

May 6, 1966
**Memorandum on Talks of Com[rade] Z. Kliszko with
a Delegation of the Communist Party of Brazil on
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Summary:

Delegations of the PUWP and the BCP discuss politics in Brazil and the organization of the Brazilian Communist Party.

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Memorandum

on talks of com[rade] Z. Kliszko with a delegation of the Communist Party of Brazil on May 6, 1966

Participants: Z. Kliszko, J. Tejchma, E. Babiuch, J. Czesak, and M. Renke

And a delegation of the Communist Party of Brazil: com[rades]: Goncalves da Silva Waz Jayme, Rodrique da Silva Eneas, Abillo Naser.

After com[rade] Kliszko greeted the delegation, com[rade] Dias thanked for the cordial welcome and passed greetings to our party from the CC [Central Committee] of the CPB [Communist Party of Brazil] and from com[rade] Prestes personally. It was agreed that the main topic of the meeting will be a report of the Brazilian comrades on CPB activities. Other matters will be discussed at meetings in CC departments.

Com[rade] Dias's report

Let us go back to the political situation in Brazil before the coup d'état. Thus we will explain the essence of the coup and the position of the democratic forces. Analyzing this problem, the Central Committee concluded that the situation had not been assessed correctly. We did not consider the changes in the international situation, especially those that took place after Kennedy's death, when imperialism took more aggressive action. Neither did we take into account the deteriorating economic situation in Brazil. From 1962, economic growth indicators began to fall and if this index was 5.2% in 1962, in 1963 it fell to 2%. The domestic bourgeoisie made no investments, transferring the profits abroad under the pretext of the lack of political stability and of the "communist threat". This process was aggravated by imperialism, which refused repayment of loans on installments and new loans. The cost of living at that time was higher by 17%. The situation of the social classes changed. The domestic bourgeoisie and minor bourgeoisie changed their positions. After mid-1963 class shifts took place. Fight against the government began. The radical forces were isolated. The Communist Party of Brazil believed (erroneously) that if the coup d'état had taken place then, the democratic forces would have won.

The coup d'état in Brazil was different than those that had taken place in other countries of Latin America. The coup was supported by the bourgeoisie and the middle class. A substantial part of the working class remained indifferent, the populist movement was only budding and was by the *fazendeiros* (large landowners).

Generally speaking, when we implemented our political line, we made the same mistakes as before; we did not direct our forces against the main enemy but against indirect forces and at a given moment we failed to display the necessary class vigilance, thus helping the coup operations of the incumbent president Jango [Goulart]. He tried to implement a constitutional reform so as to be reelected president. Otherwise, he was determined to dissolve the parliament.

With regard to the sailors' and sergeants' movement independent of the party, the banner of constitutional legalism, which previously made it possible to isolate the right during coup attempts is now in the hands of the right. Also, the martyr of defending civil liberty and fighting inflation mobilized large groups in the States of Sao Paulo, Guanabara, and Minas Gerais. At that time the party had not yet recovered from previous mistakes. The trade union movement was very weak, and our influence on minor bourgeoisie was very weak. By supporting Goulart's principles, we isolated ourselves. The military forces that we called democratic and national favored defense of the Constitution. Therefore, the majority of the military line-up joined the rebels, especially in view of the revolutionary movements (revolt) of the sergeants and sailors. Therefore, in the country, there was no major resistance against the coup, and it took place. The party, however, managed to preserve its cadres and begin operating in the underground. The rebel government formed by graduates of the War College, which was the nucleus of the rebels in Brazil, acted on the basis of theories of the US State Department. Next to the western theories of Christian democracy, the principle of the clash of the two systems and in the systemic and financial policies, it [1] introduced the principles of the International Monetary Fund. As a group, the rebels were far from homogenous. They included: the military elite, the industrialists, the *fazendeiros*, the technocrats, and such economists as Roberto Campos or Bulhoe.

[2]

Situation after the coup

After the Institutional Act no. 1 was passed, G. Branco's government is trying to introduce in Brazil principles that are antinational, anti-people, and anti-worker. In the economic and financial sphere, several steps have been taken (overt and covert) that are detrimental to the national interest. It was decided that the state's influence on the national economy would be reduced. Several decrees on the nationalization of petroleum and mining licenses in Minas Gerais for the Hana Corp. were annulled, a deal was concluded with the Bond and Sher concern, shares of state-owned enterprises were sold to anonymous companies and purchased by foreign capital at the rate USD 1 = Cr\$ 2250.^[3] These steps were taken to facilitate penetration by foreign capital. At present, further steps are being taken that include, for example, the liquidation of the category of special products. Loans for small and middle-sized enterprises were restricted. On the financial plane, this leads to a concentration of capital, and enables penetration by US capital. Banks were taken over by American interests. Authorized capital stock of joint-stock companies was raised from Cr\$ 5 million to 35 million. Investments are made only in foreign-capital companies. One cannot but notice that the government did have some financial achievements, but they came at the expense of the exploitation of the working masses. The total deficit was reduced from 3 trillion to 700 billion. Dollar reserves of USD 500 million were accumulated, among others by obtaining a moratorium on loan repayment.

In the process, those sectors and strata [of society] that supported the coup, as a result of government policies have taken a completely opposite position, although they have not taken up open combat. Having formerly supported the coup d'état financially, they now declare their doubled support to those who would depose Castello Branco, on the other hand, the support of all the government's anti-worker measures.

The taxation policy is a burden for most of the population, it increases indirect taxes at the expense of the workers. Taxes are deducted on the payrolls, whereas enterprises and firms pay taxes as declared. Indirect taxes were raised five-fold. Subsidies for public services stopped. For example, the cost of a suburban train ticket rose from Cr\$ 10 to Cr\$ 100. The word is that the users ought to pay full economic fare. Furthermore, the principles of free private initiative are promoted. State-owned enterprises that run at a deficit were sold to private entrepreneurs. Rents, telephones, gas, and electricity are no longer subject to government control. There has been a pay freeze.

The opinions of minor bourgeoisie are increasingly affected by ever tougher restrictions of personal freedoms. At present, they do not support the current dictatorship. That is why Lacerda is trying to win the hearts and minds of both groups. Also, the junior army officers are dissatisfied with the policy of subordinating the country to foreign interests. On the one hand, they strive to defend national interests, and on the other – to step up persecution of the communists, the government is gradually losing the support of those forces that had previously supported it. The working class never supported the coup, because its purpose was to preserve the exploitation of the working masses, however [the government] failed to develop any kind of governing tactics. The principles of "social peace" have been adopted. At present, wages are being frozen, which is combined with attempts to eliminate all the previous achievements of the working class. The right to work is being gradually waived through decrees, etc. the right to strike is practically nonexistent. There has been an army interference with trade-union matters. A system of ideological certificates has been introduced to confirm that a given person is not "a subversive". Farm hands' *salario minimo* (minimum wages) was reduced. Wages on the farms are now set by the owners. Leaders of the farm hands are often murdered. The rebels are trying to change the structure of the Brazilian political system. Previously, the [governing] principle was the equivalence of the three powers (legislative, executive, and judicial). At present, only the executive power has any significance whatsoever, while the legislative branch merely votes, rubber-stamping the motions or decrees of the government. The dependence of the courts on the government is constantly increasing, with a number of judicial privilege eliminated. Political offences are tried by military tribunals. Practically, elementary civil rights are nonexistent, the electoral legislation has been modified, the political parties are dissolved, and in their place

two new parties were created (pro-government and opposition). The opposition party was created by the government itself, and this government can dissolve it at any time. Direct presidential election was abolished. Currently, the president is elected by the Congress, the same is true about the governors of the individual states. City prefects will be appointed, elections are no longer proportional, and the vote is now organized on a sector's (district) basis. More and more frequently, decisions are made by military arbiters. At present, the military tribunals process ten thousand cases, with one-third of the defendants being the communists. The entire Central Committee and the regional leaders were included in the trials (also *in absentia*). The sentences amount to 15–30 years in prison, thus, for example, the trade union leaders of Goulart's day, who have been charged with serving foreign (communist) powers, receive sentences of 25–30 years. In fact, a fascist-like regime has been installed.

The party's position

The communist party sees great possibilities to act in view of this threat for the country's future and for the organization of a broad front against the dictatorship. There are possibilities to unite all the forces against the dictatorship. We should put forward slogans calling for the creation of a government of political freedom and a better standard of living for the masses, as well [one that would] respect the political rights of the masses. We should also carry out policies concordant with the interests of the people. We are convinced that the democratic and national forces will overthrow the dictatorship, even though the fight will take years. We consider possible an economic upheaval in the country, because there is no stability. For example, by December of this year, the rebel authorities emitted Cr\$ 1,246,000,000, that is more than the three former presidents together. The country is far from any kind of stability: economic, political or financial. The party is having problems with its allies. Even within the party, the same comrades believe that, for example, Goulart cannot be a part of this front. They do not want to mobilize the social masses at large. Others demand immediate armed struggle (verbally, for the most part). We are trying to persuade the former and the latter group, among whom we carry out extensive work in the country aimed at rallying around us all the forces that oppose the dictatorship. And thus in Prague, we met with Arrais (former governor of Pernambuco), who endorses our opinion on these issues and agrees with our tactics. He promised to win over other forces for this broad front. Goulart also agrees with our tactics and declares his support. These movements notwithstanding, the current situation in Brazil led to the emergence of new forces. An intellectuals' movement in defense of culture was founded with some of its members being former rebels involved in the coup. Now they are allied with the communists. The student movement is developing and taking on new forms; it has grown stronger and begun to resist. We want to introduce more and more workers into the trade unions, as well as reorganize our efforts among the peasants. We are building a broad front.

Situation in the party

We have resumed party work. We have secured our main cadres. We have organized new party leadership in the individual states. Accepting the rules of illegal work, we also want to exploit the existing possibilities of legal activity. Our achievements are not so great, and the new cadres are inexperienced, [which is] combined with the considerable influence of ideology and minor-bourgeois thought. We often lack patience. The existing differences and the disintegration of the international workers' movement, also have an adverse effect on our activity. Nevertheless, we overcome these difficulties calmly, without discriminating against other views, but requiring that decisions taken be executed. Previously, we did our trade-union work at the top, while now we have to go to the factories and do our work there. We have achieved some success here. In Sao Paulo, we have won on our own or with others 35 out of 42 trade-union elections. When the authorities find out what kind of men have been elected (i.e. the communists), they cancel the election. We lost an election in a strong metallurgical trade union, because the comrades had decided that they should not appear there and take part. In Guanabara we won the elections in the main syndicates.

The working masses have not yet reached the condition of active resistance against the dictatorship. However, they utilize the legal possibilities of expressing discontent.

And thus in the Santos harbor, we carried out a strike operation that consisted in working at a slower pace. There are some indicators that the struggle can be extended. We are slowly organizing the peasant movement. We have not stopped our activity in the student movement. We believe that wherever the masses are, the communists should be there as well. Nevertheless, we did organize a modest propaganda apparatus. The previous one was destroyed (publishing houses, printing facilities, etc. were either destroyed or seized by the police; in this respect, we estimate the financial losses at Cr\$ 750 million). We managed to organize illegal press, and we publish the party organ (25,000 copies). We also publish a legal daily – rather “pink”-colored, but there is a danger that it will be closed. The journalists support us. Since last January, we have been publishing an illegal economic journal. We publish a legal economic journal, which is self-sufficient. Our party has its press organs in all the states. We have again managed to convene our Central Committee. The leadership is operating in the underground while preserving the principle of collective action. Comrade Prestes – Secretary General – takes part in sessions of the Executive Committee. The Secretariat, composed of three persons, deals with everyday matters. There is unity in the Central Committee. Although there are differences of opinion, which are discussed, when the decisions are being made, the will of the majority is respected. After the coup, there were no cases of discipline breach.

As regards the dilemma: armed struggle or taking power by non-violent measures, the CC opposes all kinds of extremities, there are two tendencies: one attempts to transform forms of combat into a political goal and the second that accepts only non-violent forms of struggle. The CC believes that we must know what we want and the choice of form of struggle will depend on a specific situation. Previously, we believed that we should carry out our struggle only by non-violent means, but now we should not succumb to the temptation to do the opposite. In this situation, the differences in the workers’ movement and the position of the Cuban comrades are detrimental to the situation within the party. We are of the opinion that we should work together with the masses, and avoid adventurism, clashes instigated by reaction are possible. We are also prepared to become involved and lead armed struggle, but together with the masses, without creating any artificial situation. Here, we have had unpleasant experiences. We also fight against those who try to pursue non-violent struggle. We cannot underestimate the danger posed by the extreme left. At the last CC session, for the first time in the history of the Brazilian party, our party’s work in the armed forces was discussed. [The Central Committee] discussed the directions of this work, summed up the defeats, drew conclusions and ascertained that there are great possibilities for work in the military, and we should devote our efforts to it. At least in order to neutralize this real force that exists in Brazil. At the same time, we fight against excessive tendencies – viewing the armed forces as the avant-garde of the revolution, because now the armed forces are not democratic. Others among us believe that the armed forces are reactionary and there is no possibility to work among them. We point out to them the national character of those forces, their patriotism directed against imperialism, as well as the social composition of the corps. Nevertheless, work among the masses is the most important.

The party also carries out special work. We mean preparation of cadres that are to lead the fight of the peasants against reaction. The communists can teach the peasants how to fight. Another aspect of this activity is the issue of communication and transport: we organize our own transport and the entire system of shipments, etc. some of the comrades believe that this activity can be carried out only in conjunction with armed combat (guerrilla warfare). The CC believes, however, that this form of work is critically essential even in the case of legal activity, and that this form of combat should supplement the struggle of the masses. We have started discussion on the tactics in the new situation and will finish it at the moment CC session, and then we will begin preparations for our party congress.

Comrade Dias says that it was a brief presentation of their activity. To be sure, there is more to be done than already has been. Practically, there are not two communist parties in Brazil. There is only a group expelled from the party, on whom the Chinese rely, but they have no political clout. The Chinese do have some influence on the situation in our party, but their actions cause the influence to wane gradually.

Com[rade] Kliszko thanked for the information and assured that our party and its leadership are keenly interested in the activity of the Communist Party of Brazil. We will use the information received internally, within the party. The line of the Brazilian party seems to be correct. Particularly correct is the main emphasis put on work among the masses. The older generation of activists know from experience that without the masses the communists lose track [of developments]. The difficulties that you are experiencing, we no longer have – you need to combine illegal and legal work, it is a difficult matter, but the comrades, as the report shows, approach it with great care. We express our deep solidarity with your party's activity and appreciation for your devotion in illegal work.

Now, com[rade] Kliszko asks for assessment of the Three Continents Conference in Havana.

Com[rade] Dias replies that comrade Saadi present here took part in the Conference. We sympathize with it, and we will implement its decisions in our country, but adapted to the situation in Brazil.

Com[rade] Saadi: Aware of the Conference's importance, the CC decided to send two representatives. One of them was a deputy Politburo member, the other he himself. Under a dictatorship, it was not easy. In Cuba, we were faced with a situation that was far from favorable for us. We saw that the very selection of delegations discriminated Latin American parties. Most of the delegations were composed of radicals, who represented the ideology of minor bourgeoisie. the Brazilian delegation, made up mostly of the Brizolists,^[4] had an elected leader even before the Conference began. We nevertheless strove to form a united front until we had to drop it. This happened when the leader of the Brazilian delegation was used to take a stand against some communist countries. Then we started to fight. We believe that the Conference had some positive aspects, but are critical of others. We are skeptical about the establishment of a Latin American organization, which was a sign of disunity. We were under the impression that it was how the Cubans would want to influence the revolution in other Latin American countries.

Com[rade] Dias: As regards Brazil's foreign policy toward the socialist countries, according to information from the Itamarati (Ministry of Foreign Affairs), the Brazilian government's position is that "the relations between Brazil and the socialist countries are primarily of interest to the socialist countries themselves. "Therefore, only such relations will be maintained that they will be forced [to maintain] by the economic situation and the existing objective conditions. They believe that at present the geographical borders no longer play a major role, but only ideological ones. Thus, the Brazilian General Staff is preparing plans to occupy Uruguay, Paraguay as well plans of intervention in Bolivia.

Com[rade] Dias informs further that they are very cautious in their contacts with comrades from the socialist countries (diplomatic missions) in order to avoid provocation, because they know that such provocations are being prepared.

Com[rade] Kliszko, thanking again for the information, says that in Poland, in the process of building socialism, there are problems similar that those in other socialist countries, but we also have our specific issues and problems such as the state-church relations. The reactionary Episcopate leadership undertook special preparations for the Millennium,^[5] pursuing a course of confrontation. This is the only organized anti-socialist opposition. In this confrontation, they have been defeated, decisively. In the last two months, we have carried out, among others, the operation of acquainting the party with the CC letter regarding the state-church relations as well as meetings of officers and party activists in every village. We estimate that the turnout at the meetings was over 80%, and the atmosphere was lively and interesting. We decided to talk with the ordinary members of the clergy. Sometimes, a parish priest would refuse to talk, but the majority did. More details will be discussed by the comrades from the propaganda department. As regards the situation in the rural areas, the comrades will acquaint themselves at a meeting in the department of agriculture. In any case, it should be stressed that there are several forms of bonds of a socialist character between the country and the city.^[6] In this light, the advantage of individual farms does not mean that we are leaving the country high and dry – it is involved, along a broad front, in the building of socialism.

In conclusion, com[rade] Kliszko again passed to the delegation warm greetings and

best wishes from our party to the Communist Party of Brazil.

Warsaw, May 1966

[\[1\]](#) I.e. the government – trans.

[\[2\]](#) Probably a misprint. The likely reference is to Otavio Gouveia de Bulhoes – trans.

[\[3\]](#) Probable reference to the Brazilian cruzeiro – trans.

[\[4\]](#) Apparently, the reference is to the Brazilian politician Leonel de Moura Brizola – trans.

[\[5\]](#) That is, the Millennium of Poland’s baptism, which the communist regime called “the Millennium of Polish statehood” – trans.

[\[6\]](#) The word “forms” inserted in pencil – trans.