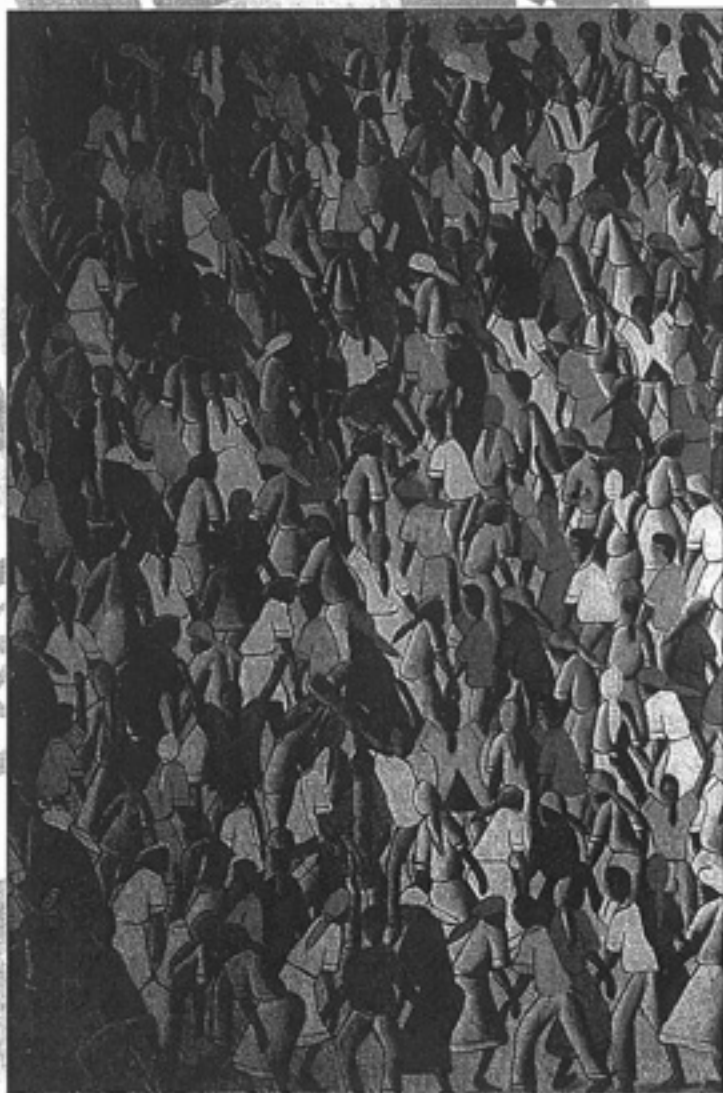


Chapter 23

LATIN AMERICA IN THE WORLD TODAY



A Swirling Crowd Drumming musicians seem to disappear in this crowd of Haitians. Painters from Haiti, many of them self-taught artists, have become famous for their imaginative style and colorful scenes.

Fine Art Why do you think the artist has not shown individual faces or expressions?

CHAPTER OUTLINE

- 1 Latin America and the United States
- 2 Regional and Global Issues
- 3 Literature and the Arts

Day after day, the workers sweated in the tropical heat. They blasted through mountains and hacked through jungles. More than 25,000 workers from Central America and the West Indies helped clear a “path between the seas.” On August 15, 1914, the Panama Canal opened.

In the United States, people hailed the Panama Canal. The United States had organized and financed the project. It had even engineered a revolution to win rights to the land where the canal was dug.

Latin Americans had mixed feelings about the canal. Fifty years after it opened, Pablo Neruda, Chile’s Nobel Prize-winning poet, wrote:

“Panama, your geography granted you a gift that no other land was given: two oceans pushed forward to meet you . . . And what happened? little sister, they cut your figure as if it were cheese and then ate and left you like a gnawed olive pit.”

In "History of a Canal," Neruda criticized the United States for using its power and wealth to carve up Panama. The building of the Panama Canal, however, was only one action of the United States that provoked fierce debate in Latin America.

CHAPTER PERSPECTIVE

Since the 1800s, the United States has taken an active role in Latin America. Latin Americans have struggled to limit North American influence in their lands. Today, the nations of the Western Hemisphere emphasize cooperation over conflict as they try to solve urgent problems and build a better future.

As you read, look for these chapter themes:

- ▶ Differing interests have sometimes led to conflict between Latin American nations and the United States.
- ▶ Through regional organizations, nations of the Western Hemisphere have worked to resolve issues and promote cooperation.
- ▶ The literature and arts of Latin America blend Indian, African, and European traditions.

Literature Connections

In this chapter, you will encounter selections from the following works.

- "History of a Canal," Pablo Neruda
- "Sensemayá," Nicolás Guillén
- "Social Commitment and the Latin American Writer," Mario Vargas Llosa
- "Flowers and Songs of Sorrow," Aztec poet

For other suggestions, see Connections With Literature, pages 804–808.

1

LATIN AMERICA AND THE UNITED STATES

FIND OUT

How has United States influence in Latin America grown since the 1800s?

What economic interests have shaped relations between the United States and Latin America?

How did the Cold War affect relations between Latin America and the United States?

What ties link Puerto Rico and the United States?

When the nations of Latin America won their freedom, they looked to the United States as a model for democratic government. Simón Bolívar called the United States a "model of political virtues and moral enlightenment unique in the history of mankind." Yet, by the early 1900s, Latin American admiration for the United States had turned to resentment. To many Latin Americans, the United States had become the "Colossus of the North"—a giant power that threatened their independence.

An Expanding Power

In the 1820s, Spain prepared to reconquer its former American colonies. The new nations of Latin America therefore welcomed the Monroe Doctrine, issued by United States President James Monroe in 1823. In it, Monroe declared that "the American continents are henceforth not to be considered as subjects for future colonization by any European powers."

As the United States expanded, Latin Americans no longer saw the United States as a

defender of their liberties. Instead, they began to fear its power in the hemisphere.

Mexican War. In 1845, the United States annexed Texas, which had once belonged to Mexico. A year later, war broke out between Mexico and the United States. When the Mexican War ended in 1848, Mexico had to give up almost half of its territory to the United States. The war left Mexicans with a lasting bitterness toward the United States.

Spanish-American War. As the United States industrialized, it extended its influence in the Caribbean and Central America. During the 1890s, Cuban patriots were battling for in-

dependence from Spain. In 1898, the United States declared war on Spain and joined the fighting. It promised that once peace was achieved, it would "leave the government and control of Cuba to its people."

The Spanish-American War ended in victory for the United States. Cuba did gain its independence, but the United States forced Cuba to include the Platt Amendment as part of its new constitution. Under the Platt Amendment, the United States claimed the right to intervene in Cuban affairs.

As a result of the war, the United States also gained Puerto Rico and the Philippines

MAP STUDY

After the Spanish-American War, the United States played a major role in the affairs of the Caribbean nations.

- 1. Region** Which two areas were acquired by the United States?
- 2. Interaction** (a) In what part of Central America did the United States acquire land? (b) Why did the United States want this area?
- 3. Understanding Causes and Effects** How did growing United States investments in the Caribbean and in Central America result in increased intervention in those areas?



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from Spain. Many Latin Americans felt that the United States had fought the Spanish-American War to win new territories.

"Yankee Imperialist" or Good Neighbor?

During the early 1900s, the United States continued to intervene in Latin America. Its actions increased Latin Americans' distrust and fear of their northern neighbor.

Panama Canal. From the late 1800s, the United States had expressed an interest in digging a canal across Panama, which was then part of Colombia. President Theodore Roosevelt offered Colombia \$10 million for a strip of land across the Isthmus of Panama. When Colombia rejected the offer, Roosevelt encouraged rebels in Panama to declare Panama's independence. In 1903, the new nation of Panama granted a 10-mile wide "canal zone" to the United States. Roosevelt's actions heightened Latin American fears of the "Yankee menace."^{*}

Investments and intervention. In the years that followed, United States investments in Latin America soared. North Americans bought sugar cane plantations in Cuba and copper mines in Chile. They built railroads and factories in Brazil and Argentina. In Mexico and Venezuela, they invested in oil wells. These investments benefited the wealthy, but not the majority of people in Latin America.

Financial interests led the United States to intervene in Latin America. In the early 1900s, the Dominican Republic was unable to pay its debts to American banks. The United States occupied the island, took over collection of its customs duties, and repaid the loans. United States marines remained in the Dominican Republic until 1924.

American forces also occupied Nicaragua and Haiti, and intervened in the affairs of Honduras six times. In each case, they stepped in to protect American lives and



In a Caracas Neighborhood Today, brightly colored signs advertising fast food restaurants rise against the background of Caracas's green hills. The United States is a major trading partner of Venezuela, Brazil, Argentina, Mexico, Chile, and most other Latin American nations. **Culture** Why might Latin Americans dislike signs like these?

property or to support a government that favored American interests.

Most Latin Americans resented "Yankee imperialism." A plantation owner in Nicaragua wrote to officials in Washington:

“Today, we are hated and despised. . . . This feeling has been created by employing American marines to hunt down and kill Nicaraguans in their own country.”

Changing directions. The growth of anti-American feelings and the beginning of the Great Depression led the United States to seek better relations with Latin America. In

^{*}By the terms of a treaty signed in 1978, the United States turned over full control of the canal zone to Panama on December 31, 1999.

1933, President Franklin Roosevelt established a new Latin American policy—one that he called the Good Neighbor Policy. Roosevelt withdrew American marines from Haiti and agreed that “no state has the right to intervene in the internal or external affairs of another state.”

The United States, however, remained the most powerful economic force in the region. American companies owned huge tracts of land, commercial farms, mines, and other valuable resources in Latin America. The United States was also the chief trading partner of most Latin American nations.

Cold War Politics

By the 1950s, the Cold War had added a new issue to relations within the Western Hemisphere. The United States wanted to create a strong anti-communist bloc in the region. Some Latin Americans, however, were sympathetic to communism. They hoped that communism would solve their region’s economic and social ills.

Battling communism. To keep leftists from gaining power in Latin America, the United States backed anti-communist forces. Often, that meant supporting dictators or military governments.

The United States also returned to a policy of intervention. In 1954, it helped overthrow a leftist government in Guatemala. It sent armed forces to the Dominican Republic in 1965, to Grenada in 1983, and to Panama in 1989.

Aid. To counter communist influence, the United States also increased aid to Latin America. One well-known aid program was President John F. Kennedy’s Alliance for Progress. It offered aid to Latin American countries if they made certain reforms. The Alliance improved conditions somewhat in some countries. However, it did not significantly reduce Latin American poverty.

In recent years, the United States has continued to provide military aid to countries faced with rebel movements. It has also put military and economic resources into the war on drug trafficking in Latin America. In addition,

it has offered financial aid to governments that agree to undertake economic reforms and support free trade.

Today, humanitarian aid also comes from non-governmental groups (NGOs) such as churches and private foundations. These groups often help rebuild schools, hospitals, and homes in countries that have been struck by natural disasters.

Containing Castro

Fidel Castro’s revolution in Cuba alarmed the United States. Communist Cuba supported revolutionaries in other parts of Latin America and became a close ally of the Soviet Union.

Bay of Pigs invasion. In 1961, the United States tried to overthrow Castro. It secretly trained and armed Cuban exiles and set them ashore at the Bay of Pigs, off Cuba’s south coast. The exiles hoped to lead a general uprising against Castro. Instead, Castro’s forces quickly defeated them.

Cuban missile crisis. After the Bay of Pigs invasion, Castro forged even closer ties with the Soviet Union. He allowed the Soviets to build missile bases in Cuba. In October 1962, when the United States discovered the missile bases, it set up a naval blockade of Cuba.

These actions set off a superpower crisis. Soviet ships steamed toward Cuba, some carrying atomic missiles. The United States Navy was poised to stop them. The world seemed on the brink of war. In the end, the Soviet Union was forced to back down and remove its missiles.

Trade embargo. Since 1962, the United States has imposed a trade embargo on Cuba. In 1977, the two nations set up limited diplomatic relations. Tensions remain high, however. Castro has denounced the United States as an “imperialist” nation. In turn, the United States has blasted Castro’s dictatorship and his human rights abuses.

In recent years, the United States has eased some restrictions. Still, it has not ended its policy of trying to force Castro to change. It has also continued to protest human rights violations by Castro’s government.

Changing Trends

In recent years, the United States has encouraged moves toward democracy in Latin America. While it has aided anti-communist forces, it has also pressed rightist governments to make reforms.

El Salvador. During the 1970s and 1980s, the United States gave massive military aid to El Salvador as its government battled leftist guerrillas. At the same time, the United States urged the Salvadoran government to launch land reform and hold free elections.

Years of civil war took a huge toll on the tiny country. In 1992, the UN finally helped rebel and government forces to reach a peace agreement.

Nicaragua. As you read in Chapter 22, leftist Sandinistas gained power in Nicaragua in 1979. Fearing that Nicaragua would become another Cuba, the United States aided the contras in a guerrilla war against the Sandinista government. It also imposed a trade embargo to damage Nicaragua's economy.

In 1990, the United States ended the embargo and restored aid after Nicaragua held free elections and the Sandinistas lost. The new government made economic reforms hoping to spur growth.

Mixed feelings. As the Cold War ended, the fear of Soviet power faded. Other issues, such as foreign debt, the illegal drug trade, and terrorism became vital to the people of the hemisphere.

Today, as in the past, Latin Americans have mixed feelings about the United States. Many admire its rich cultural heritage and powerful economy. Others resent its economic and social domination. No matter what their feelings, many Latin Americans share the views of the Mexican poet, Octavio Paz:

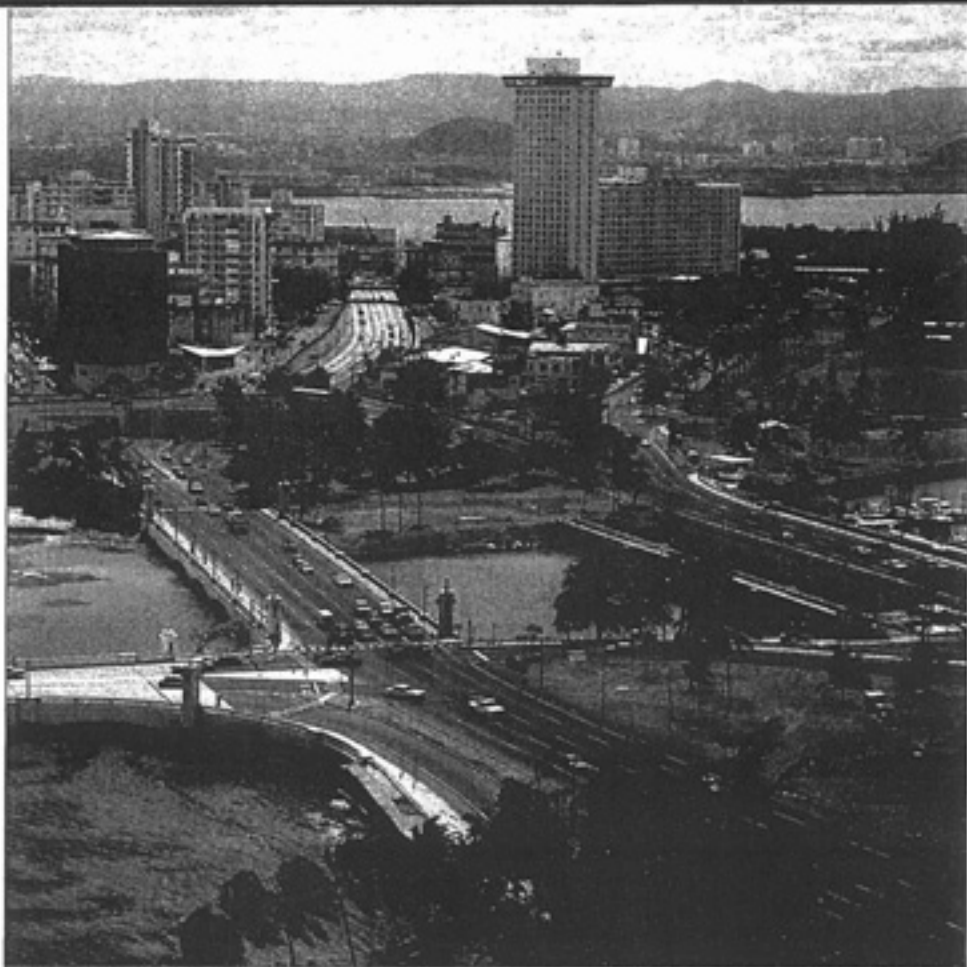
“North Americans are always among us, even when they ignore us or turn their back on us. Their shadow covers the whole hemisphere. It is the shadow of a giant.”

Puerto Rico: A Special Case

Puerto Rico has lived under the shadow of the United States since 1898. At first, the United States controlled its government and economy. To counter an independence movement, the United States gave Puerto Ricans United States citizenship in 1917.

The Mariel Boatlift
In 1980, Cuba briefly relaxed its ban on Cubans leaving their country. In just four months, 120,000 Cubans—many of them penniless—fled to Florida in boats. **Power**
Name two actions the United States has taken since 1960 against Fidel Castro.





San Juan, Puerto Rico Busy highways and towering buildings suggest the prosperity of Puerto Rico's capital city. The people of the commonwealth have a higher standard of living than most Latin Americans. The average income in Puerto Rico, however, is still only about one third that of people in the United States. **Change** How has Puerto Rico's economy changed since the 1950s?

Puerto Rico became a self-governing commonwealth of the United States in 1952. This means that Puerto Rico has its own constitution and elects its own governor and legislature. As citizens of the United States, Puerto Ricans must obey that nation's laws, but they do not have to pay taxes to the federal government. They enjoy most of the rights of citizens, although they cannot vote for the United States president or be represented fully in Congress.

Economic development. Until the 1950s, Puerto Rico's economy depended on a single crop—sugar. Large United States corporations owned huge sugar plantations on the island, and most Puerto Ricans lived in poverty.

In the 1950s, Luis Muñoz Marín (loo EES moon YOHS mah REEN) became Puerto Rico's first elected governor. He supported a program to encourage tourism and develop industry on the island. Known as Operation Bootstrap, the program offered United States companies tax savings to build plants in Puerto Rico.

Hundreds of American businesses set up factories to produce shoes, clothing, chemicals, and electronics. In addition to receiving tax breaks, these companies also benefited because wages in Puerto Rico were lower than those on the mainland United States. Even so, incomes for Puerto Ricans rose as the economy developed.

Despite economic progress, the jobless rate remained high. Many Puerto Ricans migrated to the mainland United States to find jobs. Today more than 3.1 million Puerto Ricans live on the mainland, and almost 4 million live on the island.

Future status. Puerto Ricans have long debated the future of their island. Some call for independence. Others want statehood within the United States. Most Puerto Rican voters, however, have rejected these options. They have voted many times to continue the current status as a commonwealth.

SECTION 1 REVIEW

- 1. Locate:** (a) Panama Canal, (b) Puerto Rico.
- 2. Identify:** (a) Monroe Doctrine, (b) Mexican War, (c) Spanish-American War, (d) Platt Amendment, (e) Good Neighbor Policy, (f) Alliance for Progress, (g) Bay of Pigs invasion, (h) Cuban missile crisis.
- (a) How did Latin American nations first react to the Monroe Doctrine? (b) Identify two events that changed their view of the United States.
- What was one result of increased United States investment in Latin America during the early 1900s?
- Give two examples of how the Cold War affected relations between the United States and Latin America.
- (a) How has Puerto Rico encouraged economic development? (b) Have these programs been successful? Explain.
- 7. Identifying Alternatives** (a) What choices must Puerto Ricans make about the future of their island? (b) What reasons might some Puerto Ricans have for becoming an independent nation? (c) What reasons might others have for wanting to keep their present status? (d) Why would still others want Puerto Rico to gain statehood?
- 8. Writing Across Cultures** Some people say that the Monroe Doctrine protected Latin America from Europe, but not from the United States. Do you agree or disagree? Write a paragraph explaining your answer.

2

REGIONAL AND GLOBAL ISSUES

FIND OUT

- What role have regional organizations played in Latin America?
- Why have Latin American debt and the drug trade become global issues?
- What environmental issues are important in Latin America?
- Why has human rights been an issue in Latin America?

Vocabulary default

At a meeting in Mexico in the year 2000, a group of Western Hemisphere leaders listened grimly as the president of the World Bank ticked off some unpleasant statistics:

- The number of people living in poverty in Latin America has grown by about 40 million in the past 20 years.
- Today, 15 per cent of Latin Americans live in extreme poverty.
- Latin America's Native American population is severely affected. About 80 per cent live below the poverty line.

The World Bank president had even more disturbing figures. He reported that the distribution of income in Central and South America is the "worst in the world." World Bank statistics show that the poorest 20 per cent of the region's population owns only 4.5 per cent of the region's wealth. In Africa, this percentage is 5.2. In Eastern Europe and Southeast Asia, it is 8.8 per cent.

After hearing these grim figures, the leaders agreed that it would be impossible to achieve steady economic growth so long as there is such a vast gap between rich and poor. They agreed that Latin American poverty was a global problem which required global solutions. Furthermore, they acknowledged that poverty