
FOREWORD

Robert W. Rydell

THE CONCEPT OF PAN-AMERICANISM FIRST came into play in the early nineteenth century when Simón Bolívar advanced it to promote political and economic alliances between Latin American nations fighting for independence and struggling to establish their own republican forms of government. According to many scholars, a second phase of Pan-Americanism, the subject of this book, began in the late nineteenth century when elites in the United States and Latin America misappropriated Bolívar's idea in order to advance their own economic interests, largely to the advantage of the United States. While not rejecting recent analyses of Pan-Americanism in the context of assessing asymmetrical power relations between the hemispheres, Professor Robert González shifts the emphasis away from economics to examining the role the built environment played in both representing and shaping dominant belief systems.

What post-Bolívar Pan-Americanists understood most fundamentally at the dawn of the twentieth century was this: To be understood by mass publics in the United States and Latin America, Pan-Americanism had to be seen. The task of making Pan-Americanism visible fell to a bevy of architects and designers, including John M. Carrère, Hugh Ferriss, Edward Durell Stone, and Gertrude Vanderbilt Whitney, who seized the opportunities presented by the Pan-American Union Building, the Columbus Lighthouse competition, and multiple international expositions (generally called world's fairs in the United States) to reach tens of millions of people with highly charged visual representations of hemispheric cooperation.

The centrality of world's fairs for promoting Pan-Americanism is a vital thread that runs through *Pan-America: U.S. Architectural Visions for the Western Hemisphere*. Although not many of these events were held in Latin American countries, Latin American na-

tions did participate in the dozens of fairs held in the United States beginning in 1876. Indeed, Emperor Dom Pedro of Brazil joined President Ulysses S. Grant in opening the Centennial Exhibition in Philadelphia. At subsequent expositions, Latin American elites joined their American counterparts in promoting U.S. investment in agriculture and extractive industries as well as in tourism. U.S. fairs were often branded with Latin American themes. This was especially the case with Buffalo, New York's 1901 Pan-American Exposition, San Francisco's 1915–1916 Panama-Pacific International Exposition, San Diego's 1915–1916 Panama-California Exposition, multiple world's fairs in the 1930s, and San Antonio's 1968 HemisFair. But these fairs were not alone. Rare was the international exposition held in the United States between 1876 and 1968 that did not include significant exhibits from Latin American nations. Indeed, the ideal of Pan-Americanism was so embedded in the minds of modernizing elites that it permeated the renderings for Miami's Interama, an exposition fully designed for a 1968 opening, but never built.

Pan-Americanism, in Professor González' argument, emerges as one of modernity's signature—and visible—ideological formations. What makes this book so important is that at the moment of its publication, the rhetoric of cooperation and exchange, made manifest in the name of the Pan-American Union Building in Washington, D.C., increasingly seems like a distant memory. Ironically, in 2009, at the very moment many in the United States (and around the world) celebrated the twentieth anniversary of the collapse of the Berlin Wall, North American nativists seemed closer than ever to realizing their dreams of constructing a hemispheric wall between the United States and Mexico. In the current context, the very idea of a HemisFair, the name of the 1968 world's fair held in San Antonio, that aimed to bring together the people and cultures of both

hemispheres seems distantly utopian and, doubtless in some circles, unpatriotic.

Professor González wisely refrains from speculating about the future. But wouldn't it be ironic if the hemispheric wall that so many North American nativists want to construct actually helped Latin Americans realize Bolívar's dream? And wouldn't it be ironic if resurgent nativism north of the border actually weakened the American economy and respect for the United States around the world? Whether in Bolívar's sense of the concept, or William Jennings Bryan's turn-of-

the-last-century's vision of a Pan-American university, Pan-Americanism once bespoke confidence about the future. At its worst, it represented the velvet-covered fist of imperialism. At its best, it imagined new ideas about the meaning of citizenship in the face of massive economic disparities between the hemispheres. Can Pan-Americanism be reinvented and reimagined for the twenty-first century? Will architects, designers, and engineers be building walls or pavilions of hope? This may well be the most important challenge laid down by this book.