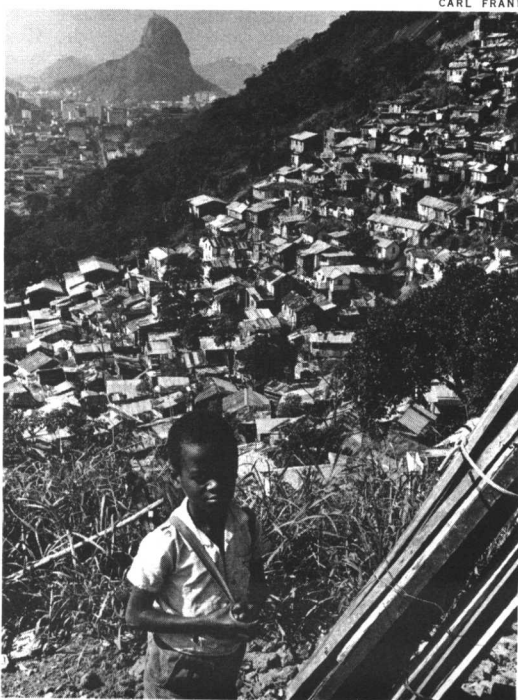
"THE MARKET" may be any village street on which farm families choose to spread their fresh vegetables.

CARL FRANK, FROM PHOTO RESEARCHERS



SHANTIES fashioned from scraps of lumber and tin cling precariously to a hillside in Rio de Janeiro.

CARL FRANK



Puerto Rico, the decline was so steep that mortality rates were halved between 1930 and 1960.

The Cities. Of the 20 largest cities of Latin America, 16 were founded by 1580. All were physically planned in accord with the ideas of Emperor Charles V and King Philip II of Spain. As originally laid out, most cities had a central plaza, around which were situated the primary governmental and religious structures. Lots surrounding the plaza were allocated to the city's important families. Outward from the central plaza, streets were laid out in a gridiron pattern, with an eye to anticipating and facilitating future growth. Areas were set aside for the Indian population at some distance from the central plaza. These became *barrios*, each usually with its own plaza, church, and trading facilities. Lima is one of the best examples of such a planned city.

There were variations and exceptions. La Paz, in Bolivia, was caught early in its career by a mining boom and grew without plan or direction. In Mexico City, where the Spanish had to accommodate a preexisting city, there is a gridiron, but there is also a maze of narrow, circuitous streets. In Venezuela, Caracas was built in an extraordinarily beautiful valley, but its population exhausted the valley's total capacity by 1961 and began to spread irregularly into mountain areas. Nevertheless, in most cities, the urban anatomical structure devised in the 16th century is still discernible.

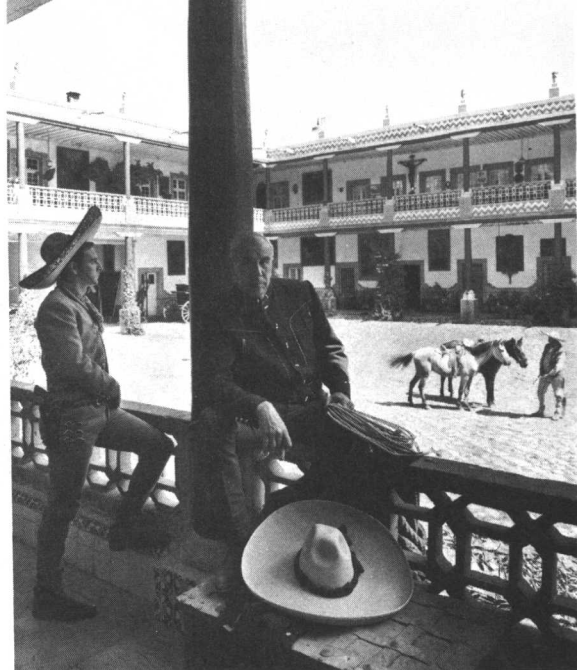
City zoning, as known in North America, is not important in Latin American cities. Residential, commercial, and light industrial structures are often found in fairly close association. Although this often lends color and charm to the city, it also causes chaos and adds to traffic congestion.

High-rise public and private office buildings are no longer uncommon in the downtown areas of some cities. High-rise luxury apartments, on the other hand, are still rare. High-status residential suburbs and exurbs not unlike those found in the United States now exist, although some of the wealthy still retain residences near the central plaza.

Overall, the degree of urbanization in Latin America is greater than that of any of the world's other underdeveloped regions. It was estimated in 1960 that about 25% of the world's population lived in cities of more than 20,000. In the world's developed regions, the proportion was 41%. In Latin America as a whole, the rate was 32%, but Argentina, Chile, and Uruguay showed a rate of 56%.

In 1930, only one Latin American city—Buenos Aires—had a population of more than a million. By 1960 there were 10, and by 1980 the number was expected to rise to 26. The largest cities in Latin America have been growing much faster than the populations of their countries.

One of the most visible manifestations of the urban explosion is the growth of squatter colonies around the edges of virtually every large city. Although they have existed in various areas since the 1920's, their period of rapid growth began in the 1950's. These settlements are known as *jacales* in Mexico, *barriadas* in Peru, *ranchos* in Venezuela, and *favelas* in Brazil. They consist of large numbers of makeshift dwellings, constructed of whatever materials are locally available. Although they house masses of people who are totally destitute, many inhabitants have



JOHN LEWIS STAGE, FROM PHOTO RESEARCHERS

A HACENDADO, the owner of an extensive estate in Mexico, poses on the veranda of his sumptuous villa.

incomes at or above the national per capita average and have stable employment. Their presence in such colonies testifies to the increasing gravity of the housing problem.

Rural Areas. Although migration from rural to urban areas is a major factor in city growth, the countryside is not being depopulated. In all countries the population of rural areas is growing, though not as fast as that of the cities. In Venezuela, for example, the farm population has been increasing at a rate of 10% or more per decade, intensifying the pressure of people on available farmland. With a ubiquitous system of single-owner, landed estates (*haciendas* or *latifundias*) inhibiting agricultural development in many countries, such pressure is not likely soon to decrease.

Social Structure. Throughout the colonial period and until the first decades of the 20th century, the essential class structure of most of Latin America had a stark simplicity. At one end of the scale was a small well-defined upper class—in essence, a landed gentry. At the other, was a great mass of illiterate mestizos, Indians, and Negroes who were peasants, laborers, and servants. A middle class of small merchants, European immigrants, and others could also be identified, but its numbers were relatively few.

However, in a process that began after 1900 and has accelerated since World War II, new social groups and categories have appeared. In most of the region there are now two upper classes, at least two lower classes, and a variegated and growing middle class.

While the traditional landholding elite is still important in the social systems of many countries, its power is declining, and its values are becoming less influential as ideals for other segments of the population. A new upper class, though it cannot yet match the old one in prestige, has come to rival it in both economic and political power. It was founded primarily by self-made men, who through business or politics



SERGIO LARRAIN, FROM MAGNUM

Horses, sheep, and other animals outnumber man on the windswept Patagonian plateau of southern Argentina.

or a combination of both accumulated fortunes. This group now includes many managers of large commercial and industrial enterprises.

The traditional lower class of peasants and agricultural laborers has been joined by a new kind of lower class that more closely resembles the "proletariat" of Europe in the early 20th century. As the urban working class grew, so did trade unions. From urban areas the unions spread to large commercial plantations, oil fields, and large-scale mining operations. The new working class differs from the old in being primarily, though not exclusively, urban and in being sufficiently organized to seek political power. It is often led by middle-class politicians.

The growing and increasingly complex middle class consists largely of persons in white-collar, salaried occupations, either in business or government, but it also includes small businessmen and many professionals. It is literate and largely urban. It is increasing rapidly in size in at least half of the countries of Latin America—countries that are the most developed in the region and that include at least four fifths of the total Latin American population.

Wherever it has occurred, the rise of the middle class has been linked to technological, economic, and social modernization, both as an effect and as a cause. There can be no doubt that this class, with its generally nationalist as well as traditionalist orientation, will be increasingly influential in shaping the area's future.

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2. The Land

Diversity is the principal characteristic of Latin America's physical geography. Features vary from high mountain ranges covered with perpetual snow to hot and steaming jungles, from windswept high plateaus to rainy coastal forests, and from broad, grass-covered plains to deserts where rain may fall in only one year out of ten.

Landforms. The land surface of Latin America covers nearly 8,000,000 square miles (21,000,000 sq km), an area slightly larger than that of the

United States and Canada combined. The continent of South America, which accounts for the bulk of the area, is roughly triangular in shape and has an unusually even coastline, with few great indentations that favor port and harbor development. Much of the coast is backed by steep slopes or other features that have made penetration of the interior difficult.

The greater part of Latin America is made up of three highland regions. Lowland plains occupy a much smaller portion of South America than do uplands. In the rest of Latin America—that is, in Mexico, Central America, and the West Indies—plains generally exist only as small, isolated coastal fringes.

Highlands. A system of mountain ranges along the western side of South America and through the middle of Central America and Mexico dominates the pattern of surface features in Latin America and forms the principal highland region. It extends in an almost continuous belt for some 6,000 miles (nearly 10,000 km) from Tierra del Fuego at the southern tip of South America northward to southern Arizona. The Andes Mountains constitute the South American portion of this system. The north-south alignment of the Andean ranges and those of northern Mexico is interrupted by the highlands of southern Mexico and most of Central America, which trend in an east-west direction.

The mountains of this system are, for the most part, young, high, rugged, and continuous. Individual peaks reach elevations higher than any found north of Mexico, and easy passage across the ranges can be made in only a few places. At 22,834 feet (6,960 meters), Mt. Aconcagua, in the Argentine Andes, is the highest point in the Western Hemisphere.

Through most of its length, the mountain mass is divided into several associated ranges. In Bolivia and Mexico parallel high ranges enclose elevated, relatively level plateau surfaces, that in Bolivia being called the Altiplano. More complex groupings occur elsewhere, and there are occasional mountain basins that receive more than adequate rainfall and are therefore well-

suited for human habitation. Volcanoes are prominent in south-central Mexico, Central America, and several sections of the Andes between southern Colombia and central Chile.

The two other highland regions of Latin America—the Brazilian and Guiana Highlands—are strikingly different from the younger mountain system to the west. They are much lower in elevation, more severely worn down by erosion, and more densely overgrown with vegetation.

The highest elevations in the Brazilian Highlands are found in the low mountains that lie near the Atlantic coast. These form a drainage divide between short, swift streams that run directly into the Atlantic and a much larger area that is drained by tributaries of the great river systems of the continent. Extending from the low mountains is an expanse of hilly lands that reaches south into Uruguay and west into the interior. Farther inland are relatively level upland plateaus composed, in the south, of hardened molten material that flowed from the interior of the earth and, elsewhere, of horizontal sandstone layers. Both of these formations are interrupted at frequent intervals by streams belonging to the Amazon or Paraná drainage systems, leaving broad upland surfaces separated by narrow, flat-bottomed, steep-sided valleys.

The Guiana Highlands lie north of the Amazon River and extend from northern Brazil into Venezuela. Their origin is similar to that of the Brazilian Highlands, but they cover a smaller area. Flattish sandstone uplands are a conspicuous feature, and much of the region is composed of low rolling hills.

Lowlands. The plains of the continent of South America consist largely of lands drained by the Amazon, Orinoco, and Paraná rivers. The Amazon, which is second in length only to the Nile, discharges a greater volume of water than any river in the world and has the world's largest drainage basin, covering more than half of Brazil and parts of five other countries.

The lowland area of the great rivers of South America have much in common. They are composed of alluvial materials—materials eroded from the mountains and deposited by running water. In each case the valleys are wide, and extensive areas are inundated during high water periods. For the most part, major surface differences between one region and another are due to variations in climate and natural vegetation. In the case of the Pampa in east central Argentina, a principal factor has been the wind, which has reworked the alluvial material and made the plain more level than the others and more free of surface stones.

Lowlands of lesser extent are found in the river plains of northern Colombia, in the Orinoco Basin, around Lake Maracaibo in Venezuela, and in scattered locations between the mountains and the sea. In southern Argentina, the so-called Patagonian plateau is made up of level surfaces, but these are somewhat elevated and are separated into several segments by streams flowing eastward from the Andes. Elsewhere in Latin America, the principal lowland plains occur in the limestone platforms that make up the Yucatán peninsula of Mexico and most of Cuba. These are interrupted by only a few groups of hills, and, because of the porous nature of the limestone subsurface, are generally without large rivers, although they are well watered by many small streams that flow to the sea.

Climate and Natural Vegetation. The climates of Latin America vary in accordance with differences in latitude, elevation, and wind conditions. The climate itself has been the principal factor determining the nature of the vegetation cover in a given region.

Rainy tropical climates, with abundant precipitation in all months, are most perfectly developed in the Amazon basin and along the northeast coast of South America, where high temperatures at the surface cause a general upward movement of air conducive to heavy rainfall. Other areas with heavy rainfall and high temperatures are found along the north and east coasts of Central America and on the Caribbean islands, where northeast trade winds blow from a warm sea onto land, and along the east and south coasts of Brazil, where the prevailing movement of air is from the southeast.

The forests of the rainy tropics have one of the world's most vigorous and luxuriant vegetation growths. The trees, which are broadleaf hardwoods, are usually tall and grow close together, often supporting an abundant mass of vines and creepers. There is an extraordinary variety of species, with none predominating in a given area, a circumstance that has made lumbering operations difficult.

Tropical wet and dry climates are found adjacent to the rainy tropical type wherever it occurs in Latin America. These climates experience high temperatures in all months but have a distinct dry season. They are found in interior locations, where heavy rains fall at low altitudes during part of the year, and in coastal districts that are shut off by mountains from the full force of rain-bearing winds.

POPOCATEPETL, one of the many great volcanoes of Latin America, dwarfs the Mexican village of Amecameca.

JOHN LEWIS STAGE, FROM PHOTO RESEARCHERS





SERGIO LARRAIN, FROM MAGNUM

LLAMAS, distant cousins of the camel, thrive in the thin air of the high Andes, where Peruvian Indians have domesticated them to serve as beasts of burden.

Tropical grasslands (savannas) usually predominate, but near the border with rainy climates, tree growth may be extensive and grassy areas may exist as parklike clearings in the forest. Trees are almost always present along the streams. Areas with this type of climate are not well suited to the cultivation of crops. Until the 1960's their most widespread use was for livestock grazing.

Arid and semiarid climates are found in a dry belt extending from the coasts of Peru and northern Chile across the Andes and southward throughout the length of western Argentina. Other large areas of aridity occur in northern Mexico and in the northwest interior of Brazil. Temperatures in these dry lands vary according to latitude and distance from the sea.

Vegetation consists mainly of a scattered growth of drought-resistant plants, although a low scrub forest penetrates the desert in parts of Argentina and Mexico, and the fog that occurs along the coast of Peru supports a low plant cover. Semiarid zones may exhibit steppe vegetation—a complex of short grasses, bushes, and low trees.

Humid subtropical climates extend from southern Brazil and Paraguay south and inland to the margins of the dry belt in Argentina. The outstanding characteristics are mild winters, warm summers, and rainfall that is well distributed through the year. There is usually somewhat heavier rainfall during the summer months (December-February). There are considerable climatic differences from one area to another.

Vegetation is similarly varied. Broad areas in the north and east have a mixed forest of broad-leaved deciduous trees and the needle-bearing Paraná pine. In south Brazil, prairie grasslands become interspersed with the forest, while in most of Uruguay and in the Pampa, Argentina's cattle-raising district, grassland predominates.

A *Mediterranean, or dry summer subtropical*, climate is characteristic of the part of central Chile that lies between the mountains and the Pacific Ocean. The region has winter rain and summer drought, warm summers and mild winters, and a high percentage of sunshine in all seasons. Crops often require irrigation.

Tree growth is low and scattered. Much of the region is covered with a scrubby growth of bushes, and all woody plants tend to have adaptations that enable them to survive long periods of drought. In some places, a low, coarse bunch grass replaces the scrub forest.

A *temperate marine* climate is found in southern Chile. Here rainfall is so abundant that it is a problem, but great extremes of temperature are absent. Winters are cool, summers moderate, and there is much cloudiness all year.

In the northern part of this zone there are dense masses of soggy forest wherever trees can fix their roots. Toward the extreme south, heavier rains and greater cold impoverish the vegetation, leaving only a meager cover of stunted growth.

Mountain climates are extremely complex in Latin America, especially in the great mountain mass that abuts the Pacific coast. Many distinct bands of climate and vegetation—and crops—occur from foot to summit of mountain ranges. In equatorial mountains, a climb of 12,000 feet (3,600 meters) may result in changes that could be found in the lowlands only by a horizontal journey from the equator to the pole. Diversity of climatic conditions in the highlands also results from differences in exposure to rain-bearing winds and from variations in the amount of sunlight received.

Animal Life. Latin America is an inexhaustible source of riches for the zoologist, offering the whole gamut of climates and natural settings found elsewhere as well as a degree of isolation from the Old World that has permitted the development of many unique species—as Charles Darwin discovered during his famous voyage aboard the *Beagle* in the 1830's. The llama, vicuña, and condor of the high Andes, the armadillo and anaconda of the Amazonian forest, the meat-eating piranha that swarm in sluggish tropical rivers, and the giant land tortoise of the Galápagos Archipelago off the coast of Ecuador are only a few of the better-known life forms among the many that flourish in this region and nowhere else on earth.

See also articles on CENTRAL AMERICA, NORTH AMERICA, and SOUTH AMERICA.

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3. Natural Resources

The natural resources of Latin America are substantial, but their distribution is often far from ideal. This has caused the overexploitation of some of the area's riches and the virtual neglect of others.

Forest Resources. The forests of the rainy tropics contain an amazing number of species of trees, many of which are highly valued as cabinet wood and for properties such as strength, elasticity, lightness, or rot resistance. But successful

THATCHED HOUSEBOATS on the upper Amazon, near Iquitos, Peru. Some 2,300 miles (3,700 km) upstream, the enormous river is still several miles wide.



GEORGE HOLTON, FROM PHOTO RESEARCHERS

lumbering has been rare because the useful trees are scattered throughout the forest, separated from each other by useless types and often by a dense undergrowth of bushes, vines, and shrubs. However, a great variety of valuable products are collected from these forests, among them wild rubber, Brazil nuts, babassú nuts, cinchona bark, which is a source of quinine, and chicle, an ingredient of chewing gum.

The mixed forests of southern Brazil and adjacent areas contain several useful hardwoods and the very valuable *Araucaria* or Paraná pine, which is the only important source of softwood lumber in South America. Another resource of this forest is a small hollylike tree whose leaves are used in the making of maté, a local beverage.

Latin America has many scrub forests, with some trees large enough to be cut for lumber, but such forests are more important for collected products. In the Chaco area of Argentina and western Paraguay, for example, the quebracho tree is cut and processed into an extract used in the tanning of leather. Scrub forests in the Brazilian interior yield such products as carnauba wax, caroa fiber, castor oil, and oiticica oil.

The coniferous forests of the highlands of Mexico and northern Central America have long been subject to the pressure of man's need for wood, so that useful stands remain only in the more inaccessible areas.

Grasslands. Latin America's grasslands have been a major resource for the grazing of livestock. The tropical grasslands are not ideal for this purpose because of the low quality of the grass during the long dry season, but since crop raising is difficult on such lands, they continue to be used mainly for livestock ranching.

Much of the Pampa of Argentina is in cultivated pasture, but the grasslands of Uruguay and south Brazil provide open grazing for large numbers of cattle and sheep. The grasses and shrubs of Patagonia in southern Argentina support a very large sheep population.

Soils. The residual soils of Latin America's tropical areas are often of rather low fertility because of the rapid decomposition of potential organic matter and the speed with which water removes soluble minerals from surface layers. However, it has been proved that with care many of these soils can be agriculturally productive, particularly for tree crops. The best soils in lowland tropical areas are those that have been formed from recent alluvial deposits and those that have resulted from the deposition of volcanic materials. The soils of the valley floors in

tropical highlands are largely of alluvial origin and often support very productive farms.

One of the largest areas of excellent soils in the Western Hemisphere is the Pampa of Argentina. Here the fine, wind-blown material, which supported a tall grass vegetation for hundreds of years, developed soils with excellent structure and high organic content.

The soils of the level portions of the dry lands of Latin America have a high mineral content and may be excellent for agriculture if irrigation water is available. Some of the most productive farming districts in the Americas are found in the oases of northern Mexico, coastal Peru, and western Argentina. In the drier deserts, the salt content of the soil is often so great that agriculture is virtually impossible.

Minerals. Although Latin America has an abundance and great variety of mineral resources, they are often poorly combined. The greatest problem is a general shortage of coal.

The area that extends along the entire eastern front of the Andes and eastward to the delta of the Orinoco River in Venezuela may have one of the world's largest reserves of petroleum. However, because of problems of exploration, inaccessibility, the lack of domestic capital, and the attitudes of some governments toward foreign investment and control, such resources have been adequately developed only in Venezuela and Argentina. Other areas with large reserves and significant production occur in the Caribbean lowlands of Colombia, and along the Gulf coast of Mexico. Despite extensive exploration, only small pools of oil have been discovered in Brazil.

Coal, which is so critical for the development of heavy industry, is in short supply. Such deposits as have been discovered tend to be small and of poor quality. The most productive mines are located in northeastern Mexico, central Colombia, south-central Chile, and southern Brazil.

Of all of the useful metallic minerals found in Latin America, iron ore is probably the most abundant. The large deposits in the eastern highlands of Brazil may make up as much as 20% of the world's reserve of high quality iron ore. Soon after World War II, large and rich deposits were discovered south of the Orinoco in eastern Venezuela. Peru, Chile, Mexico, and Colombia also have large, workable deposits.

Mexico, Chile, and Peru make major contributions to the world's supply of copper, and copper ores occur also in Bolivia, Colombia, Venezuela, and Brazil. Other important mineral production includes that of tin in Bolivia; silver, lead, zinc,

and sulfur in Mexico; lead and zinc in Peru; manganese in Brazil; and gold, in a number of countries. Nitrate is mined in Chile.

Latin America is also becoming increasingly important as a source of bauxite, the ore of aluminum. Bauxite has long been mined in Guyana and Surinam, and large reserves have been discovered in Jamaica, Brazil, and Venezuela.

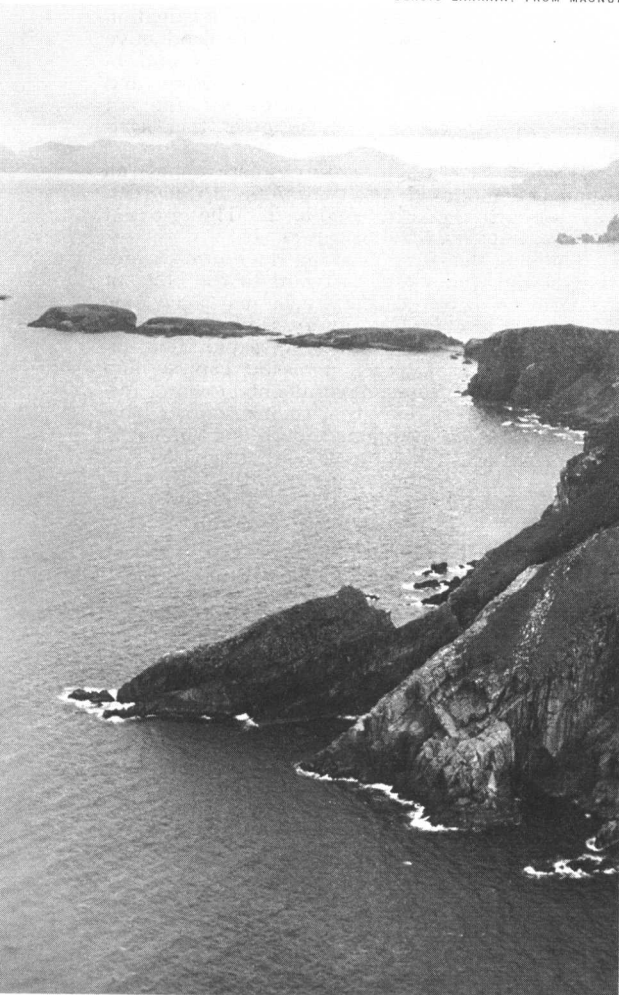
Water Power. The abundance of streams flowing from elevated terrain, particularly in South America, gives the region a great hydroelectric power potential, but less than 4% of this potential had been developed by the 1970's. The principal waterfalls and narrows that constitute the best sites for power dam construction are usually too far removed from the major power-consuming markets to make development practical. In the few areas, such as central Chile, where good sites exist near major cities, lack of capital has often delayed the building of hydroelectric facilities.

See also *LATIN AMERICA—The Economy*.

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LAND'S END in Latin America is Cape Horn, a barren promontory at the southern tip of Tierra del Fuego.

SERGIO LARRAIN. FROM MAGNUM



4. The Economy

Latin America is undergoing rapid, but very uneven economic growth. Lying largely in the tropics, the region has been a major supplier of foodstuffs and raw materials to the more industrialized countries. Its large natural concentrations of petroleum and nonferrous metals are important sources of export earnings, and, since World War II, an increasing effort has been made to develop domestic manufacturing for a growing internal market. But as a whole Latin America must still be described as one of the world's economically underdeveloped areas.

The rate of population growth—close to 3% per year—is the highest in the world. Because of the climate and the terrain, most economic activity is carried on in the temperate highlands and along the coastal rim of South America and Central America. A movement is under way to integrate the economies of the region, and the effort has met with its most significant success in Central America.

Agriculture and Stock Raising. Although more than 60% of Latin America's working population is engaged in farming, the amount of land suitable for agriculture is proportionately less in Latin America than in Europe or the United States. Most of the region is occupied by dense rain forests, mountains, and deserts. The most fertile soils are in the Argentine pampa and neighboring Uruguay; in southern Brazil; in the interior valleys of Central America, Colombia, Ecuador, and Chile; in irrigated zones of Mexico, Peru, and the Dominican Republic; and on the plains of Cuba.

The greatest concentrations of livestock are in Argentina, Brazil, and Mexico, but cattle raising is also important in Uruguay, Colombia, Chile, Bolivia, Peru, and Ecuador. Most of the region's sheep are grazed on the cold plains of southern Argentina and in Uruguay.

The majority of the rural people, especially in Mexico, Central America, Brazil, and the Andean countries, are engaged in subsistence farming and produce few products for markets outside of their own villages. Corn, beans, potatoes, rice, yams, and cassava are the mainstays of these people, and their agricultural methods are often primitive.

By contrast, a smaller number of Latin Americans produce large surpluses of agricultural products on plantations and commercial farms. The bulk of these commodities go into foreign trade. Coffee is the most valuable export crop. More than half of it comes from Brazil, although Colombia, Mexico, and the Central American and Caribbean countries are also significant producers. Wheat is grown chiefly in Argentina, with Mexico and Chile also producing substantial quantities. The production of sugar, bananas, and cotton has been rising sharply since about 1950. These are grown chiefly in the tropical zone, with Mexico and Brazil leading in cotton, and Brazil, Ecuador, and Honduras in bananas. Cuba has long been the principal sugar producer, but has been unable to reach former output levels since the government of Fidel Castro came to power in 1959 and reorganized agriculture. Other commercial farm products include meat and hides, wool, cocoa beans, vegetable oils, and tobacco.

Because farming in Latin America is highly traditional, agricultural output has barely kept pace with the growth of population. Several