

**November 13, 1961**

**Record of a Conversation with Luis Carlos Prestes,  
Secretary of the Communist Party of Brazil**

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**Summary:**

L. C. Prestes discusses the state of politics and the Communist Party in Brazil.

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RECORD OF A CONVERSATION

with Luis Carlos Prestes, Secretary of the Communist Party of Brazil

On 13 November 1961 I had a conversation in the Committee of the Soviet Parliamentary Group with L. Carlos Prestes, General Secretary of the Communist Party of Brazil. An exchange of opinions occurred in the course of the conversation about the results of the visit to the Soviet Union of members of the Brazilian Parliament at the invitation of the Soviet Parliamentary Group and the role of the Communist Party of Brazil in developing ties between the parliamentarians of the USSR and Brazil. In addition, L. C. Prestes talked about the domestic political situation in Brazil and the situation in some countries of Latin America.

L. C. Prestes noted the great interest in the Soviet Union of a considerable part of the members of the federal parliament and especially members of the parliaments of states and the desire of many of them to visit the USSR. In Prestes' opinion, the majority of the visits by Brazilian parliamentarians to the Soviet Union have yielded favorable results. L. C. Prestes cited Mauro Borjes Teixeira, who visited the Soviet Union in 1960 at the invitation of the Soviet Parliamentary Group, as an example. Mauro Borjes Teixeira was elected to the post of Governor of the state of Goias with the support of Communists and at the tense moment for Brazil of the resignation of J. Quadros Teixeira took a correct position with respect to the coup-plotting generals. The trip to the Soviet Union of a group of Brazilian parliamentarians from Warsaw at the end of the 48th Interparliamentary Conference received good responses in Brazil. Speaking in particular of Saturnino Braga, Chairman of the Parliamentary Group of Brazil, L. C. Prestes noted that S. Braga is an ally of the Communists and a firm anti-imperialist. He said in particular that S. Braga recently turned to the leadership of the CP of Brazil with a request about the possibility of Communists supporting his candidacy for the post of Governor of Rio de Janeiro. However, L. C. Prestes noted that the candidacy of S. Braga is difficult since he does not have wide influence among the masses, and is not able to win it like, for example, J. Quadros was able to do.

In the course of the conversation L. C. Prestes expressed a wish about the desirability of inviting Alvaro Lins, former Brazilian Ambassador to Portugal, to the Soviet Union. At the present time Alvaro Lins is Chairman of the Union of Writers of Brazil. On return from Portugal A. Lins sharply criticized the dictatorship of Salazar and the lack of elementary democratic freedoms in Portugal.

L. C. Prestes promised when possible to report the opinion of the leadership of the CP of Brazil in the future with respect to the advisability of an invitation to the USSR of particular parliamentarians and political figures of Brazil.

Touching on the current situation in Brazil, L. C. Prestes said that the Communists are not able to agree with an oversimplified assessment of the resignation of Quadros, whose policy was poorly understood abroad. L. C. Prestes noted that events after the departure of J. Quadros from the post of President had enormous significance for Brazil. Speaking of the personality of J. Quadros, L. C. Prestes said that J. Quadros regarded those demagogues and politicians who, coming to power, began on the left almost standing on the same platform as the Communists, as Frondisi did in Argentina, and then end with a deeply reactionary policy. In the 1960 elections the name of Quadros was used by the most reactionary circles of Brazil. Coming to power, Quadros organized an extreme right-wing government: the minister of finance, in particular, was an open agent of imperialism, just like the minister of war. Repressive measures were taken under the leadership of the minister of war against progressive-minded officers, part of whom were removed from the posts they occupied and the others sent to remote regions of the country.

In the area of economics and finance Quadros pursued a policy of complete subordination to the International Monetary Fund. Thus, the domestic policy of Quadros was directed deeply against the nation [*antinatsional'naya*]. As concerns foreign policy, here Quadros' policy was ambiguous and contradictory. On the one hand, he unswervingly observed the Rio de Janeiro Pact and the military agreement with the US, but on the other, he established diplomatic relations with Hungary,

Romania, Bulgaria, and Albania; promised to establish relations with the USSR; and took a positive position with respect to the Cuban Revolution. This ambiguity of Quadros' policy agreed with the ambiguity of the national bourgeoisie.

Quadros did not solve a single problem facing the country. A powerful national liberation movement has grown in the country and when the moment came to decide on whose side he was on, the side of the people or on the side of the generals, Quadros resigned, like Peron at one time in Argentina, and practically yielded [his] place to the generals, who were seeking a military dictatorship.

On the day of Quadros' resignation the CP of Brazil came out with a manifesto in support of observing legality and calling for support of the candidacy of M. [SIC] Goulart for the post of President.

L. C. Prestes declared that there had been no broad and militant popular movements in Brazil since 1930. Political strikes of the working class began in the country, peasants demanded weapons, and there were mass protests by students. In the state of Rio Grande do Sul a broad national movement developed headed by state Governor Leonel Brizola. Communists in this state oversaw the registration of the list of volunteers, the number of whom exceeded 300,000 people. The country was on the brink of a civil war, but the bourgeoisie maneuvered and made a deal with the reactionaries. The bourgeoisie submitted an amendment limiting the power of the President in order to calm the generals. The country switched from a presidential system [*rezhim*] to a parliamentary one.

In its composition and the policy it pursues the Goulart government is reactionary. Goulart himself, being at the head of the working class of Brazil, has some influence in the working class; for the three past years he has practically acted from the same platform with the Communists. But Goulart himself is a big property owner, he has a large estate and 300,000 head of cattle in the state of Rio Grande do Sul. In assuming the post of President Goulart took on very serious responsibilities before the people and, in L. C. Prestes' opinion, the task of the Communists right now is to influence a change of composition of the government in the direction of its improvement.

The so-called Goiania Declaration, a manifesto about the creation of a national liberation front in the country, was developed not long ago. Leonel Brizola, Governor of the State of Rio Grande do Sul, asked L. C. Prestes to support this Declaration on behalf of the Communist Party, but "not too actively". It ought to be noted that the text of this Declaration was composed jointly with the Communists and only one point was included against the Communists' wishes, namely "Brazil will become neither a colony of the US nor a satellite of the USSR".

In the opinion of the Communists right now Brazil is on the brink of a civil war, but a peaceful path is still possible. In the event Goulart resigns Mazzilli, a very reactionary person, will take the post of President. But it ought to be noted that the candidacy of Mazzilli will not only not suit the Communists, but [will] also [not suit] the forces of the National Liberation Front and the army, where there a strongly anti-imperialist movement (the specific nature of the Brazilian army is that a majority of the officers come from the petty bourgeoisie and in difficult moments for the country the Brazilian army usually stands on the side of the people).

Touching on the question of the prospects for restoring diplomatic relations between the USSR and Brazil L. C. Prestes said that this is a question of the immediate future. L. C. Prestes reported that on the eve of [his] departure for the Soviet Union he had conversations with J. Goulart and San Tiago Dantas, the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Brazil, in the course of which Goulart and Dantas declared that all the demands of the Brazilian government had been satisfied and all questions even of a technical nature, such as the size of the embassy staffs, had been solved, and there were no obstacles to the resumption of diplomatic relations. L. C. Prestes reported that under the influence of the Communists some deputies from the Social Democratic Party had already made speeches in Parliament about the question of the necessity of restoring diplomatic relations with the USSR. In the opinion of L. C. Prestes, an incorrect interpretation of Goulart's recent statement in Porto Alegre could have been made when it was reported that he supposedly suggested not hurrying with the restoration of diplomatic relations with the USSR. According to L. C. Prestes' report J. Goulart was interested in an expansion of trade relations with the Soviet Union and was counting on getting a credit from the USSR, in particular for the construction of industrial

enterprises in the northeast of Brazil, where there is huge unemployment.

K. A. Gubin, Secretary of the USSR Parliamentary Group; L. A. Nikiforov, Senior Consultant of the Department of International Relations of the USSR Supreme Soviet Presidium; and interpreter V. I. Pokhvalin were present at the conversation.

[signature]

A.VOLKOV