

relations with Latin America. "Neither the geopolitical priority that Moscow assigns to Latin America in world affairs nor the general goals it pursues in the region seem likely to alter much in the foreseeable future," writes one of them (p. 51). "Soviet policy has become a major factor in hemispheric realities," asserts another, "and efforts to interpret and respond to it will become increasingly important" (p. 112). "Soviet interest and activities in Latin America are likely to grow over the next decade," concludes the volume's editor (p. 375).

None of the volume's contributors foresaw that by the beginning of the next decade the geopolitical face of Eastern Europe would be fundamentally transformed and the very future of the USSR placed in serious question. Not only is the Soviet Union no longer a significant adversarial force in hemispheric affairs; it barely warrants notice except for the vacuum it has left in the chambers of cold war policy planning. Happily, all the major issues of inter-American affairs must now be reframed in their own proper contexts without reference to Soviet global designs.

For the historian, this is a particularly felicitous development. She or he can at last turn a scholarly eye to the protracted and engaging history of Soviet-Latin American relations unencumbered by the insidious ideological filters of the era just ended. The present volume, for its part, will serve as a useful source for better understanding those filters.

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*Immigrant America: A Portrait.* By ALEJANDRO PORTES and RUBEN G. RUMBAUT. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990. Tables. Notes. Bibliography. Index. xxiii, 300 pp. Cloth. \$39.95.

One of the United States' most distinctive features has been its extraordinary population diversity. Composed of various immigrant, racial, and ethnic groups (the 1980 census counted 155 nationalities), the United States has constantly had to find ways to accommodate their different cultures and lifestyles. This well-written, richly textured study of contemporary immigration reveals clearly that this imperative is still operative today.

Numbering some six million in the 1980s alone, contemporary immigrants have come overwhelmingly from Asia and Latin America. The inflow has spawned a vigorous national debate over immigration and the cultural politics surrounding migration legislation, and such programs as bilingual education and aid to refugees have engendered sharp public division. The authors explode numerous myths and misconceptions about current immigration, showing, for example, that the adaptive processes of newcomers closely mirror those of their predecessors. They also reveal that the poorest are not those who migrate (even among undocumented aliens), that the education rates of immigrants tend to match those of the general

U.S. population, and that some migration streams are much more highly skilled than the national average. Overall, the authors believe the impact of the newest migrations has been, with only minor qualifications, positive. To stop immigration, in their view, “would deprive the nation of what has been so far one of its main sources of energy, innovativeness, and growth.”

This synthetic study draws heavily on the secondary literature and census data. It sets out to deal with the complex subject of current immigration in a “comprehensive and comprehensible” manner, and it has succeeded magnificently. Since the United States continues as the world’s greatest immigrant-receiving nation, the issues of immigration and ethnicity still rest at the heart of the national experience and merit careful attention. By providing a graceful synthesis of a mass of existing scholarship on these issues, the authors have accomplished an important public service.

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