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Author: Agnaldo Garcia

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(Contributed by IBPP Research Associate Agnaldo Garcia through Global Network Initiative Staffer Melanie Antonich and minimally edited by the IBPP Editorial Board. With current international headlines from Brazil focusing on macroeconomic Issues, the following data pertains to events "on the ground.")

Domestic political events affecting social and cultural aspects of peoples' lives. In the 1980s, the re-establishment of democracy promoted social and cultural advances. Cultural activities such as literature, popular music, and arts were--in general--no longer subject to official censorship. In the last few years, there has been some cultural revival in Brazil. Brazilian cinema, for instance, has produced movies that have obtained international recognition (Four Days in September, Central do Brasil).

Changes in the political situation of the country have not yet produced The expected social transformations. We still have large poor areas and the large cities face problems such as misery and crime. In the last 12 years, about 300,000 families received land, however, about 4,500,000 families are still in need of it. Human rights received more attention and respect, but we are still far from eliminating police violence or child labor. We can say that institutional reformation (such as the new Constitution of 1988) has not been accompanied by social reformation leading to social justice, and social differences are still extremely high in Brazil.

We do hope that democracy will eventually reduce the distance between the richest and the poorest people in Brazil. (Keywords: Agnaldo Garcia, Brazil.)