

an anthropologist at the Federal University of Rio de Janeiro. Most Brazilians of all colors, while acknowledging that racial discrimination exists, continue to adhere to the ideal of “racial democracy,” of basically harmonious racial relations. Many, says Fry, “celebrate the virtues of ‘mixture,’ of both genes and cultures.” Ambiguity and compromise are part of the warp and woof of Brazilians’ complex racial classification system. “Where quotas have been proposed,” he notes, “opposition has been virulent.”

Simon Schwartzman, director of the American Institutes for Research for Brazil,

sounds an optimistic note: “While some conditions have worsened in recent years, especially those related to the quality of life in large metropolitan areas, most of the basic social indicators, such as education, life expectancy, housing conditions, and sanitation, have shown steady increase and improvement.”

Nevertheless, Bethell writes, “democratic government is perceived by many as having so far failed to promote a much-needed social transformation in Brazil. In this respect it is in danger of being regarded as no different from the nondemocratic governments of the past.”

The Hegemonic Hamburger

“The French Exception” by Sophie Meunier, in *Foreign Affairs* (July–Aug. 2000), 58 E. 68th St., New York, N.Y. 10021.

Resistance to American-led globalization is, well, global, but the French, as usual, are a special case. Theirs is the only 21st-century nation, besides the United States, with universalist pretensions. Naturally, then, they feel especially aggrieved by the sight of the Golden Arches and the invasive presence of the Big Mac.

“[France’s] political and cultural identity combines all the elements threatened by globalization,” explains Meunier, a visiting fellow at Princeton University’s Center of International Studies. Those elements

include “a universalist culture, a language with international aspirations, a ‘superior’ cuisine, a sensitive view of national sovereignty, a strong, centralized state, a need for a world role, a sense of duty toward the poorer nations, and a deeply rooted anti-Americanism.”

The French have worried about the invasion of American movies, music, and TV programs for years. More recently, Meunier says, their fears have grown to encompass “trade in general.” The World Trade Organization (WTO) “has been por-

EXCERPT

Italy’s Shrinking Families

People [in Italy] are not slow to put the smallness of families into a political context. “Of course children are a pleasure,” says an elderly lady to me in the park at the end of my street, as we sit in the shade of a tree and watch them careening about, “but only if you can afford to pay for them.” “That’s right,” another chimes in, “a pleasure for the rich who have everything well arranged. But my son can’t start a family when he hasn’t got a job.” In Britain, Thatcherite values have been so thoroughly internalized that the view that if you want something—in this case a large family—then you have to create the conditions for its existence yourself is more and more unquestionably accepted. In Italy, remarkably (given a political situation which is both chaotic and frequently paralyzed), people have not stopped seeing their own daily lives in political terms. A robust and direct class antagonism persists.

—STELLA TILLYARD, a biographer and historian, writing in *Britain’s Prospect* (July 2000)

trayed . . . as a Trojan horse that forces on others the low-brow uniformity of the American lifestyle—fast food, bad clothing, and even worse sitcoms.” A sheep farmer who destroyed a McDonald’s in France last year has become a national hero. “Resistance to the hegemonic pretenses of hamburgers is, above all, a cultural imperative,” intoned the respected newspaper *Le Monde*.

The French were infuriated by two WTO rulings last year that let the United States impose retaliatory sanctions against Dijon mustard, Roquefort cheese, and other products because of the European Union’s protectionist ban on U.S. hormone-treated beef and its discriminatory preferences for bananas from former French colonies in Africa and the Caribbean. “The rulings,” Meunier says, “were presented in France as clear evidence that globalization puts business interests above consumer safety, inter-

national political stability, and humanitarian concerns.”

Resistance to globalization has drawn widespread support in France—from farmers, labor groups, environmentalists, journalists, academics, and filmmakers. French politicians “have been forced to follow,” notes Meunier. Prime Minister Lionel Jospin and President Jacques Chirac, likely opponents in the 2002 presidential election, “are both wooing the antiglobalization movement.” Recent polls also show rising support in France for European integration, with 73 percent regarding it as a way of fighting globalization’s ill effects.

France’s anti-globalization message has found some sympathetic ears abroad, particularly in Japan and Canada. But if the French rhetoric is not to prove empty, Meunier concludes, the foes of American-style globalization will have to come up with “a sensible alternative.”

The ‘Populist’ Batista

“The Architect of the Cuban State: Fulgencio Batista and Populism in Cuba, 1937–1940” by Robert Whitney, in *Journal of Latin American Studies* (May 2000), Cambridge Univ. Press, Journals Dept., 40 W. 20th St., New York, N.Y. 10011–4211.

Cuban strongman Fulgencio Batista y Zaldívar (1901–73), who was overthrown by Fidel Castro in 1959, is usually portrayed by historians as little more than a counterrevolutionary and reactionary figure. Overlooked, however, is Batista’s “populist phase,” notes Whitney, an associate fellow at McGill University’s Centre for Developing Area Studies.

In the summer of 1933, Cuba “exploded in social revolution,” he recalls. Joining a loose coalition of radical activists, students, intellectuals, and disgruntled soldiers, Batista, then a young army sergeant, organized a mutiny of noncommissioned officers, which toppled the Havana government. A provisional revolutionary government was formed, led by Ramón Grau San Martín, a popular university professor. Promising social justice for all classes, and the annulment of the Platt Amendment (which permitted U.S. intervention in Cuba), the Grau government gave women the right to vote, decreed an eight-hour workday, established a minimum wage for

sugar cane cutters, and assured peasants of legal title to their lands.

In January 1934, however, Batista led a right-wing coalition that, with the support of the U.S. State Department, overthrew Grau. Batista ruled through puppets before being elected to the presidency in 1940. But Cuba, Whitney says, had become “a very different country” after the revolution of 1933. A new consensus on the necessity of state intervention for political and economic reform emerged. In 1937, though he had drawn his main support from the army and police, Batista suddenly entered a populist phase. “Many want to forget that I am the chief of a constructive social revolution, and see me as a mere watchdog of public order,” declared the young commander in chief.

“Batista was very aware that in order to rule Cuba he had to appeal to ‘the people’ and to the revolutionary sentiments of 1933,” writes Whitney. Since “Grau and his followers were still around to reclaim their role as Cuba’s most advanced social reform-