

*Aspirações nacionais*. By JOSÉ HONÓRIO RODRIGUES. São Paulo, 1963. Editora Fulgor. Bibliography. Pp. 162. Paper.

Occasionally a book appears with such penetrating insight that it becomes essential reading in its field. José Honório Rodrigues, Director of the National Archives of Brazil and eminent historian of his country, has written such a book, *Aspirações nacionais*, the most important interpretation of modern Brazil published in recent years.

The book is divided into three related, but not entirely integrated, interpretive essays. The first, "Political Psychology and the Brazilians," discusses the contemporary political scene within its historical context, and Professor Honório Rodrigues concludes that the struggle in Brazil is not political (between liberals and conservatives) but economic (between reformers and reactionaries). The aspirations of the people which are national in concept eventually will triumph, he feels, over the hitherto dominating interests of the oligarchy which are primarily anti-national and selfish in their concept.

The second essay is a psychoanalysis of Brazil. "From the first hour, Brazil was not the same as Portugal," Honório Rodrigues contends and then discusses how the divergence between the metropolis and colony continued to widen. Concerned with showing how the unique Brazilian personality developed and what it is, he synthesizes the foreign view as given by prominent travelers who visited Brazil and wrote their impressions. In conclusion, he presents his own opinion about the traditional and contemporary positive and negative characteristics of his fellow countrymen.

The third and most important essay codifies the national aspirations of the Brazilian people. In the author's opinion they are: independence and sovereignty; territorial integrity; effective occupation of the entire national territory; national unity; a balance between centralism and regionalism; improved communications and transportation; the psycho-social integration of all inhabitants by means of miscegenation, racial tolerance, and acculturation of immigrants; social justice; democratic, representative government; diminution of the powers of the oligarchy; economic development; universal education; and improved health care. At first glance these aspirations might be those of almost any underdeveloped nation in Asia, Africa, or Latin America. Indeed, they might be, but Honório Rodrigues makes them particularly Brazilian in this essay by placing

them within the context of Brazilian history and enriching his discussion with cogent Brazilian statistics.

The power and self-interest of the oligarchy, which owns most of the land and pays almost none of the taxes, inhibit the achievement of these national aspirations. Therefore, in order to progress, the Brazilian people first must limit the control of the oligarchy. Imposing that limitation, the author implies, will shape the course of Brazilian history in the future.

Professor Honório Rodrigues' excellent analysis of his country's contemporary politics, characterization of his compatriots, historical interpretation of Brazil, and codification of Brazil's motivating aspirations make this book required reading for an understanding of modern Brazil. The translation of this short book into English would be a great service to the American public interested in Latin America.

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