

Conference in early 1942. In a relatively short monograph, the author offers an excellent overview of how each Latin American nation acted and responded to the pending world crisis; how these nations sympathized with the Allied effort while they concurrently desired neutrality; how the solidifying United States–British alliance affected hemispheric internal and external affairs; how Latin American domestic politics developed during the “phony war”; and how these nations reacted to the attack on Pearl Harbor. There are also sections on the inter-American gatherings during this era.

Humphreys writes about his subject from four vantage points: separate entities, bilateral relations (such as the border war between Peru and Ecuador), matters regarding the United States, and, finally, the British. Of the above, the author’s description of the English impact on Latin America offers added insight into the movement toward global confrontation. His use of British foreign office records illustrates how that embattled country viewed internal Latin American matters, good neighbor diplomacy, and the rivalry over hemispheric allegiance between the British and United States diplomatic corps as seen through the former’s eyes. This, of course, results in some natural bias. Humphreys’s interpretation of Franklin Roosevelt’s neutrality zone, for example, stresses the British feeling that the zone was unenforceable. This is valid. That zone, however, set the precedent that allowed the United States to expand its assistance to the Allies in the Caribbean and along North Atlantic sea routes.

Despite this slight difference of opinion, Humphreys achieves the goal of his book, and his use of foreign office papers adds a new dimension to the historiography of the era. The author’s style and organization make for easy reading. For the serious student of Latin American affairs during the early stages of the Second World War, this is a welcome addition to both personal and university libraries.

Newport Beach, Calif.

IRWIN GELLMAN

*Central America: International Dimensions of the Crisis.* Edited by RICHARD E. FEINBERG. New York: Holmes and Meier, 1982. Notes. Map. Tables. Index. Pp. vii, 269. Cloth. \$24.50. Paper. \$12.50.

This is the study of Central America that we have been awaiting. Dispassionate yet incisive, the twelve essays that make up this able collection represent sturdy scholarship and speak well not only of the individual authors, but also of the book’s editor, Richard Feinberg.

Central America continues to be an increasing drumbeat for North American audiences as revolution and upheaval stalk the region. Yet those audiences are little conditioned to understand the underlying causes of the current crisis because historical scholarship and in-depth journalistic reporting have tended to bypass the countries of Central America. This is more true in the case of some, like Honduras, and less so in, say, the case of Guatemala. But overall, there is a dearth of adequate material on the region—a situation that leaves a vacuum which has been more and more filled with inadequate, marginal, and distorted, often polemic, writing.

*Central America: International Dimensions of the Crisis* jumps into this breach, affording some very able glimpses of the internal and external forces that have brought the region to its present turmoil. The emphasis is more on “the role being played by . . . external powers” (p. 1), but this is set against the backdrop of an old order that is crumbling in each of the countries of Central America.

Earlier versions of each of the essays, with two exceptions, were presented at a conference hosted by the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars at the Smithsonian Institution in Washington in April 1981. There is a marked difference between the earlier presentations and the essays contained in this volume, however: evidence of the interaction of the authors with their scholarly audiences and also of Feinberg’s able direction.

The collection starts off with a trenchant background chapter by Francisco Villagrán Kramer, a Guatemalan author and politician who served two years as vice-president of his country until he broke with its military leaders in September 1980. He argues persuasively that “the most significant overall change” (p. 15) in the region has been its abandonment of traditional “agro-export economies” based on coffee and bananas; this move has effectively undermined the political control of the armed forces, the Roman Catholic church, and the agricultural oligarchies, which for decades worked closely with the United States embassies in the region. This background chapter can only provide a sketch without too much detail, but it affords a good framework for what is to follow.

James Kurth of Swarthmore College picks up the theme of United States influence in the region, detailing the hegemony that Washington imposed on the countries of Central America and the Caribbean following the Spanish American War of 1898. He draws interesting parallels between that hegemonic system and those of the Soviet Union in Eastern Europe and Great Britain in the Middle East. Just as that British hegemony in the Middle East withered during and after World War II, the United States’s role in Central America has undergone major changes,

Kurth indicates, and is likely to undergo further adaptations. Its eventual form in the 1980s is unclear. Strategic, political, and economic factors serve up, he says, an ambiguous answer. That the United States will continue to play a role, however, is certain. Likewise, Mexico and Venezuela can be expected to enlarge their current emphasis on the region.

Two chapters in the book turn attention to those countries. Robert Bond's essay on Venezuela and the "heightened Venezuelan presence in the Caribbean" (p. 187) is the most lucid writing in the collection. Moreover, Bond, who is on the staff of the Wilson Center, easily weaves his way through the intricacies of Venezuelan politics, the resultant disagreement between Venezuelan political parties on Central American policy, and the impact of Reagan policy on Venezuelan thinking. While one might disagree with his conclusion that the earlier consensus between Acción Democrática and Copei on foreign policy "will continue to erode" (p. 200), for there are some fresh signs of a reuniting on policy, there can be no argument with his thesis that "Venezuela will continue to expand its influence in the Caribbean basin in the 1980s. Geography, natural resources, ideology, and the constellation of domestic forces all suggest an active Venezuelan presence" (p. 199).

Mexico is represented by two able scholars from the Colegio de México, René Herrera Zúñiga and Mario Ojeda, who similarly stress Mexico's increasing role in Central America, a role that they argue somewhat offsets that of Washington. They also make the interesting point that Mexico's ties with Nicaragua's Sandinistas go back to the 1920s when Mexico's new revolutionary leadership supported Augusto César Sandino, from whom the present-day Sandinistas take their name, in his struggle against United States occupation of Nicaragua.

No brief review of these pages can do justice to the variety of material presented. Margaret E. Crahan's valuable study of the Roman Catholic church's role in Central America, for example, is a particularly distinguished addition to this collection. She concludes that the Central American grass-roots church, with its "community of believers strongly committed to the creation of more just societies" (p. 231), has an opportunity to "carve a secure place for itself" (p. 232), particularly in Nicaragua. If it does not achieve that goal, however, "both the Nicaraguan church and the church internationally may very well experience a resurgence of conservatism" (p. 232).

Collections of essays often lack cohesion. They also are frequently subject to wide variations in quality. Neither complaint can be leveled at Feinberg's presentation. His own essay on changes in United States interests and diplomacy in Central America is a model for brevity and comprehension, but it does not overshadow the other writing. The col-

lection, in short, is an able introduction to Central America and deserves a wide audience.

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JAMES NELSON GOODSSELL

*Reforma Mexico and the United States: A Search for Alternatives to Annexation, 1854–1861.* By DONATHON C. OLLIFF. University: University of Alabama Press, 1981. Notes. Bibliography. Index. Pp. viii, 213. Cloth. \$21.50.

The era of Porfirio Díaz (1876–1911) has often been described as the beginning of United States economic domination of Mexico. But like many other aspects of Porfirian Mexico, United States penetration and control of the Mexican economy had its roots in the Liberal period under Benito Juárez (1857–72). It was during these critical decades that the basic outlines of the Porfiriato emerged: a centralized political dictatorship, large-scale land concentration, and an intense desire for foreign investment as the key to economic growth. This last goal—the formation of a United States economic protectorate over Mexico—is the central theme of Donathon C. Olliff’s book, *Reforma Mexico and the United States*. Olliff argues that most of the literature on the Reforma period, by focusing on the political and religious struggles, ignores or demotes the crucial economic goals of the Liberals. And he offers a clearly stated argument (unfortunately the best expression of it is buried in the bibliographical note): “the desire to have Mexico become a protectorate of the United States was common among all varieties of liberals . . . not [from] a lack of patriotism, but [from] a desperation born out of a keen sense of the need for material development, an almost mystical belief in the transforming powers of capital and technology, and a pessimism produced by three decades of government by chaos in Mexico” (p. 184).

Olliff supports his thesis well. Drawing on archival material in Mexico City (principally that of the foreign ministry) and the National Archives in Washington, D.C., he takes the reader through the complicated series of negotiations that finally culminated in the signing, but not the final ratification, of the McLane-Ocampo treaties of 1859. The study shows that on each of three attempts to establish formal economic relations with the United States, Mexican Liberals were eager to situate Mexico as an economic dependency of the United States. The principal reason this never happened until the Porfiriato was that the United States and in particular President James Buchanan wanted to acquire Mexican territory, not economic influence. In the face of pressures for territory, Mex-