

# The dark side of the force: the military dictatorship and the history course of the National School of Philosophy of the University of Brazil (FNFi/UB)

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## Abstract

The aim of this article is to focus on the final years of the course of history at the FNFi/UB (1958-1968), in order to recover the political and historiographical conflicts that took place there, and to understand the trajectory of this disciplinary field and its professionalization-process at a moment of great transformations. The article's coverage extends to the discussions related to the issues that characterize the memories of traumatic events and the History of the Present Time. Different types of sources were used, such as oral statements, newspapers, FNFi documents, and police archives.

## Keywords

History teaching; Military dictatorship; National Faculty of Philosophy/University of Brazil.

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There has been an increasing number of debates on the social role of historians, on the extent to which university history must be in tune with the social demands, and on how the academic community must avoid its isolation and its omission vis-à-vis the commitment to transpose its knowledge to the public at large, and to basic education. These issues have raised several other questions, inasmuch as the institutions and social actors oftentimes seek to legitimize their points of view through history. Could the social demands put at risk the autonomy of history as a scientific discipline? Could the pressure exerted by the memory-duty pose serious problems for the professional practices of the historian?

These challenges manifest especially in the study of the history of the present time, which for a long time was the object of resistance and interdictions, but now is present in the order of the day in Brazil, due to the creation of the National Truth Commission, aimed at ascertaining crimes against the human rights, not only as an object of academic research, but also as a challenging theme for historians, from the ethical and political standpoints. Which standing should the scientific community adopt? Should it be directly involved in this debate? If yes, which rules should guide such standing? Would this institutional involvement not end up attributing to the historian the role of history's judge?

In this context, the historians that work with the history of the present time are called upon to face the challenge and use the opportunity to expand and legitimize their field of studies, but they ought also to guard themselves against improper pressure by the social demands and by the mandatory character of the memory duty.

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If history performs a real critical work in relation to memory, it also allows the historian to overcome a purely retrospective view of the past and understand how the present has an impact over such reading of the past. This set of problems indicates a strong tension over the social role of historians; in other words, how can one make a public history while securing the respect to the scientific practices of history?

Another concrete example of the tensions faced by the professionals of history is manifested in the present moment, through the debate on the regulations of the historian's craft. With the approval of the project at the Senate, which now is in transit to the House of Representatives, there have been numerous criticisms by the media and by professionals of other areas who work in the field of history.

Act Project 368/09 establishes that the profession of the historian must be exercised by individuals with a diploma in undergraduate, masters or doctorate courses in history. By the exercise of the profession, it understands the activities as history teachers of the basic-teaching cycle and in higher teaching, and also the "planning, organization, implementation and direction of services of historical research" (article 4, incision III), along with "advisory work aimed at the evaluation and selection of documents for the ends of preservation" (article 4, incision V). Thus, it is defined that the profession of historian, encompassing research and teaching, cannot be exercised by those who have not received a diploma of undergraduate, masters or doctorate courses in history.

The discussions on the objectives of the regulation have been intense. Among those who are against the regulation, there are two groups: the group that is against each and all types of professional regulations, and the group specifically opposed to the creation of the profession of historian, as this specific type of knowledge could also be attained in other ways than college education (GRIMBERG 2012). By contrast, the National Association of University Professors of History (ANPUH) has defended the need for the regulation and the specificities for the production of historical knowledge. All these questions, which are currently in the agenda, stimulate us not only to reflect on the place of history today, but also to grasp the trajectory that this field of knowledge has covered in our country, starting with the process of university professionalization, which began in the 1930s, when the titles of professor and historian meant two quite distinct things.<sup>1</sup>

The first history courses were created in order to train teachers for basic education, or secondarily for higher education. The activity of research, depending on the course, could be more or less developed, but was far from being the main focus. Thus, the individual who was responsible for the writing of history, i.e. the historian, was not directly connected or involved with teaching activities; and if one was acting as a teacher, it was not his or her goal to have his or her students developing researches. This role was reserved to erudite liberal professionals who undertook research as a parallel activity in their lives. In truth, this situation was substantially changed with the creation of the postgraduate programs starting in the 1970s, which annually train hundreds of masters and doctors who, in most of the cases, bring together the resources to exercise both research and teaching activities. Thus, the title "historian", which in the past referred only to those who wrote history, now is increasingly used to include those who receive a specific title either for teaching or research activities.

This article's proposal of focusing on the final years of existence of the history course of the FNF/UB (1958-1968) and the disputes that took place there, awakens a strong interest and offers theoretical and methodological possibilities for facing the challenges of grasping the trajectory of this discipline's field and its professionalization-process in a moment of great transformations, as well as the issues that characterize the history of the present time. Dealing with the events and actors who took part in this history is an opportunity to exercise our critical capacity to evaluate interpretations marked by traumatic memories, police sources, and periodicals that were starkly committed with polarized and radical ideological positions. Therefore, this article is guided by

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<sup>1</sup> Although some works, such as the ones by Manoel Salgado, highlight the relevance of the production of the IHGB and characterize these authors as history professionals, it is necessary to call attention to a distinction between them and a new category of professionals who started to emerge with the creation of the university courses in the 1930s, and who received specific training aimed at their preparation for the teaching activities. While recognizing the value of the production and the identity of the professional historians linked to the IHGB in the course of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and in the First Republic, the vast majority of them was not dedicated to teaching, and was not focused on training professors. Furthermore, even though they were intellectuals who produced works of great relevance, they can be considered as self-taught professionals, as they did not have a specific disciplinary training to act as history professors. For a deeper look into the creation of the disciplinary fields, see: BOUTIER; REVEL 2006.

the orientation of analyzing the political clashes and the repression that hit the scholars and students of the FNFi, seeking to produce an analysis that may secure the scientific nature of this sensible history.<sup>2</sup>

To attain this aim, we refer to a diversified set of sources in order to retrieve events of this recent past marked by emotion and subjectivity. An important starting point for the research was an interview with Maria Yeda Linhares in 1994, which provided the first script that guided other interviews in the subsequent years with former students and professors. Despite being produced in different contexts with different objectives, the interviews have a common axis that focuses the trajectory of the interviewees, their family origins, vocational training, their choice of selecting the area of history, the teaching-activities at the FNFi, and their experience as students of that school. The selection of the interviewees had a clear-cut objective: to obtain testimonies of former students and professors of different generations that could recover several events and moments of the history course of the FNFI.<sup>3</sup>

Along with the oral-memory sources, the collection of the FNFi itself also provided materials that helped us know the structure of the courses and the curriculum programs. Although in a too fragmented and dispersed way, these documents allowed us to locate events, names and dates more precisely. The bulletins of the Center of History Studies (“Centro de Estudos de História”) were especially valuable for the purpose of mapping the political and historiographical conflicts on the agenda of the history course in the years 1958-1963. And lastly, also the archives of the Department of Political and Social Order (DOPS) had a great importance, as it was possible to find in them the dossiers of the professors and students, and in particular one specific dossier dedicated to the FNFi. This collection, which is at once rich and dangerous, demands an extreme caution by the researcher, as it gathers information that allow us to clarify, confront and question the data of the oral reports. To make this research circuit complete, articles of large newspapers of Rio de Janeiro, such as *O Globo*, *Jornal do Brasil* and *O Jornal*, allowed a better comprehension of the political struggles that took place back then, and of the importance of the FNFi in the media.

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### **Political struggles and the constitution of a discipline’s field: the 1950s**

The National School of Philosophy (Faculdade Nacional de Filosofia) and, in particular, the history course, underwent great transformations in the turn of the 1950s. The project of the School of Philosophy was created in 1939 linked to the University of Brazil (Universidade do Brasil), aiming at the consolidation of a model-university that could act as a standard for the other universities that would come to exist, and had the primary objective of preparing candidates to the regular activities of higher secondary teaching (“magistério do ensino

<sup>2</sup> To deepen the discussion on the history of the present time, see: FERREIRA 2011.

<sup>3</sup> Among the interviewees are Vicente Tapajós, Borges Hermida and Eremildo Viana, Maria Yeda Linhares, Eulália Lobo, Cibele Ipanema Moreira; Francisco Falcon, Miridan Knox and Clóvis Dotore, Pedro Celso Uchoa Cavalcanti, Ilmar Matos, Neyde Thelm, Arno Welling, and, finally, Nara Saleto, who was neither student nor teacher at the FNFi, but joined the history course as assistant professor after 1968, and whose testimony provided us with an external look by a person who arrived at the difficult repression-years.

secundário”) and to the pedagogical secondary course (“normal”). The FNFi was organized into four fundamental sections: Philosophy, Sciences, Linguistics, and Pedagogy. There was presumably a special additional section of Didactics. History and geography, among other courses, were linked to the Section of Sciences. The training activities in history and geography were unified into one single course aimed essentially at teaching. The course of history and geography would only be dismembered starting in 1955.<sup>4</sup>

The FNFi was founded during the Estado Novo (“New State”) regime, marked by authoritarian ideas, and was starkly influenced by Catholic sectors in connection with the Dom Vital Center, with Alceu de Amoroso Lima and other individuals with an Integralist orientation, who had been appointed to occupy some important seats at the newly-created university. The direction of the school was handed to San Tiago Dantas, whereas the chair of History of Brazil, which, in the Estado-Novo context, was expected to perform a key role in the training of the future secondary teachers, was handed to Hélio Viana. Thus, the institutionalization of the history course of the FNFi was starkly influenced by the conception of a political history – a dominating one at the time – aimed at reinforcing the links of the Brazilian identity by emphasizing the national unity and the role of the great heroes as constructors of the nation (FERREIRA 2012a).

With the fall of the Vargas regime in 1945, the FNFi underwent some modifications. It was starting in this moment, with the process of re-democratization, that the University of Brazil reached a better definition of its contours, both from the standpoint of its conception of teaching and research, and of its administrative and financial structures. On account of this, in 1946 the schools were reorganized into departments. The FNFi started to have other departments, in accordance with the following distribution: Philosophy, Mathematics, Physics, Chemistry, Natural History, History and Geography, Social Sciences, Linguistics and Pedagogy. In spite of these administrative changes, and of the creation of public exams to legalize the positions of the chair professors, the course of history and geography did not undergo any significant change in its curriculum program or in the composition of its faculty. In truth, what we see is that professors such as Eremildo Viana (Ancient and Medieval History), Delgado de Carvalho (Modern and Contemporary History), Silvio Júlio (History of the Americas) and Hélio Viana (History of Brazil) were confirmed as holders of the main chairs.

In the 1950s, the history course started to occupy a more highlighted place inside the National School of Philosophy. After over ten years under the direction of Antônio Carneiro Leão, professor of School Administration and Compared Education, Eremildo Viana took up the direction of the School in 1958, supported by most of his colleagues. Eremildo remained in the position until 1963, after being reelected in 1960.

Starting in 1955, there was the separation of the course of history and geography in two different departments. This modification opened spaces for

<sup>4</sup> The first part of this article is a summary of other texts published by Ferreira (2006; 2008a; 2012a).

an additional oxygenation of the history course, with a change in the curriculum and the introduction of new subjects. The chair of Methodological Introduction to History was incorporated to the program of the first semester, and optional subjects were also made available for the students. Along with these changes, a newer generation of professors started to occupy positions. Still in this same year, the chair professor Delgado de Carvalho retired, and Maria Yedda Linhares took part in the public exams for the chair of Modern and Contemporary History. In 1958, Eulália Lobo took over a position in the chair in History of the Americas, whose holder was still Sílvio Julio de Albuquerque. New assistant professors also started to be incorporated to several subjects, among them Eugênia Prado, Francisco Falcon, Arthur Weiss, and Hugo Weiss, to the chair of Modern and Contemporary History; and Manuel Maurício Albuquerque, and Luís Werneck da Silva, both to the chair of History of Brazil (FERREIRA 2012a).

### **A historiographical clash: Nelson Werneck versus Hélio Viana**

The scenario introduced in the late 1950s was marked by a process of radicalization of the social movements, creating a polarization between left and right. It was a political context of stark mobilization against communism, and against the Cuban Revolution. These dominant issues in the international scenario promoted an intense polarization and confrontation between the Western capitalist countries and the communist countries, and led to an internal exacerbation of the conflicting ideological positions.

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Especially in the turn into the 1960s, this process of changes was deepened through the political radicalization and polarization that took place in the country. The divergences ranged all the way from the conception of history and the desired course model, to the ideological position in regard to the striking political events of the Goulart administration, such as the Agrarian Reform program, the Revolt of the Sergeants, the Independent Foreign Policy, and the Central Station's Rally, only to mention a few points (FERREIRA 2008a).

All debates involved by these themes had an intense repercussion in the FNFi, and, in particular, in the history course. If in the previous years, different conceptions of history and divergent views on the format of the courses and on the relations between teaching and research were already outlined, the new scenario of intense debates on the place of the university and the uses of history-teaching as an instrument of social transformation increasingly led to a split between students and teachers, and among the teachers themselves (FERREIRA 2011).

The chair of History of Brazil, occupied by Hélio Viana, had a conservative posture. Its orientation was aimed at political history and, especially, to diplomatic history. Colonial Brazil received a special attention and the republic-themes were totally left to a secondary place; the historiographical approach was marked by an over-appreciation of the events and main figures, while the economic dimension was not dealt with – according to the testimonies of ex-students of many generations – and were profoundly tedious, exclusively expository with minute factual accounts, and without any bibliographical indication. The exams

were based on the contents presented at the classroom, thus demanding merely a good memorizing capacity. There was no stimulus to research whatsoever, either with sources or with bibliography (FALCON 2009).

While Hélio Viana transmitted a history of Brazil turned into the distant past, with an emphasis on the political history, especially in appreciation of the process of construction of the national unity and highlighting the role of the main figures of the national pantheon, the chair of Modern and Contemporary History started to add focus to more recent periods, with themes on the history of Africa and de-colonization, and started serving as a space of debate and criticism, while training teachers on research, which was not common in the other chairs of the course (FALCON 2001).

The students were becoming increasingly identified with the left-wing forces, and longed for a course that could incorporate the production of the Higher Institute of Brazilian Studies (ISEB), along with new theme areas such as contemporary history of Africa, the decolonization process and the social struggles in Brazil.

In this context, in August 1958, the Center of History Studies was created, and further on, the journal *Boletim de História* ("History Bulletin", 1958-1963). Founded by an initiative of the students of the history course, the center counted with the stimulus and the support of the school's direction and of many professors. However, from 1958 to 1963, there were changes in the strategy of the publication: from a didactical orientation to secondary-school teachers, it moved into a criticism of the university course itself, along with a perception of its limits in the training of history professionals, and social critique (PEREIRA 1998).

While a restructuring of the left-wing organizations was starting to take shape, new orientations and new groups with more radical political tendencies emerged in the country. The penetration of the Communist Party in the students' milieu, although dominant, began to raise criticisms and to stimulate the approximation with other left-wing orientations. The increasing mobilization of the workers, both in the cities and in the countryside, demanding not only salary improvements, but also changes in the unequal structure of the society, was a source of stimulus so that the university students could become more effectively engaged in the social struggles.

The position defended by the students who were engaged in the social struggles of the present and committed to the necessity of comprehending the contemporary world from a Brazilian perspective led to a posture according to which history should become involved in the current problems, and historical knowledge should present explanations and possible solutions for them (BOLETIM DE HISTÓRIA 1962; 1963).

If history teaching should be reviewed, then also the training of history professionals ought to undergo modifications. The didactical books would have to pay more attention to the study of Brazil's recent history. The testimony of Celso Uchoa Cavalcanti, director of the Center of History Studies in 1962, clearly expresses the wishes of those young university students: "For my generation,

for us left-wingers, there were three history authors: Caio Prado Jr., Nelson Werneck Sodré and Celso Furtado. The rest was not important. Capistrano merely existed. But they were the references through which we would search things, and not the books that trained us in the history of Brazil” (CAVALCANTI 2012, p. 10).

With this perspective, the students of the history course linked to the Center of History Studies rejected the teachings that were given in most of the subjects offered in the course (with the exception of the chair of modern and contemporary history), and they were becoming involved with the ISEB and started to make plans, under the guidance of Nelson Werneck, to produce a collection of didactical books that received the name *História Nova* (“New History”).

Once again, the testimony of Pedro Celso Uchoa Cavalcanti retrieves aspects of this memory:

The ISEB had a course that was a confrontation with the Higher War School (Escola Superior de Guerra). Sodré taught on Mondays: every Monday, early in the morning, I went there to attend the lessons. [...] Well, I attended this course by Sodré, [...] asking questions at the end of the class. He felt an interest for me. At the end of the course, he called me to his desk and asked if I wished to become his assistant at the ISEB (CAVALCANTI 2012, p. 10).

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After this first contact with Nelson Werneck, the next step was the organization of a history course for the students of the FNFi. Continuing his narrative, Pedro Celso (2012) declares: “I also managed to have Sodré teaching a course on Brazilian history for fellows of mine, still in college. In this course, there were 13, 15 people, such as Rubens César and others. It was at the ISEB, but it was a private course. It was a favor that he was doing us”.

As a further result of this course, the New History project was accomplished, with its focus of criticizing the existing didactical books, and presenting a history of Brazil based on the contributions of works by Werneck Sodré himself, by Caio Prado, and by Celso Furtado. Under the guidance of Nelson Werneck, the production of the collection of didactical books started with the purpose of taking another vision of history to the basic education, a vision in which the economic dimension and the class struggles played a key role.<sup>5</sup> Thus, even though professors with a leftist position, such as Maria Yeda, disagreed from Nelson Werneck Sodré’s conception of history, the penetration of his ideas and of the Marxist theses gained space in the FNFi, in an open confrontation with the views that had been transmitted in the course of decades by Hélio Viana.

The intensification of the engagement of the students and also of the professors in the political clashes that took place in the final years of the Goulart government, on the reform of the university in a general way, of the history course, and of the uses of history teaching as an instrument of social transformation, resulted in an increasingly stark split between students and professors, and among the professors themselves.

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<sup>5</sup> See: LOURENÇO 2008.



### The FNFi at the target: the CPI of the UNE

The events of 1963 were especially important in this process, as they led to an increase in the radicalization and a deepening in the political dissent at the FNFi. In the words of Arthur Poerner, from 1960 to 1964, the FNFi was a sort of an “advanced echelon of the students’ movement”, and was seen as the most politicized Brazilian university (POERNER 2004, p. 188). Since 1961, with the end of Parliamentarianism and with Goulart’s resuming of the presidential powers, the left-wing forces felt victorious and were advancing their claims, as the struggles for the basic reforms won a new dimension and the social movements were intensifying their claims. In this context, in the second semester of 1963, there were new elections scheduled to take place for the direction of the FNFi.

The director at the time, professor Eremildo Viana, had been elected twice, and many students wished for a renewal of the direction. However, according to the oral testimonies of erstwhile professors and students, and to the news issued by the press, the master desired to remain in the position and was working to reach such objective. In response, the students’ directorate mobilized the students and decreed a strike that paralyzed the entire school. According to *O Jornal* on September 25, 1963,

The students of the National School of Philosophy await the solution promised by Paulo de Tarso, Minister of Education, on the selection of a new director for the School. [...] The students affirm that the substitution of the late professor Nilton Campos, through the triple list of candidates still figuring the professors Djacir Menezes and Eremildo Viana, by professor Kingston is illegal, as there has been no specific call for a new election (O JORNAL 25/09/1963, p. 11).

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Still according to the account of the periodical,

[...] the vice-president of the Academic Directorate (DA) told the *Jornal* that the students decided to cast a vote of confidence in the Minister of Education, due to a message sent by him to the DA, thus ending the strike. He also declared that there is a small group of students that make up the opposition (GRD), and support the reelection of Eremildo Viana. Sérgio guarantees that the calm will be kept at the National School of Philosophy, as the students await a response by the government (O JORNAL 25/09/1963, p. 11).

These accounts express the conflicts that took place in that moment and the capacity of the students to press the Ministry of Education towards their objectives, intensifying the tension between professors and students.

In parallel to it, in the national scene, a Parliamentary Inquiry Committee (Comissão Parlamentar de Inquérito, or CPI) was formed at the House of Representatives to investigate a communist infiltration in the National Students Union (União Nacional dos Estudantes, UNE) and the improper use of public resources by the organization to promote political agitations. By following the CPI, it is possible for us to see a reproduction of the political clashes that marked the entire Brazilian society at the time. On the one hand, the right-wing forces

were calling for a CPI and convoking deponents to substantiate the proof of a communist infiltration in the UNE. On the other, the left-wing parliamentarians worked to neutralize the moves of Raimundo Padilha, president of the CPI, to incriminate the students.

The FNFi - focus of the students - agitation, was under the lens of investigations and its director Eremildo Viana was convoked to testify at the CPI. Eremildo's testimony, which was published in an abridged form in *O Jornal*, already indicated the position that the FNFi director had started to adopt. If during several years, Eremildo negotiated with the left-wing students and supported the creation of the Center of History Studies and of the *Boletim de História*, by providing resources for the publication, his path, as well as the paths of many others, started to take the opposite direction as the students' movement became more radical. Even though the Congress Diary, *Diário do Congresso*, had not fully reproduced Eremildo's testimony, the articles by *O Jornal* and *O Globo* indicate the main approached points.

Under the title "UNE has extra funds to agitate the students' class" ("UNE tem verba de sobra para agitar a classe estudantil"), the testimony was thus depicted by *O Jornal* on September 25, 1963:

Professor Eremildo Viana stated that on account of the fact that the UNE has substantial funds, it carries out programs that trouble the student life of the country, instead of providing services to the School in the cultural field. [...] Eremildo agrees with the fact that there is the necessity of reforms in the political and social structures, but not by means of disorder, anarchy and break of hierarchy, [...].

Several episodes of indiscipline and subversion of the order are narrated by professor Eremildo, and denouncements are made about the linkage of the students to the Communist Party. As proofs, the professor presented the Committee with placards of a subversive character in favor of the sergeants and against the STF, and handed the Manifesto that guides the organization of the pre-college courses and their connections with the Communist Party. [...]

[According to the deponent,] another organization that plots against the social order is the IESB, where students who have been expelled from the School on account of immorality, and who did not get to conclude their courses, are now professors.<sup>6</sup>

Eremildo recounted old and current episodes [...] and confirmed by bringing back to the fore an administrative enquiry that took place years before, on bacchanalia that had been verified in the School's building, including the names of the students [...]. [He also said] that the University Council has the extract and the report of the inquiry. But he did not present any solution (O JORNAL 25/09/1963, p. 5).

<sup>6</sup> For further details of Eremildo Viana's account, here are other published excerpts of his testimony: according to the deponent, "the claims that the agitators presented, which are coincident with the decision of a Congress that took place in Cuba are: division of the School's administration through the Students' Directorate, inclusion of 24 student representatives at the Congregation, which has a total of 36 members, elimination of the demand of a medical certificate, or of a new voucher for second-chance enrollment, the lowering of the minimum score for approval, and exemption from mandatory attendance; therefore they consider the administrative decentralization a fundamental element for alleviating the responsibilities of the Director. [...] [According to the deponent] the DA is mostly composed by extremist individuals, and there is a system of coercion and threats so that the students who oppose the agitations will not be present at the elections. [The deponent declared that] he sent an official note to the rector of the University with the request that the DA funds for the present year should be withheld until, according to the law, its past director Enilton Sá Rêgo can be accountable and present the balance sheet, which he denies to do" (O JORNAL 25/09/1963).

Also according to *O Jornal*, regarding these final assertions, representative Padilha made a request “for the Committee to require from the Congregation of the School the names of the participant professors, given that their names were taken out of the process”. The periodical also added that “The convocation of rector Pedro Calmon was requested, given that the process includes indecorous facts” (O JORNAL 25/09/1963, p. 5).

The statements of Eremildo at the so-called CPI of the UNE already indicated his change of course in the direction of the forces opposed to the Goulart government. They also evince the prevailing mood at the FNFi, with denouncements against students and professors on account of their political positions, and moral accusations in the attempt to incriminate and demoralize the accused, by committing them with acts that were taken as indecorous.

In the months that followed, the process of political radicalization became worse, and increasingly placed the professors and students of the FNFi in opposite fields. In the first months of 1964, in spite of the resistance of the Congress to move forward in the approval of the basic reforms, Goulart decided to implement the Agrarian Reform, through a strategy of mobilizing the population to press the Parliament. On March 13, 1964, the Central Station Rally was a watershed in this process. Evidently, students and many professors of the FNFi took active part in these final moments of the Goulart government, in the belief that the socialist revolution was about to come. The outcome of this history is known. On March 31, the military coup decreed the end of the Goulart government, leading to a fierce repression against the left-wing forces.

At the FNFi and in the history course, the episodes that followed were traumatic and intensely conditioned the memory of the subsequent decades. At the very first moments, Eremildo Viana, aided by military troops, occupied Radio MEC, which was directed by Maria Yedda Linhares, under the pretext that that there was a focus of agitation at the radio, and that firearms had been stored at its facilities for subversive acts. In the following weeks, Maria Yedda was removed and Eremildo Viana started to occupy her seat. This episode left deep marks in the history course, and on its students and professors, who began to see Eremildo as the responsible for the entire process of repression that followed.

In the next months, several Military Police Enquiries (Inquéritos Policiais Militares, IPMs) were initiated to investigate the communist infiltration at the FNFi, and professors were accused and arrested, while students were expelled. According to the dossiers produced by the security bodies, the FNFi was hosting a communist cell that gathered several professors. The amassed information of these dossiers retrieve events and persons who were active at the FNFi starting in 1958, and one of the highlighted figures in Eremildo’s denouncements, but also mentioned in other accounts, is Maria Yeda Linhares.

According to these documentation, which had the goal of making a historical account of leftist actions at the FNFi by gathering documents related to several

moments,<sup>7</sup> Maria Yedda Linhares was described as a “fanatic communist”, “dangerous”, and “a propagandist of extremist ideas”; she was accused of “having invited two known communists to be her instructors – Hugo Weiss (who was fired from Colégio Andrews and Colégio de Aplicação), and Arthur Bernardes Weiss – and the three, of inducing the students to indiscipline in relation to their pro-democracy professors.”<sup>8</sup>

In the eyes of the security bodies, since the FNFi with some of its professors had become a den of communists and dangerous extremists, it would then be a preferential target of repression. The witch-hunt was on, and once again, individual episodes of the past, which involved students and resulted in administrative inquiries to investigate acts considered indecorous, were activated to incriminate and demoralize professors, who were accused of omission and of taking part in immoral activities in the School facilities.<sup>9</sup>

### **The Investigations Committee of the University of Brazil**

Specifically in order to hit this space of opposition and debates, an Investigations Committee was created at the University of Brazil in May 1964, in Rio de Janeiro, to ascertain the communist infiltration at the FNFi. It was created by order of the minister of education and presided by general Arcy da Rocha Nóbrega, composed by professors Mauricio Joppert da Silva and Mauro Ribeiro Viega; the committee also added Adalmyr B. Pinheiro de Barros and the retired lieutenant Miguel Uzeda Filho.

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According to the documentation filed at the DOPS, which also added the news that were published by the press, in spite of the alleged existence of a communist cell operating at the FNFi, the committee did not find important elements to prove the accusations made against the so-called FNFi communists, such as Viera Pinto, and Maria Yedda Linhares. Even without having access to the documentation of the committee, it is possible to grasp, by reading Eremildo Viana’s interview to the press after the disclosure of its results and its dossier at the DOPS file, that the investigations ran across unexpected and disappointing paths for the repression. The words of Eremildo himself allow us to capture the outcome of the investigations: while the Investigation Committees in the other universities examined the facts in all their sectors, colleges and schools, the

<sup>7</sup> Maria Yedda Linhares was considered “a fanatic communist” and dangerous”, as a propagandist of extremist ideas, keeping intimate connections with João Christovão Cardoso (chair professor of Physics-Chemistry), Darcy Ribeiro, Osvaldo Hurbster de Gusmão, and Álvaro Vieira Pinto. Her activity, “by the order of the communist cell, was to attract the students of the Philosophy course” – four of them would have been Wanderlei Guilherme dos Santos, Carlos Estevam Martins, Alberto Coelho de Souza, and Fausto Guimarães Cupertino –, and “to disseminate subversive ideas against the chief of the Philosophy Department at the time, Prof. Nilton Campos”. “And thus started the big FNFi mutiny, which culminated in immorality by that professor who was accused, by inquiry, of covering up indecorous activities by the students (keeping intimate relations with Alberto Coelho de Souza) [Boletim Reservado, Pasta 23, 3 folhas; 4 fev. 1964; Departamento de Ordem Política e Social - Professores comunistas da FNFI]. Maria Yedda was also accused of “having invited two known communist to be her instructors: Hugo Weiss (who was fired from Colégio Andrews and Colégio de Aplicação), and Arthur Bernardes Weiss. The three are inducing the students to indiscipline in relation to the pro-democracy teachers. Selected by Minister Paulo de Tarso as Rádio MEC director, by appointment of Darcy Ribeiro, her objective was to use radio broadcasting in order to disseminate the ideas that she preachers at the School” (O JORNAL, 25/09/1963, p. 5). See also the DOPS documents, at the Public Archives of the State of Rio de Janeiro (APERJ), Maria Yedda Linhares.

<sup>8</sup> See the DOPS documents, at the Public Archives of the State of Rio de Janeiro (APERJ), Maria Yedda Linhares.

<sup>9</sup> See the DOPS documents, at the Public Archives of the State of Rio de Janeiro (APERJ), Maria Yedda Linhares.

committee of the University of Brazil only sought to focus the National School of Philosophy in order to accuse me".<sup>10</sup>

In his testimony filed at the DOPS documentation, Eremildo Viana declares that "the committee was created to demoralize him, to accuse him of being a whistleblower of school students and professors, and of lacking administrative honesty".<sup>11</sup> Also according to his own words, and adding a tone of accusation and denouncement, Eremildo affirms that "besides finding nothing against the rector and other members of the University Administration, the Committee started to defend the communist professors and students of the University (as it refrained from indicting known subversive professors such as Álvaro B. Vieira Pinto, Darcy Ribeiro, and Max da Costa Santos". He also declared that he had testified twice before the Committee and handed documents proving that, starting in 1962, a communist base started to develop at the school); and thus that he, in the position of director, had made a tenacious opposition.<sup>12</sup>

With these statements, it is evident that his complaints of being unjustly accused of acting as a whistleblower have become unfounded, inasmuch as he himself publicly reaffirmed and made accusations of the existence of communist professors at the FNFi.

The clashes between Eremildo Viana and general Nóbrega regarding the ascertained results by the UB committee were daily transmitted by the mass press of Rio, indicating the role of importance that the FNFi occupied in the political scene of the country at that moment, and how there were still spaces of fight, and of some guarantee of defense for the oppositions vis-à-vis the arbitrariness of the newly-founded military regime.

In this context, the activities of the FNFi, then directed by Faria Goes Sobrinho, were in large measure paralyzed, and the teaching activities became seriously jeopardized. Only starting in 1965, the rhythm of the FNFi became regular once again, under the new bases of a dictatorial regime.

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### **Dark days for the history of the IFCS**

After the Military Coup of 1964, the Ministry of Education took up the banner of the University Reform and started to promote changes in the federal universities, which were then disseminated towards the other ones (ABREU 2001).

In 1965, a federal act determined that the University of Brazil would change its name to Federal University of Rio de Janeiro (UFRJ), and soon afterwards, that its schools would either merge or turn into institutes. Thus, starting in 1967, the history course was integrated to the newly-created Institute of Philosophy and Social Sciences (IFCS) at rua Marquês de Olinda, where the existing Institute of Social Sciences was already located. In the months that followed, the process of political radicalization reached its peak, as repression bodies undertook a bomb-

<sup>10</sup> Folder Eremildo Vianna. Informações. Pasta 84 DOPS SI=SFA Nº805 (folhas 144-146). Referência: Gabinete do Sr. Diretor.

<sup>11</sup> See the DOPS documents, at the Public Archives of the State of Rio de Janeiro (APERJ), file Maria Yedda Linhares.

<sup>12</sup> See FERREIRA (2010).

attempt at the building of rua Marquês de Olinda, and with the expansion of the student's movement, which launched a wave of strikes that largely paralyzed the university activities.

In spite of all these changes, and according to the testimonies of Maria Yedda Linhares and Francisco Falcon, from 1965 to 1968, it was possible to recover the dynamics of the history course, especially in the chairs of modern and contemporary history, and history of the Americas, with Eulália Lobo ahead of the subject. The expansion of the student's movement itself, starting in 1966, and the increasing questioning of the military regime served as a stimulus to the debate, with the creation of study groups, seminars and lectures, and the involvement with readings that led to an interpretation of history from the historical-materialism perspective. Also in this period, Maria Yedda sought to create a postgraduate course in social history. A project was drafted for the activities of the new course, but the initiative did not thrive. The undergraduate curricular program did not undergo major changes either.

If, in the post-1964 period, there were still conditions for resistance in the rubble of the FNFi, which was already dismembered in different institutes, after 1968 the "lead years" would set in for real. With the enactment of Institutional Act 5 (AI-5) in December 1968, many professors were expelled by cassation and Decree 477 was applied to several students.

### **The new lord of the IFCS**

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Now transferred to Largo de São Francisco, the history course would face, for several years, an atmosphere of denouncement and persecution that dramatically jeopardized its activities. The exam of the reports of the security bodies bears evidences of the importance attained by Eremildo Viana, and of the recognition paid by the ruling regime to his services in the combat to the so-called communist activities.<sup>13</sup>

After investigating about professor Eremildo Luiz Vianna, it was found that the background recorded here is correct in regard to the communist activities. The above-mentioned professor has developed an intense activity against the communist infiltration that took place at the FNFi and at the UFRJ, in the period of 1963 and part of 1964. In 1963, he testified at the inquiry that was open at the Parliament to ascertain the communist activities at the former UNE, and he has also acted as an accusation witness against communist professors and students. Due to his actions against the communist dissemination and activities at the FNFi, he was exonerated from the position in which he had performed since 1957. With the advent of the Revolution, he was appointed to the position of Director of the Radio Ministério da Educação, which he held until 07/69 (FERREIRA 2010).

This portrait of Eremildo's trajectory, which was produced by the security bodies, indicates us the power resources and the prestige that he acquired to return to the university as the new lord of the history course and of the IFCS at the UFRJ. It was about attracting new professors, given that many of the previous

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<sup>13</sup> See the DOPS file. Dossiê Emerildo Viana. Informação nº 184/69 da SOB dated July 28, 1969.

professors had been either expelled by cassation or reached retirement, such as Hélio Viana and Silvio Julio. Also the chair-system had ended, but the entrance procedures did not change much. Recruiting still took place based on personal relations and for individuals who did not have the so-called “political past”.

The testimony of Nara Saletto, who entered the history course in 1973, provides an idea of the overall mood at the newly-created Institute of Philosophy and Social Sciences:

As I am saying, the early days of the IFCS were terrible. There were spies in the staff, who would enter the classrooms at the pretext of minor hair-splittings, and followed the steps of the professors everywhere, even in the elevators! I was not able to have conversations with the students, or even invite them to go to my house. Of course, they went, but no one should know: it was not well-seen; it was a sinful thing [laughs]. Vigilance extended itself from the corridors to the cafeteria, and thanks mainly to the students themselves, little by little the atmosphere became lighter (FERREIRA 2010).

In the 1970s, the project of creating a postgraduate course in history was reactivated based on a new orientation and under the leadership of Eremildo Viana, but the difficulties in order to consolidate it were quite considerable. The new course was only in conditions to graduate its students after the election of Eulália Lobo as coordinator of the postgraduate program in 1982. But until then, many steps had to be taken.

The political opening that started with the government of Geisel (1974-1979) and the progress in the amnesty strives brought new times for the IFCS and for the history course, with the full reintegration of the professors who had been expelled by cassation in 1979. Among the professors of the history course in this situation were Eulália Lobo herself, Hugo Weiss, who was already deceased at the occasion, Manoel Maurício de Albuquerque, and Maria Yedda Linhares.

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### Final remarks

A final highlight is that the debates and the developments after the events that occurred in the decade examined by this study (1958-1968) are fundamental for grasping the succeeding movements that took place in the less than peaceful territory in which the university history courses flourished. Certainly, an expanded investigation of the different aspects treated above, such as the trajectory of professors and students, their relations with the international debates that were mentioned, and the conflicts between different conceptions of history can contribute in order to outline a more historical perspective of our history courses, especially in a moment in which the regulation of the historians' craft is in discussion. The importance and the study possibilities on the memories of traumatic events and the repression unleashed at the FNFi/IFCS deserve an equal highlight. An analysis of the testimonies of the students and professors, which were collected for the present research, allows us to point out to some important elements.

As we know, oral testimonies are memories that represent different versions of the past and express contradictory recollections, forgotten events, distortions and conflicts, and cannot be taken as “true” or “objective” accounts of the narrated facts; yet, and precisely due to this reason, they allow us to assess a richer material and the information that is seldom found in other sources. The obtained accounts are greatly relevant as keys and as starting points for mapping the questions to be researched in a tangle of dispersed and fragmented documents. Besides filling gaps that the written documents cannot reach, the oral accounts have been safe and rich paths for clarifying the disputes and conflicts of memory, and also for providing us with clues for comprehending the constructed versions on the trajectory of the courses. The central focus of the testimonies was concentrated on the political struggles, particularly in the period from 1950 to 1964, more than in the contents of the courses themselves, considering that most of the interviewees entered the university starting in 1957 and 1958, and that their experience, therefore, was starkly marked by the years of political radicalization in Brazil, starting in the JK government, until Jango’s fall with the military coup of 1964. What can be noticed is that the engagement of the students and professors in the transformation projects of Brazil, although in different ways and with different political orientations, has intensely conditioned the memories on the history course, casting positive facts into oblivion and highlighting the repression and the traumas prompted by the military coup.

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