



Puerto Rico in the American Century: A History Since 1898

By César J. Ayala, Rafael Bernabe

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Offering a comprehensive overview of Puerto Rico's history and evolution since the installation of U.S. rule, Cesar Ayala and Rafael Bernabe connect the island's economic, political, cultural, and social past. *Puerto Rico in the American Century* explores Puerto Ricans in the diaspora as well as the island residents, who experience an unusual and daily conundrum: they consider themselves a distinct people but are part of the American political system; they have U.S. citizenship but are not represented in the U.S. Congress; and they live on land that is neither independent nor part of the United States.

Highlighting both well-known and forgotten figures from Puerto Rican history, Ayala and Bernabe discuss a wide range of topics, including literary and cultural debates and social and labor struggles that previous histories have neglected. Although the island's political economy remains dependent on the United States, the authors also discuss Puerto Rico's situation in light of world economies. Ayala and Bernabe argue that the inability of Puerto Rico to shake its colonial legacy reveals the limits of free-market capitalism, a break from which would require a renewal of the long tradition of labor and social activism in Puerto Rico in connection with similar currents in the United States.

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Review

Indispensable.--Edgardo Rodriguez Julia, *Primera Revista Latinoamericana de Libros*

Academics, students, and general readers will find this book a helpful tool to probe the intricacies of Puerto Rican history. . . . A provocative. . . [and] landmark work.--Pedro San Miguel, *Centro: Journal of the Center for Puerto Rican Studies*

A comprehensive overview of Puerto Rico's history and its evolution since the installation of U.S. rule.--*RepeatingIslands.com*

This book goes far to provide the information and analysis necessary to resolve the short shrift that Puerto Rico and its people have received in histories of Latin America and of the United States.--*The Americas*

Politics, economics and culture are in constant dialogue within the narrative . . . providing a complex and at many points refreshing perspective of Puerto Rican history.--*Against the Current*

Not only an excellent introduction to the island for the nonexpert but it is also of value to scholars who are searching for new topics to research on Puerto Rican history and the Puerto Rican diaspora. . . . An excellent contribution to the general history of Puerto Rico during the twentieth century.--*Hispanic American Historical Review*

A comprehensive historical picture of political developments in the island. . . . By taking the courageous step of restoring economic dependence and its social consequences to the heart of the argument for autonomy--and, in effect, pitting it against more inventive, and often elitist cultural perspectives that range from the neo-nationalist to the post-modern--*Puerto Rico in the American Century* offers a far more plausible context for understanding the status issue, while offering a far more tolerable, democratic direction for the independence movement in a globalised world.--*Latin American Review of Books*

An exciting . . . volume that stimulates as well as informs; students and scholars on all levels will find much to discuss. . . . Highly recommended.--*CHOICE*

An admirable history of Puerto Rico. . . . This book is the standard against which any other about twentieth-century Puerto Rico will be judged.--*New West Indian Guide*

Review

An impressive achievement. . . . Up to date in its scholarship, solid in its mastery of history, lucidly analyzed, strongly argued, and clearly written, *Puerto Rico in the American Century* may be the best modern history of the island and its people in print.--Peter Winn, History Book Club

This volume will have an immediate impact as the first English-language volume on Puerto Rico's history that incorporates the contemporary period. Ayala and Bernabe skillfully maintain a balanced view of the island's political economy and how it is inserted in the global economy without losing sight of culture. This will be the most important historical study of the island for years to come--a resource for students, scholars, and others interested in Puerto Rican and Caribbean history.--Arlene Davila, New York University

Cesar Ayala and Rafael Bernabe present a lively and original narrative of twentieth-century Puerto Rican history that also includes the development of Puerto Rican communities in the United States. This book is, simply put, the best one-volume contemporary history of the Puerto Rican people in any language. It will become the standard by which all other works on modern Puerto Rico and the diaspora communities will be gauged.--Francisco Scarano, author of *Puerto Rico: cinco siglos de historia*

The story of a nation is told not only by its history, economics, and politics; it also includes the arts and other intellectual threads, especially literature, music, and sociology, which often shine even more critical light on events than the 'sciences.' Ayala and Bernabe bring all these perspectives to bear in their comprehensive effort to understand Puerto Rico. There is much food for thought in this volume.--James L. Dietz, California State University

About the Author

Cesar J. Ayala is associate professor of sociology at the University of California, Los Angeles, and author of *American Sugar Kingdom: The Plantation Economy of the Spanish Caribbean, 1898-1934*.

Rafael Bernabe is professor and director of the Federico de Onis Hispanic Studies Center at the University of Puerto Rico at Rio Piedras. He has published three books in Puerto Rico.

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