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EMBASSY OF BRAZIL

**SUBJECT**

EMBASSY RIO DE JANEIRO

January 20, 1967

Cultural and Educational Exchanges with Communist Countries  
Department's CA-4639 of December 21, 1966

JOINT EMBASSY/USIS MESSAGE

Transmitted as an enclosure to this telegram is the mission's annual summary on Brazilian cultural and educational exchanges with communist countries.

The report has been prepared from files available within the Embassy in Rio, and the listing of data does not purport to be complete, particularly with respect to areas outside of Rio. This is because the timing of the Department's referenced instruction, which reached the Embassy on December 28, precluded the cooperation of U.S. Consulates throughout Brazil in submitting data specifically for this report. (Due to the slowness of non-telegraphic classified communications with Consulates, a minimum of about six weeks must be allowed for pouching of classified instructions to the Consulates and the return pouching of reports from the Consulates to the Embassy.) A more complete and better balanced annual review of the situation throughout Brazil could be prepared if the Department would send the statement of its requirements in September rather than at the very end of the year.

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Mrs V. Krebs, Counselor for Political Affairs

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I. SUMMARY OF ACTIVITIES AND IMPACT

During 1966 the general picture with respect to Brazilian cultural and educational exchange with communist countries remained as it was in the previous year. Brazil has a formal exchange agreement with only one communist country, Poland. In the almost three years since the overturn of the left-leaning Goulart regime, the new Government has deliberately avoided any renewal of the negotiations toward official cultural agreements with the USSR, Czechoslovakia, and Hungary which were pending at the time of the revolution of March 31, 1964. Cultural visits to or from communist countries therefore are not, except with respect to Poland, exchange agreements per se, but rather ad hoc visits handled in each separate instance by an exchange of diplomatic notes.

The Brazilian Government is strongly opposed to communist propaganda, domestic or foreign, and its lack of enthusiasm for more exchanges reflects the suspicion that even "cultural" activity brings a certain amount of propaganda. The Brazilian Government several times during the year has in one way or another expressed its general posture toward the USSR and Eastern Europe as being one of peaceful coexistence, with strong encouragement for mutually beneficial trade with Bloc countries but with no encouragement of increased cultural contacts. (See Embassy's A-103 of August 5, 1966 and A-545 of December 16, 1966.)

It will be noted that the cultural visits described in this report are all from the USSR, Poland, or Czechoslovakia. The embassies of these three countries also maintain small-scale cultural programs in Brazil. No cultural activity has been noted from other accredited missions of the Bloc--Bulgaria, Rumania, and Hungary. Brazil does not maintain diplomatic relations with Communist China, Albania, East Germany, Cuba, North Korea, North Viet Nam, or Outer Mongolia and no missions are present in Brazil from these countries except a Trade Mission from East Germany.

The most important visits to Brazil from communist countries in 1966 were those of (1) a USSR soccer team, (2) a Polish soccer team, (3) a Czech soccer team, (4) the Leningrad Ballet, (5) the Moscow Circus, and (6) a USSR delegation accompanying the Soviet Film Festival. Each of these received a moderate amount of publicity in the press, but rarely with front-page or other prominent treatment. In this "football" conscious country any soccer matches with foreign teams make big news on the sports pages, and that was true with the visiting USSR, Polish, and Czech teams. The Leningrad Ballet received good general publicity on inside pages and of course it was reviewed by critics, who had mixed reactions to the quality of the performances. The Ballet played to full houses and the audiences applauded enthusiastically. The Moscow Circus had large and enthusiastic audiences and received favorable

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press publicity and criticism. The Soviet Film Festival (see USIS Rio's Field Msg. 128 of January 12, 1967) and press interviews with members of the accompanying USSR group drew moderate press coverage. Apart from these, the remaining minor visits from communist countries, not numerous, received only moderate and perfunctory news treatment.

Press treatment of these visits in general paid no particular attention to the fact that the visitors were from communist rather than non-communist countries. Nevertheless, comment of a political character was not entirely lacking. Thus news stories noted that the Brazilian Secret Police (DOPS) "watched the moves of the Russian ballet group," with agents photographing all passports and carefully checking all baggage at the airport arrival. The Russians who accompanied the film festival, and also the manager of the Leningrad Ballet, got some political propaganda into their press conferences. And a Brazilian middle-of-the-road newspaper warned, in an editorial headed "Dangerous Innocence," that visiting athletes from the Bloc might appear "candid and angelical" but that actually their visits mixed an undesirable political propaganda with sport.

The visits from communist countries, in their totality, are estimated to have had very little propaganda impact apart from possibly lending an image of greater respectability to the communist countries involved. Given the popular aversion to communism in Brazil, even this indirect effect is judged to have been minimal except among the small minority which is sympathetic to communism.

Visits in the other direction, by Brazilian cultural groups or individuals to communist countries, were scarce and attracted little press notice. Two different groups which give presentations of Brazilian folkloric songs and dances visited the USSR in the summer. A coach (technico) of the Brazilian football club "Flamengo" spent two months in the USSR, and upon his return in September some papers carried his comments about soccer and the training of athletes in the USSR.

Communist or communist-front institutions such as binational centers, friendship societies, or libraries are virtually non-existent in Brazil today, having been closed by the Revolution. The only development during the year concerned the Instituto Brasileiro-Sovietico, which occupies a couple of rooms in a downtown office building in Rio. Moribund since the Revolution of March 31, 1964, the Instituto in mid-1966 cautiously renewed a very limited program of Russian-language instruction, with a small class of Brazilians meeting twice a week. The Instituto is linked to the Cultural Office of the Soviet Embassy. Apart from the language teaching, it is not known to be conducting any other activities.

In sum, the scope of communist cultural activities in Brazil in 1966 was limited and the impact minimal. Perhaps the most important point to

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be noted is the contrast between this situation and that prevailing three years ago under the previous Brazilian regime, when there was a great proliferation of exchanges, front groups, centers, etc., serving the interests of communist countries.

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A. Agreements. No new agreements in 1966. A cultural accord exists with only one communist country, Poland.

B. Institutions. Only one institute, The Instituto Brasileiro-Soviético in Rio as mentioned above. As to local book publishers and distributors, there has been no change since our last report on the subject. (See Embassy Rio's A-937 of March 21, 1966.)

C. Exchanges. Visits to Brazil.

(1) A USSR soccer team was in Brazil from February 4 to February 13. A Polish soccer team was in Brazil from June 5 to June 9, and a Czech team from June 9 to June 25. The latter two teams participated in the "International Soccer Season" held in Rio under the auspices of the Secretary of Tourism of the State of Guanabara and of the Brazilian Sports Confederation.

The presence of the USSR soccer team inspired the following editorial in the Rio newspaper Maria de Noticias: "The frequency with which Soviet athletes visit Brazil, with the purpose of engaging in sports matches with Brazilians, gives cause for thought. The Brazilian Sports Confederation and certain clubs do not hide their predilection for the Soviet soccer team, which now comes to Brazil again, in a program which will take it to various states of the union. We are very simple, in that we accept the theory that sports and political ideology do not mix. Well, Soviet Russia and all the "Iron Curtain" countries always present a candid and angelic air, finding in certain of our ingenious boys of press and radio willing collaborators, who presume they are doing a lovely thing when in reality they are totally in error. It is high time that the Government find out why there is all this interest in bringing so frequently to Brazil athletes from Red Russia. It is high time also that visits by Brazilian sports delegations to the lands of the hammer and sickle should be controlled. As a precaution, at least, because the basketball who makes one basket makes a hundred, as the saying goes."

(2) The Moscow Circus was in Brazil for two months after its arrival on May 21, giving a series of performances in São Paulo, a series in Rio, and later in Belo Horizonte. (Press reports indicated that the Circus was to go to two or three cities in northern Brazil, but the Embassy lacks confirmation that this happened.)

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(3) The Leningrad Ballet arrived in Rio on August 2 for a series of performances which, as already noted, were well attended by enthusiastic audiences. The Ballet then went to São Paulo for a series of performances. It returned unexpectedly to Rio, the press reporting that Argentine authorities had refused to give visas for the Ballet's intended visit to that country. (Jornal de Brasil, September 1.)

(4) Rio's First International Popular Song Festival, October 27-30, was attended by composer Szaboies and singer Josef Nemeth from Hungary; composer Stefan Rorkowski and singer Irena Sauter from Poland; Andrei Petrov and singer Edward Khil from the USSR, with Soloviov Sedoi of the USSR also present as a member of the panel of judges. The representatives from the communist countries attracted slight press attention, being outnumbered and outshone by the better-known artists from some 19 non-communist countries.

(5) The Soviet Film Festival (reported in USIS Rio's Field Message No. 128 of January 12, 1967) was accompanied by a small delegation from the USSR consisting of two actresses, a writer, and a film director. Their Rio press conference, reported in Correio da Manhã and other journals of April 29, included some political statements. Writer Victor Sytin was quoted as saying with respect to the "recent imprisonment of Soviet writers" accused of publishing books damaging to the Soviet regime, that both writers are completely unknown in the USSR and that "there was a great deal of sensationalism about the trial, promoted deliberately by our enemies." With respect to Soviet youth he alleged that in the USSR, western values are fully accepted and respected and that "the only difference between capitalist and communist youth is that the communists don't let their hair grow long in the Beatle style."

Director Eldar Riazanov was quoted as saying that "the fundamental difference between the cinema in the capitalist world and the communist world is that the former is more commercialized and serves as a vehicle for militaristic and political propaganda." He said that "in the socialist countries it is prohibited by law to defend militarism, hatred among nations, racism, or pornography."

(6) An all-Czechoslovakia volleyball team played matches in Brazil from November 11 to November 30, with little publicity apart from that on sports pages.

(7) The Polish pianist Witold Malcuzyński gave performances in Rio's Municipal Theater on April 21 and 22. The press reported that the audiences received him enthusiastically, but the music critic of Correio da Manhã found many faults with the pianist's performance.

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(8) Professor Edward Goldstucker of Prague University, the Czech expert on Franz Kafka, lectured in Rio and held a press conference on March 18.

(9) In January and February, an exhibit of Soviet paintings was shown at museums in São Paulo and Rio.

#### D. Exchanges. Brazilians to Communist Countries.

(1) In mid-1966 the Sincos Group, which gives performances of Brazilian folkloric songs and dances, visited the USSR. It was reported to have been well received by audiences and critics in the USSR.

(2) Also in mid-1966, a second Brazilian folklore group, that of Coerys Goulart, visited the USSR and gave performances there.

(3) A coach of the Brazilian soccer team "Flamengo" visited the Soviet Union for 66 days. On his return to Brazil, Jornal do Brasil of September 22 devoted a lengthy article to his views about sports and training in the USSR. (The article identified the coach as "Duck," with no other name given.)

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#### E. Student Exchanges.

The only thing to be added to the information about student exchange given above in the section "Summary of Activities and Impact," is the following, quoted verbatim from Enclosure 7 to the Embassy's A-545 of December 16, 1966, classified Confidential:

The Assistant Secretary General for East Europe and Asia, Ambassador José Osvaldo de Menezes Penna, told an Embassy officer on December 8 that his ministry had been making a check through its missions in Bloc countries of the number of Brazilians studying there. He said their preliminary estimate is approximately 200, of whom about 80 are in the Soviet Union and the rest in groups of not more than 20 each in the other Eastern European countries. He cited Czechoslovakia and Poland as having somewhat more than the others. He added that he had been somewhat disturbed to learn that apparently some of those countries have been offering scholarships since the 1964 Revolution; he is looking carefully into this aspect with a view to restricting or even eliminating entirely the flow of students to the USSR and the Eastern European communist countries. As to the ideology of the Brazilians who have accepted these scholarships, Menezes Penna said his tentative conclusion is that very few of them are communists; rather they seem to be people who were ready to take advantage of almost any opportunity to obtain higher education, and probably could not have gained admission to Brazilian universities.

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