Book Reviews

Tünnermann-Bernheim (C.) *La Universidad Hacia Nuevos Horizontes* ('New Horizons for the University'), Managua, D.N., Universidad Politécnica de Nicaragua, 1993, 194 pp.

This book is a collection of recent lectures by Carlos Tünnermann-Bernheim on university matters. The author is a man of the university and a democrat. His experience is broad, deep and even painful. Always an activist since his student days, professor and administrator of the University of Nicaragua, President of the Association of Latin American Universities (UDAL), member of the Administrative Council of the International Association of Universities, exile, international researcher on university matters, he formed part of his country's revolutionary government, which he served as Minister of Education, and later as Ambassador to the United States with sincerity and loyalty. This sketch is a portrait of his life; it is also useful for the understanding of his book.

The volume is composed of seven interrelated chapters, whose coherence is determined by the unity of subject and of Tünnermann-Bernheim's thought.

The first two are 'Historical Development of The University in Nicaragua', and they constitute an introduction to the analysis of higher education in that country. He emphasizes, among the traits of the colonial university, its early creation and its *raison d'être*; the differing conceptions of the two crowns of the Iberic peninsula; the organizational characteristics and physiognomy of a university at the service of a 'nation state', whose unity he repeatedly praises; 'a whole, and not simply a sum of its parts'; and some tendency towards autonomy and student participation. He surveys the reforms introduced during the second half of the eighteenth century, including the introduction of the exact sciences, the experimental method and teaching in Spanish.

He criticizes the colonial university for its ivory-tower attitude regarding 'its own reality', which is manifest in its lack of participation in Independence. This situation contrasts with that of *Nueva Granada*, today Colombia, whose independence movement in political and military terms was undertaken by university men, who during our history have maintained this tradition.

The author complains with insistence that the Latin American university followed too closely the 'professionalizing scheme of the Napoleonic university'. He attributes to this tendency 'the destruction of the concept of the university as such', and its divorce from science and research, although he recognized the 'inferiority of Spain in the realm of science, and its marginal position in the Industrial Revolution'. He does not take into account the incipience and weakness of Latin American economic development, insufficient as a basis for scientific research, nor the fact that its universities had no background in this field, but were urgently required for the training of civil servants, administrators and professionals.

He concludes his survey with the 'Cordoba movement' of 1918, without a doubt the most authentic expression of democratic and cultural reform in republican Latin America, and which preceded by half a century the European and American outbursts of 1968 and 1970.

Regrettably, this historical overview omits developments in the Latin American university after World War II: the seduction of the American model of academia and administration; the 'politicization and bureaucratization' of the university; the irruption of professionalism as a counter-ethos; the current campaign for the recovery of basic values and to correct the deficiencies of

the university, with the responsible exercise of autonomy and the consequent requirements of quality; the creation of postgraduate programmes in the region; and its growing interest in science and technology.

'Fundamental Problems of Contemporary Higher Education and Main Trends of Innovation', 'Education: Basis for Development of a Culture for Peace and Democracy', 'Scientific Research in the Latin American University', 'Foundation of an Integral University Reform', and 'Universities and Integration in Latin America' are the titles of the remaining five chapters. In these, difficulties, contradictions and prospects are examined from a Latin American viewpoint: autonomy versus state selection and *numerus clausus*; general education versus professionalization; specialization versus polyvalence; service to society versus the responsibility of criticism.

The author sustains with idealism the thesis of mass education of optimum quality through the adoption of new educational technologies. He advocates changes in educational methods, in order to 'center them on the learning process, rather than on that of teaching'. He suggests new forms of academic organization, with the creation of departments that encompass the whole of academic disciplines. He is inclined towards a flexible, individualized plan of studies. He emphasizes planning as an element which 'makes dynamic and orders educational development'. He proposes social intervention so that 'the performance of educational institutions peruses great national practice, not only of higher education, but of all postsecondary education, including formal education, education at a distance and even the results of experience, of the homologation of their learning value'. He also reaffirms the autonomous value of investigation and its natural location within the university.

As he contemplates the coming century, the author poses problems such as the new world order, the intensification and globalization of the political, economic and cultural relations, the rise of nationalisms, the claim of all peoples to their identity and sovereignty, the resurgence of violence, the new threats to peace, pollution, the rapid growth of population and urbanization, the widening gap between rich and poor countries and between rich and poor groups and regions in each country. And, from the threshold, he proposes the elements of an integral university reform that would include 'all aspects of university life' for his own country.

Finally, he insists on the urgency of the integration of Latin America and, with the support of a declaration of principles made in international forums, sets out the role of the university in this process.

Fernando Hinestrosa
Rector, Universidad Externado de Colombia