

## BOOK REVIEWS

### GENERAL

*The United States and Latin America.* By DEXTER PERKINS. Baton Rouge, 1961. Louisiana State University Press. Pp. xi, 124. \$3.00.

These are three thoughtful essays on the present realities of United States relations with Latin America. First, Mr. Perkins deals with the issues of national security, and suggests that in the present struggle between the Communist and non-Communist world Latin America is second only to Western Europe as a favorable field for our effective influence. He grants that, on the score of security, Latin America is of secondary importance—and adds that it “has never been of first importance”—despite the tumult of fear in 1823. He discards the notion that “the Monroe Doctrine saved the Latin American republics from extinction or conquest” as well as the thesis that those republics owed their safety to the British navy. Dealing with more recent issues of security, he cites the great contribution of raw materials during World War II, raises questions as to our wisdom in arming one and another Latin American state, the consequent increasing of military influence in the southern republics and the provoking of arms competition between them. The chief threat to Latin America, he points out, lies not in invasion but in the penetration of “the alien and vicious ideas that emanate from the Kremlin.”

Mr. Perkins then turns to a deft retelling of Latin American political relations with the United States from the early period of colonial revolts down to the present confused situation (but not including the current Cuban crisis). His comments on the futility of our interventions in Cuba, Nicaragua, Haiti, and the Dominican Republic; our measures did not result in “any very sweeping change in their political habits or in the secure establishment of popular rule.” He points out that Mexico, where our interventions were fitful and less important, has a vastly better record than any of the states of the Caribbean area—except Costa Rica—that it is “the most stable, the most intelligently progressive, the nearest to popular rule.” Mr. Perkins then describes the way in which we foreswore the policy of intervention more than twenty years ago, and have stuck to it ever since—a point which might be debated in the light of our role in

Guatemala in 1954, and which certainly will be debated in the case of our active aid to the attempted invasion of Cuba in April, 1961.

Mr. Perkins' third essay deals with economic relations. He deals incisively with the change of American "economic imperialism." He cites the case of the United Fruit Company in Central America, Colombia, and Ecuador; he admits the earlier misuse of power of the company; he cites the social and economic contributions to the various countries involved; and, he points up the increasing recognition by the company of its responsibilities. He then turns to sugar, describes the twists and turns in our dealings with Cuba (but without covering the most recent events). He deals with oil, describes the expropriations by Mexico and Bolivia, and raises questions to the likely course on petroleum in other countries. He discusses the various agencies through which the United States extends aid to Latin America, and insists that we "need to step up our interest in it. On that larger horizon which ought to animate every American to renewed effort on the international scale, Latin America looms large, and will loom larger tomorrow."

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*El mundo hispánico y el mundo anglo-sajón en América: choque y atracción de dos culturas.* By ÁNGEL DEL RÍO. Prologue by GERMÁN ARCINIEGAS. Buenos Aires, 1960. Asociación Argentina por la Libertad de la Cultura. Pp. 162. Paper.

In this volume a veteran Spanish Hispanist long associated with Columbia University presents in brief an interpretation of the historic political and cultural relations of the United States and Spain and of the relations between the United States and Latin America. A relatively brief and superficial account of these relations is enlivened and justified by the reflections of the author whose experience and whose good will towards the peoples and cultures of which he writes make his remarks particularly worthy of attention. Primarily written for Spanish American audiences these two lectures do full justice to the elements of United States culture usually minimized or disregarded by Spanish and Spanish American writers. Del Río particularly emphasizes the importance of the Hispanic influence on American writers from Washington Irving to Hemingway. He is, however, unable to hide his distress at the general ignorance and disregard of Hispanic culture by most educated citizens of the United States. This is true and deplorable. It is equally true (though Del Río does not say so) that the average educated Latin