

# The IAS and the creation of an Intellectual Council at USP

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I HAVE PARTICIPATED in the activities of the *Instituto de Estudos Avançados* – IEA (Institute of Advanced Studies) since its inception in 1986, initially as deputy director during Carlos Guilherme Mota's tenure, from 1986 to 1990, and Alfredo Bosi's, from 1997 to 2001, and finally during my tenure as director from 2001 to 2003, which was interrupted by my compulsory retirement at the age of 70.

The early years of the IEA were marked by many noteworthy activities, to which we invited high-level researchers and intellectuals, including some of renowned talent. On many occasions these guests delivered their lectures in the amphitheater of USP, amidst much interest from the audience and a full room. In those early days, there was great interest in the IEA, due in part to the novelty represented by this Institute, and in part to the dynamism of its first director. Many research and discussion groups, which survived several administrative periods, were established during that first phase of the Institute.

One of the issues discussed at the meeting of former directors was the possibility of reactivating the IEA and going back to the early days of enthusiasm for the new idea. During the meeting on August 12, 2011 commemorating the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Institute, various aspects linked to IEA activities were discussed. This does not mean that its performance is lacking, but several suggestions were made to this regard.

From this point of view, an important issue raised at the time concerned the representation in the University Council of several small units such as museums, Institutes of Brazilian Studies, and the IEA itself, i.e., the small-scale representation of these units that leads to the virtually permanent absence of the IEA in this Council.

This issue was discussed at the meeting on the 12th. One of the solutions proposed to improve representation in the University Council is described next. Whereas it is unlikely that all small units could be ensured permanent representation, an Intellectual University Council could be established in parallel to the University Council currently in place, whose characteristic is essentially political.

This Intellectual Council, consisting of professors who stand out for their

intellectual stature, could be housed in the IEA. Its coordinator would be the IEA director. It would be comprised of a limited number of members (10 or 20), whose election would be dependent upon a mechanism yet to be developed, but who would be intellectual luminaries of the university. Their duty would be to draw up proposals for non-political problems. These proposals would be generated through a mechanism not dependent on voting, but at which the members would arrive by discussion.

This new Council would help to define an important role for the IEA, as well as to resolve any issues essential to USP, which then could be submitted to the University Council for evaluation. Thus, there would be a Political Council - the University Council - to discuss power-related issues at the University, certainly dependent on the political influence of the units, linked in part to their size and economic and historical relevance, and another council for intellectual debates of more philosophical issues linked to universities in general. That would be an important step towards the discussion of some conceptual issues, which could even serve as the basis for future revision of statutes.

Currently, the University Council is limited to discussing mainly important administrative issues, which are often urgent and need to be resolved without undue delay, with no time for deeper consideration. The existence of a collegiate body dedicated to more philosophical issues related to USP or to the general concept of universities and not limited to issues of power, would certainly be a valid progress towards discussing the past, present and future of these institutions.

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