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## Changes in Latin America

Because of their significance, we should be aware of happenings in Latin America. Most of us have read of a population explosion there. Less well known has been a continuing, rapid migration to the major cities, which is creating social dynamite. At the same time, there have been constructive changes, and it is possible that at least some, if not most, Latin American countries will escape disaster. A basis for hope is the progress most of the countries are making in education and in changing the social structure.

The changing order in Latin America has given advantages to the larger countries, as compared with the smaller ones. Countries such as Brazil, Argentina, and Mexico have internal markets of sufficient size to facilitate the establishment of industrial capacity, and many plants have been located there. The larger countries also have a greater variety of natural resources to draw on. In contrast, a small country such as Uruguay is severely handicapped, both as to size of market and as to resources.

Of all the countries of South America, Argentina has progressed most. It has a literacy rate of 92 percent; reproduction is slowing; resources are present to provide for a larger population; and industrialization is proceeding. Though support for scientific research has been poor by our standards, two Argentine scientists have received Nobel prizes.

The most dynamic country in South America today is Brazil. During the past several years, its gross national product has been growing at the rate of about 9 percent; in 1971, it grew 11 percent, and talk of the "miracle of Brazil" has begun. On the average, Brazil is not nearly as advanced or as literate as Argentina. In the torrid, dry, northeast region of the country, some 30 million people live in poverty; about half of them have a yearly cash income of less than \$50. It is in the southern, more temperate region that industry is booming. Production of steel is increasing rapidly and is projected to reach 8 million tons in 1975. Brazil has begun to export motor vehicles. Last year, several million dollars' worth of precision parts for aircraft were exported to the United States.

One of the largest Brazilian efforts has been in education. Resources devoted to education have doubled during the last 5 years. During the past 8 to 10 years, the number of students receiving higher education has increased by 500 percent. The tradition of education for the few has been abandoned.

Brazilians have a flair. The great wholesale food distribution center in São Paulo is unsurpassed in convenience, size, and cleanliness. It makes comparable centers in the United States look anachronistic and grubby. Similarly, their huge international exhibit hall outclasses most of ours. The big shocker is the new capital, Brasília. Its construction in the midst of nowhere has opened up a vast region. Its architecture and the city plan are highly imaginative and striking.

By reason of Brazil's geography, the present dynamism of the country could have profound consequences on the rest of South America. Brazil borders every country of the continent except Chile and Ecuador, and its neighbors are highly sensitive to the changes that are occurring. To varying degrees, they are apprehensive and envious of the Portuguese-speaking giant. But they are more likely to look to Brazil as an example than to the United States.

Latin America is on the move. Great changes will be occurring in the next decades. Some we will applaud. Others we will dislike. In either case, we should be aware of the latent power of our southern neighbors.

—PHILIP H. ABELSON