

# BRAZIL'S NEW FOREIGN POLICY

*By Jânio Quadros*

THE interest shown in the position of Brazil in international affairs is in itself proof of the presence of a new force on the world stage. Obviously my country did not appear by magic, nor is it giving itself momentarily to a more or less felicitous exhibition of publicity seeking. When I refer to a "new force," I am not alluding to a military one, but to the fact that a nation, heretofore almost unknown, is prepared to bring to bear on the play of world pressures the economic and human potential it represents, and the knowledge reaped from experience that we have a right to believe is of positive value.

We are a nation of continental proportions, occupying almost half of South America, relatively close to Africa and, ethnically, having indigenous, European and African roots. Within the next decade, our population will amount to close to 100,000,000 inhabitants, and the rapid industrialization of some regions of the country heralds our development into an economic power.

At present we are still beset by the evils of underdevelopment which make of the greater part of our country the scene for quasi-Asiatic dramas. We have poverty-stricken areas which are overpopulated, and we have vast regions—the largest in the world—still unconquered. And yet, great cities are becoming industrial and trade centers of major significance.

If Brazil is only now being heard of in international affairs, it is because on taking office I decided to reap the consequences of the position that we had achieved as a nation. We had been relegated unjustifiably to an obscure position, while—even in our own hemisphere—there were accumulating errors and problems in our way that jeopardized our very future. We gave up the subsidiary and innocuous diplomacy of a nation aligned with worthy though alien interests and, to protect our rights, placed ourselves in the forefront, convinced as we were of our ability to contribute with our own means to the understanding of peoples.

Before I undertake an objective analysis of Brazil's foreign policy, the reader will, I hope, bear with me in a somewhat subjective statement of views. It will serve to clarify the underlying

Editor's Note: This article was written for FOREIGN AFFAIRS shortly before President Quadros resigned from office, and the official translation was approved the week before he left the Presidency. We believe this defense of his policies has a continuing interest.

reasons why we have taken particular positions on world issues.

To be genuine, a nation's foreign policy, as such, must be the embodiment of the ideals and common interests that govern its existence. Idealistic aspirations are defined by the explicit or implicit establishment of the goals aimed at. They reflect the common interests and all those economic, social, historic and political circumstances that at a given moment influence the choice of immediate aims and the selection of ways and means of action.

The ideals of the community are the backdrop against which the national drama unfolds, and are the constant source of inspiration of true leadership. They generally permeate the means and resources for the enforcement of political decisions. A national policy—as a tool for action—seems at times to turn against the fundamental impetus that gave it birth, in order the better to serve it; but in terms of the very essence of that policy, the truth of certain realities cannot be refuted. In order to ensure that the formulation of a national strategy is viable, popular desires and ideals cannot be ignored; but the truth of the matter is that very often the tactics must be neutralized and divested of idealistic or sentimental content in order to meet urgent interests and strengthen the ideals of the community itself.

There are two moments in the life of nations when complete freedom is permitted in the expression of what might be called a national ideology: when they are undergoing dire poverty, as the sole romantic consolation left to the people; and when they are thriving in abundance, as a duty imposed upon the nation by the multitude of interests asserted but never entirely satisfied.

A nation which no longer is so poor or unprotected as to be able to indulge in the luxury of dreamy consolations, yet is struggling against mighty odds to achieve the full possession of its wealth and to develop the potentialities of its own nature, must ever remain in the arena—alert, aware and vigilant. Such a nation cannot lose sight of its objectives, yet must avoid jeopardizing them by submitting to policies which—though in keeping with remote ideals—do not, at the moment, satisfy its true interests.

There can be no doubt that Brazil—thanks to a tremendous national effort—is making gigantic strides toward breaking the barrier of underdevelopment. The rate of national growth speaks for itself, and I am convinced that at the end of my term of office the country's rate of progress will be such as to make the population explosion no longer a somber prospect but rather an addi-

tional and deciding factor for advancement in the process of economic development.

We have no right to dream. Rather it is our duty to work—but at the same time to trust and hope—and work with our feet firmly on the ground.

In time, the foreign policy of Brazil will reflect the craving for developmental progress. Obviously, underlying the decisions which we are compelled to take in order to meet the problems of material growth inherent in the desire of the Brazilian people for economic, social, political and human freedom lies the interweaving of the country's material needs. Keeping our aims ever in mind, we must choose those of our country's sources of inspiration that can best be mobilized to assist the national effort.

## II

Because of our historical, cultural and Christian background as well as our geographical situation, ours is a predominantly Western nation. Our national effort is directed toward the achievement of a democratic way of life, both politically and socially. It may not be idle to stress here that our dedication to democracy is greater than that of other nations of our same cultural sphere. We have thus become the most successful example of racial coexistence and integration known to history.

Common ideals of life and organization draw us close to the major nations of the Western bloc, and on many issues Brazil can, in a leading position, associate itself with this bloc. This affinity is underlined by our participation in the Inter-American regional system, which entails specific political commitments.

However, at the present juncture, we cannot accept a set national position exclusively on the basis of the above premises. It is undeniable that we have other points in common with Latin America in particular, and with the recently emancipated peoples of Asia and Africa, which cannot be ignored since they lie at the root of the readjustment of our policy, and on them converge many of the main lines of the development of Brazilian civilization. If it be true that we cannot relegate our devotion to democracy to a secondary place, it is no less true that we cannot repudiate ties and contacts offering great possibilities for national realization.

The closeness of Brazil's relations with neighboring countries of the continent and with the Afro-Asian nations, though based

on different reasons, tends to the selfsame end. Among these, in the majority of cases, are historical, geographic and cultural motives. Common to them all is the fact that our economic situation coincides with the duty of forming a single front in the battle against underdevelopment and all forms of oppression.

From all this, naturally, certain points stand out that may be deemed basic to the foreign policy of my government. One of these is the recognition of the legitimacy of the struggle for economic and political freedom. Development is an aim common to Brazil and to the nations with which we endeavor to have closer relations, and the rejection of colonialism is the inevitable and imperative corollary of that aim.

It is, furthermore, in the light of these political determinants that today we consider the future of the Inter-American regional system of first importance. The growth of Latin America as a whole and the safeguarding of the sovereignty of each nation of the hemisphere are the touchstones of a continental policy as the Brazilian government understands it.

The mistakes created by an erroneous equating of continental problems are only too well known. Insufficient or misdirected aid has increased regional disagreements. Nations at grips with grave problems in common—that is, all the countries of Latin America—must take stock of their needs and plan accordingly. Latin Americans are interested not in the prosperity of the small, leading groups, but in the national prosperity as a whole, which must be sought at all costs and regardless of the risks.

The United States must realize that today it confronts a challenge from the socialist world. The Western world must show and prove that it is not only Communist planning that promotes the prosperity of national economies. Democratic planning must also do so, with the assistance of those economically able, if the political system of a perplexed two-thirds of the Western world is to avoid the risk of bankruptcy.

We cannot too often stress the extent to which poverty separates us from North America and the leading European countries of the Western world. If by their success these represent, in the eyes of underdeveloped peoples, the ideal of achievement of the élite of European cultural origin, there nevertheless is taking root in the minds of the masses the conviction that this ideal, for a country without resources and hamstrung in its aspirations for progress is a mockery. What solidarity can there be between a

prosperous nation and a wretched people? What common ideals can, in the course of time, withstand the comparison between the rich, cultivated areas of the United States and the famine-ridden zones of the Brazilian Northeast?

Thinking of this sort irrevocably creates in us a sense of solidarity with those poverty-stricken peoples who, on three continents, are struggling against imperialist interests which, under the umbrella of democratic institutions, mislead—if not destroy—attempts to organize popular economies. When nations competing with the democratic group make demonstrations of real or pretended and disinterested economic help, this problem seems more acute under the pressure of the conflict of interests.

At this point it might be appropriate to refer to the ideological prejudices of the capitalist democracies, ever ready to decry the idea of state intervention in countries where either the state controls and governs economic growth—which has become a question of sovereignty—or nothing at all is achieved. We are not in a position to allow the free play of economic forces in our territory, simply because those forces, controlled from outside, play their own game and not that of our country.

The Brazilian Government is not prejudiced against foreign capital—far from it. We stand in dire need of its help. The sole condition is that the gradual nationalization of profits be accepted, for otherwise it no longer is an element of progress but becomes a mere leech feeding on our national effort. Let it be known that the state in Brazil will not relinquish those controls that will benefit our economy by channeling and ensuring the efficiency of our progress.

### III

Economic imbalance is doubtless the most critical of all the adverse factors that beset the Inter-American regional system, and from it almost all others stem. My government is convinced that it is fighting for the recovery of Pan Americanism and that this must start with the economic and social fields. Politically we are trying to give shape and content to the imperative principles of self-determination and non-intervention, and it is these principles that guide us in relation to the Americas as well as to the rest of the world.

The still dramatically present question of Cuba convinced us, once and for all, of the nature of the continental crisis. In defend-

ing with intransigence the sovereignty of Cuba against interpretations of an historical fact which cannot be controlled *a posteriori*, we believe we are helping to awaken the continent to a true awareness of its responsibilities. We stand by our position on Cuba, with all its implications. Surely the Brazilian attitude has been understood by other governments, and as it gains ground, the entire regional system shows signs of a regeneration in the assessment of the responsibilities of each member nation.

The government of the United States, through its recent aid programs, took an important step toward the revision of its classical and inoperative continental policy. We hope that President Kennedy, who is not lacking in the qualities of leadership, will carry the revision of his country's attitude to the very limit and will sweep away the considerable remaining obstacles on the road to a truly democratic, continental community.

As to Africa, we may say that today it represents a new dimension in Brazilian policy. We are linked to that continent by our ethnic and cultural roots and share in its desire to forge for itself an independent position in the world of today. The nations of Latin America that became politically independent in the course of the nineteenth century found the process of economic development delayed by historical circumstances, and Africa, which has only recently become politically free, joins us at this moment in the common struggle for freedom and well-being.

I believe that it is precisely in Africa that Brazil can render the best service to the concepts of Western life and political methods. Our country should become the link, the bridge, between Africa and the West, since we are so intimately bound to both peoples. In so far as we can give the nations of the Black continent an example of complete absence of racial prejudice, together with successful proof of progress without undermining the principles of freedom, we shall be decisively contributing to the effective integration of an entire continent in a system to which we are attached by our philosophy and historic tradition.

The attraction exerted by the Communist world, by Communist techniques and by the spirit of Communist organizations upon the countries but recently freed from the capitalist yoke is common knowledge. Generally speaking, all underdeveloped countries, including those of Latin America, are susceptible to that appeal. It must not be forgotten that whereas the independence of the Latin American nations was inspired by a liberation

movement rooted in the French Revolution, the autonomy obtained by the new Asian and African nations was preceded by a wave of hope aroused by the socialist revolution in Russia among the oppressed classes and peoples all over the world. The Afro-Asian liberation movement arose against the domination by nations that compose—if not lead—the Western bloc.

These historical factors are of decisive importance and must be borne in mind when gauging the role that a country such as Brazil can play in the task of reappraising the dynamic forces that are at work in the new world of today in Asia and Africa.

For many years Brazil made the mistake of supporting European colonialism in the United Nations. This attitude—which is only now fading—gave rise to a justified mistrust of Brazilian policy. Misinformed circles, overly impressed with European patterns of behavior, contributed to a mistake which must be attributed more to a disregard of the deeper commitments of our country than to political malice. Our fraternal relationship with Portugal played its part in the complacency shown by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Brazil in this matter.

Therefore, everything points to a necessary change of position with regard to colonialism, which in all its guises—even the most tenuous—will from now on meet with the determined opposition of Brazil. This is our policy, not merely in the interests of Africa, nor for the sake of a platonic solidarity, but because it is in keeping with Brazilian national interests. These to a certain extent are still influenced by the most disguised forms of colonialist pressure, but call for a rapprochement with Africa.

I might add that the raising of the economic standards of the African peoples is of vital importance to the economy of Brazil. Even from a purely selfish standpoint, we are interested in seeing the social betterment and improvement in the production techniques of Africa. The exploitation of Africans by European capital is detrimental to the Brazilian economy, permitting as it does the fostering of commercial competition on the basis of low-salaried Negro workers. Competition on a civilized and human level must be found to replace that of enslavement by underpayment of an entire race. Here and now, the industrial growth of my country guarantees to the Africans a most important source of supply, which could even serve as the basis for arrangements for the linking together of our respective production systems.

We are setting up regular diplomatic and trade relations with

several African countries and my government's emissaries have visited that continent to study concrete possibilities for coöperation and exchange. In time, the potentialities of this closer relationship, destined to be a milestone in the history of human affairs, will be fulfilled.

## IV

Here I must underscore another important aspect of the new Brazilian foreign policy. My country has few international obligations: we are bound only by pacts and treaties of continental assistance which commit us to solidarity with any member of the hemisphere that may become the victim of extra-continental aggression. We have not subscribed to treaties of the nature of NATO, and are in no way forced formally to intervene in the cold war between East and West. We are therefore in a position to follow our national inclination to act energetically in the cause of peace and the relaxation of international tension.

Not being members of any bloc, not even of the Neutralist bloc, we preserve our absolute freedom to make our own decisions in specific cases and in the light of peaceful suggestions at one with our nature and history. A group of nations, notably of Asia, is also careful to remain on the sidelines in any clash of interests which are invariably those of the great powers and not necessarily those of our country, let alone of world peace.

The first step in making full use of the possibilities of our position in the world consists in maintaining normal relations with all nations. Brazil, either through misinterpretation or distortion of its better political judgment, spent many years without regular contacts with the countries of the Communist bloc, even to the point of having only roundabout and insufficient trade relations with them. As a part of my government's program, I decided to examine the possibility of renewing relations with Rumania, Hungary, Bulgaria and Albania; these have now been established. Negotiations for the reopening of relations with the Soviet Union are in progress and an official Brazilian mission is going to China to study exchange possibilities. Consistent with this revision of our foreign policy, my country, as is known, decided to vote in favor of including on the agenda of the U.N. General Assembly the question of the representation of China; this initial position will, in due course, have its logical consequences.

The possibilities of trade relations between Brazil and the



Orient are practically *terra incognita*. Even in the case of Japan, to which we are bound by so many ties, our barter relations are far from complete. China, Korea, Indonesia, India, Ceylon and all of Southeast Asia provide room for the development of our production and commercial endeavors, which neither distance nor political problems can discourage.

The world must be made aware of the fact that Brazil is intensively increasing its production, looking not only to the domestic market, but specifically seeking to attract other nations. Economically speaking, my government's motto is "Produce everything, for everything produced is marketable." We shall go out to conquer these markets: at home, in Latin America, in Africa, in Asia, in Oceania, in countries under democracy, and in those that have joined the Communist system. Material interests know no doctrine and Brazil is undergoing a period where its very survival as a nation occupying one of the most extensive and privileged areas of the globe depends on the solution of its economic problems. Our very faithfulness to the democratic way of life is at stake in this struggle for development. A nation such as ours, with 70,000,000 inhabitants and with the world's highest rate of population growth, will not permit even a slowing down of its movement toward the full utilization of its own wealth.

Without fear of error I can say that the experiment in democratic progress being carried out in Brazil is decisive both for Latin America and for all the underdeveloped areas of the world. Therefore, this experiment is of deep interest to prosperous nations which are also proud of being free. They will remain so to the extent that success crowns the efforts for economic emancipation of the underdeveloped nations living under the same system. Freedom once again becomes the outgrowth of equality.

It must be pointed out that the idea behind the foreign policy of Brazil, and its implementation, has now become the instrument for a national development policy. As part and parcel of our national life, foreign policy has ceased to be an unrealistic academic exercise carried out by oblivious and spellbound élites; it has become the main topic of daily concern. With it we seek specific aims: at home, prosperity and well-being; elsewhere, to live together amicably and in world peace.

There is no need to spell out to Brazilians what we are in the world today. We are fully aware of the mission we must accomplish—and can accomplish.

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