

# Argentina Activity

- **Key Players**

Argentina's President Hipolyto Irigoyen was in office from October 1916 to October 1922 when he serves his first term, then in October 1928 he served another 2 years in office. Irigoyen detested the Anglophile (meaning they were on the side of Britain) cattle barons and the Francophile (meaning they were on the side of France) intellectuals and despised the many Argentines who looked to Italy as their mother country. He saw no reason to have his country do anything but profit from the sale of her war materials, which she was doing on an enormous scale. Probably the majority of the population supported him but there were great pressures on him to join the Allies. To Irigoyen, the entrance of the United States into the war was merely another good reason for Argentina to stay out.

- **Before WW1**

When the Argentinian rural economy began to develop, in the second half of the nineteenth century, the fertile regions of the pampas are divided into vast *estancias* owned by no more than 300 families. Each *estancia* covers hundreds of thousands of acres. With wealth in so few hands, oligarchy is almost inevitable. Argentine's gilded few ensure that power remains within their own circle by means of an exclusive club, the Argentine Rural Society, founded in 1866. The presidency of Julio Roca in 1880 begins three decades in which the office (together with its material benefits) is passed from hand to hand among a small circle of friends and relations within the Rural Society. By the 1890s this situation has prompted sufficient outrage for two opposition groups to be formed - the Radical party in 1892 (campaigning on behalf of all shades of political opinion against the corruption of the regime) and in 1895 the specifically left-wing Socialist party. By 1912 political unrest is so potentially explosive that the ruling group reluctantly concedes electoral reform. There is now to be a secret ballot and universal male suffrage. At the next election, in 1916, the oligarchy is finally removed from power

- **During WW1**

Argentina had claimed they would keep a neutral position, and they did throughout the war. German ships were seized in Argentina and in Chile, violating the neutrality acts. Argentina also let British ships have access and traded with Britain and France. Favoritism of the Allies Argentina traded with and loaned money to the Allies. There was great pressure on Argentinean president Hipolyto Irigoyen to join the Allies because of his pro-Allies citizens. The president saw no direct reason why Argentina should enter the fight, and preferred that the country do nothing but profit from the support it was giving. Argentina began selling surplus wheat to Britain and France in 1918. Citizens Affected Many British and German immigrants in Argentina returned to their homeland to fight for their countries. Latin American lives were lost

due to the war but not nearly as many as the participating nations lost. Argentinean Prosperity. In 1924, Argentina went through a sudden period of prosperity due to foreign investment, immigration, and rising exports. From 1913 to 1929 the amount of foreign trade had tripled.

- **End of WW1**

The economy was boosted after the war. This was due to major exportation of goods. This was beneficial in case there was aftermath after world war 1.

- **After WW1**

Argentina became a creditor and paid off their American loans. They became the richest nation in Latin America. They also became a major exporter of wool, beef, and wheat. Involvement/Participation Argentina kept a neutral position throughout but still lost lives because of the war. Because the citizens of Argentina favored the Allies so much, there was a great amount of pressure on the Argentinean president to join the Allies. However, the president wanted to stay out. Economic and Foreign policies: The large amount of trade with the Allies boosted the Argentinean economy. Between 1913 to 1929 the amount of foreign trade had tripled. Political and Social: Argentina became a very important nation in Latin America due to the boost in the economy.

- **Key events**

1930 - Armed forces coup ousts Yrigoyen amid sharp economic downturn caused by Great Depression. Civilian rule is restored in 1932, but economic decline continues.

1942 - Argentina, along with Chile, refuses to break diplomatic relations with Japan and Germany after the Japanese attack on the US Pacific fleet at Pearl Harbour.

1943 - Nationalist army officers seize power in protest at stagnation and electoral fraud. One leading figures is Colonel Juan Peron.

1945 - Argentina declares war on Japan and Germany.

## **Post WW1**

The economy continued to stay high. New president: Roberto Ortiz.

This period was characterised by electoral fraud, persecution of the political opposition (mainly against the UCR) and generalised government corruption, against the background of the Great

Depression. The impact of the economic crisis forced many farmers and other countryside workers to relocate to the outskirts of the larger cities, resulting in the creation of the first *villas miseria* (shanty towns). Thus, the population of Buenos Aires jumped from 1.5 million inhabitants in 1914 to 3.5 million in 1935.<sup>[1]</sup> Lacking in political experience, in contrast with the European immigrants who brought with them socialist and anarchist ideas, these new city-dwellers would provide the social base, in the next decade, for Peronism.

## Sources

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