

**ARTS & LETTERS**

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happiness fails, human nature turns to another; if the first calculation is wrong, we make a second better. We find comfort somewhere."

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**OTHER NATIONS**

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*A Latin Giant*

"Dateline Brazil: Southern Superpower"  
by Jim Brooke, in *Foreign Policy* (Fall  
1981), P.O. Box 984, Farmingdale, N.Y.  
11737.

With 119 million people, Brazil is the fifth-largest nation on earth. It has the world's eighth-largest gross national product (\$200 billion, up 100 percent since 1970) and ranks as the sixth-largest weapons exporter (\$1 billion in 1980), selling light tanks and small missiles. Its modern factories churn out computers for China and turboprop planes for the Ivory Coast. According to Brooke, a *Washington Post* correspondent, Brazil is "emerging as the superpower of the South."

The country's economic success rests on an aggressive export policy and a nonideological, open-arms attitude toward other Third World countries, say the author. Lured by low prices, developing countries now snap up 40 percent of Brazil's exports, especially in Africa, where Brazil is linked by language to Portuguese-speaking Angola and Mozambique. Agriculture has contributed to the export boom, too. Brazil is still the world's leading producer of coffee. But soybean output has jumped from 2.2 million to 15 million tons since 1971 and now stands as the country's top export crop.

Brazil now conducts an independent foreign policy. The *Yanquis* remain Brazil's leading trading partners, creditors, and investors. Even so, diplomatic relations were badly strained by the Carter administration's criticisms of human rights violations. President João Baptista Figueiredo condemned the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan. Yet Brazil signed a five-year, \$5 billion trade pact with Moscow—Brazilian soybeans and blue jeans for 30,000 barrels of Soviet oil per day. And despite Brasilia's official hostility to Cuba, the regime refuses to endorse U.S. intervention in El Salvador.

Like other Third World regimes, Figueiredo's military government faces some sizable problems. The nation imports 80 percent of its oil, which has pushed its foreign debt up to a world-leading \$60 billion. Inflation roars along at 100 percent annually. A new austerity drive has slowed economic growth (to four percent) and spurred unemployment. Finally, Brazil's income distribution is highly skewed; poverty and illiteracy remain widespread.

Yet Brazil now uses barely 15 percent of its arable land. It has yet to exploit its hydroelectric potential. And it sits atop vast, untapped reserves of iron ore, copper, nickel, manganese, and bauxite. Compared to its assets, Brazil's economic liabilities are minor.