DICIONÁRIO
DE HISTORIADORES PORTUGUESES
DA ACADEMIA REAL DAS CIÊNCIAS AO FINAL DO ESTADO NOVO
http://dichp.bnportugal.pt/

BURNS, Edward Bradford (Muscatine, Iowa, 1932; Los Angeles, California, 1995)

Edward Bradford Burns earned a BA in History from the University of Iowa in 1954. During his doctorate at Columbia University, he conducted various research projects in Guatemala, Portugal, Venezuela, and Brazil, completing his degree in 1964. That same year, he joined the history department at the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA), as an assistant professor, eventually retiring as a full professor in 1993.

Bradford Burns focused his research on Latin American history, publishing his first work in 1966: The Unwritten Alliance: Rio Branco and Brazilian-American Relations, which earned him the Order of Rio Branco from the Brazilian government. This book, which analyses the diplomatic relations between the USA and Brazil at the start of the 20th century, placed him among notable foreign scholars who examined Brazilian society, such as the French anthropologist Claude Lévi-Strauss and historians Pierre Monbeig, Roger Bastide, Kenneth Maxwell, Thomas Skidmore, and Warren Dean from the United States. These scholars came to be known as "Brazilianists." In this work, Burns describes the transfer of the Portuguese royal family to Brazil as a disruption in the formation of Brazilian national identity, which had previously taken shape through resistance against Dutch and French invasions.

This idea is further developed in his book A History of Brazil (1970), where he conducts extensive documentary research to explore the role of nationalism in shaping Brazilian society. Burns divides the development of Brazilian nationalism into three stages. The first, which he calls "colonialist nativism," is a period when the Brazilian elite began identifying with the new territory. This identity was forged not only through defending the land from invasions and thereby aligning with Portugal but also through literature that integrated Brazilian society within the Portuguese Empire. Burns argues that this stage, which lasted until Independence, laid the foundation for Brazil's cohesion after its emancipation from Portugal (p. 28). The second phase, from 1821 to 1930, is termed "19th-century defensive nationalism," marked by a search for national identity coupled with strong anti-Portuguese and anti-British sentiments. The third phase, which began after 1930, Burns calls "20th-century offensive nationalism." For analytical purposes, he further categorises this period into political, cultural, and economic nationalism, demonstrating how nationalism extended beyond the intellectual elite to reach the urban middle class and even the working class.

In 1979, Burns co-edited a collection with Thomas Skidmore titled Elites, Masses, and Modernization in Latin America, 1850-1930. In his essay within this volume, Burns argues that the Brazilian elite's attempts at modernisation— modelled on European capitalism— did not alter the foundational structures of Brazilian society, such as land ownership. He explains that the Portuguese land system, established in Brazil in 1532,

ingrained a societal and economic structure based on land concentration, shaping both the elite and the lower classes. As landowners pursued modernisation in the mid-19th century, widespread dissatisfaction arose, exacerbating economic hardship for the population. Burns posits that Brazil's political violence is a reflection of this deep-rooted cultural conflict.

In evaluating Bradford Burns' research on Brazil, it's evident that he emphasises Portugal's crucial role in shaping the territorial unity of the country. Unlike its Spanish-colonised neighbours, Brazil remained united and did not fragment after independence. This question of Brazil's post-independence cohesion has been a major topic in Brazilian historiography. For Burns, the explanation lies in the ways the Portuguese colonial government organised and consolidated economic, political, and cultural space, particularly during the period of the royal family's stay in Brazil.

In the late 1970s, Burns expanded his focus to Central America, where he sharply criticised US intervention in El Salvador. In the 1980s, he published At War in Nicaragua: The Reagan Doctrine and the Politics of Nostalgia (1987), another incisive critique of US policy, this time directed towards Nicaragua. These critiques drew a personal and public response from President Ronald Reagan. This shift in Burns' research from Brazil to Central America reflected the profound impact of Latin American political events on US domestic politics.

Burns was a meticulous researcher, often incorporating films and photographs as historical documents alongside traditional sources. His interests consistently centred on themes such as nationalism, imperialism, dependency, and popular culture. A key contribution of his work was his analysis of culture as a driver of economic modernisation, exploring how the cultural foundations of elites could either foster or hinder progress beyond structural dependency. This perspective supported dependency theory, which argues that land concentration not only intensifies societal conflicts but also deepens cultural divides and political violence.

Widely recognised in the United States, Burns received numerous scholarships and honours throughout his academic career. At UCLA, he played a major role in establishing and organising various Latin American studies programmes. Beyond the university, he was an advocate for teaching and research in Latin American history, serving as president of the Pacific Coast Council on Latin American Studies in 1973-1974 and of the Pacific Coast section of the American Historical Association in 1993-1994.

Active bibliography: *The Unwritten Alliance: Rio-Branco and Brazilian-American Relations*, New York, Columbia University Press, 1966; *Nationalism in Brazil; A Historical Survey*, New York, Frederick A. Praeger Publishers, 1968; *A History of Brazil*, New York, Columbia University Press, 1970; *Latin America: A Concise Interpretive History*, New Jersey, Prentice-Hall, 1972; *Teaching Latin American History*, Los Angeles, University of California Press, 1977; *Elites, Masses, and Modernization in Latin America,* 1850-1930, E. Bradford Burns, Thomas E. Skidmore e Virginia Bernhard (org.), Austin, University of Texas Press, 1979; *The Poverty of Progress: Latin America in the Nineteenth Century,* Los Angeles, University of California Press, 1980; *At War in Nicaragua: The Reagan Doctrine and the Politics of Nostalgia*, New York, HarperCollins, 1987; *Patriarch and Folk: The Emergence of Nicaragua, 1798-1858*, Cambridge, Massachussets, Harvard University Press, 1991; *Kinship with the Land: Regionalist Thought In Iowa, 1894-1942*, Iowa City, University of Iowa Press, 1996.

Passive bibliography: LAUERHASS JR, Ludwig. *Edward Bradford Burns, History: Los Angeles*. http://texts.cdlib.org/view?docId=hb0z09n6nn;NAAN=13030&doc.view=frames&chunk.id=div00013&toc.depth=1&toc.id=&brand=calisphere, consultado em 18 de dezembro de 2020; LIMAM, Marcos Felipe Pinheiro. *A aliança não escrita*. https://www.scielo.br/pdf/rbpi/v47n2/v47n2a09.pdf, consultada em 03 de dezembro de 2020; https://a.alumni.ucla.edu/share/ucla-awards/bio/bradford-burns.aspx, consultado em 18 de dezembro de 2020; https://prabook.com/web/edward_bradford.burns/1667011, consultado em 10 de novembro de 2020; https://oac.cdlib.org/findaid/ark:/13030/tf2z09n82f/, consultado em 03 de janeiro de 2021. KANTOR, Íris e Dantas, Mônica. *O ofício do historiador hoje: Entrevista com Stuart B. Schwartz*, https://www.scielo.br/scielo.php?script=sci_arttext&pid=S0101-33002011000100010, consultado em 22 de abril de 2021.

Tânia Veiga

This work is financed by national funds through FCT - Foundation for Science and Technology, I.P, in the scope of the projects UIDB/04311/2020 and UIDP/04311/2020.

SUPPORTED BY: