

Internationalization of the IEA

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WHEN I was elected by the University Council of the USP, in 1989, for the Board of Directors of the *Instituto de Estudos Avançados - IEA* (Institute of Advanced Studies) at USP, I had no idea of the importance of the IEA. I knew little about its mission and its performance. At the time I was director of the Institute of Geosciences. With a degree in Geology, I had taken care of hitherto seen to my academic career always in the area of Earth Sciences. As a geoscientist, I was somewhat familiar with other areas of the Exact Sciences, such as Physics, Chemistry and Mathematics, but knew little about the character, breadth and scope of the Social Sciences and Humanities. My assessment of them changed considerably when I joined the IEA. Through the meetings of its Board I had the opportunity to participate in discussions of extraordinary intellectual richness, always comprehensive and boundless in terms of topics, about contemporary thought and scientific, cultural, national and global life. New fields opened up to me, new worldviews. Interdisciplinarity, transdisciplinarity, global society, integrated economy, cultural history, international politics... I was never the same since. At the time, Jacques Marcovitch was director of the IEA. Alfredo Bosi had been publishing the Institute's journal since its inception. Both would deeply mark my academic life thereafter.

In the early 1990s I chaired the International Union of Geological Sciences and was a member of the Executive Committee of ICSU, the International Council for Science. Consequently, with the environmental issue in full swing, I was quite familiar with the environmental issues addressed holistically, "our common future". At the same time, I participated in the preparations for the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, Rio 92, since ICSU had been tasked with drafting the science chapter for the first version of "Agenda 21". This close contact with the issues of planet sustainability, coupled with my previous experience in the Earth Sciences, made it natural for me to get involved in the area of Environmental Sciences at the IEA, of which I was appointed coordinator by director Marcovitch. I made my best struggled to advance the Institute's projects in this area. I participated in many discussions about climate change, natural disasters and the role of the Earth Sciences for sustainability. I followed closely the development of activities under the FLORAM project, one of the most successful of the IEA. Around the same time I also helped to organize a series of activities related to the international agenda on sustainable development, and the participation of Brazil in the Rio 92.

In 1993, when I was chosen by rector dean Fava to succeed Marcovitch as director of the IEA, I was given the huge responsibility of leading the Institute in the next quadrennial. I then had the full view of an academic institution without students and a permanent faculty, which relied on the voluntary collaboration of professors from all USP units, and on a large number of prominent persons from outside institutions entities. I realized how important the IEA label brand was and how easy it was to get the voluntary and frequently spontaneous collaboration of all people involved. I realized that the IEA was as a kind of “outer arm” of USP, by conducting its discussions always with a view to bringing the university closer to society.

During my years at the IEA, I believe that my main contribution was the effort to internationalize its activities. Initially, by bringing it closer to the ICSU and helping to organize the Rio-92 Conference; then through the activities of the Area of International Affairs, one of the most important of the IEA, which incidentally was already in place when I first joined the Institute. I understand that the ideas and discussions that emerged during the events organized by the IEA in this area ultimately enhanced the international activities of USP itself. Later on I also had the opportunity to promote foster the development of these ideas, when I chaired the International Cooperation Commission (Comissão de Cooperação Internacional – CCInt) of USP, during the administration of dean Marcovitch. In 2004, during dean Melfi’s administration, the Institute of International Relations (*Instituto de Relações Internacionais* - IRI) was established at USP. The IRI houses the Group of International Context Analysis (Grupo de Análise da Conjuntura Internacional – GACINT), whose origins lie precisely in the area of International Affairs of the IEA.

The *Instituto de Estudos Avançados* is very dear to me. I consider my close liaison bond with it to be very rich. I recognize that it has greatly expanded my intellectual horizons. It has been a major milestone in my academic career. It has opened my mind and changed my perception of the world. It has changed my life.

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Received on 19 Sep. 2011 and accepted on 25 Sep. 2011.