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| E | P | IO | TO : DEPARTMENT OF STATE | | RECEIVED | | | |
| L | FSO | AID | INFO : RIO DE JANEIRO | | MAY 12 2 29 PM 1969 | | | |
| SP | 3/1 | | FROM : AMERICAN EMBASSY BRASILIA | | DATE: April 23, 1969 | | | |
| AGR | COM | FRO | SUBJECT : Situation at the University of Brasilia | | DEPARTMENT OF STATE BUREAU OF INTER-AMERICAN AFFAIRS MAY 14 1969 | | | |
| INT | LAB | TAR | REF : JOINT EMBASSY/USIS MESSAGE | | | | | |
| TR | EMB | AIR | SUMMARY | | | | | |
| ARMY | CIA | NAVY | Since the opening of the new semester in March this year, the students at the University of Brasilia have been relatively quiet, as was the case with most Brazilian universities. However, while other universities have denied admission to a number of politically active students, the University of Brasilia denied admission to over a hundred students on academic grounds, presumably selected by the university's computer. A good number of professors have been fired by the Rector in a rather peremptory fashion. Several other changes are taking place at the university, hopefully for the better. | | | | | |
| DAO | USIA | NSA | ----- | | | | | |
| NSC | 6 | | 1. The new school year which began early March 1969 seems to give new hope for a more orderly and calm situation at the University of Brasilia. A dialogue has been established between the students and the new Vice Rector, a physicist with an MIT degree, who appears to be intelligent and simpatico, capable administrator and generally very outgoing person. The students who were at first suspicious of him, since he is also a lieutenant commander in the Brazilian navy, evidently accepted him now and appreciate the various administrative and academic reforms which are taking place at the university and which are largely attributed to his influence. | | | | | |
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2. The Vice Rector, José Carlos de Almeida Azevedo, proceeds in a careful, methodical way in his investigations and proposed remedies for the many academic and administrative deficiencies of the university. However, the Rector, Caio Benjamin Dias, who because of his inaccessibility is referred to by the students as Greta Garbo, has fired a number of professors, albeit not very competent in their field, in very summary fashion and has created considerable resentment and confusion. He is bringing in many new people principally from his home state of Minas Gerais.
3. Thus for instance, the department of languages has been completely reorganized and a new Coordinator, professor Oneyr Baranda appointed. His first move was to replace the foreign professors in charge of the English, French and German departments by Brazilians. The British Council which was largely responsible for the establishment and equipment - only last year they gave the university a large, modern language lab - protested the relegation of their man, professor Robert Scott-Buccleuch, to the teaching of English literature only. The French and German professors are planning to leave shortly. Recently both the Rector and professor Baranda have requested USIS Brasilia's help in certain areas of English teaching. In view of our over-all agreement of cooperation with the British Council and the good relations we have with their local representatives, we are proceeding carefully and will keep them informed of any steps we may undertake in this respect after consultation with USIS Rio.
4. On the other hand, the Institute of Psychology which operates under the direction of an American professor Robert Berryman, on leave from Columbia, New York, has been left undisturbed. This may be partially explained by the fact that his Brazilian wife has powerful political connections. There is some feeling that among the students selected out by the computer, an ancient IBM machine, known among the students as "Galileo" there was a number of political, as well as academic undesireables.
5. Comment: It is difficult to predict the outcome of these latest changes at the university, which during its seven years of existence has undergone several drastic upheavals from complete overhaul of the academic and administrative machinery to student riots. A great deal depends on the support given by the Brazilian government to either the Rector or the Vice Rector; they are both governmental appointees. At any rate, for the first time in its turbulent history the university seems to be settled for at least an outwardly undisturbed academic year.

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