Latin American sociology in the Cultural Cold War: Florestan Fernandes, Aldo Solari, and ILARI

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Abstract

What does the collaboration between the sociologist Florestan Fernandes, Aldo Solari, and the Latin American Institute of International Relations (ILARI), an organ of the Congress for Cultural Freedom, tell us about Fernandes's thinking between 1969 and 1972? The analysis of official ILARI documents and correspondence and texts by Fernandes and Solari suggests that this episode reveals Fernandes's concern with defending space for science on a continent marked by authoritarianism, thereby enabling a more nuanced understanding of his trajectory than one marked by two distinct phases, "reformist-academic" and "revolutionary-political." From ILARI's perspective, the partnership with Fernandes is revealed as critical in lending its actions intellectual legitimacy.

Keywords: history of Latin American sociology; Florestan Fernandes (1920-1995); Cultural Cold War; Latin American Institute of International Relations; Aldo Solari (1922-1989).

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The aim of this article is to investigate a little-known episode in the trajectory of the São Paulo-based sociologist Florestan Fernandes (1920-1995) and in the history of Latin American sociology in general. It is about his brief liaison, between 1969 and 1972, with the Latin American Institute of International Relations (ILARI, 1965-1972), an initiative of the Congress for Cultural Freedom (CCF), an organization funded by the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), whose objective was to promote anti-communist cultural activities to compete with what was understood to be the growing attraction exerted by Soviet power over Western artists and intellectuals (Saunders, 2000; Scott-Smith, 2003).¹ This episode highlights Fernandes's attitudes towards his own social science project and the way ILARI engaged with the social sciences in the region.

The period in question is a controversial topic in the literature on Florestan Fernandes. In the decades following the end of the 1964 military dictatorship, an essentially political view of his trajectory took shape, especially because of his role in the 1980s as a congressman and intellectual linked to the Workers' Party (Arruda, 2018). Bárbara Freitag (1987) contributed decisively to this view in a classic article in which she divides Fernandes's trajectory into two periods: one "reformist-academic" and the other "revolutionary-political," with his compulsory retirement in 1968 marking the change of direction.

Other scholars have challenged this hypothesis by looking for continuities in Fernandes's trajectory. José de Souza Martins (1996), for example, sustains the eminently academic coherence of his colleague's trajectory, pointing out the connection between his Marxist phase and his original sociological concerns. Meanwhile, Eliane Veras Soares (1997) tackles Freitag's hypothesis directly, arguing that even in his supposedly "academic" phase, Fernandes never ceased to be political and that in his later period he also ended up resuming his original intellectual concerns. Lidiane Rodrigues (2006) follows a similar argument in her master's dissertation, which explores the period between 1969 and 1972 and argues that Fernandes never lost his sociological gaze, even when he was focused on Lenin's formulations – one of his core themes in the period. According to Rodrigues, Fernandes's Marxist turn did not involve him abandoning his scientific project in the field of sociology, but rather adapting it to a scenario of increasing authoritarianism and weakened institutionalization.

More recently, Elide Rugai Bastos (2020) pointed out how Fernandes's output in the 1970s can be related to his sociological research on dilemmas of social change conducted in the previous decade. According to Bastos, the question of the authoritarianism of peripheral capitalism was important for Fernandes in both periods, putting her among the analysts who do not see the two stages as mutually exclusive.

However, some authors continue to see Fernandes's Marxist turn as a clear point of inflexion. For example, in an analysis of his writings from the 1970s, Diogo Valença Costa (2021) argues that his Marxist-Leninist orientation led him to refine and radicalize his sociological project. As such, Costa supports the idea that Fernandes departed from his original Mannheimian project, as reflected in his texts on the co-option and alienation experienced by the social scientists of the day. These interpretations are supported by Fernandes's own views at the time, as expressed in his correspondence with Bárbara Freitag.

Fernandes went to live in exile in Canada after his compulsory retirement from the University of São Paulo in 1968. In a letter to Freitag (1996, p.148-149) dated April 22, 1970, he discusses his frustrations at having to live abroad:

Man is limited by his human condition. I will not go any further than others and perhaps I have certain incurable limitations, which are born of scars from the past. It is the scars that make me somewhat reluctant to enjoy the advantages my position offers me (such as the endowment offered by the Volkswagen Foundation, with which I shall do the same as I have done with similar offers from the Ford Foundation), and which I realize lead me to act irrationally.

This brief confession, which reveals a criticism on the role of research funding performed by American and European foundations, is reinforced and elaborated further in another letter to Freitag, dated January 29, 1971:

'Science' is injecting Europe with the same dose of spinelessness, co-optation, and deliberate (albeit well disguised) conformism that it has already instilled in the United States. Today, you can learn more by reading a good article of a critical orientation – when journalists make an 'honest' description – or a novel than by reading works by 'high-level' political scientists, sociologists, and economists. I am increasingly repulsed by this 'high level,' the sophisticated 'models' and the total emptiness they involve; a useful science for those who command bureaucrats and can pay a 'functional price' for the decisions imposed from the top down (Freitag, 1996, p.151; emphasis in the original).

These letters are well known, as is Fernandes's critical diagnosis of the directions being taken by the professionalization of the social sciences in Europe, the USA, and Brazil. They bear witness to both his political commitment to the transformation of society and his view of the discipline as "militant knowledge," to borrow part of the title of a book of essays on the author (D'Incao, 1987).

But another set of correspondence from that same period sheds light on lesser-known aspects of Fernandes's international trajectory. In August 1969, the Uruguayan sociologist Aldo Solari invited him to take part in a series of discussions on the university and society, whose other participants would be the Argentine Jorge Graciarena, the Frenchman Jean Labbens, and the Paraguayan Domingos Rivarola., Fernandes was expected to contribute with a basic text. The closed seminar would take place from September 4 to 6 in Rio de Janeiro, and would have the following structure (or "scheme", as Solari puts it):

- a) On the validity of the scheme itself and how it may be expanded and modified;
- b) detail the main points to be studied within each of the major items of the approved scheme;
- c) establish orders of priority and a kind of plan for gradual progress within the possibilities of ILARI's centers in Latin America (Solari, 18 ago. 1969).²

To contextualize this invitation, it is important to note that ILARI was an attempt to modernize the traditional anti-communist discourse of the CCF, promoting dialogue with progressive sectors of science and culture in Latin America, especially the emerging world of professional social sciences. It was run by Louis Mercier Vega,³ a veteran of Europe's anti-

Stalinist, libertarian left, who soon engaged in sophisticated editorial and intellectual work. Under Vega, ILARI published the journal *Aportes*, the specialized magazine *Mundo Nuevo* (arguably its best-known initiative, led by the Uruguayan critic Emir Rodriguez Monegal), *Informes de China*, and *Cadernos Brasileiros*, as well as other publications, such as Paraguayans *Revista de Sociologia, Revista de Antropologia, Suplemento Antropológico*, and *Temas* (edited in Montevideo by Benito Milla, another well-known intellectual and anarchist activist close to Vega). ILARI also funded art galleries, such as Goeldi, in Rio, Arca, in La Paz, and Libertad, in Santiago. As for its books, it mostly worked with the publishers Libera and Paidós, in Buenos Aires, and Alfa, in Montevideo. According to Elizabeth Cancelli (2015), in 1965 alone – the year in which its bylaws were approved – the institute published 232 books and four journals or magazines.

By 1969, ILARI was going through a crisis because of an exposé published in *The New York Times* in 1966 about secret CIA funding for the activities of the Congress for Cultural Freedom. This forced an organizational restructuring, resulting in its name being changed to International Association for Cultural Freedom and some difficulties in maintaining its activities, as it now depended exclusively on funding from US foundations, particularly Ford.

How can we understand the involvement of Florestan Fernandes, known for his left-wing political convictions and criticism of US research foundations, with the activities of ILARI? What does this brief period of cooperation reveal about the dynamics of the Cultural Cold War in Latin America and Fernandes's own trajectory? This article seeks to answer these questions and thereby contribute to two topics being discussed in the literature on the history of Latin American sociology: (a) the role of ILARI in the organization of social sciences in the continent and its recruitment strategies; (b) a more nuanced reconstruction of Florestan Fernandes's intellectual trajectory that goes beyond a sharp division between two periods: "reformist-academic" and "revolutionary-political."

The article is structured into two sections. In the first, I present the state of the scientific debate on the role of ILARI in the Cultural Cold War and the very meaning of this concept in the history of the social sciences. Although the literature has made significant progress in revealing the identity and interests of the actors that engaged with ILARI, as well as its organizational rationale and financial flows, I believe there is still much to be brought to light about how these factors translated into ways of doing sociology and modes of intellectual action. In that first part, I draw primarily on secondary sources.

In the second part, I describe the intellectual and political context that surrounded Solari's invitation to Fernandes, highlighting the role of the Uruguayan sociologist in ILARI, especially his work in intellectual enterprises in Uruguay, such as the seminar on Latin American elites in Montevideo, in 1965. I draw from secondary literature on the subject and explore part of the extensive correspondence involving Solari and ILARI in the period in question. Next, I describe the connections between the institute and Fernandes in 1969 and 1970, analyzing correspondence from the ILARI archives and letters from the Florestan Fernandes archive at the Federal University of São Carlos. In addition, I situate Fernandes's output in the context of the debate on universities and development, also joined by Solari. I suggest that Fernandes's involvement with ILARI and with the initiatives promoted by his Uruguayan colleague indicates a scholar concerned with securing space for scientific

debate in a continent marked by authoritarianism. I also argue that there was a less clear-cut separation between his "reformist-academic" and "revolutionary-political" phases. The data presented here reveal a man who remains equally convinced of the scientific power of sociology and of the function of universities in a democratic society – topics dear to him since the 1950s, from a Mannheimenian perspective (Vianna, 1997).

ILARI, the Cultural Cold War, and the history of Latin American sociology

The concept of the Cultural Cold War has some peculiarities in the case of Latin America, especially in view of the dominance of one of the superpowers in the region, unlike what was seen in Europe, which was effectively split into pro-US and pro-Soviet nations. As Patrick Iber (2015) shows, even the region's liberals or social democrats had little time for an anti-communist discourse that played down the US's imperialist pretentions in the region or that stigmatized nationalist and popular experiments that were not necessarily Soviet-inspired. Iber (2015, p.22) highlights the controversy among the left over the Cuban regime for classifying the Cultural Cold War as an "international civil war within the global left to define the ideas and practices that would guide political change."

The effects of the Cultural Cold War on Latin American arts and literature have been explored extensively elsewhere (Gilman, 2003; Mudorvcic, 1997). The case of the social sciences gained attention more recently, especially in the light of investigations aiming to reconstruct the controversies played out among the region's intellectuals and scientists over the role of research funding from US foundations, as in the case of the controversies associated with the well-known Project Camelot (Navarro, 2011) and Marginalities Project (Plotkin, 2015).⁴

In the case of ILARI, the work done by Karina Jannello is highly relevant, both for its rich empirical data and for the detailed analysis of the various activities this entity spawned. Jannello (2018a) analyzes ILARI's editorial policy, how it boosted the modern social science agenda in the region (Jannello, 2018b), and how the CCF addapted to the dynamics of the local intellectual fields, which she explains prompted the active uptake of anti-communist agendas and ideas (Jannello, 2013-2014). Her studies allow us to contextualize a critical debate for this historiography over how to interpret the involvement of the region's intellectuals and social scientists in ILARI's endeavors and how the institute's activities affected the institutionalization of the social sciences in Latin America and the way intellectuals engaged in science.

Jannello (2018a, p.72) holds that the relationship between ILARI and Latin American social sciences should not be seen through the prism of co-optation, since the institute was not actually inducing intellectuals who previously thought differently, but making room for actors who already had an established, autonomous trajectory in the area and who shared something of a common agenda. This vision chimes with that recently expressed by Marcelo Ridenti (2018), who focuses on *Cadernos Brasileiros*, one of the CCF's most important Brazilian publications. Analyzing its editorial profile and correspondence between CCF representatives and Brazilian editors (particularly Afrânio Coutinho), Ridenti finds that the journal gradually opened up to left-wing intellectual thinking, especially

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after the 1964 coup, which CCF operatives in the region saw as an authoritarian process worthy of criticism. Ridenti (2018, p.363-364) goes so far as to suggest that the journal operated in a space of relative autonomy in relation to the CIA.⁵

Elizabeth Cancelli (2015, 2017) offers an alternative interpretation to that sustained by Jannello and Ridenti. In her research, Cancelli focuses on foundations such as Ford and ILARI and their work in promoting and funding the social sciences in Latin America. She argues that a significant portion of the modern social science agenda in Latin America in the 1960s and 1970s should be seen as derived from sophisticated work by these foundations to set this ideological agenda through means of projects, funding, and exchanges. As she explains,

the CCF played an overwhelming role in the spread of ideas, models, and behavior. Above all, it left deep marks on the mode of thinking and the intellectual environment and enabled the creation of intellectual traditions that, above all, and mistakenly, purported to be independent, modern, democratic, and often original (Cancelli, 2017, p.39).

Wanderson Chaves (2019) follows a similar argumentin his doctoral thesis, supervised by Cancelli and recently published in book form. Chaves analyzes the archives of the Ford Foundation and emphasizes the its role in shaping the intellectual agenda in the region, highlighting the case of Florestan Fernandes, whom he analyzes from the perspective of both his participation in a major conference on race and color organized by the CCF and the arguments he expounds in his books *Mudanças sociais no Brasil* (Social change in Brazil) and *A integração do negro na sociedade de classes* (The integration of the Negro in the class society) (Chaves, 2019, p.228). He concludes that "this synthesis of Florestan Fernandes's program converged, except only for his socialist convictions, with the agenda advocated by the Ford Foundation, the world's biggest investor in the academic field of racial studies."

It is clear, then, that there is significant divergence of opinion in the literature on the role of ILARI and the CCF in promoting Latin American intellectual debate, particularly in the social sciences. This divergence concerns both the degree of autonomy of these institutions' interlocutors and partners and the real-world effects of their funding strategies on the social science community. I maintain that the best way to understand the relationship between ILARI and the intellectuals with whom it worked is to establish the different levels of involvement, because there is a clear hierarchy in the tasks distributed among these actors.

The case of Solari, Florestan, and ILARI helps us to understand some of the issues addressed by scholars on the history of Latin American sociology, because it involves a well-known insider of the institute – the Uruguayan scholar Solari – and an eminent social scientist, who, in the period under analysis (1969-1972), was seen as critical to US imperialism and to the role played by international foundations in research funding.

Aldo Solari, Florestan Fernandes, and ILARI

The encounter between Aldo Solari and ILARI was the convergence of a singular trajectory in Uruguay's intellectual field and an institution whose modernizing and pluralistic vocation offered an alternative to the constraints of this field.

With a degree in law and solid roots in the Colorado Party, Solari began his career in the early 1950s at the University of the Republic (Udelar), where he worked alongside Isaac Ganon to institutionalize sociology in the university system. A strong supporter of structural functionalism, he participated in the creation of the Institute of Social Sciences (ICS), becoming its director in 1964 and remaining in the post until his resignation in 1966. In the following year, he joined the Latin American and Caribbean Institute for Economic and Social Planning (ILPES), an organ of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC). Thenceforth, the establishment of sociology as a university discipline in Uruguay would be conducted by a new generation educated at the Latin American Faculty of Social Sciences (FLACSO) – known as "flacsists" – who were keen to connect a scientific and professional ideal of the discipline with new theoretical approaches that diverged from Solari's structural-functionalist approach (Markarian, 2020a; De Sierra, 2005).

Given Solari's role in the early institutionalization of sociology in Uruguay and his political and intellectual stance – closer to liberalism than strictly left-wing views – his ensuing engagement with ILARI should come as no surprise.

One revealing document regarding this engagement is the lengthy report "Situation, Activités et Projets du Congrès Pour la Liberté de la Culture en Amérique Latine" (Situation, Activities, and Project of the Cultural Congress for Freedom in Latin America), probably written in early 1963 by author or authors unknown, possibly Mercier Vega (IACF, 1963). The report explains that the new phase of the CCF envisaged replacing a fiercely anticommunist strategy with an attempt to build intellectual capacity in the region to foster the consolidation of a modern scientific mentality that opposed to totalitarianism. In other words, it required the promotion of the intellectual culture of the social sciences, marked by plurality, as a response to the spread of communist ideas in the region. This new strategy also avoided a rigid ideological position, which had not yielded results in previous years. In the list of key figures in different countries from the region, three Uruguayans stand out: Benito Milla, a bookseller, prominent intellectual articulator, and former anarchist fighter in the Spanish Civil War (where he met Mercier Vega); Emir Rodriguez Monegal, a literary critic who ran Mundo Nuevo; and Aldo Solari, classified as "the only Uruguayan sociologist of value." The credentials attributed to Solari include: his trajectory, showing how he was becoming increasingly aligned with the positions of the CCF, having left a left-wing organization; his critical work on Uruguay's third-worldism (tercerismo); his involvement with CCF activities in the region; and his position as director of the ICS, having defeated the sociologist Carlos Rama, a candidate considered a "Castrist," i.e., overly sympathetic to the Cuban model.6

As Ximena Espeche (2016) shows, third-worldism was especially relevant between 1958 and 1968, a period marked by the emergence of a critical awareness of intellectuals who wished to rethink the country's identity by revising usual Latin American doctrines, such as Arielism. Third-worldism was an ambiguous political position, ranging from a simple geopolitical posture equidistant from the two superpowers to a "national-popular" ideology that framed the country's identity in the light of Latin American integration (Acosta, 2003). But in the eyes of ILARI's operatives, third-worldism was a dangerous doctrine because it

could lead to a friendly position towards Cuba, which explains why the report highlights Solari's position on the subject as important for his recruitment.⁷

In addition to organizing working groups and giving lectures in spaces financed by ILARI, Solari set about pursuing a challenging mission, which resulted in the seminar on the formation of Latin American elites, to be held in June 1965 in Montevideo in partnership with the Institute of International Relations of the University of California, directed by Seymour Lipset. As Markarian (2020b) shows, the event was initially planned by Lipset and Vega, who first suggested the Chilean Jorge Ahumada to organize the activities in Montevideo, turning to Solari, with whom Mercier had already been talking, when Ahumada declined.

The seminar was the target of a scathing attack by Carlos Real de Azúa, who published a criticism of the CCF and the event's organizers in the weekly publication *Marcha!* on May 4 of that year, relating the event to the US's imperialist interests in the region, confirmed once again by the invasion of the Dominican Republic. Real de Azúa was a professor, writer, and essayist, as well as a leading figure in *Marcha!*, centerpiece of the Uruguay's left-wing intellectual culture and a fundamental forum for the articulation of third-worldist positions. It was therefore no coincidence that this publication should have been the main channel for the controversy surrounding a seminar organized by an institution such as ILARI, which for its part was keen to avoid any kind of identification with conservative stances.

Lipset acknowledged the problem in a letter to Solari himself, dated May 18, 1965, writing that Gino Germani had warned him about growing opposition to the event (Lipset, 18 maio 1965). The letter not only shows concern, but also reveals a fundamental aspect of ILARI's endeavors to rally intellectual thinking: the strategic use of political and intellectual pluralism to legitimize its actions. As Lipset (18 maio 1965) put it:

It occurs to me that it might be a good idea to invite additional discussants to the Seminar who certainly could not be associated with United States interests. I have been informed that Leonel Brizola, former Governor of Rio Grande do Sul, Darcy Ribeiro, former president of the University of Brasilia, and Decio Freitas, a young lawyer – all three closely related to Joao Goulart – are living in Montevideo. Their attendance might well contribute to a discussion of Latin American political elites, and hopefully would reduce pressure on the conference.

The idea of attracting figures identified with the left was designed to prevent ILARI from being associated with initiatives seen as imperialist. In the end, the program attracted a prestigious group of Latin American social scientists and US Latin Americanists, such as Fernando Henrique Cardoso, Juarez Brandão Lopes, Gláucio D. Soares, Kenneth Silver, and Frank Bonilla. According to Markarian (2020b), Real de Azúa's criticism did not reverberate strongly in the press, and Solari had no trouble getting support from Udelar's internal bodies.

But in the years to come, memories of this event would again be triggered by the growing debate about external funding for science in Uruguay, which had already been mobilizing different actors from the world of higher education, such as student federations, university administrators, and leading academic entrepreneurs like Solari (Markarian, 2020b). ILARI was navigating this minefield, already under the cloud of the *New York Times* exposé.

Later, ILARI had another opportunity to exercise its "strategic pluralism." Four years after the episode involving the Elites seminar, Solari (18 ago. 1969) wrote to Florestan Fernandes to reiterate a previous invitation for him to take part in a working group on the university and society, whose other members would be Solari himself, Jorge Graciarena, Jean Labbens, and Domingo Rivarola, all key figures in the organization of ILARI's activities in the Southern Cone. Indeed, a few months earlier Rivarola (22 maio 1969), had written to Fernandes mentioning the meeting of the working group and saying it planned to discuss the university and student movements. He had added that all Fernandes's expenses would be covered and that he would be paid two hundred dollars for the submission of the paper.

Forming working groups was a key aspect of ILARI's work. In a report (possibly written by Vega), probably prepared between October 1968 and May 1969, the dynamics of nine separate research groups are set forth, including the one coordinated by Solari on the university system and society. In the text entitled "Research Program of the Latin American Institute of the International Relations" (IACF, 1968-1969), it is explained that the topics were chosen because they did not receive due attention in existing research centers, and that the working group format was justified by the possibility it provided of fostering intellectual exchange and making the most of resources. Some of the key outcomes of the university working group were the publication of a book (*Students and politics*) in 1968 by Libera, a seminar in Puerto Rico in 1967, the existence of two similar groups operating in Bolivia and Paraguay, and plans for another book of collected articles, to be published by Monte Avila Editores.

Solari had been engaged in research into universities and social change, with studies focused on the situation in Uruguay. One text that gives a good understanding of his perspective is "La universidad en transición en una sociedad estancada: el caso del Uruguay" (The university in transition in a stagnant society: the case of Uruguay) (Solari, 1966), published in Aportes. In it, Solari combines an analysis of the relationship between the education system and economic development with a critique of what he understood to be the student ideology of the time. He begins by demonstrating that, despite the free tuition and increasing democratization of higher education in his country, the low number of graduates and the focus on traditional courses like law and medicine showed that the system was not very effective in fostering development. In addition, Solari argues that higher education was not fulfilling its full potential because of the discrepancies shaping the country's social structure, marked by limited economic dynamism, strong weight of the tertiary sector, and an oversized employer state. In the final section, Solari criticizes the "student ideology" of the period, which, he judges, was based on a rejection of the existing party-political system, calls for greater student engagement in university administration and broader politics, and the quest for a truly "popular" university. The Uruguayan sociologist believed that this ideology would ultimately obscure the real problems preventing universities from becoming more open and cost-effective, such as the length of time students took to graduate.

A year later, Solari (1967) published "Los movimientos estudantiles en América Latina" (Student movements in Latin America) in *Revista Mexicana de Sociologia*. In it, he further

elaborates on his criticism, proposing that analysts should focus less on the professed ideology of student movements and more on the systemic relations between higher education, social stratification, and political system. The struggle for the autonomy of universities could therefore be expressed in multiple ways, one being the possibility of recruiting elites through non-clientelistic and more universalist means. In other words, Solari analyzes the dilemma of the region's universities in the light of the functions the higher education system should fulfill for the modernization of Uruguayan society, which presupposed an integration with the political system and the system of professional occupations. If the political system continued to be obstructed by traditional forces and values, the movement of elites would be impaired, spawning dysfunctions in the way universities worked. The radicalism of the movement would then be an expression of a university that could not adequately channel the tensions sparked as educational opportunities were expanded.

Solari's vision combined a structural-functionalist theoretical framework with a liberal-modernizing political vision, which saw the higher education system as a possible mechanism for the expansion of elites and diversification of the social structure. This view diverged from perspectives that saw the student movement as key in engendering radical and revolutionary change. In this sense, Solari's article and his engagement in the topic alongside ILARI were in tune with the institute's orientation towards a "professional" and "modernizing" social science. But how should we interpret the contribution of Florestan Fernandes, also listed as a participant in the working group? How did his arguments align with Solari's thinking?

The basic text that Fernandes wrote for the meeting was published in issue 17 of *Aportes* (Fernandes, 1970). Entitled "Universidad y desarrollo" (University and development), it is based on a lecture he gave at an event in the Department of Physics and Mathematics of the University of São Paulo on June 21, 1968. It was subsequently incorporated into a book, *Universidade brasileira: reforma or revolução?* (Brazilian university: reform or revolution?) (Fernandes, 1975), containing texts and lectures from that year, when he was traveling around the country involved in activities to discuss university reform.

In the foreword, Fernandes explains his engagement in the debate about the reform, which had by then been taken over by the Castelo Branco government. Saying that he did not nourish any "reformist faith," especially in the face of the lack of meaning of such concepts in a conservative scenario, he explains that he was not invited either as a socialist or as a sociologist in the strict sense, but as a thinker capable of producing analyses that might inform the political discussions. In this sense, he explains that his call for a profound revolution of the Brazilian university system was driven by a sense of scientific responsibility, defining it in the following terms:

We cannot 'vaporize' people and ingrained habits. However, we will be able to rebuild universities, converting them into a new historical reality, as a measure of the conquest of science and scientific technology, and as the beginning of a new phase in the nation's era, and the consolidation of democracy as a conception of the world and way of life (Fernandes, 1975, p.19; emphasis in the original).

In 1975, Florestan associated the new university system with a worldview of democracy as a way of life. In the book, the collected texts present a set of interventions in which he points out the structural limitations of Brazil's higher education system, shaped by the conservative and dependent bourgeois revolution that took place in Brazil. He highlights the model of Brazilian higher education, based on the logic of isolated departments that were strongholds of liberal professionals and sectors of the elite engaged in reproducing their lifestyle and prestige, and the later conglomerate university, geared solely towards transmitting knowledge and providing narrow training for professionals. In general, he argues that Brazilian universities should, once restructured, be guided by the new demands of industrial civilization, with modern pedagogy, more decentralized organizational structures, a polyfunctional vocation, and an emphasis on the creative power of research. These characteristics are associated with the possibility of autonomous development, a reality difficult to imagine in that historical context of authoritarianism and reiteration of the model of dependent capitalism.

In the text published in Aportes, Florestan sets forth a historical analysis of Brazilian higher education, marked by a process of transplantation that hampered its potential to innovate, with an interpretation of the pattern of capitalist development in Brazil. By so doing he brings forth the country's dependency, as well as the peculiar nature of Portuguese colonialism and its effect on the way the idea of the university is transposed, insofar as it was adapted in a manorial society based on slavery, where "schools of higher education" prevailed as symbols of distinction. In the section on the "educational effects of dependent development," he notes that underdeveloped societies could even manage to absorb the innovations stemming from capitalist hubs, but that these had a smaller impact and scope than they did in developed countries. The pace of underdevelopment, he claims, would incorporate these advances as a reiteration of the process of dependent growth instead of leading these societies to their full, autonomous realization. In the last section, in which he discusses what kind of "university for development" there could be in Brazil, Fernandes analyzes different national modernization strategies, highlighting socialism and developmental capitalism, the latter of which, he claims, would not lead to the country completely overcoming its dependence, even if it increased the pace of change from dependency. However, he does not even interpret Brazil in the light of this great historical dilemma, because the authoritarian outcome of 1964 set its political power on a conservative path, and Fernandes does not see how hegemonic actors could effectively provide political guidance for the modernization of the university system. The 1968 reform, he feels, put emphasis on the technical elements of the discussion, but conservative oversight prevented any real progress.

It is in another text, published in the same collection and based on testimony he gave to the Parliamentary Inquiry on Higher Education, chaired by congressman Evaldo de Almeida Pinto, that we can get a better idea of his normative view of what "new" universities should look like. Commenting positively on the innovations brought by the University of Brasília, which were unable to gain a firm footing because of the prevailing authoritarianism, Fernandes (1975, p.71) highlights the following elements:

The university, as the fundamental unit of reference and integration, understood in multifunctional terms; the department, as a basic unit of organization of scholarly work; the 'central institutes,' as intermediate units for coordinating related fields or specialties; professional and technical learning, as a specialized function; basic research, as an activity parallel to teaching functions, but with its own structure and independent pace; graduate education, as a central function in the didactic sphere and the preparation of researchers (emphasis in the original).

From Fernandes's perspective, revolutionizing the university meant removing it from the inertia of elitism and local autarkic insularity, guiding it to new modern requirements and to democracy as a way of life. Therefore, it was fundamental to make efficient use of the means necessary for this purpose, as Fernandes repeatedly reiterates in his testimony in Congress, which confirms his belief not in reformism, but in social science as an instrument of democratic emancipation. Thus, while his words may express the normative assumption that the only way to achieve real autonomy was to break away from dependent capitalism, he does not fail to recognize the role that intellectuals and scientists could have in advancing new ideas about universities with the potential to accelerate their rational reconstruction.

The two years of 1969 and 1970 were also marked by the writing of texts that would give rise to the book *Capitalismo dependente e classes sociais na América Latina* (Dependent capitalism and social classes in Latin America), originally published in 1972 (Fernandes, 1981), composed of three essays. The first chapter provides background information on the historical construction of dependence in the region and the forms and mechanisms by which this came about, as well as its effects on the absence of integration. In his "prior explanation," he argues that the essays are examples of militant interpretation and represent one peculiarity of sociology in Latin America, where the discipline – or rather, science – is located at the heart of human and collective dramas, not departing too far from the world of ordinary men. In this brief text, he seeks to situate the meaning of his project at that moment, relating the work of sociology in Latin America to the human crisis experienced by the continent's societies, without necessarily being mediated by a clearly defined, established scientific community. According to Florestan Fernandes (1981, p.9),

as we have a shortage of personnel, large, organized teams, financial resources, and even intellectual security, we take to history the materials that elucidate the crises themselves and we also experience the crises on the sociological level, as processes of heuristic meaning. Above and beyond universities and research institutions, we learn and mature with every upheaval that affects the fate of our peoples.

He goes on to state: "Sociology is not as far from men and their ambitions and disappointments as it is in Europe or the United States" (Fernandes, 1981, p.9). It is true that this view aligns perfectly with his criticism of what he considered to be the excessive scientific professionalization experienced in the Northern hemisphere in a letter to Freitag and quoted in this article. Fernandes valued the intimate relationship the social sciences had with Latin America's societal dramas, which allowed the fulfillment of their "militant integration." But by the same token he regretted the organizational and institutional shortfalls that spoiled the specialized scientific work, that is, the regular activity of sociologists in educational and research institutions, guided by the values of

science ("shortage of personnel ... and even intellectual security"). This is not, therefore, a case of abandoning the critical promise of scientific sociology, but its full realization in the light of the circumstances of the historical time of Latin America and global geopolitical processes. But what is ILARI's interest in this intellectual project?

The answer lies in the practice of "strategic pluralism," which it already used to deal with the crisis produced by the attacks on the international seminar held in 1965 in Uruguay, and also visible in the same report cited, which contained a brief summary of the meeting of the working group on universities and society in Rio de Janeiro (IACF, 1969). ILARI's reports generally began with an analysis of the region's political scenario, increasingly marked by growing military authoritarianism. After a brief description of the escalation of political repression in Brazil and even Argentina (Ongania took power in 1966), it continues by saying:

It is however possible for us to note some reassuring traits, such as the fact that a certain number of influential left-wing intellectuals, who have hitherto been very reticent towards our activities, have agreed to collaborate with us in one way or another. Thus, in Peru, the philosopher Augustin Salazar Bondy, Jorge Bravo Bresani, Alberto Escobar; or, in Chile, part of the Flacso team and in particular the sociologist Carlos Fortín; in Brazil, Florestan Fernandes; in Uruguay, Jorge Graciarena etc. (IACF, 1969).

The enthusiasm of the directors of ILARI at the success in attracting Fernandes does not stop there. In a circular from January 1970, Mercier Vega (30 jan. 1970) mentions the preparations for the international seminar "El intelectual y el poder político en las Américas" (The intellectual and political power in the Americas), to be held from February 23 to 25, 1970, in New York. The organizing committee consisted of Florestan Fernandes, Gino Germani, Domingo Rivarola, Kalman Silvert, Aldo Solari, Charles Wagley, and Richard Morse, and there would be only two preparatory texts, which would serve as the basis for the collective debate: one by Hanna Arendt and the other by Florestan Fernandes. ILARI's decision to reach out to Arendt was certainly calculated, given how well known she was for her criticisms of modern totalitarianism and their repercussions among liberal and left-wing thinkers critical of the experience of real socialism.

This history of intellectual proximity prompted Solari (20 Mar. 1972) to make a special request to Fernandes, in March 1972. He had learned from Kalman Silvert, he wrote, that the Ford Foundation was still considering maintaining its financial support for the publication of *Aportes*, but for this to happen the region's scientific community would have to manifest its support. Since the *New York Times* revelations in 1966, ILARI had been struggling to maintain its sources of funding, which at the time were restricted to what the Ford Foundation could offer on its own account.

A few days later, Florestan responded by writing to Silvert himself. The letter, dated March 28, 1972, is transcribed in full below:

Just now I have received a letter from Aldo Solari, our common friend, asking me a request on the behalf of 'Aportes' to be written to Ford Foundation. I am able to do it as I consider 'Aportes' very helpful to the development of social sciences in Latin America. What is more important, this magazine works as a middle of the road tribune, open to social scientists identified with different ideologies. Giving the lack of freedom in the

majority of the countries of Latin America and the absence of effective communication between the Latin American social scientists this function is paramount and deserves a careful attention.

Perhaps there is some accessible way to put Ford Foundation if favor of a so good cause...I think that this would be appreciated by my colleagues, even by those who would like to see 'Aportes' more engaged in the fighting of our authoritarian and totalitarian regimes (Fernandes, 28 mar. 1972; emphasis added).

Florestan shows himself to be sympathetic to the *Aportes* cause, using language he knows would appeal to the US liberal progressive elite and Ford's partners ("a middle of the road tribune"). At the same time, he concludes his brief request with a subtle criticism of the journal's political line and perhaps even ILARI itself, with which he collaborated briefly in this short period of institutional displacement and radicalization.

Final considerations

The historical account presented in this article contains new elements that gives us a greater understanding of the trajectory and international circulation of Florestan Fernandes and the ways ILARI operated in different spheres of Latin American social sciences, both topics of great significance in the history of sociology in the region.

In Fernandes's case, the evidences support the hypothesis of an overall continuity in his intellectual project, swelling a growing body of literature (Soares, 1997; Rodrigues, 2006; Brazil Jr., 2013, 2015; Arruda, 2018; Bastos, 2020) in which he is shown to be faithful to the critical project of scientific sociology, forging his theoretical and methodological approach in different contexts without demonstrating any particularly radical change of direction. In addition, the article sheds light on his interactions with actors from other countries – a topic still little explored in the literature, despite some good first steps (Brasil Jr., 2013; Blanco, Brasil Jr., 2018; Mesquita, 2019). The brief partnership shows a sociologist enjoying great prestige among his Latin American peers, to the point of being considered a valuable asset for cementing ILARI's legitimacy.

These international interactions also allow us to think about possible thematic affinities between Solari, Florestan Fernandes, and ILARI with regard to the role of intellectuals and sociological knowledge in a possible democratizing and modernizing transformation of the university system. This agenda was central to all those involved, even if their agreement as to its importance was not accompanied by corresponding ideological positions.

Fernandes's view of science and universities diverged from Solari's insofar as it was guided by a political vision geared towards overcoming dependent capitalism – a goal way outside the scope of his Uruguayan colleague's agenda. Moreover, Solari's skepticism towards student participation in the running of universities reflects his context, where universities had been institutionalized longer than they had in Brazil, where it was harder to foster such participation on a routine basis. Unlike Solari, Fernandes associated the vision of a modern, polyfunctional university with the democratization of its internal structures. Even so, both authors operated within common ground, based on a critical diagnosis of the irrational aspects of the Latin American social structure, which were still guided by

traditional and non-liberal values that transformed universities into a mechanism for reproducing the elites. In a way, both sociologists – albeit with modulations – translated the debate initiated by Parsons about the place of the university system in a democratic mass society set on realizing universalist values (Parsons, Platt, 1973).

Regarding Fernandes's intellectual and professional practices, his engagement with ILARI reveals how much he valued the different forums available for intellectual debate in a continent under authoritarianism and curbs on freedom of research. His critical view of the bureaucratization fostered by international foundations, as revealed in his letters to Barbara Freitag, should be seen in conjunction with this brief episode of interaction with a well-known institution that would play a major role in the Cultural Cold War, but which offered space for discussions specific to the social sciences.

As for ILARI, this case helps consolidate the hypothesis of increasing "openness to the left" as a key element in the organization of intellectual life envisaged by Mercier Vega (Iber, 2015; Jannello, 2013-2014; Markarian, 2020b). The case of Florestan Fernandes shows how pluralism was used strategically through invitations to intellectuals and scientists identified with the Latin American left, in a performance of legitimacy crucial for an institution under attack for its initial ties with the CIA.

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NOTES

- ¹ Although the communist project had exerted great influence over intellectuals at least since the success of the Russian Revolution and the effects of the 1929 crisis, it was in the post-Second World War scenario, when two superpowers and their respective satellites took shape, that it became a global geopolitical issue, reflecting in initiatives such as the Congress for Cultural Freedom.
- ² Free translations are provided of this and the other citations from texts published in other languages.
- ³ Born in Brussels as Charles Cortvrint, Louis Vega was an anarchist militant who fought in the Spanish Civil War and escaped to France in 1936, which he later fled as Nazi influence spread. He joined the CCF in 1951 and in 1952 he was sent to Latin America to work with another militant from the libertarian past, Julian Gorkin, to rally the region's intellectuals, remaining there until 1953. In 1961, he took over from Gorkin in charge of the Latin American Department of the CCF (Jannello, 2018a).
- ⁴ Project Camelot started in 1964, when US Department of Defense officials planned a wide-ranging study into the causes of the uprisings and revolutions in Latin America, together with the American University. The project had a budget of six million dollars and recruited different specialists in the region, including such figures as Gino Germani, but ended up being denounced as imperialist intervention after the public disclosure of the sources of funding and interests involved. Marginalities was a Ford Foundation project that began in 1966 in Chile with the aim of studying the informal populations of Latin America. Despite the "leftist" credentials of many of those involved, such as José Nun, Miguel Murmis, and even Fernando Henrique Cardoso, the project failed on account of theoretical and political differences, which also spawned huge public controversy over claims of imperialism in the USA's foundations.
- ⁵ After this article was accepted, the same author released a book in which he systematizes his broader research on the subject. My understanding is that the interpretation present in the 2018 article does not change substantially, but is substantiated by more empirical evidence and analytical robustness (Ridenti, 2022).
- ⁶ It should be noted that the report cleverly captures the position held by Solari, who at that time had been a full professor for some five years in the second chair of sociology in the country, both at the Faculty of

Law and Social Sciences. Carlos Rama was in fact a more left-leaning sociologist than Solari, who at that time enjoyed prestige and leadership in a field that was still dominated by thinkers and sociologists with a right-wing background (Errandonea, 2003, p.29).

⁷ In December 1965, the publisher Alfa, linked to ILARI, released a book by Solari on third-worldism, which prompted intense debate among the readers of the weekly intellectual publication *Marcha!*. Essentially, Solari considered third-worldism to be a left-wing nationalist ideology that evidenced how little Uruguay's intellectuals were in tune with society and the national political system.

⁸ To date, neither these texts nor more information about the holding of the event has been unearthed, but research of the sources continues.

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