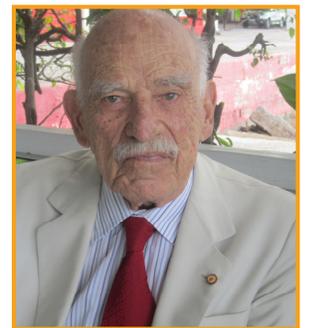




ANTONIO DIAS LEITE, 1960 BRAZIL

By the time he began his Eisenhower Fellowship in 1960, Antonio Dias Leite had established himself as a prominent professional in economics in Brazil. By 1949 he was an assistant professor in the Department of Statistics and Economics at the Federal University of Rio de Janeiro and he had completed the first national income estimates for Brazil, which became significant in the support of quantitative analysis of the Brazilian economy. Dias Leite said that as he began his fellowship, “I did not see myself as a future scholar and preferred to be a part-time professor, keeping contact with the real world problems as a freelance consultant. In my opinion, the main feature of the extensive visit to the U.S. was to understand the pragmatic and objective American way to conduct business and government.”



On his fellowship, Dias Leite spent eight months traveling throughout the U.S. to gain insight and expertise that would help him improve the existing economic policies aimed at creating economic growth in Brazil. Soon after he returned to Brazil, he was invited to serve as the assistant Minister of Finance during a critical phase of negotiations between the U.S. and the IMF on Brazil’s foreign debt. Dias Leite then returned to the University, but continued to work with the Ministry of Finance, drafting a fiscal incentives law that benefitted forestation projects. This law remained in force for 15 years and resulted in more than three million hectares of plantations and induced foresters and wood processors to devote resources in genetic and technological innovation.

In 1967, Dias Leite was nominated president of the state-owned Cia Vale do Rio Doce, an iron mining operation, and in 1969, as Minister of Mines and Energy. During his five-year tenure as Minister, he was responsible for the first mapping project of the Amazon region, which covered more than four million square kilometers. He also restructured the economic basis of both the mining and energy sectors, based in part on the practices he had witnessed during his fellowship. His policies, which remained in effect for the next 25 years, formalized the central operation of the hydro-thermic electric system and consolidated the administrative structure. Dias Leite said, “I believe that the understanding of the broad and long term perspective of American leadership in both private and government sectors served as a background for some critical decisions I had to make while Minister of Mines and Energy.” Dias Leite continued to have a profound impact on Brazil. By connecting the companies working with the Ministry of Mines and Energy with the Federal University, Dias Leite helped to develop four research centers at the university campus focusing on electric energy, oil, minerals, and nuclear power.