

January 24, 1968

My dear Mr. Ambassador:

Were I not leaving Washington on Friday for several weeks, I would ask for an appointment to see you. I believe that a serious labor situation is developing in Brazil which can be materially assisted by our mutual understanding of the facts.

I am informed that in September 1967, Mr. Lourival Coutinho, President of the Rio de Janeiro Petroleum Workers Union, launched a campaign against the international free trade union movement, particularly the International Federation of Petroleum and Chemical Workers (IFPCW), associated with the ICFTU. His campaign coincided with moves by some Brazilian trade unions dominated by political groups in opposition to free trade unions and the Brazilian Government.

Brazilian-born, U. S. naturalized citizen Herbert Kemmsies collaborated with Mr. Coutinho in his efforts to discredit the free trade union movement, the American Institute for Free Labor Development, and some international trade secretarists (ITS) working in Brazil with affiliated organizations. Mr. Kemmsies now is employed by the International Chemical Workers Federation (ICF), a jurisdictional rival trade secretariat opposing the International Federation of Petroleum and Chemical Workers.

In November 1967, anti-American attacks published by a sector of the Brazilian press and in Coutinho's Petrojornal have expanded the attacks upon free trade unions, the AFL-CIO and the AIFLD of which I am the president. These attacks have contained references to articles appearing in U. S. publications of the extremist variety which I consider inspired by the communist international. And it would appear that considerable anti-American feeling is being nationally developed in Brazil as the result of slanted notoriety and the way the matter is being

officially handled in spite of long standing friendship between the United States and Brazil.

I am certain that the Brazilian Government knows well that a free trade union movement is essential to democracy. If the Brazilian free trade unions are taken over by the communists or company union bosses, the situation will have taken a long step backwards and the problems of several years ago will have to be faced again, together with the tremendous economic consequences and everything that will mean to the people.

I will appreciate knowing what your opinion is in this matter, together with an indication of the approach your government intends to take.

With every good wish,

Sincerely yours,

President

His Excellency  
Ambassador Vasco Leitao de Cunha  
Embassy of Brazil  
3007 Whitehaven Street, N. W.  
Washington, D. C. 20008

bcc: Ambassador Tuthill  
Mr. George P. Delaney  
Mr. Loyd A. Haskins  
Mr. Joseph A. Beirne  
Mr. Wm. C. Doherty, Jr.  
Mr. James A. Suffridge, % Gerard O'Keefe