

The bath, the water, the basin, and the child: history and historians in the discard of the first version of the Base Nacional Comum Curricular of History for Elementary School¹

O banho, a água, a bacia e a criança: história e historiadores na defenestração da primeira versão da Base Nacional Comum Curricular de História para o Ensino Fundamental

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ABSTRACT

The first version of the Base Nacional Comum Curricular (BNCC) [Common National Curriculum Base] of History for Elementary School was the cause of intense controversy. It chose to shift the focus away from Eurocentric formulas of Brazilian history, deepening its ties with Amerindian and African origins, which restricted the space for ancient and medieval history, for example. The document was the target of a diverse combination of devastating criticism not only from publishers and authors of textbooks, conservative politicians, religious fundamentalists and sensationalist journalists but also from academic associations and individual historians. Published after the coup of 2016, the second and third versions were less innovative than the previous curriculum proposal, the 1990s Parâmetros Curriculares Nacionais [National Curricular Parameters]. The objective of this critical essay is to revisit this debate and observe significant patterns on the problematic relationship between historians

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and the world of the classroom and educational policy, starting from the hypothesis that the sociocultural context we are settled, of progressive polarization in all fields and themes, has adversely affected the curricular debate. Lastly, we propose some general lines to solve the problems that emerged from the discussed process.

Keywords: Curriculum. History teaching. Eurocentrism. BNCC.

RESUMO

A primeira versão da Base Nacional Curricular Comum (BNCC) de História para o Ensino Fundamental foi causa de uma intensa controvérsia. Indicava uma escolha por deslocar o foco das fórmulas eurocêntricas da história do Brasil, aprofundando seus laços com as origens ameríndias e africanas, o que restringiu o espaço para a história antiga e medieval, por exemplo. O documento foi alvo de uma combinação diversificada de críticas demolidoras de editores e autores de livros didáticos, políticos conservadores, religiosos fundamentalistas e jornalistas sensacionalistas, mas também de associações acadêmicas e historiadores individuais. Publicadas após o golpe de 2016, a segunda e a terceira versões saíram menos inovadoras que a proposta curricular anterior, os Parâmetros Curriculares Nacionais, dos anos 1990. O objetivo deste ensaio crítico é revisitar esse debate e buscar nele alguns padrões significativos da problemática relação entre os historiadores e o mundo da sala de aula e da política educacional, partindo da hipótese de que o contexto sociocultural que vivemos, de progressiva polarização em todos os campos e temas, afetou de modo nefasto o debate curricular. Propõe-se, ao final, algumas linhas gerais para equacionar os problemas que resultam do processo discutido.

Palavras-chave: Currículo. Ensino de história. Eurocentrismo. BNCC.

Introduction: the child

In 2016, a parliamentary, juridical and mediatic coup overthrew President Dilma Rousseff and, among its many consequences, imposed a profound restructuring of the educational system, involving several actions, such as the reform of high school and the approval of the definitive version of the BNCC – Common National Curriculum Base for Primary and Secondary Education. Although the disrespect for transformative and cumulative discussions is an unfortunate constant in Brazil's history, it is not to the coup of 2016 that we owe

the greatest setbacks in the BNCC, especially in History, originally released in September 2015. The innovative perspectives of the first version of the BNCC History/Elementary Education (henceforth BNCC-H/EF), of drastically reducing the contents of ancient and medieval history, were attacked from the very first moment, starting with the then Minister of Education, Renato Janine Ribeiro, to the most radically conservative sectors of society, with historians' entities in the midst. The quadripartite model (Ancient, Middle, Modern and Contemporary Ages) returned triumphantly in the second version, still under the Rousseff government, in May 2016, and its most canonical design was restored in the final version of January 2017.

This text reflects on this seemingly contradictory movement, through retrieval of documents and debates on the topic and the search for meanings for the broad and sometimes strident debate of late 2015 and early 2016.

The first version of the BNCC-H/EF opted to prioritize Brazil's history and recent history. In our view, this was a timely and legitimate option. First, it is important to understand what we mean by "option". The definition of curricula, and especially the type of document that is the BNCC, a structured list of learning rights, content, methodologies and concepts, is a matter of choosing what to keep and what to abandon, what to highlight and what to consider secondary. Although every curriculum works this way, it can be said that the first version finally broke with a canon of the "disciplinary code of history" (CUESTA FERNÁNDEZ, 1997). The option for the focus on Brazil did not correspond to an abandonment of general history, nor a vulgarly nationalist project of teaching, but a change in focus and content priorities. The option for the initial chronological cut in the sixteenth century would not preclude references to previous periods in various spaces, cultures and contexts, but would subject them to a new logic of organization of subject matters.

Instead of discussing what it effectively proposed and meant in curricular and educational terms, the option of the first version of the BNCC-H/EF was pejorated in the debate as "Braziliancentrism", at left and at right, in the academic community and the external community (keeping proportions and intensities). The neologism sought to identify the option with eurocentrism, as its counterpart, but in the same category of meaning and significance. However, most academic and progressive critics agreed that the proposition of an alternative to eurocentrism, although they considered it inept, was a step forward. Therefore, Eurocentrism, for this camp, was not the alternative to "Braziliancentrism", although it remained an alternative for the most conservative critics, both historiographically and politically. What, then, would be the option? A polycentric narrative? "Acentric"? Is there a precedent or basis

in the history of curricula and didactic narratives for a multi-centred or non-centred content structure? Were the critics of “Braziliancentrism” effectively proposing other narrative focuses? The fact is that it was not necessary to effectively make any counterproposal to gain an advantage in the debate: it was enough to create the neologism and associate it with another form of discourse that was highly accepted at the time of the impeachment, that of the denial of science through an anticipated condemnation of Humanities and Social Sciences scientists for “excess of ideology”. This *ad hominem* fallacy exempts the attacker from actually discussing the proposal and offering alternatives and solutions and has been widely used by organizations such as Escola Sem Partido (FRIGOTTO, 2017). This is a rather unpleasant approach, not because it is identified, but because of its very existence: a common argumentative strategy between a civil society organization that practices a form of scientific negationism (against the Human Sciences) and associates it with others (against the Biological and Exact Sciences, in cases of confrontation between religious and scientific narratives), an argumentative strategy to which some sectors of the academy itself have dangerously approached. Cleto (2016), for example, identifies that those historians’ early criticisms of the proposal are packaged in a conservative (formalist rather than substantive) conception of equality as the basis for citizenship. The intervention of Magnoli and Barbosa (2015) also brings, in an underlying way, the rejection of the affirmative policy for blacks, linked to the formalist perspective of equality.

Despite many statements throughout the debate regarding the lack of transparency in the formation criteria of the teams that drafted the preliminary version, the fact is that reading the material makes it clear that most of these teams were composed of representatives of municipal and state education departments, with the assistance of university professors from multiple regions of the country. Otherwise stated, that was a criterion to ensure the representativeness of the executive bodies that would be responsible for implementing the BNCC, rather than the representativeness of entities of historians. If by chance, the teams were composed of noteworthy academics, especially if they represented only one line of thought, the resulting document would probably be less susceptible to the criticism it received from university professors and their entities. It would probably have more internal coherence and be more in tune with the great historiographical and educational debates of the moment. None of this, however, was enough for previous models, such as the Parâmetros Curriculares Nacionais (PCN) [National Curricular Parameters], to be effectively accepted in the various spheres of the educational system and put into practice. The outcome, however, was a document full of flanks for the typically academic criticism (but not typical of the curricular debate or educational policy), which we intend to explore a little better ahead.

In the Ordinance SEB/MEC No. 19 of July 10, 2015 (BRASIL, 2015) twelve specialists² were appointed to the commission, but according to Silva and Meireles (2017, p. 13)³ it worked with only ten components. The members of the team, with representatives from states and municipalities and with the axis shifted to the North and Northeast, may explain an important part of the boldness in drastically reducing the contents of ancient and medieval history and refocusing the contents of the History of Brazil. In our view, the explanation for this is simpler than all the theories and accusations raised. It was simply a matter of trying to face the deleterious effects of treating the subject of history in the classroom as a crowded bus in which new passengers insist on getting on. The first challenge faced, therefore, was to choose contents to the detriment of others, to reduce a gigantic load of subjects that teachers and students must (or should) deal with, an inglorious and generally unsuccessful task. Trying to cover all the content is a guarantee of superficial and mnemonic teaching and learning, the kind that is useful to approval in competitive exams and then forgotten.

Traditionally, history teaching in Brazil has meant dealing with a canonical structure of contents originally built in Europe, grafted into the educational system of a monarchical and noble state, for the formation of elite cadres in the “white man’s world”. Thereafter, this model has been maintained with few structural changes, and thematic history initiatives have not been sufficiently widespread to confront it. Once the context that gave rise to it was over, the model continued, now self-sustained, stuck to the internal logic of the educational system, more self-referential than dialogical, reproducing itself in the training of students, who in turn would become parents, teachers and historians, generating a vicious iron circle. Thus, we remain Eurocentric, curiously nationalistic (claiming in this nationalism almost exclusively the European heritage) and linear. Other forms of confronting this model tend to add new demands to it, like a Christmas tree to which we add more and more ornaments. The efficiency of this confused and encyclopedic history teaching, loaded with endless topics and contents, is heading towards nullity. In a tsunami of facts, information, concepts, images, considering the few history classes, it is difficult to establish any other

2 Appointed specialists: Antônio Daniel Marinho Ribeiro (Seduc-AL); Giovani José da Silva (Unifap); Leandro Mendes Rocha (UFG); Leila Soares de Souza Perussolo (Undime-RR); Márcia Almeida Gonçalves (UERJ); Maria da Guia de Oliveira Medeiros (Undime-RN); Marcos Antonio Silva (USP); Marinelma Costa Meireles (Seduc-MA); Reginaldo Gomes da Silva (Seduc-AP); Rilma Suely de Souza Melo (Seduc-PB); Sandra Regina Ferreira de Oliveira (UEL); Tatiana Gariglio Clark Xavier (Seduc-MG).

3 The commission worked with ten specialists, since Márcia Gonçalves and Sandra Oliveira withdrew.

relationship than memorization, content zapping, and lightening. For students, especially in high school, (where classes are few and the content is repeated), from the Big Bang to this morning, history makes little sense. This “selection” of contents does little to help them read the world and makes historical literacy very difficult and even impossible.

It is symptomatic that this problem was not evaluated in any of the texts that discussed the first version that we were able to raise, except for the text of a teacher from the Paraná State Network, Fabrício Maoski, who indicated the confrontation of a relevant problem for teachers:

The discipline of History, traditionally, presents some catches for the teacher. The first is the time lock of the organization of the content, that is, as a friend of mine would say, you start in Adam and Eve in the sixth grade and continue until today in the third year of high school (MAOSKI, 2016, our translation).

The discussions and criticisms around the first version preferred to remain to the question of what to teach, which History to privilege, not equating the school reality and its main subjects involved: teachers and students. If the school dimension and historical learning were indeed considered in the dispute over the prescribed curriculum, we would have a significant debate on education and history that would have an impact on our schools, teacher training, and the directions of degree courses.

The water and the bath: letters, manifestos, denouncement in newspaper articles and Associação Nacional de História (ANPUH) [National Association of History] interventions

The late 2015 and early 2016 were the occasions for a huge wave of texts opposing the first version of BNCC-H. It could not have been much different, since the history part of the BNCC-H was late comparing to the others, and right from the beginning, it was targeted by the Minister of Education at the time, Renato Janine Ribeiro, who cut the inaugural ribbon of criticism on what was missing in the History proposal. Criticism for what was missing was the main theme of the debate. But not only that. The fact that the minister said that the

History proposal was too “ideological”, besides addressing a superficial critic, was the password for movements and press organs traditionally aligned to the right to focus their batteries on the political aspect of the first version. Here we highlight another point of contact with the denial of science: the discussion on ideology, partisanship and objectivity in the Human and Social Sciences was deliberately ignored (since Janine Ribeiro is not lacking in erudition). By choosing a politically easier discourse, Ribeiro opened the floodgates to conservative, superficial and ignorant critiques of the academic debate, only some of these made by non-academics, in which the ignorance of the accumulation on the subject of objectivity would be understandable.

Some of the historians who came riding over organs of the mainstream press, and brought in their arsenal mainly political criticism against “*lulopetismo*” or the *petista* government. Looking in perspective at the present, it is not surprising to add these demonstrations to the set of acts of political warfare designed to create the conditions for the 2016 coup. More than a deliberate choice to ignore all the accumulated academic debate on the problem of neutrality, they stuck to the fallacious strategy of defining the opponent simplistically and describing his arguments frivolously and incorrectly, a real scarecrow.

In chronological order, the first criticism in these terms came from Demétrio Magnoli and Elaine Barbosa (2015, our translation), with a dramatically pamphlet-like title: “MEC’s proposal for teaching kills temporality”. Quoting Janine Ribeiro and Aloizio Mercadante, the authors argue that, by “removing” ancient and medieval history and privileging Africa and indigenous people, the document would mean a rupture of the “grammar of temporality”. For them, the “removal” would mean avoiding the study of Western history, where democratic principles such as equality before the law were enshrined. The sociologist and the historian chose to ignore (for here one cannot speak of a lack of knowledge or technical competence) first that there was still much of the West left in the first version of the BNCC, and that democratic principles were enshrined and took the form we know today in the modern period, with obvious consequences in the history of Brazil. In other words, the accusation of murdering temporality would only be valid if they found the corpse, but temporality (not quadripartite) was found alive and well in the curriculum proposal. Therefore, far from a pertinent and collaborative critique, the article inaugurated the lynching of the first version, resorting to a current term full of implications in right-wing discourses: “indoctrination”, doing a disservice to the debates.

Without seeing the counterpoint in the mainstream press, other texts in the same vein followed: Ronaldo Vainfas (2015), historian and textbook author, already known in the public debate of polemics in history teaching such as that of the textbook “*Nova História Crítica*” (VAINFAS; VINHAES, 2007), accused the

proposal of being the new face of authoritarianism and brought up two new terms that collaborate to the clarification of the line of argumentation: “lulopetism” and “brasilcentrism”, the latter assimilated and frequently repeated in the debate in the community of historians. In the texts by Magnoli and Barbosa (2015) and Vainfas (2015) one can notice that the criticism is made by identifying what is “missing”, which was called the rhetoric of loss, which indicates the attachment to the quadripartite model, hiding its historicity, as well as the deliberate ignorance that curriculum is selection, therefore improving it is not the same as filling it with what is not there. The following is a text by a less famous author, Rafael Diehl (2015), in *Gazeta do Povo*, with essentially the same argumentation. Respected the end-of-year recess, the historian Marco Antonio Villa (2016) expresses himself, rebuking “*lulopetismo*” and feeding the criticism of the lack. Marcelo Rede (2016), professor of ancient history at USP, finishes the cycle in the month of Momo, denouncing another murder, this time the murder of history.

There was also political criticism of the left, with a smaller circulation. This was the case of Calil (2016), who reported the lack of Marxism, socialism, and gender in the draft, and with that the reader could see that the “cultural revolution of the PT” (VILLA, 2016, our translation) was not that dangerous as the mention of the Chinese cultural revolution might indicate.

We believe that this first cycle of public criticism was not correctly dimensioned in its consequences, mainly by conditioning, in one way or another, the other criticisms from other subjects and with other interests and commitments that followed. The creators of the first version would have been more concerned with the criticism of a more academic and less political nature, but the fact was that the first wave set the tone for the following ones, both in the underground of the social networks, where it fed movements such as the *Escola Sem Partido* and several reactionary blogs (a search for the titles of the articles above leads easily to these addresses, where they were reproduced and celebrated) as in the academic debate. Before these examples, whether we like them or not, the fact was that the vast majority of the texts that followed from the university community shared the character of demolishing criticism, with the rare customary exceptions. Few texts legitimized the first version as worthy of dialogue and contributions for its necessary improvement: there was no willingness to understand that it was necessary to cut contents to avoid encyclopedic overload, the rhetoric of loss was used to exhaustion, and political criticism of the first version was prominent. In this last aspect, it appeared, for example, the extemporaneous criticism to the very idea of building a BNCC, defined years before, in the Plano Nacional de Educação (PNE) [National Education Plan], within a long process, legitimized by Conferência Nacional

de Educação (CONAE) [National Conference on Education], discussed from the municipalities, involving the most diverse entities linked to the area. But in general, destructive criticism followed typical parameters in the academy, going back to the *disputatio* in which winning the opponent with the weapons of formal logic and rhetoric is an objective that surpasses the sincere and disinterested search for the truth, in the sense of the best and most grounded argument. The second form of debate has figured more rarely and consists in identifying problems and jointly proposing solutions, seeking the minimum possible consensus. At this rate, the critics of the first version adhered (uncritically) to the politically polarized tone, even though it was formally registered the refusal to occupy the same trench of organizations such as the *Escola Sem Partido*, the mainstream media, and neoconservatives in general. Still, it sustained fire on the same target as theirs, which in practice meant as much a choice of the immediate enemy as of the allies of occasion.

The predisposition against the draft version in the academic community was also due to an assessment that the process was too influenced by private foundations, their interests and their models of education and society guided by the market, mainly concentrated in the Base Movement. This movement was indeed one of the collective subjects, but it shared space with entities of public sector leaders (MORENO, 2016). The fact that such foundations were satisfied with the later versions is an indication that their influence was circumvented by the BNCC-H/EF draft version team.

It is not possible, for a text like this one, to account for all the debates, themes and nuances of the dozens of documents produced within the university, school and editorial communities. Thus, we will highlight the relevant aspects of the argument that will be developed from now on, concerning the complex relationship between historians and the teaching of history. It is also not a question of ignoring the many weaknesses of the first version, a good part of which can be credited to the heterogeneity of the team, the short time for elaboration and the difficulties concerning the general model for writing the base and the limited size of the text, which did not leave room for justifications and arguments. For this reason, much of the criticism was based on the hermeneutic exercise of trying to deduce what the formulators wanted to express, and what they based themselves on. These exercises generated diverse results.

The text of Associação Brasileira dos Autores de Livros Educativos (ABRALE), still in 2015, following several criticisms and general and specific suggestions by discipline, made the following balance regarding History: the positive aspect is to remove the excessive focus on Eurocentrism, and the negative

it limits the opportunity for the student to get to know a wider cultural heritage by omitting some moments of History; there is the risk of losing cultural roots of the West; despite ceasing to be Eurocentric, the content passes to another ethnocentrism (ASSOCIAÇÃO BRASILEIRA DOS AUTORES DE LIVROS DIDÁTICOS, 2015, p. 23, our translation).

It does not immediately follow, however, that a curriculum proposal focused on national history is an ethnocentric history, since Brazil, there, can be understood as the result of the concurrence of various ethnicities and cultural interactions. Reading the entire content of the first version, one can easily deduce that this is the case and that one cannot speak, for this document, of traditional nationalism, ethnocentric because of its Eurocentrism. By definition, ethnocentrism that admits such different ethnicities as “center” does not constitute ethnocentrism.

Associação Brasileira de Estudos Medievais (ABREM) [Brazilian Association of Medieval Studies], echoes Minister Janine Ribeiro’s statement, considering relevant his criticism that the proposal was too “ideological”. It points out, among other items, the non-Eurocentric and multicultural possibilities of the history of Africa before the 16th century, insisting that the selection made by the preliminary version corresponds to fighting Eurocentrism, when they are related, but not identical, choices. The quote from the document below is significant of how the entity, but not only it, reveals a complete lack of understanding of the identities and specificities between the university and basic education, between post-graduate research and school teaching:

The equivocation of this amputation is so evident that Capes itself has been inclined to foment non-national history. How to converge the legitimacy and recognition of research in the fields of Ancient and Medieval History that Capes and CNPq have given to their researchers with the proposal of the Ministry of Education? (ASSOCIAÇÃO BRASILEIRA DE ESTUDOS MEDIEVAIS, 2015, p. 3, our translation).

Associação Nacional de História, Rio de Janeiro section (ANPUH-RJ) [National Association of History, Rio de Janeiro section] – in its note, calls for the change of the team of the draft version, or its expansion, and this would become a banner of the national board of directors of the entity. Regarding the choice of contents, it states that “The studies of prehistory and proto-history, as

well as of Antiquity and the Medieval that were discarded as relevant curricular contents - [cannot] be confused with Eurocentric contents” (ASSOCIAÇÃO NACIONAL DE HISTÓRIA, RJ, 2015, our translation).

In this example, but also in general, the reduction of ancient and medieval is again understood as a fight against Eurocentrism, in what coincides with the newspaper articles mentioned above, and no entity or historian takes into account the draft’s withdrawal from trying to cover “all of history” and its assumption of the willingness to make broad cuts to enable the chosen contents to be covered with sufficient time, changing for the better the relationship between the amount of content and the availability of class hours.

To Pereira and Rodrigues (2008),

From the point of view of the smaller group of university intellectuals who intervened intensely in the debate, the effect of such a restructuring of basic education curricula would also not be negligible. The practical (and political) character of the past as configured in the first version of the BNCC could impact, in the medium and long term, the constitution of groups and funds for research, thus affecting the position of academic leaderships and their “legacies” to the field (PEREIRA; RODRIGUES, 2018, p. 11, our translation).

The Associação Nacional de História, Paraná section (ANPUH-PR) [National Association of History, Paraná section] document was the most incisive, demanding “rejection of the proposal of the National Common Curricular Base (BNCC) in History presented by the Ministério da Educação (MEC) [Ministry of Education], because given the set of critical observations enunciated here it is not possible to propose amendments or adjustments to the proposal under consideration” (ASSOCIAÇÃO NACIONAL DE HISTÓRIA, PR, 2016, our translation).

After several letters, the national ANPUH finally defined its claims to the Ministry of Education regarding the BNCC, taking up the banners of historians and history entities from specific areas, asking for the return of the ancient and medieval history contents, besides a curious claim, in the first item:

[...] it is considered important that the second version of the preliminary document of the component History/BNCC:

1) Does not reinforce the traditional dichotomies between researchers of History Teaching and other areas of historiography, seeking to cool

the cleavage and broaden the dialogue between the areas, contributing to resolving the mismatch identified in many reviews and incorporating the most recent historiographical debates (ASSOCIAÇÃO NACIONAL DE HISTÓRIA, 2016, our translation).

Such a claim, which does not correspond to anything that should be included in the text of the BNCC, reveals a tension that was (re)established at the time, between historians who historiograph and historians who do didactic reflection and, therefore, do not integrate an area of historiography. This relationship was just awakened from a latent sleep, because since the 1980s the relationship between Teaching and Research and its place in undergraduate courses has permeated the discussions about the production of historical knowledge, although such tension had as its crucial point a moment of political crisis, in a process of democratization of the country, of resumption of rights, in which curricular reformulations were urgent and redesigned through debates and disputes, among other aspects, the directions of Brazilian education after the military dictatorship. According to Selva Guimarães (2012, p. 32, our translation), “we left the 1980s, a period characterized as times of ‘rethinking’, with a rich, positive, and empowering balance.”

The current concerns have provoked the emergence of old problems and revealed that some issues that were thought to have been overcome have taken on a new guise that highlights the face of tradition and the weight it represents for historians who no longer want to differentiate themselves from “*historioeducadores*”, an expression used by Moreno (2016), but who naturally continue to ignore the place, the subjects, and the objectives and meanings of teaching and learning history in Brazil today. The request of the ANPUH board to disregard the cleavage only reveals that the cleavage is still alive and strong and that the answer found in the face of this contradiction for the task of representing the members was to ignore it and ask to be ignored.

The documents cited here and many others ended up conditioning the second version presented by the MEC in May 2016, already under the administration of Aloísio Mercadante, at the end of Dilma Rousseff’s government. The new minister, attesting to the pressure suffered, announced that “we need to emphasize Classical History, our belonging to the West,” but also considering that “We have the third most ethnically and racially diverse country on the planet, and this culture has not been given space in classrooms” (RODRIGUES, 2016, our translation). Meanwhile, ANPUH managed to nominate members to expand the team responsible for History in the BNCC, but these nominees did not accept to participate. Part of the original team was then

dismissed, and the second version published did not correspond to the review they were doing but was commissioned by the Secretariat of Basic Education of the MEC from professionals who worked in secrecy. Thus, the continuity of the process was lost in the face of pressure to modify the text of the preliminary version. In the end, what prevailed was the ANPUH-PR demand: the summarized abandonment of the preliminary version, as well as, partially, what ANPUH-RJ demanded: the change of the team.

The second version, the new evaluators recognized, meant a regression to the models before the PCN, and the current version points to a regression to the 1970s. The remnants of the original team are not authors of the text of the second version of the BNCC-History, which was made by ad hoc advisors hired by the Ministry. In an article in the newspaper *O Estado de São Paulo*, the statement of Ilona Becskehazy, an education consultant for the contents of History, is emblematic: “The ancient world, with mythologies, castles and princes, attracts young children. As they grow up, they gain the maturity to better understand today’s reality. The more modern and contemporary the story is, the more tools are needed to understand it” (BECSCHEHAZY, 2017, our translation). The consultant’s words highlight a denial and/or ignorance of a range of research in history teaching that seeks to focus its investigations beyond content, seeking to consider students’ historical learning. In this sense, concepts such as progression and historical culture, among others, seek to objectify the dimensions of the functions and purposes of a history lesson. Again, we see the denial of science, or of what it has to say about history teaching since its current stage is solemnly ignored.

Some debates and documents, specifically those about the first proposal that we try to recover in this article, did not emphasize such studies, but rather were concerned with polarization, with the choice of one narrative in favour of another, without worrying about the school space, its organization and conditions, and especially about its diverse subjects. We state this because as Moreno (2016) argues, the discussions provoked impact at a conception of class.

In this sense, the discussion provoked by the BNCC text made a great contribution by making it clear that it is necessary to abandon the pretension or illusion of covering “all of history” in Basic Education. This is even more true when we think about school time. It is not just a matter of the reduced number of weekly hours but concerns the conception of how learning is produced. Many of the arguments that defend an extensive curriculum based on working on “all of history” can only do this by conceiving of “history class” as a master class or a reading followed by a

textbook exercise. By doing so, they imagine students as passive listeners (MORENO, 2016, p. 16, our translation).

Although the idea of a classroom conception in Basic Education is implied, the debates did not touch on this component, which assumes a central character when thinking about the curriculum: the cognitive dimension of what is taught, articulated to how it is taught and to whom it is taught.

The basin: the dispute arena

Using the expression of Christian Laville (1999), the war of narratives brought to the surface, so to speak, of the basin, the existing symbiosis between the university and the school, because although a series of resolutions suggest changes in the teacher's degree courses since 2015, it was the BNCC (and its repercussions) that promoted voracious criticism and moved rooted bodies, often inert in the defence of their space. That is, at that moment, it became evident in the form of open letters linked to scientific associations, in interviews or even in collegiate spaces, the fearful approach between the narrative and the curricular organization of the grids of undergraduate courses with the school curriculum.

In this and other cases, the students' right to learning was not discussed, but what would be done about the specialist teachers in these areas if the BNCC were approved in the way it was drawn up. The delicate question exposes one of the most serious problems of the training of the teacher historian in Brazil: how history is learned in universities and college and how history is taught in basic education (SILVA; MEIRELES, 2017, p. 19, our translation).

The impressive silence before the second version of the BNCC-H/EF by almost all those involved in the debate of the first version, entities, professionals and groups, is indicative of the fact that the internal discussion in the academy was guided mainly by corporate interest, by the demolishing and disinterested criticism of the solution of the problems of the first version, and in the form of the first criticisms, which came from conservative political and academic positions.

As, for example, Lima (2019) states:

[...] it is noticeable that there has been a reduction in individual and collective demonstrations by Brazilian medievalists since the publication of the second version of the BNCC, which may be related to the return of the contents of Medieval History to the Base, perhaps the main immediate objective of the mobilization; the national political scenario, marked by the process of presidential impeachment of President Dilma Rousseff, which took place between December 2015 and August 2016, which began to focus the attention of historians in general and left the issue of the BNCC in the background; or the demobilization of teachers around the issue of the presence of the medieval in the national school curriculum, a topic of growing concern in academia, but which still occupies a secondary space in the investigations of Brazilian medievalists (LIMA, 2019, p. 10, our translation).

Part of this silence could be attributed to the moment when the discussion of impeachment, recognized as a coup by the vast majority of the Humanities and Social Sciences community, became more heated. However, we have the uncomfortable task of making this questioning: for shooting at the same target, even though seeking to preserve a different trench, for the destructive tone of the criticism, even though preserving that the destruction was not the same as that promoted by Villa and other historians welcomed by the mainstream press, for the equal silence when the second and third versions of the BNCC-H/EF were presented, **will we not have given our share of collaboration (even if preserving the condition of default) to the point we have reached in terms of the curriculum?**

The expectation is that from this arena of attacks and disputes we can see beyond the surface and join forces in benefit of a solid school and university education that allows beyond content and accumulation of information, because “[...] teaching is not reduced to government documents, this did not even happen in the previous dictatorship (1964/1985). Once the classroom door is locked, teachers and students are free to think. And think!” (SILVA, 2018, p. 1012, our translation).

To develop the historical thinking of Brazilians who struggle to survive daily in the face of so many inequalities, history teaching reinvents itself by building meaning in the relationship between past, present, and future.

Final considerations: go getting the child back

Should we make *tabula rasa* of the past? (CHESNEAUX, 1995). The history community has shown that it has not been able to overcome the quadripartite scheme. It can criticize it, but it is not ready to overcome it concretely.

The idea that the cut-off of ancient and medieval history immediately corresponds to an anti-Eurocentric attitude has been unfairly widespread. Eurocentrism may survive in the other parts of the clipping. For example, the traditional history of Brazil is Eurocentric. Therefore, it was not simply a matter of “swapping” ancient and medieval for African and indigenous, but of decolonizing the teaching of Brazilian history by reemphasizing the contribution of Blacks and Indians to revise the canonical narrative, in school, of traditional national history. Thus, the pejorative term “Braziliancentrism” is not a demerit of the proposal, but, again, an innovative choice.

In contexts such as the one experienced by the community of historians, the cleavage between historians in the strict sense and historians dedicated substantively to the field of history teaching, how does the power of representation of an entity that brings together both groups, as is the case of ANPUH, stand when it has to choose the demand of one of them to forward to the public authorities? What are the meanings and consequences of the recommendation of the national board of directors to avoid considering the cleavage between history researchers and history teaching researchers? Whenever there is a dispute of conceptions and/or interests, will the former have their position represented by the entity, given that they are the largest number of members? If not, can ANPUH be considered democratic? Have we, in this emblematic case, reached the frayed limit of the entity’s possibilities of representation for these two large groups? If so, the denial of their differences is the only way to continue representing both, but this is also the safest way not to represent the second group.

It should also be considered that the discussion in question was made in the tone of the special historical conjuncture in which it took place. Point of view, the excess of corporate considerations overlapped with the need to think and act tactically and strategically, following a good conjunctural analysis.

The silencing of debates and discussions of the later versions endorsed the issue that incorporating themes to the debate that would allow us to think about the individual’s place of belonging in society and, mainly, to understand the construction of their identities could not overlap certain fields of research that felt excluded from the narrative of the National Base, although, as we have already stated in the course of this article, it was not about the withdrawal of

one in favour of another, but rather about a re-signification, starting from other looks at the historical narratives of the subjects and their actions in time.

The place of departure was the stage for the arguments that followed and brought to the fore controversies that were not resolved in the academic universe; the place of the historian was still made up of at least two groups: those engaged in teaching and those engaged in research. Even though the role of the teacher-researcher was assured in the discourse, the impediments of the BNCC versions impacted and rekindled the polarization of the place of both in the legitimization of the writing of school history.

In this dispute of narratives, common to the obstacles in the redefinition of curricula and, in this case, in the construction of a Common National Curricular Base, the concern with the learning of students in a country of large territorial dimensions was left implicit, relegated, that is, once again we witnessed that the curricular component of History is still tied to the academic production of the writing of History, thus hiding the advances of History teaching, which is concerned with understanding and articulating contents, students and methods.

The smokescreen, even indirectly, reaffirmed content-based teaching that is far from the perspective of developing the subject's historical thinking.

Finally, we live with processes of science denial that are cultural and disseminated by society and that served to the process of delegitimization of the first version and its authors. The password was the word “ideology”, launched by minister Janine Ribeiro, associated with the term “indoctrination”. The denial of science assumes, in the case of the Human and Social Sciences, the denial of its scientists, by the accusation of “leftism”, among other forms and strategies. But how much is there, internally, of denial of science among historians? How to explain that all specialities in history feel comfortable discussing another speciality without reading its accumulated production or consulting its specialists? If specialists in history teaching entered the debate on ancient or medieval historiography ignoring the production and the current state of the question, what would be the reaction of researchers in these fields? The unceremonious way in which the teaching of history as a field of research, production of knowledge, and accumulation of discussion of public policies has been ignored by so many debaters is a worrying symptom that the field is not recognized by large contingents of historians, perhaps the majority. It is not surprising that this denial of the science produced by “others” is compatible with an element that is very present in the work culture of historians, which is the idea that teaching is application, simplification, and backward didacticization of what the historian produces. It seems to us that the confrontation of this problem of identity – pertinent to both groups – will be the decisive issue to be faced if what is sought is a unitary and powerful representation of all professionals in History.

However, it is important to maintain our research, our dialogue with the teachers of Basic Education, who are our professional colleagues and are daily challenged to break with a history that does not give meaning to the practical life of the subjects. We need to fight for continued training, for initial training that articulates and puts beyond the discourse a training that is constant of the teacher-researcher. The idea of teaching and research as something inseparable will allow this teacher to transcend the content and work on possibilities of reading the world. One of the most important strategies is to claim and conquer curricular spaces for the Diversified Part in the classroom. Another is the collective rebuilding of the document, rewriting it according to the needs and conceptions of the classroom, as a projection exercise of the future transformations that must be claimed.

The teacher training that integrates such elements in his initial and continuing education and, mainly, in his classroom experience will bring gains to the historical learning of future generations, who will give meaning to their orientations in time.

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