
BACKGROUND BOOKS

BRAZIL

Brazil. Many North Americans think of the Amazon, *Carnaval* in Rio, Brasilia's highrise architecture, the *samba*, dictators, coffee. Although the number of books in English on Brazilian subjects has grown rapidly, filling 62 pages of the *Hispanic American Historical Review* in a recent two-part series by Thomas E. Skidmore on the historiography of Brazil, U.S. readers still do not have much general knowledge of the world's fifth largest nation.

A good reading list starts with broad histories and cultural surveys, followed by books on politics, race, regions, the military, and selections from Brazil's own vivid literature.

But, first, back to coffee. Its importance in Brazilian history, shaping both rural society and economic growth, cannot be overstated. No work in English matches Affonso de Escragnole Taunay's 15-volume **HISTORIA DO CAFE NO BRASIL**. Taunay's work is described in **LATIN AMERICA: A Guide to the Historical Literature** edited by Charles C. Griffin (Univ. of Tex., 1971) as "vast, indispensable, poorly organized, and unindexed"; understandably, the 15 tomes have yet to be translated from Portuguese.

There is, however, among books available in English, E. Bradford Burns's **A HISTORY OF BRAZIL** (Columbia, 1971, cloth & paper) to take the reader in one volume through the full sweep of events from Portuguese discovery in 1500 to the 1960s. This narrative of exploration, war, slavery, the coffee trade, industrial development, and often brutal politics can be paired with Charles Wagley's **AN INTRODUCTION TO BRAZIL** (Columbia, 1963, 1970, cloth & paper).

Wagley, a noted cultural anthropologist and a pioneer among American scholars of Brazil, analyzes rural and urban society in terms of race, class, region, religion, the arts. In the latest edition's final chapter, "If I Were a Brazilian," Wagley views uncontrolled urban growth and runaway inflation and concludes: "I would be confused. Before my eyes would be the great Brazilian dilemma posed by a Brazilian proverb—'Brazil is rich but Brazilians are poor.'"

Riches there have always been, as the classic **COLONIAL BACKGROUND OF MODERN BRAZIL** by Caio Prado, Júnior (Univ. of Calif., 1967, cloth & paper) makes plain. **THE GOLDEN AGE OF BRAZIL, 1695-1750** is Charles Boxer's vivid account of the gold and diamond boom—55 years of hunting and digging treasure (Univ. of Calif., 1962).

Political upheaval has also been chronic in Brazil. Probably the best narrative in English covering the period from the first unsuccessful attempt to establish a republic in 1788-92 to the military overthrow of President João Goulart is **A HISTORY OF MODERN BRAZIL, 1889-1964** by José Maria Bello, published in Portuguese in 1940 and later translated and revised for publication by Stanford (1966). The English edition has good maps and a helpful chronology. More recent books covering briefer periods are Thomas E. Skidmore's **POLITICS IN BRAZIL, 1930-1964: An Experiment in Democracy** (Oxford, 1969, cloth, 1967, paper); Alfred C. Stepan's **THE MILITARY IN POLITICS: Changing Patterns in Brazil** (Princeton, 1971); and a collection of articles on the present-day situation

edited by Stepan entitled **AUTHORITARIAN BRAZIL: Origins, Policies, and Future** (Yale, 1973, cloth, 1976, paper).

The Skidmore study opens with the 1930 *coup d'etat* that ended the "old Republic" (proclaimed at the overthrow of the monarchy in 1889) and closes with the revolt that ended the 1946 Republic. Stepan's own book treats the military as a political institution and analyzes the military role in the turbulent period before 1964. The essays in the volume edited by Stepan deal largely with the subsequent military regimes.

Another collection of essays, **BRAZIL IN THE SIXTIES**, edited by Riordan Roett (Vanderbilt, 1972) covers the political setting (including Brazilian-American relations), the general economy and, more specifically, agricultural policy (the statistics inevitably suffer from obsolescence), change in such areas as education, the middle class, and the Church, and social protest in the novel and the theater.

BRAZIL AND THE GREAT POWERS, 1930-39; The Politics of Trade Rivalry by Stanley E. Hilton (Univ. of Tex., 1975) treats the special case of U.S.-German rivalry for Brazilian support in the period prior to World War II. Hilton rebuts Marxist historians who interpret Franklin D. Roosevelt's "Good Neighbor policy" as beneficial primarily to U.S. business; he shows that the Brazilians, far from being duped, often outsmarted the Americans as President Vargas played his cards well against both FDR and Adolf Hitler.

BRAZILIAN CULTURE: An Introduction to the Study of Culture in Brazil by Fernando de Azevedo, published originally in Portuguese in 1950 and translated into English by W. Rex Crawford (Macmillan, 1950; Hafner, 1971, facsimile ed.), looks at the social structure of Brazil from the early days to the end of World War II from an an-

thropologist's viewpoint.

Azevedo's findings are extended in several more specialized studies that cover race, the plantation system, the distinctive regions, the peasantry, and the coming of industrial civilization.

Among these, a short book by Marvin Harris, **PATTERNS OF RACE IN THE AMERICAS**, summarizes anthropologists' studies of racial relationships in Brazil compared to those in several other Latin American nations and the United States (Walker, 1964, cloth; Norton, 1974, paper). A more recent title, **NEITHER BLACK NOR WHITE: Slavery and Race Relations in Brazil and the United States** by Carl Degler (Macmillan, 1971) covers this ground in greater detail. A third book, hard going for the nonspecialist but perhaps the most thorough of the three is Fernandes Florestan's **THE NEGRO IN BRAZILIAN SOCIETY** (Univ. of Calif., 1969, cloth; Atheneum, 1971, paper).

Warren Dean's **RIO CLARO: A Brazilian Plantation System, 1820-1920** (Stanford, 1976) traces the growth of plantation society in a county in southern Brazil that was for a century one of the centers of coffee production. Dean is principally interested in the black slave labor force, which was finally replaced by Swiss, German, and Italian immigrants after the (violent) abolition of slavery in the 1880s.

RIO GRANDE DO SUL AND BRAZILIAN REGIONALISM, 1822-1930 by Joseph LeRoy Love (Stanford, 1971) is a detailed analysis of the politics of the cattle-raising state in Brazil's far South that has long been the cradle of plotters and leaders; it was from Rio Grande do Sul's *estancias* that Getúlio Vargas rode with several "provisional corps" of *gaúchos* to power in 1930.

Richard M. Morse's **FROM COMMUNITY TO METROPOLIS: A Biography of São Paulo** (Univ. of Fla., 1958;

Octagon, 1971) is the first significant attempt at Brazilian urban history. It explains the dynamism of the city southwest of Rio de Janeiro whose population grew from less than half a million people in 1940 to nearly 6 million in 1970.

Familiar to most students of Latin America is T. Lynn Smith's **BRAZIL: People and Institutions**, first published in 1946 and now in its fourth edition (La. State Univ., 1972), a comprehensive, readable text on the sociology of the country. Smith's recent **BRAZILIAN SOCIETY** (Univ. of N. M., 1975) focuses more narrowly on the sociology of development, with emphasis on migration to the cities from the countryside after 1940. His migrants are former members of the hard-pressed farmer class described in Shepard Forman's **THE BRAZILIAN PEASANTRY** (Columbia, 1975), a study that includes information on marketing, land ownership, and the culture, politics, and policies that combine to keep the peasant, like his urban brother in the teeming *favelas* of Rio and São Paulo, in grinding poverty.

The facts of history, of politics, of social structure and modernization, and the analyses built upon these facts by scholars, helpful as they are, do not explain everything. But Brazil has a powerful literature, fortunately increasingly available in fine translations, that provides a sense of the life and character of Brazilians.

MODERN BRAZILIAN SHORT STORIES, translated and introduced by William L. Grossman (Univ. of Calif., 1967), includes one by João Guimarães Rosa, a diplomat, poet, and novelist (**THE DEVIL TO PAY IN THE BACKLANDS**) whom many Brazilians consider their most important contemporary writer. This tale of a luckless, mysterious fisherman and his family on the Amazon, "The Third Bank of the River," conveys in a few pages the ironic tone of much Brazilian prose.

Elizabeth Bishop, a prize-winning American poet, who has lived long in rural Brazil, has compiled **AN ANTHOLOGY OF TWENTIETH-CENTURY BRAZILIAN POETRY** (Wesleyan, 1972), in English translations by W. S. Merwin, Richard Wilbur, James Wright, and others, including Miss Bishop herself. She and her coeditor Emanuel Brasil observe:

"Poets and poetry are highly thought of in Brazil. Among men, the name of poet is sometimes used as a compliment or term of affection, even if the person referred to is a businessman or politician, not a poet at all. One of the most famous twentieth-century Brazilian poets, Manuel Bandeira, was presented with a permanent parking space in front of his apartment house in Rio de Janeiro, with an enamelled sign POETA—although he never owned a car and didn't know how to drive."

EDITOR'S NOTE. *Leslie B. Rout, Jr. (see page 74), Joan R. Dassin, assistant professor of English at Amherst College, and Riordan Roett, director of Latin American Studies at the Johns Hopkins University School of International Studies, recommended these selections.*