



CONSULATE GENERAL OF THE
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
Rio de Janeiro

LP
Dad
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thoughts
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file

November 20, 1973

Mr. Stephen Low
Director, Office of Brazilian Affairs
Bureau for Latin America
Department of State
Washington, D. C.

Dear Steve:

Yesterday, while I was calling on Mario Henrique Simonsen for a discussion of various matters, he brought to my attention a matter regarding which he expressed considerable concern.

During recent years there has been commonly used in Brazil, throughout the universities and also in advanced study, the well-known basic book on economics by Paul Samuelson, Nobel Prize winner from M.I.T. The book is used here to some extent in the English edition but mostly in the Portuguese translation. Recently the revised 9th edition of the book was published and one of the Brazilian publishers is now midway in translating this 9th edition into Portuguese. A serious problem, however, has developed. On pages 870 and 871 of the book, Professor Samuelson has a short section on Fascism in which he places together the present Brazilian government along with Hitler's Germany, Mussolini's Italy, etc.

For your further information on the details, I am enclosing a copy of these two pages. Also enclosed is a letter dated November 8, 1973, which a local publisher has sent to McGraw-Hill Book Company describing the problem.

Simonsen esteems very highly the economic work of Professor Samuelson and would like to assure that the latest edition

continues to be used in Brazilian universities. At the same time, while he has great respect for freedom of expression, he feels that Samuelson certainly is not well informed on the entire picture of Brazil, if he so arbitrarily categorizes the country as a Fascist regime comparable to the other examples which he cites.

Since the 9th edition has been published, any revision presumably will have to wait for the 10th edition, but meanwhile there are obvious problems here in proceeding further with the Portuguese translation and use of the book, given the attitudes which exist in this country with respect to defamatory remarks.

Simonsen said that he was bringing this to my attention, well realizing that it is not something for us to deal with directly, but he wanted us to be informed on the matter, and has some hopes that we would use any contacts available to us for the purpose of enlarging Professor Samuelson's knowledge of Brazil. He seemed to think that perhaps Samuelson might be disposed to modify at least his blunt placement of Brazil in the pejorative Fascist category, making possible such revision in the Portuguese translation and in the subsequent 10th edition.

I am passing this on to you for your information, with a copy to Ambassador Crimmins. It could be that you might have an occasion to mention Samuelson's categorization of Brazil, with appropriate corrective comments, in discussions you or others may be having with university economists. Also the matter may become of interest because USIS has been planning to use a TV tape interview* on its "Realidades" show, at some time in the next several months, which could give rise to further comment on what he has to say in his book.

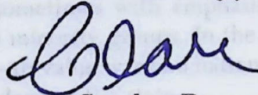
In talking with Simonsen, I encouraged the continued use of the book as is, in the Portuguese translation, on grounds that this single point is not relevant to the overall subject, and that anyway a textbook should promote free discussion. I mentioned also that Brazilian economists or diplomats could perhaps arrange an opportunity to discuss this with Samuelson. Simonsen said that he agreed in principle but one had to face

*with Samuelson

one hard facts of attitudes and sensitivities in Brazil, which now threaten to deprive Brazilian universities of the latest edition of a valued book.

If you have any ideas as to anything positive which we could or should do on this matter, please let me know.

Sincerely,



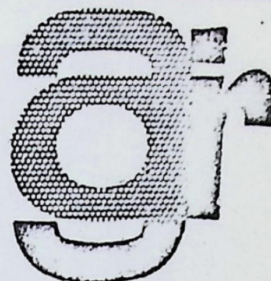
C. A. Boonstra
Minister

Enclosures:

As stated.

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Co-Publishing and Foreign Rights
1221 Avenue of the Americas
New York - N.Y. 10020

Rio, 08 de Novembro de 1973

N/ref.- 1.470

att. William P. Orr

Dear Mr. Orr,

In the course of translating the ninth edition of Samuelson's Economics, we are coming across a matter of importance, for the solution of which we shall need your assistance. It is not a routine matter.

On pages 870 and 871 of the book, we find references to Brazil, like the following:

"Be it in Hitler's Germany, Mussolini's Italy or the Greek and Brazilian juntas fascism was usually characterized by a one-man dictatorship, by one political party with all others abolished, by the disappearance of civil liberties of the type granted in our Bill of Rights fascists are urged to value war and national power as ends in themselves."

We need not quote further, because you can easily see that it would be inconceivable to provide undergraduates with, as main teaching material, a text that presents their own country as a companion of Hitler's Germany, or Mussolini's Italy and contains expressions of deep regret for the economic progress of Brazil.

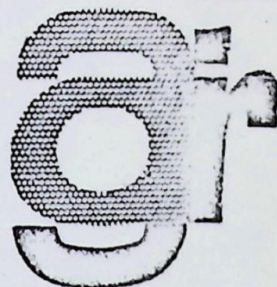
This very biased portrait of our country, unfortunately, is frequently encountered in the U.S. and in Europe, but is the result of deep ignorance of our social, economic and political realities. It is also the result of the distressing habit of applying to human problems the system of logic by "bits" of the computer, instead of trying to study them under more ample human criteria.

However, our problem, here and now, is not to defend the qualities of our government and condemn its defects, but simply to know what can be done about this edition.

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A simple suppression of the offending sentences, even if authorised by the author, would not, in our opinion, solve the matter since, after all, Brazil and its economic progress deserves some kind of mention. We have no doubt that, if he wished, the author could have adopted a wording that, without hiding his liberal convictions, would not have offended Brazilians and we are not here concerned so much about our authorities as about plain truth and the normal reader!

We should like you to consult Prof. Samuelson about this. If he feels that he cannot alter anything at all, then perhaps we had better skip this edition and wait for the tenth. One of the professor's arguments being that Brazilian progress must necessarily be short-lived, this argument should be settled one way or the other by the time the next edition is published.

We would ask you to give this matter your urgent attention, since we are, at the moment, in the middle of the translation. As you know, Prof. Samuelson's book, the successive editions of which we have been translating for years and of which we have sold nearly 100 thousand copies, has already established a kind of tradition in our firm and in Brazil. It really was the book that started young Brazilians in their knowledge of economics and prepared them for assuming the enormous task of developing the country and working towards a more human and just distribution of the GNP. The book is so very much appreciated that one of the printings of the 7th edition was done as a co-publishing venture with the National Book Institute of our Ministry of Education.

Hoping to hear from you soon, we remain,

yours very sincerely,

Ernst Fromm
Director