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Hitler Had His Eye on Brazil, But Vargas Beat Him to the Punch

By JAMES T. HOWARD

Brazil is on Hitler's list. The Fuehrer has said that when the proper time comes he will create a new Germany there.

Look at the map. Brazil, our good neighbor, is more than 4000 miles from New York. From Natal, on the Brazilian hump, to Dakar, in Africa, it is only 1600 miles.

Should the day come when Nazi legions move across French West Africa, the most accessible spot in the Western Hemisphere would be Brazil, with its long, exposed coastline.

Brazil today has some 50,000 Germans born in Germany, possibly a million German-Brazilians who have an ancestor or so from the Fatherland.

They are concentrated in the south, in the farm and ranch country of Rio Grande do Sul and Santa Catharina and in the coffee state of Sao Paulo. They are also in business in the big cities of Brazil.

Brazil's German problem resembles that of Argentina, although it is much worse. There are three times as many Germans in Brazil and there is less feeling of national unity to oppose them.

It has been estimated that about 50 per cent of Brazil's 45,000,000 people are white, 14 per cent Negro, 22 per cent white and Negro, and the rest Indian or mixed, with the percentage of illiteracy over 60 per cent.

Germans Have Schools

The Germans, in their towns and communities, have set up schools of their own, schools in which German teachers, with better equipment than the Brazilian national schools provide, have been preaching loyalty to the German fatherland.

There were 3000 of these schools, mostly in the south, when President Vargas cracked down a few years ago, closing most of them until they promised to teach in Portuguese, the national language.

German societies flourished and there was a powerful German press until early this year, when President Vargas decided to sever diplomatic relations with the Axis and undertook to curb the enemies at home.

German-Brazilians

Most of the German schools were ordered closed again for failing to obey the Portuguese-language edict. It was charged by investigators that German school children were being taught obedience to Hitler and that German clergymen were taking their texts from *Mein Kampf*.

In the interior regions of Rio Grande do Sul, Varga's home state, it was found that uniformed militia drilled daily, rehearsing war tactics in open fields, and that Germans who refused to join Nazi organizations were boycotted or threatened.

Bigger Than U. S. A.

Before Vargas cracked down, almost all German activity in Brazil centered around the German Embassy and the consular staffs, which were the largest of any nation represented in Brazil. German-Brazilian individuals and firms were "taxed" (10 per cent of income and up) to pay the bill for Nazi infiltration. The money, in the form of contributions, went to German "relief societies."

Brazil is rich in fertile soil and natural resources, although the masses are poor.

She has vast resources of iron and manganese, as well as cotton, coffee, cacao, tobacco and rubber. The U. S. A. needs these raw materials for the war effort. A victorious Germany would like to exploit Brazil's resources and her people.



Egon Albrecht

1918 — 1944