

Hackensack High School

Latin American Studies Class

Summer Assignment AY 2016-2017

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Assignment Due: Monday, September 12th, 2016

***Welcome to the learning experience that will take you
around more than 20 countries, centuries of history
and culture 😊***

Your Assignment:

- 1. Read information below on the book “Open Veins of Latin America”*
- 2. Read the attached introduction to the book “120 Million Children in the Eye of the Hurricane”*
- 3. After reading the introduction you will answer the following question:*

✓ What is Galeano’s message in the introduction? What points does he make to describe the economic and political situation of the Latin American Region? Be specific in your response citing facts from the reading.

✓ To help support your answer, you must also find at least one article on the web that mentions or critiques the book and include that information on your paper.

The response should be 3-5 pages, typed, double spaced, Times New Roman 12.

If you have any questions regarding the assignment, please do not hesitate to e-mail me over the summer ☺

Sra. González

Open Veins of Latin America

Open Veins of Latin America: Five Centuries of the Pillage of a Continent (in Spanish Las venas abiertas de América Latina) is a book written by Uruguayan journalist Eduardo Galeano in 1971.

Summary

In *Open Veins of Latin America* Eduardo Galeano analyzes the history of Latin America as a whole from the time period of the European settlement of the New World to contemporary Latin America, arguing against European and later US economic exploitation and political dominance over the region.

The Library Journal review stated, "Well written and passionately stated, this is an intellectually honest and valuable study."

Background

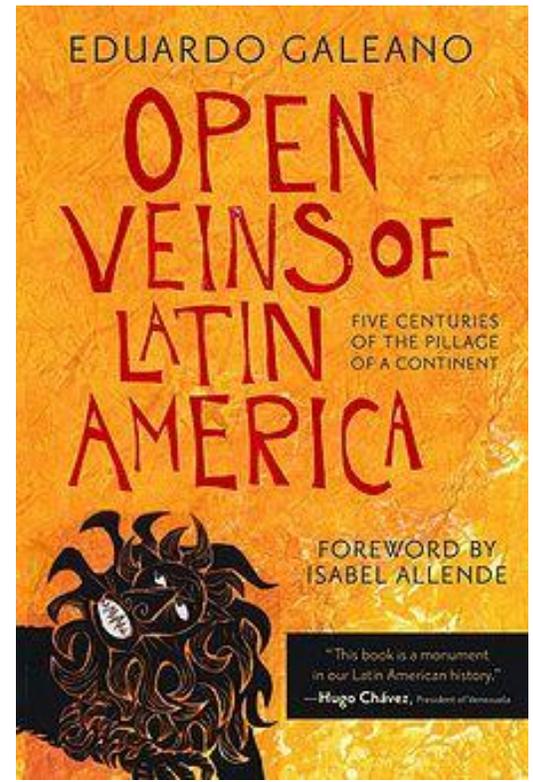
Open Veins of Latin America was written by Eduardo Galeano in Uruguay in 1971. During this period Galeano was working as a journalist, editing books, and was employed in the publishing department of the University of the Republic. Galeano states that "it took four years of researching and collecting the information I needed, and some 90 nights to write the book".

Shortly after the publishing of *Open Veins of Latin America*, in 1973, a military junta took power in Uruguay forcing Galeano into exile. As a result of the book's left-wing perspective it was banned under the right-wing military governments of Brazil, Chile, Argentina and Uruguay.

Cultural significance in Latin America

In the foreword for the 1997 edition, Isabel Allende stated that "after the military coup of 1973 I could not take much with me: some clothes, family pictures, a small bag of dirt from my garden, and two books: an old edition of the *Odes* by Pablo Neruda and the book with the yellow cover, *Las venas abiertas de América Latina*".

The book was banned in the 1970s by the right-wing military dictatorships in Argentina, Brazil, Chile, and Uruguay.



Gift to U.S. President Barack Obama

Venezuelan President Hugo Chávez gave United States President Barack Obama a Spanish copy of *Open Veins of Latin America* as a gift at the 5th Summit of the Americas. During the 2009 annual White House Correspondents dinner, Obama, in his speech said the following in reference to the book given to him by Chávez: "Now, let me be clear, just because he handed me a copy of *Peter Pan* does not mean that I'm going to read it — (laughter) — but it's good diplomatic practice to just accept these gifts". As a result of this international exposure, the book's sales are reported to have risen sharply—it was the 54,295th most popular book on Amazon.com on one day, but it moved to #2 on the list a day later.

Open Veins of Latin America - Five Centuries of the Pillage of a Continent

By Eduardo Galeano

Introduction: 120 Million Children in the Eye of the Hurricane

The division of labor among nations is that some specialize in winning and others in losing. Our part of the world, known today as Latin America, was precocious: it has specialized in losing ever since those remote times when Renaissance Europeans ventured across the ocean and buried their teeth in the throats of the Indian civilizations. Centuries passed, and Latin America perfected its role. We are no longer in the era of marvels when fact surpassed fable and imagination was shamed by the trophies of conquest—the lodes of gold, the mountains of silver. But our region still works as a menial. It continues to exist at the service of others' needs, as a source and reserve of oil and iron, of copper and meat, of fruit and coffee, the raw materials and foods destined for rich countries which profit more from consuming them than Latin America does from producing them. The taxes collected by the buyers are much higher than the prices received by the sellers; and after all, as Alliance for Progress coordinator Covey T. Olive/;" said in July 1968, to speak of fair prices is a "medieval" concept, for we are in the era of free trade.

The more freedom is extended to business, the more prisons have to be built for those who suffer from that business. Our inquisitor hangman systems function not only for the dominating external markets; they also provide gushers of profit from foreign loans and investments in the dominated internal markets. Back in 1913, President Woodrow Wilson observed: "You hear of 'concessions' to (page 12) foreign capitalists in Latin America. You do not hear of concessions to foreign capitalists in the United States. They are not granted concessions;; He was confident: "States that are obliged. . . to grant concessions are in this condition, that foreign interests are apt to dominate their domestic affairs. . . ," he said, and he was right. Along the way we have even lost the right to call ourselves Americans, although the Haitians and the Cubans appeared in history as new people a century before the Mayflower pilgrims settled on the Plymouth coast. For the world today, America is just the United States; the region we inhabit is a sub-America, a second-class America of nebulous identity.

Latin America is the region of open veins. Everything, from the discovery until our times, has always been transmuted into European-or later United States--capital, and as such has accumulated in distant centers of power. Everything: the soil, its fruits and its mineral-rich depths, the people and their capacity to work and to consume, natural resources and human resources. Production methods and class structure have been successively determined from outside for each area by meshing it into the universal gearbox of capitalism. To each area has been assigned a function, always for the benefit of the foreign metropolis of the moment, and the endless chain-of dependency has been endlessly extended. The chain has many more than two links. In Latin America it also includes the oppression of small countries by their larger neighbors and, within each country's frontiers, the exploitation by big cities and ports of their internal sources of food and labor. (Four centuries ago sixteen of today's twenty biggest Latin American cities already existed.)

For those who see history as a competition, Latin America's backwardness and poverty are merely the result of its failure. We lost; others won. But the winners happen to have won thanks to our losing: the history of Latin America's underdevelopment is, as someone has said, an integral part of the history of world capitalism's development. Our defeat was always implicit in the victory of others; our wealth has always generated our poverty by nourishing the prosperity of others-the empires and their native overseers. In the colonial and neocolonial alchemy, gold changes into scrap metal and food into poison. Potosi, Zacatecas, and Ouro Preto became desolate warrens of (page13) deep, empty tunnels from which the precious metals had been taken; ruin was the fate of Chile's nitrate pampas and of Amazonia's rubber forests. Northeast Brazil's sugar and Argentina's quebracho belts, and communities around oil-rich Lake Maracaibo, have become painfully aware of the mortality of wealth which nature bestows and imperialism appropriates. The rain that irrigates the centers of imperialist power drowns the vast suburbs of the system. In the same way, and symmetrically, the well-being of our dominating classes-dominating inwardly, dominated from outside-is the curse of our multitudes condemned to exist as beasts of burden.

The gap widens. Around the middle of the last century the world's rich countries enjoyed a 50 percent higher living standard than the poor countries. Development develops inequality: in April 1969 Richard Nixon told the Organization of American States (OAS) that by the end of the twentieth century the United States' per capita income would be fifteen times higher than Latin America's. The strength of the imperialist system as a whole rests on the necessary inequality of its parts, and this inequality assumes ever more dramatic dimensions. The oppressor countries get steadily richer in absolute terms-and much more so in relative terms-through the dynamic of growing disparity. The capitalist "head office" can allow itself the luxury of creating and believing its own myths of opulence, but the poor countries on the capitalist periphery know that myths cannot be eaten. The United States citizen's average income is seven times that of a Latin American and grows ten times faster. And averages are deceptive in view of the abyss that yawns between the many poor and the rich few south of the Rio Grande. According to the United Nations, the amount shared by 6 million Latin Americans at the top of the social pyramid is the same as the amount shared by 140 million at the bottom. There are 60 million campesinos whose fortune amounts to \$.25 a day. At the other extreme, the pimps of misery accumulate \$5 billion in their private Swiss or U.S. bank accounts. Adding insult to injury, they squander in sterile ostentation and luxury, and in unproductive investments constituting no less than half the total investment, the capital that Latin America could devote to the replacement, extension, and generation of job-creating means of production. Harnessed as they have always been to the con-(page14)stellation of imperialist power, our ruling classes have no interest whatsoever in determining whether patriotism might not prove more profitable than treason, and whether begging is really the only formula for international politics. Sovereignty is mortgaged because "there's no other way." The oligarchies' cynical alibis confuse the impotence of a social class with the presumed empty destinies of their countries. .

Says Josue de Castro: "I, who have received an international peace prize, think that, unhappily, there is no other solution than violence for Latin America." In the eye of this hurricane 120 million children are stirring. Latin America's population grows as does no other; it has more than tripled in half

a century. One child dies of disease or hunger every minute, but in the year 2000 there will be 650 million Latin Americans, half of whom will be under fifteen: a time bomb. Among the 280 million Latin Americans of today, 50 million are unemployed or underemployed and about 100 million are illiterate; half of them live in crowded, unhealthy slums. Latin America's three largest markets-Argentina, Brazil, and Mexico-together consume less than France or West Germany, although their combined population considerably exceeds that of any European country. In proportion to population, Latin America today produces less food than it did before World War II, and at constant prices there has been a threefold decline in its per capita exports since the eve of the 1929 crisis.

For its foreign masters and for our commission-agent bourgeoisie, who have sold their souls to the devil at a price that would have shamed Faust, the system is perfectly rational; but for no one else, since the more it develops, the greater its disequilibrium, its tensions, and its contradictions. Even industrialization coming late and in dependent form, and comfortably coexisting with the latifundia and the structures of inequality-helps to spread unemployment rather than to relieve it; poverty is extended, wealth concentrated in the area where an ever multiplying army of idle hands is available. New factories are built in the privileged poles of development-Sao Paulo, Buenos Aires, Mexico City-but less and less labor is needed. The system did not foresee this small headache, this surplus of people. And the people keep reproducing. They make love with enthusiasm and without precaution. Ever more people are left beside the road (page 15) without work in the countryside, where the latifundios reign with their vast extensions of idle land, without work in the city where the machine is king. The system vomits people. United States' missionaries sow pills, diaphragms, intrauterine devices, condoms, and marked calendars, but reap children. Latin American children obstinately continue getting born, claiming their natural right to a place In the sun in these magnificent lands which could give to all what is now denied to almost all.

At the beginning of November 1968 Richard Nixon loudly confirmed that the Alliance for Progress was seven years old and that malnutrition and food shortages had nevertheless intensified in Latin America. A few months earlier, in April, George W. Ball wrote in *Life*: "But at least for the next several decades, the discontent of poorer nations does not threaten world destruction. Shameful as it undoubtedly may be, the world has lived at least two-thirds poor and one-third rich for generations. Unjust as it may be, the power of poor countries is limited." 2 Ball had headed the U.S. delegation to the First Conference on Trade and Development in Geneva, and had voted against nine of the twelve general principles approved by the conference for removing some of the handicaps of the underdeveloped countries in international trade.

The human murder by poverty in Latin America is secret; every year, without making a sound, three Hiroshima bombs explode over communities that have become accustomed to suffering with clenched teeth. This systematic violence is not apparent but is real and constantly increasing: its holocausts are not made known in the sensational press but in Food and Agricultural Organization statistics. Ball says that it is still possible to act with impunity because the poor cannot set off a world war, but the Imperium is worried: unable to multiply the dinner, it does what it can to suppress the diners. "Fight poverty, kill a beggar!" some genius of black humor scrawled on a wall in La Paz. What do the heirs to Malthus propose but to kill all the beggars-to-be before they are born? Robert McNamara, the World Bank president who was chairman of Ford and then Secretary of Defense, has

called the population explosion the greatest obstacle to progress in Latin America; the World Bank, he says, will give priority in its loans to countries that implement birth control plans. (page 16) McNamara notes with regret that the brains of the poor do 25 percent less thinking, and the World Bank technocrats (who have already been born) set computers humming to produce labyrinthine abracadabras on the advantages of not being born: "If," one of the Bank's documents assures us, "a developing country with an average per capita income of \$150 to \$200 a year succeeds in reducing its fertility by 50 percent in a period of twenty-five years, at the end of thirty years its per capita income will be higher by at least 40 percent than the level it would otherwise, have achieved, and twice as high after sixty years." Lyndon B. Johnson's remark has become famous: "Let us act on the fact that less than \$5 invested in population control is worth \$100 invested in economic growth." 3 Dwight D. Eisenhower prophesied that if the world's inhabitants continued multiplying at the same rate, not only would the danger of revolution be increased, but there would also be a lowering of living standards for all peoples, including his own. .

The United States is more concerned than any other country with spreading and imposing family planning in the farthest outposts. Not only the government, but the Rockefeller and the Ford foundations as well, have nightmares about millions of children advancing like locusts over the horizon from the Third World. Plato and Aristotle considered the question before Malthus and McNamara; in our day this global offensive plays a well-defined role. Its aim is to justify the very unequal income distribution between countries and social classes, to convince the poor that poverty is the result of the children they don't avoid having, and to dam the rebellious advance of the masses. While intrauterine devices compete with bombs and machine-gun salvos" to arrest the growth of the Vietnamese population, in Latin America it is more hygienic and effective to kill guerrilleros in the womb than in the mountains or the streets. Various U.S. missions have sterilized thousands of women in Amazonia, although this is the least populated habitable zone on our planet. Most Latin American countries have no real surplus of people; on the contrary, they have too few. Brazil has thirty-eight times fewer inhabitants per square mile than Belgium, Paraguay has forty-nine times fewer than England, Peru has thirty-two times fewer than Japan. Haiti and El Salvador, the human antheaps of Latin America, have lower population densities than Italy. The pretexts invoked are an insult to the intelligence; the real intentions anger us. No less than half the territory of Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Ecuador, Paraguay, and Venezuela has no inhabitants at all. No Latin American population grows less than Uruguay's-a country of old folk-yet no nation has taken such a beating in recent years, with a crisis that would seem to drag it into the last circle of hell. Uruguay is empty, and its fertile lands could provide food for infinitely more people than those who now suffer in such penury.

Over a century ago a Guatemalan foreign minister said prophetically: "It would be strange if the remedy should come from the United States, the same place which brings us the disease." Now that the Alliance for Progress is dead and buried the Imperium proposes, more in panic than in generosity, to solve Latin America's problems by eliminating Latin Americans; Washington has reason to suspect that the poor peoples don't prefer to be poor. But it is impossible to desire the end without desiring the means. Those who deny liberation to Latin America also deny our only possible rebirth, and incidentally absolve the existing structures from blame. Our youth multiplies, rises, listens: what does

the voice of the system offer? The system speaks a surrealist language. In lands that are empty it proposes to avoid births; in countries where capital is plentiful but wasted it suggests that capital is lacking; it describes as "aid" the deforming orthopedics of loans and the draining of wealth that results from foreign investment; it calls upon big landowners to carry out agrarian reforms and upon the oligarchy to practice social justice. The class struggle only exists, we are told, because foreign agents stir it up; but social classes do exist and the oppression of one by the other is known as the Western way of life. The Marines undertake their criminal expeditions only to restore order and social peace; the dictatorships linked to Washington lay foundations in their jails for the law-abiding state, and ban strikes and smash trade unions to protect the freedom to work.

Is everything forbidden us except to fold our arms? Poverty is not written in the stars; underdevelopment is not one of God's mysterious designs. Redemptive years of revolution pass; the ruling classes wait and meanwhile pronounce hellfire anathema on everybody. In a (page 18) sense the right wing is correct in identifying itself with tranquility and order: it is an order of daily humiliation for the majority, but an order nonetheless; it is a tranquility in which injustice continues to be unjust and hunger to be hungry. If the future turns out to be a Pandora's box, the conservative has reason to shout, "I have been betrayed." And the ideologists of impotence, the slaves who look at themselves with the master's eyes, are not slow to join in the outcry. The bronze eagle of the Maine, thrown down on the day the Cuban Revolution triumphed, now lies abandoned, its wings broken, in a doorway in the old town in Havana. Since that day in Cuba, other countries have set off' on different roads on the experiment of change: perpetuation of the existing order of things is perpetuation of the crime. Recovery of the resources that have always been usurped is recovery of our destiny.

The ghosts of all the revolutions that have been strangled or betrayed through Latin America's tortured history emerge in the new experiments, as if the present had been foreseen and begotten by the contradictions of the past. History is a prophet who looks back: because of what was, and against what was, it announced what will be. And so this book, which seeks to chronicle our despoliation and at the same time explain how the current mechanisms of plunder operate, will present in close proximity the caravelled conquistadores and the jet-propelled technocrats; Hernan Cortes and the Marines; the agents of the Spanish Crown and the International Monetary Fund missions; the dividends from the slave trade and the profits of General Motors. And, too, the defeated heroes and revolutions of our time, the infamies and the dead and resurrected hopes: the fertile sacrifices. When Alexander von Humboldt investigated the customs of the ancient inhabitants of the Bogota plateau, he found that the Indians called the victims of ritual ceremonies quihica. Quihica meant "door"; the death of each chosen victim opened the door to a new cycle of 185 moons.