

Political refugees. Some immigrants were political refugees who sought safety from harsh governments. Hundreds of thousands of Cubans have migrated to the United States since Fidel Castro took power in 1959. Many people from El Salvador and Guatemala fled to the United States to escape civil war and right-wing death squads. During the 1970s, immigrants from Chile, Argentina, and Haiti also headed north to escape brutal military regimes.

Economic refugees. Other immigrants were economic refugees who sought a better life. Some had legal papers that entitled them to work in the United States. Others entered the United States illegally. They had to take whatever jobs they could find no matter how low the pay.

Economic refugees send a large part of their earnings to their families at home. In Jamaica, Haiti, the Dominican Republic, and other countries, the money sent home by migrants in El Norte is vital to the nations' economy.

SECTION 2 REVIEW

- 1. Identify:** (a) machismo, (b) El Norte.
- 2. Define:** liberation theology.
- 3.** Describe two effects of urban growth in Latin America.
- 4.** (a) What traditions affect the lives of women in rural areas? (b) How has urbanization changed the lives of women in Latin America?
- 5.** How has the role of the Catholic Church changed in Latin America?
- 6. Evaluating Information** (a) What are the benefits and disadvantages of commercial agriculture in Latin America? (b) Have the benefits outweighed the disadvantages? Explain.
- 7. Writing Across Cultures** Write a letter that a Latin American immigrant to El Norte might send to a friend back home. Explain why you left your country and whether you are meeting your goals in the United States.

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MEXICO

FIND OUT

- What were the causes and results of the Mexican Revolution?
- How has Mexico tried to build a stable government?
- What economic progress has Mexico made?

Vocabulary ejido, free trade, maquiladora

“**F**irst, a distant shot; then another, nearer, sharper, echoing like the explosion of a rocket. Then shots in all directions. Round a corner galloped a body of horsemen, their carbines raised. Hoofs struck sparks from the paving stone. Bullets passed whining.”

In the short story “The Bosses,” the Mexican writer Mariano Azuela described the arrival of revolutionary forces in a small Mexican city.

For years, the Del Llano family has used its control of the bank and land to destroy many people. Esperanza and Juanito seize the moment to take revenge. As his sister watches, Juanito sprinkles oil on the store the Del Llanos stole from their father.

“They heard an explosion and black smoke was soon pouring from the doors and windows. . . . from the top floor spirals of smoke rolled up to the clouds. The house of Del Llano Bros., Inc, burned very well.”

Azuela had witnessed violence as a doctor in a revolutionary army. His stories captured the bitterness and anger that led to the Mexican Revolution. The revolution, which lasted from 1910 to 1920, ended years of dictatorship and brought about social reforms.

Geography and People

Mexico is a varied land. In the north, rugged mountains contain a wealth of minerals. The coastal lowlands and vast Central Plateau provide fertile farmland, as well as rain forests and deserts. In the past, foreigners often controlled key Mexican resources. After the revolution, however, Mexico took control of its own resources.

Location. Mexico shares a long border with the United States. Mexicans have mixed feelings about their larger, more powerful neighbor. A Mexican saying laments, "*Pobre Mexico, tan lejos de Dios, y tan cerca de los Estados Unidos!*" ("Poor Mexico, so far from God, and so near the United States!") The two nations have clashed over land in the past. In 1848, Mexico was forced to give up large areas to the United States. During more recent times, Mexicans have faced economic domination by the United States.

People. With a population of 97 million people, Mexico is the world's most populous Spanish-speaking country. Although most Mexicans are mestizos, the country's Native American heritage is still strong. The name Mexico, for example, comes from the Aztec god Mexitli. More than 60 Native American groups, speaking 40 languages, live in rural areas of Mexico. Several million Native Americans speak Na-huatl, the language of the Aztecs.

Rapid population growth poses serious problems for Mexico. About 38 percent of all Mexicans are under the age of 15. As they grow up, they will need jobs, housing, and land, all of which are scarce. As elsewhere, the lack of jobs contributes to poverty and malnutrition.

Achieving Stability

As in other Latin American nations, caudillos often took power in Mexico during the 1800s. From 1876 to 1911, the dictator Porfirio Díaz ruled Mexico.

Díaz. Under the motto "Order and Progress," Díaz introduced programs that were intended to strengthen and modernize Mexico. He invited foreigners to invest in Mexico. They built railroads, developed mines, and



MAP STUDY

Although Mexico is mainly an agricultural country, it has important mineral resources that have helped its economic growth.

- 1. Location** (a) What two major sources of energy does Mexico possess? (b) Where are these resources found?
- 2. Interaction** What evidence does this map provide about Mexico's farming economy?
- 3. Forecasting** As Mexico becomes more industrialized, what effect do you think this will have on people's lives?

bought land in Mexico. Production of silver, copper, coffee, and sugar soared. At the same time, Díaz set up a strong police force that destroyed rural bandits and political opponents.

Economic growth benefited foreign investors and wealthy Mexicans as well as Díaz and his supporters. For most Mexicans, however, life remained unbearably harsh. Nearly

90 percent of Mexican peasants owned no land at all. They worked on large estates for tiny wages. Many lived on the verge of starvation.

Revolution. In 1910, Mexicans' anger against Díaz and foreign investors exploded. Peasants, workers, and members of the middle class joined in the struggle to overthrow Díaz. For almost 11 years, civil war raged across Mexico as various rebel groups fought for power. About 1 million Mexicans died in the fighting.

The revolution almost destroyed Mexico. Yet, in the end, it gave the country a more democratic government and brought lasting social changes. In 1917, in the midst of the fighting, Mexicans wrote a new constitution. It called for redistributing land to peasants, protecting the rights of workers, and limiting the power of the Catholic Church. In addition, the constitution of 1917 gave the Mexican government control over resources such as oil and silver.

Gradual change. During the years since the revolution, Mexico has gradually tried to fulfill the promises of the constitution. During the 1930s, President Lázaro Cárdenas (CAR thay nahs) took bold steps toward achieving reform. He broke up large estates, giving small farms to about one third of Mexico's

peasants. He also nationalized foreign oil companies and recognized the power of labor unions.

After Cárdenas, the pace of reform slowed. Economic hard times and pressure from right-wing groups have forced some presidents to retreat from reform.

Although Mexico is a democracy, one party, the Institutional Revolutionary party (PRI), has dominated the country since 1929. The PRI has succeeded in part by paying attention to the needs of many groups, including farmers, industrialists, labor unions, and the middle class. Critics, however, claim that the PRI has used fraud and violence to stay in power.

Challenges. In 1968, just as the Olympic Games were scheduled to begin in Mexico City, students and workers launched a massive strike. Government troops fired on peaceful protesters, killing hundreds of students. The Olympics took place as planned, but Mexicans were shocked by the massacre.

During the late 1980s, a rival political party mounted the most serious challenge the PRI had ever faced. In a close election campaign, the PRI candidate barely won the presidency. One reason many voters turned against the PRI was the economic crisis that gripped Mexico.



An Oil Refinery After Mexico nationalized its petroleum industry in 1938, Britain and the United States boycotted Mexican products. Mexico finally eased this crisis by paying foreign companies for oil wells and refineries.

Justice Why did Mexico feel justified in nationalizing its oil industry?

Economic Development

After the revolution, Mexico developed a mixed economy. The government owned key industries, such as oil. Private companies owned other businesses and industries. However, the government limited foreign ownership in any company to less than 50 percent of it.

Mexico has sought to achieve balanced growth by developing both agriculture and industry. Despite setbacks, its economy has grown at a steady pace. Food production has increased, and many people now enjoy a higher standard of living than they did in the past. The benefits have not reached everyone, however. According to one estimate, for each Mexican who lives well, six still live in poverty.

Agriculture. Under its land reform program, the government divided many large haciendas into **ejidos** (eh HEE dohs), or agricultural communities. Today, about half of Mexico's farmers live in ejidos. They raise crops on the land but cannot sell the land because it is owned by the community. Most people on the ejidos are subsistence farmers. They produce enough for their families but have little left over to sell.

The government encouraged the growth of commercial farming. It provided irrigation to open arid areas in the north for farming and ranching. Large companies, many of which are foreign-owned, set up commercial farms there. Using modern farm machinery, they produced a variety of crops such as fruits and tomatoes for shipment to the United States.

As commercial farming grew, farmers no longer produced enough food for local markets. To feed its booming population, Mexico had to import food. The government further contributed to the problem of falling food production. It kept prices for wheat and corn low so urban dwellers could afford to buy bread and tortillas. The low prices discouraged farmers from growing those crops.

Industry. For many years, Mexico followed a policy of economic **nationalism**. The government imposed high tariffs to protect local industries. By the 1960s, Mexican factories were



Growing Tobacco in Veracruz Commercial farms like this use modern methods to raise cash crops. They are more efficient than ejidos, where small plots of land are farmed and technology is often out of date. Even so, most peasants still prefer to farm their own land. **Choice** Why has commercial farming increased Mexico's dependence on imports?

producing cars, refrigerators, appliances, and many consumer goods. Many state-owned factories were inefficient and unprofitable. The government, however, could afford to keep them going because of an oil boom.

In 1974, large new oil reserves were found in Mexico. As oil prices soared, Mexico borrowed and spent billions of dollars to build refineries and modernize its industries. It also borrowed heavily from foreign nations for various development projects.

Debt crisis. During the early 1980s, plunging oil prices ended the oil boom. At the same time, rising interest rates on its loans put Mexico into a major debt crisis. To avoid economic collapse, Mexico had to make painful reforms. As a result, it cut spending on education, health care, and other services. It also laid off thousands of government workers and sold state-owned industries to private investors.

Recent trends. Mexico also moved toward **free trade**, or trade that had low tariffs and no restrictions. Mexico, Canada, and the

United States—already major trading partners—signed the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) in 1993. NAFTA will create a common market with 365 million consumers. It will abolish most tariffs on goods traded among the three countries. In the future, the economies of these three North American nations are likely to become increasingly interdependent.

Many Mexicans hope that free trade will attract foreign investment and create new jobs. Others worry that the United States, Japan, and other countries might dominate Mexico's economy.

Increased free trade has encouraged the growth of *maquiladoras* (mah kee luh DOHR uhs). A **maquiladora** is a foreign-owned plant in which local workers assemble parts into finished goods. American and Japanese companies built *maquiladoras* in Mexico to take advantage of workers' lower wages. Mexicans flocked to the plants, which sprang up along the border with the United States. Despite overcrowded living conditions near the plants, workers were glad to have jobs.

SECTION 3 REVIEW

- 1. Identify:** (a) Porfirio Díaz, (b) constitution of 1917, (c) Lázaro Cárdenas, (d) PRI, (e) NAFTA.
- 2. Define:** (a) ejido, (b) free trade, (c) *maquiladora*.
- 3.** Describe three changes that resulted from the Mexican Revolution.
- 4.** What role has the PRI played in Mexican politics?
- 5.** (a) How did nationalism affect Mexico's economic policies? (b) What economic changes has Mexico made since the debt crisis of the 1980s?
- 6. Defending a Position** Do you agree that revolution was the only way to bring about reform in Mexico? Give reasons for your answer.
- 7. Writing Across Cultures** Reread the Mexican saying about the United States on page 493. List three facts that might explain why many Mexicans feel this way.

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ARGENTINA

FIND OUT

- Why were Juan Perón and Eva Perón popular figures?
- What role has the military played in Argentina?
- What economic challenges does Argentina face?

Vocabulary *inflation*

Waving torches above their heads, thousands of workers marched behind a flatbed truck. On it, a huge movie screen showed pictures of a lovely blonde woman wearing elegant silk dresses and diamond jewelry. As the images flashed across the screen, the workers chanted, "*Eva es mi alma y mi corazón.*" ("Eva is my heart and soul.")

Every year, on July 26, workers march through downtown Buenos Aires to honor Eva Perón, the former First Lady of Argentina. "Evita" had risen from poverty to riches. She tried to help the *descamisados*—"shirtless ones"—as working-class people were called. "You, too, will have clothes as rich as mine," she told the poor women of Argentina.

Although she died more than 40 years ago, Eva Perón remains a symbol of hope to many of Argentina's poor. Today, as in the past, the nation's leaders face the challenge of meeting the needs of its large working class.

Geography and People

In area, Argentina is one of the 10 largest countries in the world. The pampas, a vast fertile plain, stretches across east-central Argentina. There, farmers grow wheat, corn, and sorghum. Huge cattle ranches, called *estancias*, are also scattered across the grasslands. The riches of the pampas make Argentina a leading exporter of food. In addition to its agricultural resources, Argentina has deposits of lead, zinc, and tin.