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Rebel Universities in The Brazil of Anísio Teixeira: The University of The Federal District and The University of Brasília

Universités rebelles au Brésil d'Anísio Teixeira : l'Université du District Fédéral et l'Université de Brasilia

Universidades rebeldes en el Brasil de Anísio Teixeira: la Universidad del Distrito Federal y la Universidad de Brasilia

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Résumé de l'article

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Rebel Universities in The Brazil of Anísio Teixeira: The University of The Federal District and The University of Brasília

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Abstract

This article analyzes two higher education institutions created by Anísio Teixeira, identifying the autonomous and, to a certain extent, rebellious nature of the institutional model which defined their organization. It is divided into three parts. The first deals with the Brazilian educational debate which marked the 1930s and 1960s, in the middle of competing projects for national construction. Next, the proposal for the organization of the University of the Federal District and its characterization as a rebel university is discussed. The third part seeks to understand the positions of Darcy Ribeiro and Anísio Teixeira in relation to the proposal for the University of Brasília, highlighting its innovative and rebellious nature in relation to the models in force in the 1960s. Finally, Teixeira's legacy is assessed and his contribution to current thinking about some of the most important themes related to higher education in Brazil.

Keywords: universities, Brazil; Anísio Teixeira

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Résumé

L'article analyse deux établissements d'enseignement supérieur construits sous la direction d'Anísio Teixeira, identifiant le caractère autonome et, d'une certaine manière, rebelle du modèle institutionnel qui a présidé à son organisation. Il est divisé en trois parties. Le premier aborde le débat éducatif brésilien qui a marqué les années 1930 et 1960, au milieu de projets concurrents de construction nationale. La deuxième partie porte sur la proposition d'organisation de l'UDF et sa caractérisation comme université insoumise. La troisième partie cherche à comprendre les positions de Darcy Ribeiro et Anísio Teixeira vis-à-vis du projet de l'Université de Brasilia, en soulignant son caractère innovant et rebelle, par rapport aux modèles en vigueur dans les années 1960. À la fin évalue leur héritage et leur contribution à la réflexion, aujourd'hui, sur certains sujets brûlants de l'enseignement supérieur au Brésil.

Mots-clés: les universités, Brasil, Anísio Teixeira

Universidades rebeldes en el Brasil de Anísio Teixeira: la Universidad del Distrito Federal y la Universidad de Brasilia

Resumen

El artículo analiza dos instituciones de educación superior construidas bajo el liderazgo de Anísio Teixeira, identificando el carácter autónomo y, en cierto modo, rebelde del modelo institucional que presidió su organización. Está dividido en tres partes. El primero aborda el debate educativo brasileño que marcó las décadas de 1930 y 1960, en medio de proyectos en competencia por la construcción nacional. La segunda parte se centra en la propuesta de organización de la UDF y su caracterización como universidad rebelde. La tercera parte busca comprender las posiciones de Darcy Ribeiro y Anísio Teixeira con respecto al proyecto de la Universidad de Brasilia, destacando su carácter innovador y rebelde, en relación a los modelos vigentes en la década de 1960. Al final, evalúa su legado y su contribución para pensar, hoy, sobre algunos temas candentes de la educación superior en Brasil.

Palabras-clave: universidades, Brasil, Anísio Teixeira

Introduction

The article analyzes the higher education institutions created by Anísio Teixeira in the 1930s and 1960s. The idea of rebel universities highlights a particular characteristic of educational institutions created by him during his trajectory. Anísio Teixeira (1900-1971) was a Brazilian intellectual who, at the age of twenty-four, took charge of organizing teaching in the state of Bahia and, from 1931 to 1935, fulfilled a similar position in the city of Rio de Janeiro, then capital of the Republic.¹ Here he created the municipally-run University of the Federal District (UDF), whose model of organization and functioning was different from the dominant models in Brazil, as we will outline later. In the 1960s, Anísio Teixeira assumed the position of vice-president of the recently created University of Brasília, attempting to implement another university marked by rebellion.

One of the factors which allowed the university models formulated and supported by Anísio Teixeira to be described as rebels is related to the belief in the harmonizing role which the university institution can and should play. In Anísio Teixeira's conception, the university should be an institution that formulates and disseminates national culture, a center of production of original knowledge and empirical research and studies. He defended the idea that the professional staff of university institutions have to have renowned technical competence and be producers of original knowledge linked to the national and regional empirical reality. In his view, in order to guarantee the necessary accumulation for research to be carried out, this staff had to exercise the function of recording the reality to be studied and reformulated. He thus defined the university as a social necessity, becoming in parallel a center of documentation and research for the formulation of culture, knowledge, and national science.

In the political sphere, the University and its teaching were seen by him as an expression of the commitment to the production of a type of knowledge embedded in Brazilian society, considering that science was universal, but technologies have to be national (Teixeira, 1961). Recognizing the importance of defining channels of

¹ Anísio Teixeira was born in Caetitê, in the Brazilian state of Bahia in 1900, son of a large rural landholder and local politician. He worked as the Inspector General of Public Instruction from the state of Bahia (1924-1928) and afterwards as Director of the Department of Education of the Federal District-RJ (1931-1936), during which period he founded the University of the Federal District (UDF). He was Secretary of Education and Health for Bahia (1947-1950) and was one of those responsible for the creation of Carneiro Ribeiro Educational Center [*Escola Parque*], which became a reference for schools offering fulltime education, recognized by UNESCO. In addition, he was one of the founders and General Secretary of the Campaign for the Improvement of Higher Educational Personnel (CAPES) and Director of the National Institute of Pedagogical Studies of the Ministry of Education (INEP – MEC). In this institution he founded the Brazilian Center for Educational Research (CBPE) in 1955. He was President of the University of Brasília (UnB), member of the Federal Council of Education (CFE), and a Consultant for the Getúlio Vargas Foundation (1969-1970). He died in 1971, after a supposed fall in the elevator shaft in the building of a friend. The circumstances of his death were investigated by the National Truth Commission, concerned with achieving justice and the reparation of the crimes perpetrated by the Brazilian Military Government (1964-1985). However, the results of the investigation were not conclusive. Cf: Anísio Spinola Teixeira. *Dicionário Histórico Biográfico Brasileiro*. CPDOC-FGV. <http://www.fgv.br/cpdoc/acervo/dicionarios/verbete-biografico/anisio-espino-la-teixeira>

dissemination for university knowledge, original and empirically situated, he attributed to teacher training colleges the nucleus of a new conception of university, a conception which was materialized in the organization of the University of the Federal District (UDF), founded in 1935.

Part of the research on which our analyses in the present article are based was done for my doctoral dissertation, later published in a book (Xavier, 1999). Another part is the result of some developments of the initial research, carried out on various occasions and resulting in various publications (Xavier, 1999, 2003, 2007, 2014; Mendonça & Xavier, 2008). What is presented, thus, is a summary of the studies already made about the conceptions and institutions created by Anísio Teixeira under the auspices of higher education, alongside the questions which punctuated the Brazilian educational debate on the role of universities in projects of national construction which marked the two democratic intervals in the political history of Brazil: the 1920s-30s and the 1950s-60s.²

This text was written for presentation at the International Colloquium held in 2020, by the Chair of Basic Education of the University of the State of São Paulo, in partnership with the Institute of Brazilian Studies (IEB), in celebration of the 120th anniversary of the Brazilian educator, Anísio Teixeira. At the time, the guiding principle of the presentation that was requested of me focused on the idea of rebellious universities. It was not difficult to integrate the two university models created with the participation of Anísio Teixeira, in Brazil in the 1930s and, later, in the 1960s, with the term *rebel*, proposed at the event, as the reader will be able to verify by reading this article.

The text is divided into three parts. The first deals with the Brazilian educational debate and the intellectual environment of the 1920-30s, when the expectation of the structuring of country in republican molds guided the preparation of distinct projects of national reconstruction and teaching reforms. In the next part we focus on the proposed organization of UDF and its description as a rebel university. The third part seeks to perceive the positions of Darcy Ribeiro and Anísio Teixeira in relation to the project of the University of Brasília, highlighting its innovative and thus *rebel* nature in relation to the models in force in the 1960s. Finally, we offer some considerations about the legacy of Anísio Teixeira and his contribution to ways of thinking about the burning issues of higher education in Brazil.

² The democratic interval of 1920s and 1930s corresponded to the period after the proclamation of the Republic (1889), when intellectuals and leaders dissatisfied with the political situation, tried to reconstruct the nation in republican molds. After the fall of the *Estado Novo* Dictatorship (1937-1946) a second democratic interval was established. The mobilization for the democratic reconstruction of the country had an impact on the education sphere on the reformulation of the relevant legislation and the debate about university reform. The climate of optimism and the widespread political participation ended with the 1964 civil military coup.

Education as a Requirement of National Formation

In Brazil, the existence of university institutions was delayed due to the prohibition that Portugal imposed on the existence of higher education institutions in the Brazilian colony. With the arrival of the Portuguese royal family in 1808, isolated institutions of higher education were created, which taught courses of a professional nature. Through successive reorganizations, fragmentations and agglutinations, these courses gave rise to the set of isolated institutions of higher education that remained with the same structure until the Republic. As Mendonça (2000:133) demonstrated, the debate around the need to establish universities in the country spanned the 19th century, but without significant achievements. It should be added that the adoption of the federative system resulting from the Proclamation of the Republic, at the turn of the 19th to the 20th century, favored the creation of universities by state government initiatives that, however, had an ephemeral life.

In 1920, the federal government created the University of Rio de Janeiro, a conglomerate of schools without any articulation between them even though it adopted the name university. There, working as a university professor meant being part of a small group of white, literate men, belonging, therefore, to a cultural and economic elite in a country where most of the population was illiterate, given that the slave regime had been extinguished just over three decades prior. In the university structure in place at the time, being a full professor meant having tenure in the position, which guaranteed them a wide margin of power in the hierarchy that, little by little, was constituted within the universities. The power of full professors contrasts with the working conditions of their assistants, who had reduced chances of joining the institution's staff and achieving stability.

In this context, marked by a certain institutional immobility, the University of the Federal District, founded in 1935, constitutes an act of rebellion in the sense that it resulted from a local and not a federal initiative, and constituted itself as a counterpoint to the immobility that marked the professorships and the fragmented and static functioning resulting from the gathering of isolated higher education units. The UDF's rebelliousness was also characterized by having, among its staff, professors hired because of their contribution in the areas of knowledge of their specialties, bringing together professors from different states of the country, as well as counting on foreign professors. Another aspect that characterizes the rebelliousness that we attribute to this institution is its flexible and interdisciplinary structure, as well as its connection to other organs of the state bureaucracy, promoting the articulation between university knowledge and the knowledge necessary for the application of public policies and the proper functioning of state bodies in their mediation with the population.

The 1920s and 1930s marked a largescale mobilization around the debate over the defining lines of national identity and the creation of institutions suited to a country entering modernity. Among the intellectuals aligned with the defense of a type of scientific administration of government, education and health received special attention. As Martins observed (1987:80), this process continued in the 1950s and 1960s with the

structuring of a cultural field open to the spirit of renewal and research, with repercussions on the opening of a market for the recognition of the social identity of intellectuals and their mission in society. In the institutions created in the context of education and culture, different social development and citizenship projects were presented, expanding the field of possibilities resulting from the favorable political climate and the creation of new institutions capable of making the plans and projects they nurtured possible.

One aspect that deserves to be highlighted is the belief, shared by intellectuals who adhered to the cause of public education, that it was possible to transform society through education reform. In turn, the university was conceived by them as a place for the education of modernizing elites and as an instrument capable of radiating its culture for the rest of the country. These beliefs explain the intense mobilization in favor of the expansion and modernization of public education institutions which marked the period. This mobilization was based on the consensus of the belief in the power of science and the ambition of establishing a scientific administration in the public sphere, understanding politics as a technical competence founded on *social science*. That is why the two great lines of the project for the restructuring of society through the creation of a cultural field implied mobilization around teaching reforms. This project encompassed two general principles: the first, a theory which made the existence of a university aimed at the reproduction of the elites compatible with the ideals of a more open and democratic society, and the second, the defense of the extension of free and equal public education for everyone.

Returning to the previous studies which presented an overview of the strategies of intellectuals involved with the educational question in 1930s Brazil (Xavier, 1999), at least three distinct spaces of institutional recreation can be observed: state teaching reforms; the creation of universities, often accompanied by the insertion of the educational problematic in general and basic education in particular, at the university level; and finally the creation of institutions linked to state bureaucracy capable of adopting scientific procedures, in other words, those based on research.³ In this context, Anísio Teixeira's participation in the configuration of *rebel* projects for universities gave visibility to their conceptions about the integrating role of scientific research, as well as its necessary application in the formulation of sectorial state policies.

Anísio Teixeira defended a model of university organization opposed to the model in force at the time, based on the convergence of isolated units. For him, the notion of university was linked to the idea of interdisciplinarity and a dynamic of functioning

³ There is widespread literature about the teaching reforms in the states, published at the end of the 1990s and the first decade of the 2000s (Cf: Nagle, 1976; Limongi, 1989; Carvalho, 1998; Nunes, 2000), highlighting the 1920s-30s Reforms in the states of São Paulo, Rio de Janeiro, Minas Gerais, Pernambuco, and Bahia. In relation to the state bureaucratic agencies created to inform central government policymaking, we can highlight by way of example, the Brazilian Geographic and Statistical Institute [*Instituto Brasileiro de Geografia e Estatística* – IBGE] and the National Institute of Pedagogical Studies [*Instituto Nacional de Estudos Pedagógicos* – INEP].

moved by the connection between different areas of knowledge and the production of knowledge, as well as activities linked simultaneously to the development of advanced science and scientific dissemination. It is precisely the importance attributed to scientific dissemination which justifies the union between the two ends of the schooling process: university education and primary or basic education, as they are now called today.

In his view, the most relevant function of public school, as well as teaching and socialization, resided in the formation of a rational mentality. Contributing to overcome mystic and conformational thought, rational thought contained, in the view of Teixeira and those who were part of his networks of intellectual sociability,⁴ the possibility of awakening individual and collective consciences for the need to act in the social environment, transforming it according to interests and needs placed in their social and historical context.

Although he had exercised outstanding leadership, Anísio always worked in communion with his network of support and affinity, bringing together leaders from the old generation and exponents from the new. The common traits which sealed the alliance between the leaders of the 1920s-30s generation and the intellectuals of the new generation, who had a prominent role in the 1950s-60s, translated into a group action and a specific trajectory marked by the expansion of the geographic axis in which they acted; by insistent institutional recreation and a line of temporal continuity. In effect, the perspective of the reproduction of professionals to work in primary and secondary education, as well as exercising research activities and occupying positions in universities and in public administration, allows us to trace a line of temporal continuity which links the set of initiatives carried out by the group during the first half of the twentieth century. These traits will be detailed in the observations presented below, explaining our understanding of the concepts of rebellion and innovation, and clarifying the expectations which surrounded the organization of rebel universities imagined and materialized by Anísio Teixeira and some of his closest collaborators.

The University of The Federal District: Utopia And Rebellion

The concept of rebellion adopted in this text is expressed by the attitude of insubmission to the model of higher education institutions that had traditionally been structured in Brazil. In the experience of UDF, rebellion is expressed in adherence to the repertoire of innovations that the new school movement disseminated, both nationally and internationally. John Dewey's⁵ perspective of pragmatism, as experienced at the

⁴ Borrowed from the French historian, Jean-François Sirinelli (2003) the network concept of intellectual sociability brings us to the spaces of production and exchange between individuals linked by ties of belonging to a public cause and the sharing of experiences and common visions of the world.

⁵ John Dewey was an American philosopher, who was born in Vermont in 1859 and died in 1952. His contributions for reflection on the potentialities of democratic education, as well as his philosophical and pedagogical contributions, linked to pragmatism and progressive education, inspired the educators of his time, above all those involved in the international new school movement. Anísio Teixeira was one of the main disseminators of the pedagogical experimentalism proposed by Dewey, as well as translating and disseminating his main works in Brazil. Cf: Cunha, 1999.

University of Chicago (USA), was appropriated and reconfigured to the Brazilian context, mainly from the perspective of articulating the production of university knowledge with the surrounding social environment. In this sense, the organization and functioning model of UDF expresses both the application of innovative ideas in transnational circulation and the possibility of promoting a rupture in the traditional model of Brazilian higher education institutions. Its greatest virtue was to put into practice the idea of a university, which, in the case of UDF, involved interdisciplinarity, and integration between scientific knowledge and its forms of dissemination, with emphasis on the training of professors immersed in university life and of specialists in different areas of knowledge engaged in the struggle for the right to state public education.

The University of the Federal District (UDF) was created in April 1935 during the administration of Mayor Pedro Ernesto, when Anísio Teixeira held the position of director of the Department of Education of Rio de Janeiro city. UDF included the following institutions: the Institute of Education, the School of Sciences, the School of Economics and Law, the School of Philosophy and Letters, and the Institute of Arts. The novelty is the list of “complementary institutions” aimed at pedagogical experimentation, the practice of teaching, and cultural diffusion, with the following being particularly noteworthy: the central education library; the radio school; kindergartens and elementary schools; the elementary, secondary, technical secondary, and experimental maternal schools of the Institute of Education; and laboratories and clinics in the hospitals of the Federal District.⁶

In these conditions, rebellion appears to the extent that it represents an organizational structure which enriches and extrapolates its internal space, bringing into the campus institutions which serve as a field of teacher training. At the same time, **it** brings students out of the campus to do internships and act as observers in institutions of health, communication, and vocational education. In turn, the incorporation of the Institute of Education into the structure of UDF guaranteed university education and the training of teaching staff for all levels of education. After being incorporated into UDF in 1935, it came to be called the School of Education, also working with the training of specialists in education (technicians) and further training for teachers working in public schools in the city, as well as offering master’s and doctoral classes (Teixeira, 1998:45). Also within its scope, the establishment of a documentation and research center was stipulated for the development of the scientific study of education.

Understanding education as an area for the “application of science,” Anísio Teixeira defended the connection between teaching content and its methodology, interlinking the scientific and pedagogical disciplines. Coherent with this perception, the structure of UDF allowed the integration of the School of Education as a central place in the formative process, inspiring both teacher training students and specialists in other

⁶ Cf: Decree no. 5.513, dated 4 April 1935, from the City Government of the Federal District. See especially Articles 4-9.

areas. Teacher training was treated differently from the way it was treated by similar institutions, where a certain division between scientists and educators was established; the former emphasizing the research dimension and resulting in a bachelor's degree, while the latter emphasized the professional dimension, including training and qualification. As is well known, the latter was the model which lasted the longest in Brazil, while UDF remained a utopia of a less hierarchical university education aimed more at the application of knowledge in the resolution of problems related to local and national realities.

In addition to training teachers for the different levels of basic school, UDF also assumed as part of its institutional mission the training of specialists in education and further training of working teachers. In this way, it treated the education of all levels of teaching as a single body. With the experimental schools, created under the auspices of the Federal District's Department of Education, the pragmatic perspective, inspired by the theories of Dewey, permeated the institutions created by Anísio, establishing a *modus operandi* based on scientific procedures, with the idea of a research laboratory and experimentalism requiring the preparation of systematic assessments and plans. From the point of teacher training, teaching and research came together, like science and art, configuring teacher education as a creative process synthesized with the social reality developing in a continuous and uninterrupted manner.

As well as perceiving basic school as a field of empirical observation—from the point of view of the university—and as a field of experimentation—from the point of view of the dynamics of the school, Anísio also sought to link other fields for the application of university knowledge in linked state bodies, as we will detail below. It is important to note that the points of view—of the school and the university—are united in a fruitful exchange, which involves not only teaching institutions and level, but also the actual schooling trajectory of children and young people until adulthood. In summary, the UDF model links elementary and university teaching, the training of researchers and teachers, empirical research, and uninterested studies or pure science, themes which correspond to the desire to establish a new university tradition in Brazil.

However, the rebelliousness of trying to establish new paradigms for higher education —strikingly traditional and elitist—through a perspective unprecedented in Brazil, anchored in experimentalism and thus on the possibility of a permanent change of direction, upset the apparent security coming from the perpetuation of tradition and the definition of clear mechanisms of control. On the other hand, that university model, created under the municipal auspices, was not in line with the legislation in force, which recognized the competence of the federal government to establish the patterns of higher education in the country. In an atmosphere of growing political closure which culminated with the establishment of the *Estado Novo* (1937-1945), Anísio Teixeira was removed from his position in charge of the Department of Education and a short while later UDF was closed down (Cf: Mendonca, 2002).

After the closure of UDF, some of its courses and teaching staff were incorporated into the University of Brazil [*Universidade do Brasil* – UB]. In the centralizing project of

the *Estado Novo*, UB was invested with the function of a model institution for higher education all over Brazil. However, in its new structure, the National Faculty of Philosophy, responsible for training secondary teachers, was not incorporated into the UDF School of Education, which was formally excluded from the new institution. With this, the training of primary teachers lost the status of high-level teacher training, reinforcing the tendency for the simplification of the curriculums of the *normal* schools. In relation to this, we consider that a setback occurred in relation to the efforts made until then to establish a tradition of studies and research in Brazilian education. The training of secondary teachers remained the responsibility of the Faculty of Philosophy which, in addition to this function, also trained researchers and specialists. The continuity of our research (Xavier, 2008) confirmed that the 1950s and 1960s were marked by a scarcity of teachers with suitable training and certification to work in the secondary schools most distant from the large urban centers of the country due to the lack of places in the faculties of philosophy existing at the time.

University of Brasília: Rebellion in The Heart of The Country

With the end of the authoritarian period of the *Estado Novo*, in 1946, as well as the end of the Second World War, efforts at democratic reconstruction once again resulted in the participation of public intellectuals in Brazilian cultural and political life, opening a space for rebelliousness and utopia. The expectation of the reformulation of the university structure expanded with the change of the Brazilian capital, until then located in Rio de Janeiro, to a new planned city in the center-west of the country, a region still little occupied which rapidly materialized as the geographic and political heart of the country. Stability was finally achieved after a series of coups and countercoups which followed the downfall of the *Estado Novo* and lasted until the 1950s, contributing to the configuration of a mood of optimism and hope for the development of the country and the overcoming of its structural problems. In this sense, the atmosphere which permeated the second half of the 1950s and the beginning of the 1960s was fruitful in many aspects, including in relation to the expectations of democratic reconstruction and higher-level education reform. This atmosphere fed projects and actions of networks of public intellectuals through which passed Anísio Teixeira and exponents of the new generation of social scientists, such as Darcy Ribeiro.

Since the 1950s, the expectation of university reform had again animated the national debate. The perception was that the structure of the Brazilian university did not correspond to the developmentalist anxieties, and national emancipation became a consensus among individuals of these networks. It is interesting to highlight that the perspectives on the question converged towards supporting change but diverged in particular aspects. Both Anísio Teixeira and Darcy Ribeiro considered the importance of preparing a university project entirely different from the model in force in Brazil until then. At that moment of national geopolitical reorganization, the creation of a university in the future capital, Brasília, was presented as a very promising possibility.

However, in principle Anísio Teixeira was opposed to the idea of the creation of a university institution in Brasília, considering it more appropriate to organize postgraduate courses, aiming to provide further education to those already in the state apparatus (Teixeira, 1961b). In opposition to Anísio, who believed the University of the new capital had to be a type of higher-level institute which only offered master's and doctoral courses, Darcy Ribeiro defended a complete university, with undergraduate and postgraduate courses, the idea that prevailed. Years later, Darcy Ribeiro (1997:234) acknowledged that he had learned with Anísio about the real importance of postgraduate studies for UnB and for the country. He summarized this learning, highlighting the importance of research in the training of skilled personnel to use the scientific method in various sectors of public administration.

However, on seeing the bill for the creation of eleven universities in the capital—which were still being built—become law, Anísio Teixeira definitely adhered to the plan drafted by Darcy Ribeiro. As he declared on that occasion (1961c:208), the project for UnB was seen by many as correcting the most serious defects of Brazilian universities. As a consequence, the project for the foundation of UnB was transformed into one of the main themes of Brazilian cultural debate, by presenting an alternative plan of university organization, according to the formulators, rationally planned. In a later statement, Darcy Ribeiro (1997:230) clarified that the idea which guided the organization of UnB drew on the project for the University of the Federal District (UDF), founded by Anísio in the 1930s, expanding this and adapting it to the new conditions.

UnB was based on an immense political and intellectual ambition, envisioning the possibilities of this university becoming an intellectual center capable of coexisting with the traditional centers of cultural production, both national and foreign, as well as providing public bodies with trained high level intellectual staff, able to work at both the national and local levels. Darcy Ribeiro's ambitions were suited to Anísio Teixeira's educational project, precisely in the expectation of making UnB the center of the maturation of the national critical conscience, privileging study programs capable of instrumenting it scientifically and ideologically sustaining it (Ribeiro:1978:76).

The idea of the formation of a national conscience has been present in the writings and discourse of Anísio Teixeira since the 1930s, composing the repertoire of a generation. Updating this tradition, Darcy Ribeiro added the perspective of overcoming underdevelopment,⁷ expressing how the new generation of public intellectuals allied themselves with the struggle in defense of public education and the democratization of Brazilian society. We can identify in this the continuity of the ideas of struggle of Anísio Teixeira's generation, who believed it possible and desirable to generate, through the

⁷ The theory of underdevelopment marks the production on the economy of Latin American countries produced under the auspices of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (Cepal), in the 1960s and 1970s. In general terms, the theory focuses on the problematization on the culture of dependency existing in the economic relations between Latin America countries and the economically dominant countries, which blocked the autonomous economic development of dependent countries, creating the condition of underdeveloped country. Cf: Bielschowsky, 2000.

expansion and modernization of basic and higher education, awareness and a commitment to overcoming the problems of the country and the strengthening of national sovereignty.

Brasília was officially opened on 21 April 1960, and in the following year its courses began to provisionally operate in the facilities of the Ministry of Labor. Darcy Ribeiro was appointed by presidential decree the first president of the institution, a position he held until August 1962 when he became head of the Ministry of Education and Culture, at the invitation of President João Goulart, leaving the presidency of UnB in the hands of Anísio Teixeira. In the words of Paixão e Carvalho (2018:1):

The creation of UnB reflected an *avant garde* proposal for higher education, which echoed the anxieties for social transformation at the beginning of the 1960s. This project included important innovations, such as making curricula more flexible, the valorization of interdisciplinarity, the centrality of extension activities, and the organization of central institutes which provided a basic education and coexistence between students from various courses.

However, the 1964 civil-military coup⁸ once again established an authoritarian regime in the country. Following this, UnB became the constant target of violence, arbitrariness, and surveillance by the repressive apparatus. In this context, the institution was subject to successive waves of repression, the expurgation of professors, and military occupations and incursions which disfigured its initial project and generated a climate of terror in the university environment.

As is known, for authoritarian regimes, rebel universities are not well regarded, since they threaten order and tradition. Since they cultivate a critical conscience and creativity, rebel universities flourish in environments where there is freedom and a commitment to democratic construction, autonomy, and the sovereignty of individuals and nations.

Final Considerations

When reflecting on the universities highlighted here, we conclude that both the UDF and the UNB models—despite the differences between them—express a common ambition, which is to establish connections between science and politics, aligning research, teaching, and dissemination of scientific knowledge with the search for solutions to national problems.

We also believe that the rebelliousness identified in the pillars which supported the university model defended by Anísio Teixeira resided in the uncontested defense of university autonomy. This autonomy is not restricted to the financial question, but also covers the pedagogical and administrative dimensions. For this reason, Teixeira argued

⁸ The expression *1964 civil-military movement* denotes the participation of groups from civil society in the movement which overthrew the democratically elected administration of President João Goulart and which after removing him from power, established a Military Dictatorship which lasted until 1985.

that the university as an institution should be led by representatives of society. In the pedagogical sphere, he contested encyclopedic teaching, the model that was still in force and dually alienated from the cultural reality; alienated since it was aimed at the classical past of the Western world and alienated as it is based on the values and achievements of Western European culture. The university autonomy defended by Anísio also involved the democratic perspective, anchored on decentralization to understand that the production of knowledge should develop free from political interventions and the interests of the government. On the other hand, this democratic dimension is also expressed in a collaborative culture, which governs interactions among professors and between them and their students, as well as relations between university, civil society, and government.

The mobilization for the restructuring of Brazilian universities in the 1960s was to a certain extent constrained by the 1968 Higher Education Reform.⁹ This reform was dually criticized by Anísio Teixeira, who at the time declared that he did not believe that change, improvements, or modernization of Brazilian universities could occur through legal decrees. Rather, he believed that higher education reform had to be structural and not merely formal. Moreover, this had to come from within, through a means of organization and functioning which made feasible the means of provoking a change in the mentality of students and professors. Defending liberty as the basic principle to rule the coexistence of students and professors, and between teaching and research within the university, Anísio Teixeira also added that university autonomy could never be implemented as a concession of the state, but rather had to be the result of the free exercise of the functions of the university, supported by scientific procedures in the exercise of the function of the production of knowledge, centered on a humanist vision of its social function, and guided by democratic and integrated practices, within and outside the campus.

Reflecting on the present-day university, we believe the defense of its institutional autonomy and its function of producing scientific knowledge is still crucial. These two axes form consensual areas, which in our country depend on the recognition and incentive of the state and often suffer from the instabilities dictated by governments of the moment. Furthermore, freedom of teaching and research continues to be an essential condition for the development of culture and national sovereignty, contributing globally and in an uncontested manner to the equilibrium and harmony of the environment, health, and human survival.

⁹ The 1968 University Reform aimed to adapt Brazilian universities to the demands for the expansion of spaces in higher education, as well as trying to modernize its structure. Guided by the recommendations of the partnership signed by the Ministry of Education and the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), some of the changes deserve to be highlighted such as: the end of the *cátedra* regime; departmentalization, registration per discipline (credit regime) unified entrance exams as a form of access to higher education and the institution of graduate studies. Cf: Cunha, 1980:242-243.

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