

V. LATIN AMERICAN POLICIES TOWARD FREE WORLD COUNTRIES

A. TRADITIONAL LATIN AMERICAN RELATIONS AND ATTITUDES, MAINLY TOWARD EUROPE, UNTIL 1945

After independence, the new republics feared a Spanish reconquest and possible aggression by other European powers. These fears were not unfounded, for Spain attempted an invasion of Mexico in 1829 and returned to rule the Dominican Republic between 1861 and 1865. Also, in 1864, she captured some islands off the coast of Peru, producing a brief state of war with that country as well as with Ecuador, Bolivia, and Chile.

In 1833, England occupied the Falkland Islands, which Argentina still considers as belonging to her. Between 1838 and 1850, France and England intervened frequently in the La Plata River region. In 1861, England, Spain, and France occupied Veracruz. The British and Spanish soon withdrew, but the French troops conquered Mexico and remained until 1867 when Napoleon III, under pressure from the United States, withdrew.

During all of the 19th century, England was the most active foreign power in Latin America. She invested heavily and contributed much to the economic development of many countries in the area. British investors remained dominant in Latin America until World War I. Since then, however, the nationalization and purchases of British railroads, utilities and other investments, and Mexico's oil expropriation of 1938 have reduced considerably England's stake in the area.

France, despite the Mexican intervention of 1861, has always been greatly respected and admired. Her cultural influence has been paramount, her philosophy, literature, art, and law all having left a definite mark. (See below pt. VI.) French trade, though never as large as England's, was important until World War II.

In spite of the Wars of Independence, ties of language and religion, and human contacts provided by the large numbers of immigrants have helped maintain a strong Spanish influence in Latin America. Also, Spain's writers and philosophers of the "generation of 1898" helped strengthen her cultural influence in the early 20th century. The end of the Republic in 1939, and the resulting stagnation of cultural life have loosened considerably Spanish ties with the area. Only in some conservative circles and among certain extreme rightist groups is the influence of Franco's Spain felt at all.

In Brazil, the influence of the mother country has not been so great, for Brazil developed a culture of her own and became the leader of the Portuguese-speaking world. Brazil's cultural ties have understandably been closer with Portugal than with any other European country. Until World War I, however, British commercial influence was preeminent.