



Anísio Teixeira on universities, research and public education

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Abstract

The article investigates the issues that were central to the debate about Brazilian education in intellectual circles in the 1920s-1930s and 1950s-1960s. It analyzes the project for Universidade do Distrito Federal, highlighting what set it apart from other higher education models, and the articulation between education and social science that oriented the work of Centro Brasileiro de Pesquisas Educacionais, founded and run by Anísio Teixeira. The positions of Darcy Ribeiro and Anísio Teixeira concerning the plans for Universidade de Brasília are set forth. The changes in Brazil's intellectual field in the midst of competing university projects and the prospect of developing social science research and applying it to education policymaking are analyzed.

Keywords: Anísio Teixeira (1900-1971); university; education; social sciences; Brazil.

“Education is not just an asset for individuals, but a need for society”.¹ This statement by Anísio Teixeira (1900-1971) was made in May 1968 at the Chamber of Deputies Parliamentary Enquiry to examine the restructuring of higher education in Brazil. His intention upon saying this was to highlight the social function of universities, which he understood as shaping and divulging the nation’s culture, as producing knowledge (not merely reproducing existing knowledge); as fostering empirical study and research, as harboring professionals of acknowledged technical expertise (rather than people appointed for their social connections or family ties); and as being constituted through the gathering of empirical material that was representative of society’s institutions and undertakings, with the function of registering the Brazilian reality, which would then be studied and reformulated. As such, he believed universities were a social necessity that should also operate as centers of documentation and research for the formulation of a ‘national’ culture, knowledge and science.

In the model defended by Anísio Teixeira, universities could not be run by governments, but by councils of society representatives. Furthermore, university education should not be encyclopedic learning, which was alienated from the cultural reality in two ways – for being geared towards the classical past of the western world, and for being based on values and deeds from European culture. Finally, he saw universities and university education as two points in a single process: first, as an expression of commitment to the production of knowledge of a kind that was rooted in Brazilian soil and the Brazilian way of thinking, in view of the fact that science was universal but technologies were national; and second, as a materialization of the commitment to spread this knowledge, with teacher training institutions forming the core for a new university conception, such as Universidade do Distrito Federal (UDF), founded in 1935 in Rio de Janeiro. It was precisely in this way that, in Anísio Teixeira’s proposed model, different points were articulated in one process: school and university education, researcher and teacher training, empirical research and impartial or strictly scientific studies. The pioneering experiments of the 1930s – Universidade de São Paulo (USP) and UDF – are milestones in Anísio Teixeira’s conceptions of Brazilian higher education. He believed that they were representative of the desire to develop in Brazil a new university tradition that would further the nation’s culture and science. Despite the interruption of the UDF experience during the Estado Novo period (1937-1945), these goals were largely resumed in the 1950s and 1960s in the project for and implantation of Universidade de Brasília (UnB).

These are the historical developments that this article will investigate. It is not a study of the history of Brazilian universities per se, but the way education, research, teacher training and university and school education were interconnected at some institutions where Anísio Teixeira worked during his career. Part of the research that forms the basis of the analysis was undertaken for my doctoral thesis (Xavier, 1999), while another part is the outcome of ramifications of the initial research work, covered in different publications (Xavier, 2001, 2003, 2007; Mendonça, Xavier, 2008). What this article does, then, is to bring together the research thus far undertaken into Anísio Teixeira’s positions and actions and the major educational issues that permeated intellectual debate in Brazil in the 1920s-1930s and 1950s-1960s.

“I will begin by covering the debate about education amongst intellectual circles in the 1920s-1930s, when the design of different national reconstruction projects was underpinned by the aspiration to organize the country along republican lines. Next, I will focus in on the project for UDE, noting in what ways it differed from other university models such as USP and Universidade do Brasil. Next, I will look into Centro Brasileiro de Pesquisas Educacionais (Brazilian Center for Education Research), an entity under the auspices of the Ministry of Education that was set up and run in its founding years by Anísio Teixeira. It and the regional centers later created in Bahia, Pernambuco, São Paulo, Rio Grande do Sul and Minas Gerais states were run in articulation with international institutions, such as the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (Unesco) and universities like Escola Livre de Sociologia e Política and the Faculty of Philosophy, Science and Letters at USP. Finally, I will draw attention to some points that shed light on the positions held by Darcy Ribeiro (1922-1997) and Anísio Teixeira concerning the project for UnB.

Educational reform and institutional renewal: a line of action for intellectuals

In the literature on Brazilian intellectual movements, the 1930s is highlighted for the discussions about the problem of national identity and the creation of institutions to help move the country into modernity. Calling for a social science, the intellectuals from different fields sought to influence the political movements that were changing the way society was organized, defending the adoption of a kind of scientific administration, and in this effort they heralded a rich period of institutional renewal. At the Associação Brasileira de Educação, a group of intellectuals tackled the issue of how the country's education was organized, resulting in the publication in Brazil's main newspapers of “Manifesto dos pioneiros da educação nova” (Manifesto of the pioneers of new education).²

Certain of the principles contained in the manifesto brought to the center of the education debate some key issues that demonstrated a concern with modernity. These included the democratization of social relations, criticizing the exclusive nature of traditional schools, and the recognition of every citizen's right to education. The manifesto also called for science and technology to be applied to teaching and education research, which implied raising the social and political standing of the professional educator, introducing a process of specialization and automation to the field of education that would result in its legitimization in the eyes of the public and the government.

When it came to higher education, the manifesto saw universities as having the three-pronged function of ‘creators of science’ (research), the teaching or transmission of knowledge (existing science) and the communication or popularization of the sciences and arts, which was to be the responsibility of university outreach institutions. It was this last conception that guided the proposals for both USP and UDE. The mobilization of professional educators – a category in formation in the 1920s – was part of a broader process that was largely guided by the formation of three professional fields, medicine, engineering and education, whose rational-based knowledge contributed to public interventions. In the 1920s, physicians, engineers and educators, increasingly equipped

with specific technical and scientific training, shared the common goal of influencing the direction the country was to take. Through a variety of strategies, such as holding leading public posts or formulating explanations, standards and values which they propounded in their pro-reform discourse, these intellectuals were engaged in articulating the modernization of Brazilian society, seeking to formulate a broad vision and an explanatory model for the country.

If the problem of Brazil's modernization was on the agenda in the 1920s-1930s, uniting the educators who signed the 1932 manifesto, then in the 1950s-1960s, the same issue was taken up again in a different manifesto that was published in 1959 in the midst of the debates in the run-up to the *Lei de Diretrizes e Bases da Educação Nacional* (Guidelines and Bases for National Education Law, LDB). With many signatories in common with the previous manifesto, with whom new figures joined forces, the manifesto "Mais uma vez convocados"³ (Called to action once more) expressed the urgency they felt at the time to have education democratized.

As Martins (1987, p.80) notes, in the 1930s and 1950s there was a chance to structure a cultural field that was open to the spirit of renewal and research, paving the way for a marketplace suited to the exchange of ideas and the recognition of the social role of intellectuals and their mission in society. Here, different projects for society and for bolstering citizenship were presented, expanding the scope of opportunities yielded by the favorable political environment and the creation of new institutions where intellectuals and their projects could be accommodated. In this respect, the overlapping of two separate processes can be seen: the institutionalization of the social sciences and their subsequent academic legitimization, and the attempt to professionalize the sphere of education through a number of different initiatives. By analyzing the strategies used by the intellectuals involved in education, it becomes clear that they engaged in at least three different yet related spheres: education reforms in states, the creation of universities – often in conjunction with a problematization of university education – and the creation of institutions linked to state apparatus, where the 'scientific' study of national problems was given priority.

When it comes to the educational reforms in different states, there is ample literature on the topic (cf. Nagle, 1976; Limongi, 1989; Carvalho, 1998, Nunes, 2000), especially about the reforms in the 1920s-1930s in São Paulo, Rio de Janeiro, Minas Gerais, Pernambuco and Bahia. The figureheads of these reforms included Sampaio Dória (1883-1964), Anísio Teixeira, Fernando de Azevedo (1894-1974) and Carneiro Leão (1887-1966). As for the state entities created to inform the central government's policymaking activities, two such examples are Instituto Brasileiro de Geografia e Estatística (Brazilian Geography and Statistics Institute, IBGE) and Instituto Nacional de Estudos Pedagógicos (National Institute for Education Studies, Inep).⁴ The latter, created under the auspices of the Ministry of Education, has undergone many changes in orientation throughout its history, but continues today as an important provider of data and diagnostic studies for the purposes of informing education policy. In articulation, these three areas of intervention directly or indirectly fostered the development of Brazilian universities as centers of research and therefore the production of knowledge.

However, the focus of this article is Anísio Teixeira's conception of scientific-oriented research, where it was undertaken, and how it was applied in articulation with the broader educational policy geared towards 'social reconstruction'. As a collective player, he took part in shared projects, while also holding a singular position regarding his conception of science, universities and the very development of research in Brazil, as we will see below.

Inside universities: scientific development and teacher training

Considering that the Brazilian people was not yet politically constituted, the generation of intellectuals to which Anísio Teixeira and Fernando de Azevedo belonged set about creating institutions they believed were in keeping with the nation's reality. They held that the people's educational requirements would be fulfilled by expanding the supply of schools, especially primary schools, and reorganizing higher education. The population would learn how to care for their own health and be encouraged to have a less mystical, more rational mentality, while also engaging more actively in the nation's development. When it came to higher education, it should be noted that despite their differences – for not everyone defended the priority of the national imperative or had a hierarchical view of the social order – these intellectuals agreed that progress could only be achieved through the action and formation of enlightened elites which, 'acting from above', could 'shape society'. This conception is what underpinned their interest in higher education, for it would be the task of universities to educate the nation's leaders. However, their views about what kind of education would best serve the formation of this elite were not consensual, as witnessed by the different models for organizing higher education introduced in the country.

The Faculty of Philosophy, Science and Letters at USP was created in 1934 with the mission of educating undergraduate students in the areas of philosophy, science, language and literature, and also secondary school teachers. Its educational model was fuelled by concerns of a theoretical and speculative nature that were strongly influenced by French thinking, leaving little room for empirical research. As noted by Limongi (1989), if the faculty had any practical objective, it was expressed in the training of secondary school teachers. However, this was not done as part of the undergraduate program, but in a parallel course within the Institute of Education. Due to the participation of educators like Fernando de Azevedo, who believed in the importance of having teachers with university degrees, the structure of the Faculty of Philosophy, Science and Letters at USP included an Institute of Education. However, the functions attributed to the institute and rest of the faculty occupied quite different planes, in that the latter was responsible for providing the specialized culture and content required for the bachelor's degree course, while the Institute of Education was dedicated exclusively to training classroom teachers.

In Rio de Janeiro, UDF was established along different lines from USP in terms of how education was approached there. The incorporation of the Institute of Education into the UDF structure assured undergraduate education and teacher training for all levels of education were provided. Once it was incorporated into UDF in 1935, the institute was renamed the School of Education, and also educated specialists in education, provided

training for practicing teachers, and had the power to grant master's and doctoral degrees (cf. Teixeira, 1998, p.45). It was also sanctioned to establish a center of documentation and research for the development of the scientific study of education, and thereby for the formation of a culture of higher education in the area.

Understanding education as an area for the 'application of science', Anísio Teixeira held that educational content and methods could not be separated, which in his mind meant that scientific and educational disciplines must be fully articulated. As such, the School of Education would be fully integrated into the UDF structure, and as a result education became a lynchpin of the UDF project, warranting it a higher profile than it received at USP, where there was a certain divide between scientists and educators, with the former working mostly in research and undergraduate education and the latter being more professionally-oriented, focusing on teacher training.

The decree that created UDF established the following institutions: the Institute of Education, the School of Sciences, the Economics and Law School, the School of Philosophy and Letters, and the Institute of Arts. There were several 'complementary institutions' designed to be for "educational experimentation, teaching practice and cultural diffusion". It is worth going into this list in further detail, which included "a central education library; a radio-school; a kindergarten and the following schools: primary and secondary schools from the Institute of Education; a technical secondary school; an experimental preschool and an experimental primary school; laboratories and clinics at the hospitals of the Federal District" (Distrito Federal, 1935).⁵

This structure was complemented by an experimental perspective as advocated by the American philosopher John Dewey (1859-1952). By this conception, 'experimental schools' should be forums for the planning, implementation and evaluation of experimental educational methods, articulating with the educational activities per se both theoretical and empirical observation and experimentation and an ongoing reformulation of teaching practices. Its organization and articulation with the UDF was designed to herald an organizational conception of teaching work founded on the idea that teachers should receive continuous education in an unbroken process, with the school serving as an empirical field for the observation and development of the research undertaken at the university.

However, not everyone appreciated the originality of this university model. UDF was criticized by more conservative sectors of society as a vehicle for communist propaganda and as constituting a barrier to the university project cherished by the minister, Gustavo Capanema. He also criticized the way UDF was organized, saying that as a municipal-level initiative, it impinged on the Union's power to set the standards for higher education across the country. As such, soon after the failure of the Communist Uprising of 1935, a political crackdown set in that culminated in the Estado Novo (1937-1945). With no political backing, Anísio Teixeira was forced to retire from public life, and shortly afterwards UDF was closed down (cf. Lopes, 2008).

When UDF was closed in 1939, some of its courses and professors were moved to Universidade do Brasil, which, according to the Estado Novo's centralizing project, would be responsible for shaping higher education throughout the country. This new approach

had some very serious repercussions for education. The National Faculty of Philosophy, created later at Universidade do Brasil, did not even include the UDF's School of Education in its structure, which found no place in the new institution. Meanwhile, the training of primary school teachers lost the status of higher education, which led to a simplification of the teacher training curriculum. In both cases, the efforts thus far expended to found a tradition of study and research into Brazilian education suffered a setback.

The training of secondary school teachers was retained at the Faculty of Philosophy, which not only engaged in teacher training, but also trained researchers and specialists. Interestingly, until the period of 1956-1960, research in the humanities and social sciences, including education research, was undertaken at state entities such as the Ministry of Education, as explained below.

From outside to inside universities: education policy and social sciences

Having been ousted from public life during the Estado Novo, Anísio Teixeira only returned to center stage of the education debate when democracy was reestablished in 1946.

He was invited to hold state-level positions, including the Secretary of Education and Health in Bahia, and federal-level positions, e.g. where he was a member of the board of Capes, the government's graduate and research development agency, and director of Inep.

As Secretary of Education in Bahia, Teixeira spearheaded two important initiatives for the furtherment of the social sciences and education research. The first of these was an agreement signed in 1949 between the Bahia Department of Education and Columbia University to develop a joint social research program, under the auspices of the Foundation for the Development of Science in Bahia. The method used in the program was community studies, with the aim of understanding processes of cultural and social change in different regions of the country. The second initiative related to the opening of Centro Educacional Carneiro Ribeiro in Salvador, an experimental school where different projects involving novel teaching methods and practices were conducted and education was particularly geared towards children from underprivileged backgrounds. Anísio Teixeira was keen to take the methods employed in both initiatives out to the national level with the creation of Centro Brasileiro de Pesquisas Educacionais (Brazilian Center for Education Research, CBPE).

In 1952, upon his appointment as director of Inep, Anísio Teixeira gave a speech in which he proposed revitalizing the study of Brazil's education problems through Inep. However, given that it had become more of a legislative than a study and research entity, it made sense to create a new entity, CBPE, to fulfill this function. It was formed with two main aims in mind: to provide the Ministry of Education and Culture with a set of procedures and statistical data to help it plan, control and inspect the country's education establishments based on a more accurate picture of the reality; and to give primary and secondary school teachers access to information and a chance to undertake studies and research so they could acquire a broader, self-reflexive view of the role of the teacher and the school, the characteristics of the regions and the national dimension in which they

were engaged in teaching (cf. Plano de Organização..., 1956). In this sense, UDF and CBPE were situated on a continuum that encompassed experiments to restructure the education system initiated in Bahia in the 1920s and developed in greater depth in Rio de Janeiro in the 1930s.⁵ In this new context, the idea of forming a national consciousness and of intervening in the education system for the purposes of analysis and planning and as a strategy for assuring the country's development reemerged anew in the 1950s in the light of new experiences.

The joint research program between Bahia state and Columbia University, started in 1949, had its own offshoots in the form of agreements with other American universities, collaborations with community research initiatives undertaken by Donald Pierson (then at ELSA) in São Francisco valley, and research into social relations spearheaded by Unesco. Anísio Teixeira's project at the Bahia state department of education to recruit social scientists to systematically review the political and administrative issues he wanted to tackle in the field of education was mirrored in Rio de Janeiro by the creation of CBPE. There, the guiding principle for its studies and research was the use of the tools of social science to investigate education issues. The documents produced while the project ran at this research center are testament to the intention to build up a broad body of knowledge into the field of education while also encouraging the consolidation of studies in the social sciences.

As identified in earlier research (Xavier, 1999), the work of CBPE far exceeded the scope of just the production of research; it also trained high-level personnel for work in social research and the education system. This work was undertaken in the Social Studies and Research Division as part of the graduate program in the Education of Social Researchers, coordinated by Darcy Ribeiro. Training education professionals was the task of the Teacher Training Division, which set up experimental schools and classes in different parts of the country, and created graduate diploma courses in education at the regional center in São Paulo, coordinated by Fernando de Azevedo.

Its own administrative structure, involving self-contained divisions – the Education Studies and Research Division, the Social Studies and Research Division, the Education Documentation and Information Division, the Teacher Training Division – and the library, provided not just the material means for creating a niche of studies into education, but also the groundwork for a new conception of education, be it inside schools, to which the findings of research should be applied, or in the university community itself, where the problems of education should be investigated. The structure of the national center was reproduced in regional centers, which conducted studies into the social, economic, political and cultural conditions of each region, showing the understanding that the nation's problems should be addressed by seeking out its cultural roots, with their wealth of diversity. The regional centers organized research, documents and courses for training researchers and teachers, while also promoting experimentation with new educational methods and techniques.

According to Anísio Teixeira's conception, CBPE should be a center for applied science, combining the organization and orientation of scientific research with practical objectives essentially designed to guide education policies based on the study of and proposals for resolving its problems. However, not all those involved in this project shared the same

ideas. Observing the dynamics of the work conducted at the Social Research Division of CBPE enabled us to address the problem from a different viewpoint, emphasizing the relationship between scientific research and applied research and ultimately between science and policy, where different conceptions vied for hegemony. On the one hand there was the vocation for pure social research; on the other, research applied to public policymaking designed to address problems of a practical nature. In the former case, the work was designed around the emerging output in the researchers' fields of study and/or interest. It was also isolated from any time constraints exerted by external agents or immediate political demands. Or, as Florestan Fernandes (1959) put it in the debates that preceded the creation of the center, 'impartial' scientific research left researchers immune to the set of interferences that could hamper the validation of the scientific nature of their work. Meanwhile, applied research inevitably had a restricted range of topics open for study, for the core object of investigation would be predetermined and the work would be more prone to pressure from lay actors. In this respect, there was a tension between the concomitant projects involved in this process, which somehow also fed into each other: the national project, with emphasis on education reform as defended by Anísio Teixeira and the group of educators he was connected with, and the project to raise the status of scientific activity based on academic rigor and isolated from the vagaries of politics.

The CBPE experience provides valuable insights in the scope of this intellectual field as it acquired increasing specialization, laying bare new boundaries and hierarchies. Interestingly, the divisions between the disciplines in the social sciences would become ever sharper until the 1960s. Meanwhile, new hierarchical parameters set up differentiations and value judgments that derived from exposure to scientific activities, tools and principles. It was they that separated the generalist from the specialist, the academic from the publicist, the social scientist from the essayist, the graduate from the non-graduate (cf. Brandão, Xavier, 1997).

The University of Brasilia project

In the words of Darcy Ribeiro (1997, p.225), Anísio's idea behind creating CBPE was to encourage Brazil's intelligentsia, especially at its universities, to address the issue of primary education – i.e. to be concerned about elementary education – just as they were concerned about medicine and engineering. However, the reshuffling of the agents in the field of battle opened up by the positions made available during the discussions preceding the LDB⁶ meant that new professionals were appointed to hold the top posts at CBPE. While Florestan Fernandes was busy in the 'defense of public schools', Darcy Ribeiro devised a new orientation for the CBPE project as of the creation of UnB. In line with the UnB proposal, Anísio Teixeira transferred to Brasilia many of the human and financial resources earmarked for CBPE to subsidize primary and secondary school interventions.

As demonstrated previously (Xavier, 1999), the Brazilian university crisis had already been on the agenda since the late 1950s, and the need to restructure it had already been raised, as its present structure was deemed unsuited to meet the country's needs in terms of training new professionals and consolidating its science and technology foundations so

as to contribute to the development of the nation's economy. The haphazard creation of private higher education establishments followed by federalization as of the second half of the 1940s and throughout the 1950s resulted in the incorporation of these establishments by the federal government, which were clumped together and turned into federal universities. The sharpest criticism was voiced when isolated faculties were joined together, instead of their being articulated through the notions of interdisciplinarity, integration and universalism, which underpinned the whole university 'concept'. Another much-criticized aspect of the university structure was the system of life-long tenures, by which heads of departments could dominate their whole area, even having the power of decision about the hiring of assistants, which opened the door to distortions and authoritarianism.

As we can see, the proposed university reform was supported by broad swathes of Brazil's intellectual classes. Indeed, the conviction that the Brazilian university structure did not meet the needs of the nation's development and emancipation was shared by those groups that envisaged different solutions for the same problem. Darcy Ribeiro wanted to take the opportunity to formulate a whole new kind of university model, arguing that it would be easier and more productive to create something completely new than to reformulate an existing model with all its faults and failings. He believed the impact of these new universities would have the power to leverage radical change. As such, he set about masterminding an ambitious project: the creation of a university for the future capital city, Brasília. Initially, Anísio Teixeira (1961) was against the idea of creating a university there. Unconvinced by the very idea of the new capital, he did not think it was essential for the nation's capital to have a university. However, when a bill for the creation of some 11 universities was passed, he joined forces with those who were calling for the creation of the University of Brasília (UnB). According to Darcy Ribeiro himself, what guided the organization of UnB was the original UDF project, albeit with expansions and adaptations to the new circumstances.

Nevertheless, Anísio Teixeira was not in favor of the university model that Darcy Ribeiro was pushing for. In his mind, a graduate school should be created, a kind of high-level higher education institution that only ran master's and doctoral courses to train Brazil's future university professors. Meanwhile, Darcy Ribeiro envisaged a university in the broadest sense of the word, with undergraduate and graduate courses; it was his proposal that prevailed. Years later, he admitted that he had learned from Anísio the importance of graduate level education for the future UnB: "I learnt, above all, that the main output of scientific research is not the dissertation or the thesis – or even the article or the book that contribute to broadening knowledge – but the education of people skilled in using scientific methods. People that can only be educated where research is done, but where the researcher is also involved in teaching activities" (Ribeiro, 1986, p.228).

The discussion about the UnB project became the driving force for the debate about university reform that had been going on since the early 1950s, as we have seen. It was argued that Brazil's university crisis was the outcome of holding onto an outdated higher education model that no longer met the nation's needs. The new model as then conceived saw the university as creating a science-oriented culture for the nation and educating masters capable of reformulating and divulging this culture.

Let us sketch out the main lines that guided the conception of UnB, according to Darcy Ribeiro (1978, p.75) himself: first of all, the UnB project was a repository for great political and intellectual aspirations, given the chance that it could become an intellectual hub capable of holding its own against the traditional centers of cultural production in Brazil and abroad. The second declared aspiration was that it would provide public entities with new (and renewed) high-level intellectual human resources with the means to provide advice in a far-flung city (unlike Rio de Janeiro, where there was no shortage of specialists in every area). The third aspiration was to “make UnB a hub for maturing the nation’s critical consciousness, giving precedence to study programs that are better able to equip it scientifically and sustain it ideologically” (Ribeiro, 1978, p.76). But, according to the anthropologist, this third aspiration came hand-in-hand with the challenge of garnering the cooperation of the official intellectual classes, especially scholars, in the task of rethinking Brazil, seeking out new ways of organizing it so as to overcome its state of underdevelopment. Furthermore, it should institutionalize graduate education as the mainstay of research and education and enable the new capital to exercise its role of expressing the nation’s critical consciousness (Ribeiro, 1978, p.80).

Darcy Ribeiro’s keen desire to have this much-heralded university approved and set up was met by a certain resistance on Anísio Teixeira’s part, revealing the complexity of the political dealings, the immediate decisions to be made, and the very terrain of interpersonal relations. The episode reported by Ribeiro in an article on his relationship with the “eminent Anísio” offers us a few insights on these issues. The incident in question concerns the fact that Darcy Ribeiro became the dean of UnB, despite it being widely acknowledged that Anísio Teixeira was an authority on education and a respected public figure. It is worth turning to Ribeiro’s (Ribeiro, 1986, p.235) own memoirs, in which he recalls a conversation with Anísio:

– Look here, Dr. Anísio, the University of Brasilia has been created and you are the dean. But you will only be so provided you go and live in Brasilia. I will not let you stay here running CAPES, CBPE and also UnB. With me there, facing all those deputies and senators and the Ministry of Education bureaucrats, making the university happen without the authority to do so. This I won’t accept. So there are two ways out: if you want to go there, I will accept being vice-dean and will help you however I can. ... I concluded the proposal saying that the alternative would be him accepting me as dean. In that case, I said, you will be the vice-dean, if you agree. ... The truth is that ... Anísio did not just agree that I should be dean, but also that he should be vice-dean. May it be clear that just as I was somewhat small-minded to demand this of Anísio, he was broad-minded in accepting the position, which did not belittle him, truth be told, but which did not match his name and standing if compared with my own insignificance.

Brasília was inaugurated on April 21st, 1960, and in January 1961 President Juscelino Kubitschek transferred the leadership of the government to Jânio Quadros. At the same time, UnB’s first courses were started, which were given at the Ministry of Labor throughout the academic year of 1961. Darcy Ribeiro was appointed dean by presidential decree, a position he held until August 1962, when he took over as head of the Ministry of Education and Culture on the invitation of President João Goulart, handing over the reins of UnB to Anísio Teixeira.

Final considerations

The changes brought in by the coup d'état and ensuing military dictatorship in 1964 marked another period of regression and dispersion of the work of intellectuals involved in educational projects, demonstrating that in Brazil the impact caused by new institutional models is not enough of itself to assure results, nor even the continuation of changes in the field of culture.

The movement to restructure Brazil's universities in the 1960s was constrained somewhat by the higher education reform of 1968. This reform was criticized on two counts by Anísio Teixeira, who did not believe that changing, improving or modernizing Brazil's universities could be achieved by legal instruments. In his view, higher education reform had to burgeon from the inside by changing the mindset of professors and students. Defending liberty as a basic principle by which professor and student interacted and by which teaching and research were undertaken within universities, Anísio further added that the steadfast defense of university autonomy could never be achieved as a State concession, but as the outcome of the free exercise of university activities, constituting a model of democratic culture and practice.

NOTES

¹ In this and other citations of texts from Portuguese, a free translation has been provided.

² Amongst the 26 signatories of the 1932 "Education Manifesto" some of the most notable names are Anísio Teixeira, Fernando de Azevedo, Lourenço Filho, Paschoal Lemme, Cecília Meireles and Roquette-Pinto. The manifesto was in favor of schools that were public, lay, free, and the responsibility of the State. It also defended coeducation, i.e. education for boys and girls in the same classroom, which was not common at the time. As such, the public school designed by these educators was a common or single school type that would be open to all, with no distinction of sex, color or social standing.

³ Like the previous manifesto of 1932, the manifesto published in 1959 under the title of "Mais uma vez convocados" (Called to action once more) aimed to focus public attention on its rights and the problems of national education, and to urge the State to accept responsibility for providing public, lay, free education for all. Amongst the signatories were the educators from the 1920s-1930s generation, plus a new generation of intellectuals engaged in defending public education and democracy, including Darcy Ribeiro, Florestan Fernandes, and Fernando Henrique and Ruth Cardoso.

⁴ Under the same acronym as when it was created, but now named after Anísio Teixeira, Inep carries out research to identify educational issues, such as school and university censuses and institutional assessments, the performance of students and teachers, etc. Cf: —<http://www.inep.gov.br/institucional/>.

⁵ Of particular interest are articles 4 and 9.

⁶ Anísio Teixeira was director-general of public education in Bahia under the Góis Calmon administration from 1924 to 1928. As we saw earlier, he was also director of public education in the Federal District (Rio de Janeiro) during the Pedro Ernesto administration, from 1931 to 1935. The position of director of public education is the equivalent of today's education secretary.

⁷ The discussions surrounding the Guidelines and Bases for National Education Bill started in 1948 and were marked by heated debate and public demonstrations until August 1961, when the bill was passed in congress, becoming the Guidelines and Bases for National Education Law.

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