

toward and away from military rule in Latin America, the pendulum since 1954 seems to have swung in the latter direction, as it has before, with the added consideration that civilian regimes now coming into office have a wider basis for democratic government than existed in the past.

The recent decline in militarism began in Panama in 1955 with the assassination of Colonel Remón. The following year General Somoza of Nicaragua was also assassinated, General Magloire of Haiti was driven from power by a revolution, and General Odría retired from the Peruvian scene following the election of an opposition civilian president. During 1957, Honduras' armed forces turned the Government over to civilians. The election of civilian regimes in Argentina and Colombia in 1958 and Venezuela in 1959 and the transference of power from military juntas to moderate civilian regimes merely represented consolidation of the anti-dictatorial revolutions against Generals Perón (in 1955), Rojas Pinilla (in 1957), and Pérez Jiménez (in 1958). The most recent, and in many ways the most spectacular defeat of military dictatorship occurred in Cuba early in 1959.

The political spectrum of contemporary Latin America, on balance, displays a moderate picture. Gone are the military dictatorships (except in Paraguay and the Dominican Republic) and gone are the radical revolutionary regimes (except in Cuba and perhaps Bolivia) which characterized the immediate post-World War II period. Traditionalist-type governments now prevail in Panama, Nicaragua, El Salvador, Ecuador; moderately conservative regimes have power in Chile, Colombia, Argentina, Costa Rica, Guatemala, Uruguay, and Peru. Middle-of-the-road parties dominate Mexico and Brazil. Mildly left-of-center governments are running Venezuela, Honduras, and perhaps Haiti.

Briefly, the postwar political undulations in each of the 20 Latin American countries have been as follows:

ARGENTINA

The decade immediately following the end of World War II was dominated by the dictatorial figure of Juan Domingo Perón. He was a leader in the 1943 colonels' conspiracy, which ousted the traditionalist regime that had ruled Argentina in the 1930-43 period, and, with the support of junior officers and labor, he obtained virtually absolute power by 1945. For a full decade Perón headed a radical military-labor regime, and during this period he precipitated social and economic changes so fundamental that they can probably never be undone.

Backed by urban labor, the tenant farmers, the army, and an assortment of extreme nationalists, Perón was able to win overwhelming victories at the polls in the presidential elections of 1946 and 1951. Abetted by a rubberstamp Congress, a brutal Federal police force, and mobs inspired by his demagogic appeals, Perón muzzled the opposition. Sweeping labor benefits and social welfare programs were promulgated, and a large-scale, state-subsidized industrialization program was launched in an effort to revolutionize the Argentine economy and society. In foreign affairs nationalism and imperialism were the keynotes.