

## FOREWORD

The third issue of the International Interdisciplinary Journal INTERthesis covers a round-table about the Contemporary Brazil, explanation and discussion of Canadian and Brazilian University students' papers, accomplished at the Canadian Congress of Latin American and Caribbean Studies (CALACS), in the city of Guelph (Ontario, Canada), on October 30, 2004.

The president was Prof. W.E. (Ted) Hewitt (University of Western Ontario), and the coordinator was Prof. Edgar Dosman (York University), having Prof. Judith Hellman (York) as mediator. The round-table was organized and presented to honor Betinho (Herbert de Souza, creator of IBASE in Brazil), who was exiled in Canada between 1974 and 1978, becoming at that time highly acknowledged at the academic environment, for his capacity of leadership, organization and initiative towards the fight for social justice, for the intellectual innovation, and the practical sympathy with the Latin American peoples. Such qualities have been reconsidered today by several Brazilian and Canadian University professors and students, as necessary to rebuild and broaden the exchange, the convergence and the reflection in common, between Brazil and Canada.

The reasons for this search for the mutual acknowledgement and cooperation between Brazil and Canada are many. Brazil is today very little known and studied in Canada and the same happens in Brazil concerning Canada. Whenever we hear something involving these two countries, it has to do with occasional incidents and conflicts of interests.

Recently we have seen successive complaints from both countries to the World Trade Organization (WTO), mutually denouncing the state subsidies to the plane industries - Embraer, in Brazil, and Bombardier in Canada, for violation to the rules of free formation and price competition in the international market. Whatever the practical results of these arbitrages for interest might be, the Brazilian and Canadian public opinion just receives very partial information regarding the existence of competition and occasional contradictions between these two countries.

However there are convergent characteristics and long-term contributions, even complementary, of both - Brazil and Canada - that have never reached the media. Among these characteristics which challenge the comparative study and the bilateral cooperation, we can highlight, in the internal aspect: the Canadian multiculturalism and the Brazilian ethnic pluralism; the importance of the civil society and of the social mobilizations in the magnification of the public sphere in both countries; the gradual integration of the migratory groups in the national society and the native peoples' rights to the defense of their cultural patrimony; the existence of vast inhabited areas and the challenges they mean to Nature preservation and the national integration.

Beyond any doubt, the Parliament in Canada and the Presidentship in Brazil (among other inheritances and historical differences) conditions the

development of these common characteristics and challenges in each country. Therefore, this divergent institutional-juridical inheritance must also be the object of a comparative study, that enlightens its relative efficacy in the environmental, social and cultural diversity approach.

But besides the convergent national challenges, there are also important Brazilian and Canadian experiences in the international scope, which are unknown to public opinion as well. Let us mention just three examples that present great similarities: 1) The contributions that both Brazil and Canada have been efficiently and constantly giving to the special forces of the UN for the maintenance and reestablishment of peace in areas of conflict all over the world; 2) Regarding the Americas, both countries, in their peculiar ways, have tried to oppose to the ambitions of the United States unilateral hegemony. In North America, Canada has been showing the virtues of the so called North Model accepted at a state of minimum welfare, contrasting with the individualization of the social problems predominant in the United States. Yet Brazil, even having pragmatically accepted the alliance with Bush's government, attempts, through Mercosur and new diplomatic cooperation, establish a constructive presence among its neighbors in South America and other emergent countries around the world; 3) There is also an influential presence of Canada in the British Community of the Nations, as well as of Brazil among the Portuguese speaking countries - in both cases, concerning the preservation and development of their political - cultural traditions.

There is no doubt that there are many other national and international similar experiences worth mentioning, showing that both countries have played a most important role, having a moderating and multilateral influence in the construction of a more peaceful and pluralist world. Unfortunately, the international news does not highlight these common objectives practiced by Brazil and Canada, and by several other countries, in favor of the peace and the cooperation among the peoples of the world.

This round-table about the contemporary Brazil at the CALACS Conference lines up, therefore, with a greater effort of cooperation, aiming at promoting a mutual study and knowledge of their national realities.

The papers selected for presentation at CALACS, have chosen, for discussion among the Canadian University public, a few central themes of studies of the current Brazilian reality. Ted Hewitt begins presenting a report of recent studies about Brazil, performed by intellectual Canadians. The results of the studies have verified significant growth and pending challenges in the area.

All the papers presented can be found in this issue of our journal; in the language they have been written and presented, followed by their abstracts.

It is important to mention the importance of each study:

Sérgio Costa, for instance, approaches the current changes in the ethnic mobilization in Brazil (mainly of those with Afro background), pointing out the contributions of the international studies on the theme, as well as the links that this mobilization establishes abroad.

Paulo Krischke discusses the characteristics of the government social politics, emphasizing that they are not only redistributing, but they also turn to the acknowledgement of the social and cultural diversity and the political tolerance as well - hence its impact in the popular approval of the government, in spite of the pending social-economical problems.

Leandro Vergara-Camus analyzes the objectives and principles that guide the Movimento dos Trabalhadores Rurais Sem Terra - MST (Landless Rural Workers' Movement), and pictures the existing tension between their objectives and the policies of the current government.

Finally, Tullo Vigevani and Marcelo Fernandes de Oliveira show the attempts to change the Brazilian international politics in the last decade, concerning a more autonomous and deliberate participation, facing imminent difficulties, such as the ones occurring along the ALCA negotiations.

In short, all the presentations reveal the current Brazilian reality, as a historical process in progress, dedicated to the accomplishment and development of democracy, and, as such, teeming with ambiguities, challenges and problems of difficult solutions. The examples of Canada and other democracies more fully consolidated than ours might provide profitable comparative studies and promote the strengthening of democracy in Brazil.

Last, but not least, it is necessary to thank the multilateral support that allowed this round-table at CALACS to be held: the CNPq, which paid for the trip of some of the Brazilians who participated the Congress; their Universities, which released them from their classes and allowed them to travel during that week; CALACS, which paid for their stay and internal trips in Canada; The Study Center on Security and International Relations of the University of York, which provided opportunities of lodging, research and exchange with other colleagues of that University in Toronto and also sponsored all the trip of one of the Brazilian participants; all the Canadians at CALACS - participants, organizers, workers - who welcomed us, Brazilians, so warmly and cordially. We will surely never forget such hospitality and we hope we can soon meet again, this time in Brazil, so that we can also offer them a warm and cordial reception.

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