

Historical-Critical Pedagogy and Teacher Training for Rural School

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ABSTRACT – Historical-Critical Pedagogy and Teacher Training For Rural School. This paper is a critique to the *Escola Ativa* Program, identifies the contradictions based on the experience carried out by the Universidade Federal da Bahia, and presents improving elements by proposing a Specialization Course on Historical-Critical Pedagogy for teachers of Multigrade Classes within the *Escola da Terra* Program, which replaced the *Escola Ativa* Program. We advocate for a teacher training for rural schools founded on a continuous policy and developed according to a materialist, historical, and dialectic theoretical basis, in harmony with the interests of the working class.

Keywords: Education. Historical-Critical Pedagogy. Escola da Terra Program. Escola Ativa Program.

RESUMO – Pedagogia Histórico-Crítica e Formação de Docentes para a Escola do Campo. O presente texto trata de uma crítica ao Programa Escola Ativa, identifica contradições a partir da experiência da Universidade Federal da Bahia e apresenta elementos superadores através da proposta de um curso de Especialização em Pedagogia Histórico-Crítica para professores de Classes Multisseriadas dentro do Programa Escola da Terra, que substituiu o Programa Escola Ativa. Defendemos a formação dos professores das escolas do campo a partir de uma política contínua e desenvolvida sob a base teórica materialista, histórica e dialética, sintonizada com os interesses da classe trabalhadora.

Palavras-chave: Educação. Pedagogia Histórico-Crítica. Programa Escola da Terra. Programa Escola Ativa.

Introduction

This text aims to present elements of the criticism directed to the *Escola Ativa* (Active School) Program, which is intended for Multi-grade Classes, based on the experience of the Universidade Federal da Bahia (UFBA) and presents a proposal for the Specialization Course on Historical-Critical Pedagogy¹ for the continuing training of teachers considering the reordering of the Rural Education policy, based on the *Escola da Terra* (Local School) Program².

The *Escola da Terra* Program was implemented in Brazilian states under coordination of the Department of Continuing Education, Literacy, Diversity and Inclusion (SECADI) of the Ministry of Education (MEC) in partnership with municipalities and seven federal public universities, namely: Universidade Federal de Minas Gerais (UFMG), Universidade Federal da Bahia (UFBA), Universidade Federal do Rio Grande do Sul (UFRGS), Universidade Federal do Maranhão (UFMA), Universidade Federal do Amazonas (UFAM), Universidade Federal do Pará (UFPA), and Universidade Federal de Pernambuco (UFPE). It was developed on an experimental basis, with the goal of training approximately 15,000 teachers of municipalities across the country who enrolled in the *Escola da Terra* Program.

It is a strategy that replaces the *Escola Ativa* Program³, implemented initially by the government of Fernando Henrique Cardoso and that continued in the government of Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva. It was intended for multigrade classes, or small schools, in locations of difficult access, with low populational density, with only one teacher, in which all students, of different grades/years of elementary school, studied together in the same classroom. In 2009, according to data from the Ministry of Education, they represented over 50% of rural schools in Brazil, totaling approximately 51 thousand schools with multigrade classes, mainly located in rural areas (Brasil, 2009a).

The *Escola da Terra* Program was developed and proposed from 2012, in a situation of capital crisis (Harvey, 2011), which is expressed by the austerity policies, in the economic and social fields, applied selectively with the working class being deprived of rights and acquired benefits through different means, including the dismantling of public services. This dismantling was due, among other aspects, to the earmarking of about half of Brazil's General Budget for the payment of interest and amortization of external debt, to cuts in this budget - for example, in 2012⁴, in sectors such as health, education, science and technology -, and to tax exemptions and concessions (privatizations) to the bourgeoisie. Financial crises, according to Harvey (2011, p. 18), “[...] serve to rationalize the irrationalities of capitalism [...] The possibility of escaping the crisis in a different configuration relies heavily on the balance of class forces”.

The working class is responding with strikes – which in 2012 totaled 873, according to data from the *Departamento Intersindical de Estatística e Estudos Socioeconômicos* (DIEESE)⁵ [Inter-union Department of Statistics and Socioeconomic Studies] – and there were mass demonstrations by young people protesting and claiming in the streets, as in the demonstrations held in June and July 2013 in large urban centers of Brazil.

These contextual data allow us to recognize that the power of the bourgeoisie is still hegemonic within the State and that this class has advanced to take ownership of public funds and direct the education of the working class, with the purpose of keeping it under the rule of the capital, which needs to keep the work and the worker under its yoke, as a condition of its survival and maintenance of profit rates. In this sense, unfortunately, the working class faces a process of straight disqualification of its education, which can be observed based on: a) the denial of scientific knowledge as an essential basis for conscious explanation and action in reality; b) the marginalization of materialistic, dialectic, and historical theoretical references in curricula; c) the ideologically controlled assessments; d) the silencing of the laws governing the capitalist mode of production, the class struggle, and the bourgeois State; e) the criminalization of social movements and trade union organizations of the working class; f) the absence of reference to the historical project of overcoming the class-organized society, the socialist historical project. These aspects, to a greater or smaller extent, manifest in public educational policies, since these are the result of the correlation of forces between the classes.

We believe that the challenge of the working class is still fighting for the end of the capitalist mode of production, based on private ownership of the means of production, and which is currently expressed in Brazil in the struggle for a different policy, whose central objective is meeting the broad claims of workers. It is, in particular, a struggle for change in the current direction of the Brazilian public educational policy, which must be founded on a project of sovereign nation in which the educational project is not subjected to the world educational project and has as its fundamental guidelines: the right of every person to quality and socially referenced public education, the guidance of this project from the perspective of omnilateral education, and public funding that ensures objective conditions suitable for its implementation.

According to Saviani and Duarte (2012, p. 2), the contradiction that marks the history of school education in the capitalist society is related to the specificity of the educational work, which is socializing knowledge in its most developed forms and the fact that knowledge is constitutive of the means of production, property of the capital and cannot be socialized. To Saviani and Duarte (2012), there are possibilities of struggle: this struggle goes through the understanding that developing

the educational work requires a pedagogy of Marxist inspiration. Still according to Saviani and Duarte (2012, p. 3), there is a possibility of giving direction to the struggle that is possible to the movement produced by the contradiction that marks the school education in the capitalist society, in favor of the working class, which is “[...] the struggle for effecting the school specificity, making the work of socializing knowledge the central axis of all that is carried out within this institution, that is, of that which confers significance to its existence”. This necessarily goes through the critical reflection on the fundamentals that support the continuing education programs for teachers, such as the *Escola da Terra* Program.

Considering these issues, we initially expose the conception of man and education we stand for. According to Saviani (2013b, p. 1), with whom we agree:

Considering that the specifically human characteristics are not inscribed in genetics and, therefore, are not inherited by individuals at birth but historically produced and must be acquired through the educational activity, the historical-critical pedagogy defines education as the act of producing, directly and intentionally, in each single individual the humanity that is produced historically and collectively by humankind. This means that the role of education is to make individuals contemporary to their time, since, when entering existence, the members of the human species are already in a context which is a historical product, that is, product of the actions of the previous generations. We see, then, that the human individual, at birth, is already greatly determined by the conditions of the physical environment which, in our time, is already overdetermined by the knowledge produced by humanity expressed in scientific fields such as geology, geography, agronomy, as well as by the complex of physical-chemical and natural sciences. This means that, in addition to the physical environment, the child is also born predetermined by the cultural environment represented by human environment constituted with its language, customs, morality, artistic expressions, religion, economic and political organization, its specific history. And it dovetails to this set, is influenced by it, depends on it.

Roseli Caldart (2008), one of the greatest thinkers concerning rural education in Brazil, admits that, in the Brazilian rural areas, there is a need for extending the school's social function and for overcoming curricula that are poor, aseptic, with no social, cultural, or political life.

What interests us here is the point of convergence among scholars who have been dedicated to Rural Education, from the Marxist perspective. The overcoming of poor, aseptic curricula, emptied of knowledge, is a point of convergence. This convergence lies around the recognition

of the school's social function, of ensuring access to humanity's cultural heritage, without which we do not become human beings.

Points of view regarding multigrading are also controversial⁶. We recognize that the multigrade school is a reality in education, in and of rural areas, which needs to be overcome. However, while this does not happen, we cannot let a whole generation of children and young people subjected to the complete denial of the schooling process. It must be understood as a transient action towards the guarantee, in fact, of the right to education for all. Therefore, it is the struggle against the capitalist expressions in the rural school; a struggle fought within the capitalist school with positions in favor of the working class, which implies a fight against the relegation of the rural schools' educational curricula. It is seeking to overcome by the incorporation of the positive elements of hegemonic pedagogies, traditional and New School (Saviani, 2011), to organize a pedagogy articulated with the interests of the working class, the Historical-Critical Pedagogy.

Considering that every child has the right to study near home, and since the school bus is too dangerous for young children and the fatigue caused by the same disrupts the learning process, that these schools can/should be organized to overcome the grading and fragmentation of knowledge, fostering a work by learning cycles, and that such schools build and maintain a relation of reciprocity, of collectivity, of cultural reference and of social organization in the communities in which they are inserted: we advocate that action in this transitional activity should be as qualified as possible, always having as a reference the perspective of omnilateral education.

Context of Emergence of the *Escola da Terra* Program

To explain the emergence of the *Escola da Terra* Program, it is necessary to reference to the *Escola Ativa* Program. As explained in the section *Escola Ativa* (D'agostini; Taffarel; Santos Júnior, 2012, p. 313) of the Dictionary on Rural Education (Caldart et al., 2012), the Program comes from a proposal developed in Colombia based on the New School⁷, in the 1970s, with the name of *Escuela Nueva*, created to serve the multi-grade classes. The program was aimed to serve regions with low population density and low educational quality.

During the decade of 1970, the *Oficina Regional para a Educação na América Latina e no Caribe* [Regional Office for Education in Latin America and the Caribbean] (OREALC) presented and promoted actions in Latin America to develop and improve the quality of multi-grade schools, which mirrored the experience developed in Colombia and which became a parameter in Brazil. The *Escola Ativa* Program was developed from 1996 mainly in the Northeastern states through FUNDESCOLA (School Development Fund), with funding from the World Bank.

After ten years of implementation, the program has suffered severe criticism due to its economic references based on neoliberalism, to theoretical references based on constructivism, and to its inefficiency to change the quality indices for basic education in rural areas. Considering the indicators from published studies⁸ on the experiments conducted and experiments developed in some Higher Education Institutions (HEIs), the problems, difficulties, and possibilities of overcoming were pointed out, admitting the severe limits imposed by a more general policy that continues within the framework of neoliberalism, that is, within the framework of aggressive capitalist relations.

The process of reformulating the program occurred under the conceptions presented in the Operational Guidelines for Basic Education in Rural Schools – CNE/CEB Resolution No. 1, April 3, 2002 (Brasil, 2002) – and under the Complementary Guidelines Norms and Principles for the Development of Public Policies to Support the Basic Education in Rural Areas – Resolution No. 2, April 28, 2008 (Brasil, 2008b)⁹.

The program advanced with the severe criticism of its constructivist theoretical foundation, crafted from its implementation by the federal universities, and due to the fact that the program, in its formulations, did not fully assume the issue of the *historical project beyond the capital* and of the historical and dialectic materialist reference as logic and theory of knowledge to foster a program that effectively reaches the root of all evil – the mode the capital organizes the production of life. This was detected in the critical analysis elaborated by Marsiglia and Martins (2010).

Another element is the criticism from the Social Movements of Rural Areas, among them, the *Movimento dos Trabalhadores Rurais Sem Terra* [Landless Rural Workers' Movement] (MST) and its Education Sector. The criticism is directed to: a) the roots of the program, based on neoliberal policy; b) the absence of rupture between the educational policy of the government of Fernando Henrique Cardoso and that of the government of Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva; c) the absence of a project of sovereign nation to guide teleologically the schooling of children and young persons in rural areas; d) the absence of a project of development for the Brazilian rural areas based on land reform, on family agriculture, and on agroecology; e) the absence of partnership with social movements of rural areas; f) the absence of self-determination of rural school teachers to define the work methodology; g) the insufficient funding and the logistics so the actions provided for are effectively implemented in rural schools; h) the disregard for the accumulation of the Landless Rural Workers' Movement based on the pedagogical experiences in the areas of land reform; I) the lack of integration between educational policies in rural areas, especially regarding the education of teachers, infrastructure, and educational material.

The Social Movements of Rural Areas admit in their evaluations that the dispute for the directions of Rural Education, for the project

of nation and for the sovereignty of the country is posed, raging, and requires engagement in the fight, mainly from the organized working class. We continue to tread hard paths on the *razor's edge*, amidst disputes for schooling Projects and Nation Projects.

The *Escola Ativa* Program, from 2008, expanded to the entire Brazil and had direct funding from MEC, being no longer connected to the World Bank; In addition, the books were reviewed, changed, and reissued. The program was taken over by a department named, at the time, SECAD (Department of Continuing Education, Literacy, and Diversity), currently named SECADI (Department of Continuing Education, Literacy and Diversity and Inclusion), as a priority action for basic education in rural areas and the federal universities were allowed to participate of the initiatives in the states along with the departments of education, which enabled a deepening of the criticism of the theoretical-methodological proposition of the program.

Despite the expansion of the *Escola Ativa* Program, of approximately 3,100 municipalities and one million students, compared to the actual numbers of rural schools, it is observed that still very little is done and invested, since, in the universe of the reality of rural education in Brazil, the total number of multigrade schools is approximately 51 thousand, mostly in the northeast region of the country (Brasil, 2009b).

***Escola da Terra* as a PRONACAMPO Program and the Demands of the State of Bahia for the Continuing Education of Teachers from Rural Schools**

In March 2012, SECADI/MEC launched the *Programa Nacional de Educação do Campo* [National Rural Education Program] (PRONACAMPO), which combines articulated actions, actions in support of Rural Education provided for in Decree No. 7.352/2010, which preconize the improvement of education in the networks existing in rural areas, teacher training, production of didactic material, and access and recovery of infrastructure and quality of Rural Education at all stages and modalities (Brasil, 2012). PRONACAMPO has received criticism and is in dispute between the bourgeoisie, represented by ruralist politicians and their radius of influence in the Executive and Legislative sectors, and the organized working-class sectors claiming the rights of rural workers to a project of education related to Land Reform and to the Popular Sovereignty of the Nation.

PRONACAMPO is structured in four axes, which are:

Axis I – Pedagogic Management and Practices: Escola da Terra; Escola Quilombola; Mais Educação: Escolas do Campo; Programa Nacional do Livro Didático - PNLD Campo; Programa Nacional de Biblioteca da Escola – PNBE;

Axis II – Training: Initial Training of Rural Teachers; Continuing Education of Teachers; Postgraduate Studies for Rural Teachers;

Axis III – Adult and Youth Education, Professional and Technical Education: PRONATEC Campo; *Educação de Jovens e Adultos/EJA – Saberes da Terra;*

Axis IV – Physical and Technological Infrastructure: Construction of Schools; Digital Inclusion; *Programa Dinheiro Direto na Escola/PDDE Campo, PDDE Água e Esgotamento Sanitário; Luz para Todos na Escola;* School Transportation.

The *Escola da Terra* program is inserted in Axis I and provides for the continuing education of teachers with training courses, local team responsible for pedagogic monitoring and provision of a set of specific pedagogic materials (Brasil, 2012). This program aims to address the rural multigrade classes with actions focusing on the promotion of quality teaching in rural schools.

Based on recognition of the limits of the *Escola Ativa* Program and of the urgent need for a program intended to be consistent within the scope of training for teachers of multigrade classes, SECADI, from 2012, has held meetings with representatives from federal institutions of higher education to discuss pedagogical aspects and operationalization of the *Escola da Terra* Program. The challenge posed to this program is its consistency with the specificity and the needs of rural workers, in the sense of altering the pedagogical work in/of multigrade classes. It is also important to a partnership to be established among SECADI, municipalities, state departments of education, and IFES (these being the responsible for outlining the proposal of education, according to the principle of pedagogic autonomy, and its implementation). The municipalities and state departments of Education have a key role in the implementation of the program for their responsibility in the provision of objective conditions for the education of teachers, such as funding (which is carried out in partnership with SECADI).

According to a survey from SECADI/MEC in 2013, of a total of 3,548 municipalities with multigrade schools in the country, 2,932 municipalities joined the program (which represents 83% of the total). Considering the number of multigrade schools in the country, these figures are expressed in 37,396 schools (71%) which joined in a total universe of 52,665 schools.

In the state of Bahia, of a total of 417 municipalities, 325 joined the *Escola da Terra* Program, which corresponds, of 11,917 rural public schools with multigrade classes in the state, to 6,143 schools participating in the program. These schools have as demand the continuing education of 12,631 teachers (Brasil, 2013b). It is, according to data from SECADI/MEC, the state with the highest number of rural public schools and of participations in the program considering the parameter of number of schools, as well as the indication of greater necessity for continu-

ing education of teachers from rural schools. These data demonstrate a real demand for the education of teachers for rural schools in the state of Bahia, education which does not occur without appropriate objective conditions (which implies sufficient resources for the development of the proposed education) and without an improving theoretical basis that responds to specific demands of education for the working class in rural areas in a situation of crisis of the capital.

SECADI/MEC projected to UFBA the goal for serving, in the 2013-2014 period, 1,750 teachers of 12,631 enrolled teachers from rural public schools. In the first stage, there were 600 teachers, considering 10 priority municipalities, which have the highest number of rural schools to be serviced at this stage of experimental implementation of the program¹⁰. This means that, considering the 12,631 teachers in the 325 municipalities that joined the *Escola da Terra* program, at this first stage, 12,031 teachers were not granted the education (Brasil, 2013b). A total of 10,881 teachers will be out until the end of the process, which requires an educational policy that is very strict, systematic, permanent, and with adequate funding considering the challenge.

Historical-Critical Pedagogy: UFBA's initiatives to promote the *Escola da Terra* Program

“Improve the quality of school performance in multigrade classes of rural schools” (Brasil, 2008c, p. 33) remains the goal of the program presented now with the designation of *Escola da Terra*, a name which is closer to the interests and educational tradition of Social Movements of Rural Areas. Appropriation that is being questioned, since the formulation of the program has not had the participation of Social Movements of Rural Areas, within that which is claimed by such movements.

At the time of the elaboration of this program under SECADI/MEC in conjunction with education institutions, we defended that, to this program to be fostered, the following problems would need to be confronted and overcome:

- 1) *The basis of the program should be the historical project to overcome capitalism, which implies a perspective of human education advocated by the Social Movements in defense of democratization of basic education in rural areas;*
- 2) *The perspective of compensatory policy via Multilateral Bodies and the focal and paternalistic political profile must be overcome;*
- 3) *The theoretical basis of the program must break with pragmatism and New School and neoconstructivist concepts, which do not meet the needs of a consistent theoretical basis on Rural Education to support the pedagogical work in schools of rural areas;*
- 4) *Funding should be adequate, sufficient, permanent and agile: the situation remains unstable at the present time, in the government of Presi-*

dent Dilma Rousseff, considering the annual cuts in the budget and the dispute for these resources by sectors such as the “ruralists”, landowners, and imperialists;

5) The relationship between the federal government, universities and departments of education of municipalities and states, which are complicated, bureaucratized, and interfere with the autonomy of the school and teachers;

6) The alienating political orientation of the program, focused on neutrality of the teaching technique must be overcome, since the program is a methodological strategy that provides directions to the human cultivation in rural schools;

7) *The preparation, training of educators*, of trainers, beyond the teaching technique and the strict management, which end up detracting from the other dimensions of the act of teaching and learning, such as the dimensions of scientific thought and attitude, politics, technique, ethics, morals, aesthetics. The claims from teachers of rural areas, regarding the responsibilities of the federal, state, and municipal governments and of the university to effectively ensure the implementation of the Guidelines for Rural Education in multigrade schools¹¹, must be ensured;

8) *The discontinuity of the program*: The program cannot be stopped, delayed. This has been occurring due to the fragility of the government’s public educational policies and to the deep crisis faced by the states as a result of the crisis of capitalism;

9) *The self-criticism*: there must be systematic, constant assessment and self-criticism of the program by SECADI/MEC and the other participants;

10) *The reconceptualization of the program in its new version*: The new version of the program, with reformulations elaborated from the concrete pedagogical work in rural schools and with the contributions of pedagogical experiences of the individuals that militate in the Rural Education and in the fight for land reform in Brazil. The program should achieve a degree of national reformulation able to identify it with the fundamentals of Rural Education, which has its identity related to social fights for land reform and for another model of economic development in rural areas and another project of national sovereignty;

11) The presence of Social Movements of Rural Areas as introducers of the persons from rural areas to the program and observing their criticism, taking into account the experience accumulated by the Social Movements;

12) *Overcoming bureaucracy in the application of resources considering the reality of rural areas*: Purchase of permanent material - teaching equipment and payment of teachers (due to the specificities of each region in Brazil) for the training courses in rural areas of the states must be allowed;

13) Mischaracterize the idea that the program is closed, from top to bottom, which is detrimental to university autonomy: The constitutional precept that ensures the university autonomy should be guaranteed, leaving the university to be a mere executor of government programs or implementer of educational *policies*.

14) *The program should contribute to reaching the point of irreversibility to guarantee its continuation in another qualitative level, which implies another Historical Project, another project of schooling that will dispute the hegemony with the conservative sectors.*

Considering that which was exposed, we questioned: How will the *Escola da Terra* program be assumed by the SECADI/MEC as a priority action for basic education in rural areas with the purpose of improving the quality of school performance, taking into account the need for an integrated system of education? Considering the amount of funding, the scope of the program, and the actual demand for Rural Education, is this program a priority action to carry out the operational guidelines for Rural Education, to *improve the quality of school performance in multigrade classes of rural schools*?

These questions lead us to sustain that participation in the program should be a *Critical Participation*, taking into account that also in this scope the project of education of children and young persons of rural areas is in dispute. To elaborate the proposal for continued training of teachers from public schools with multigrade classes developed by UFBA, we support some theoretical-methodological parameters for this formation developed in the form of a specialization course on Historical-Critical Pedagogy, whose outline is presented in a latter section.

This is, therefore, one of the central points on which our fight within the university focuses. Positioning in relation to the theoretical and methodological foundations for a pedagogy of Marxist basis.

Theoretical and Methodological Aspects for the *Escola da Terra* Program

Theoretical foundation We advocate that Liberalism, the New School (John Dewey) and Constructivism (Piaget), expressed in the formulations of the UNESCO (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization), with adherence to postmodern theses, and founded on the pedagogies of *learning to learn*, compromise the human education, as discussed by Duarte (2001; 2003; 2004a; 2004b), by way of the epistemological and cultural relativism, by denial of objective knowledge in its most developed expressions (such as science and art) and by assigning a secondary role to the teacher and the school.

We advocate that the theoretical basis is founded on Marxist theory, on Socialist Pedagogy and on the Historical and Dialectic Materialist Theory of Knowledge from the perspective of human emancipation, of omnilateral education.

It is necessary, therefore, to ensure another theoretical foundation of the Program, within a critical trend of education, for changes in the pedagogic work and rising of the cultural standard of teachers and students in Brazil.

Implementation: The *Escola da Terra* Program must provide didactic and methodological autonomy to HEIs to organize - with the departments of education of municipalities and states and with Social Movements of Rural Areas - the basic principles to be agreed nationally based on the initiative of these sectors. Emphasis must be directed to working with teachers who teach classes in multigrade schools. Implementation should emphasize the education of teachers to work collectively and build the Pedagogy and Policy Project, the curricula, the school programs autonomously, suitable to each reality, taking into consideration that the social function of school curriculum is to raise the theoretical capacity of students, develop the personality, the human psyche, the higher psychological functions. The basic curriculum guidelines should be built with participation of multigrade class teachers, state and municipal departments of education, the SECADI/MEC, the Social Movements of Rural Areas and experts in the field. They must be deeply analyzed, considering the social function of the school of developing the human psyche, from the perspective of emancipation, and they should be taken as references for structuring the School Curriculum.

Proposal of the specialization course on Historical-Critical Pedagogy at UFBA

The contradiction in course in the capitalist mode of production of denial of socialization of knowledge, because its production base is private property, signals to the struggle between the classes. And in this fight we take position in favor of the interests of the working class. The proposition of development of the *Escola da Terra* program by the UFBA, in partnership with the SECADI/MEC, the municipalities, and the department of education of the State of Bahia, in the form of a specialization course on Historical-Critical Pedagogy considers and is justified by:

- 1) the data from Rural Education in Bahia and the data from SECADI/MEC regarding the participation of municipalities and public schools with multigrade classes reaffirm the educational deficit to which the country's population have historically been subjected, which justifies this investment in the education of teachers for rural schools, especially those who teach students in initial grades;
- 2) the need for and relevance of including in this education the specificities of rural education in public educational policies;

3) the need for continuing education for teachers of rural areas as it is a right assured by the *Lei de Diretrizes e Bases da Educação Nacional* – LDB 9.394/1996 [Law of Guidelines and Bases for National Education];

4) that which was accumulated by the FAGED/UFBA in recent years, based on practical experience in Rural Education (PRONERA, ACC, *Escola Ativa*, PROCAMPO – Teaching degree in Rural Education) and for having developed teaching materials – the Guidelines on the Foundations of Rural Education, Pedagogy and Policy Project for Rural School, Funding of Rural Education, Rural School Curriculum, Pedagogical Work in Rural Education (Taffarel; Santos Júnior; Escobar, 2010);

5) data from studies on rural schools that indicate, according to Salomão Antônio Mufarrej Hage (2011, p. 103): “[...] that the number of schools solely with multigrade classes decreased from 62,024 in 2002 to 50,176 in 2006, while the number of enrollments in the same period decreased from 2,462,970 to 1,875,318”, representing respectively 60.6% of the schools and 32.4% of the enrolments in rural areas of the country;

6) data from Bahia in 2010, with 19,172 multigrade classes in 328 municipalities. With 8,553 teachers with teaching function in 5,553 schools (Análise... 2010);

7) the need for alteration of the theoretical basis that these teachers of the Bahia municipalities are working with Programs for education of educators of relativist epistemological base and New School pedagogy;

8) the Commitment of the Universidade Federal da Bahia with the continuing education of teachers of rural areas with consistent theoretical basis, providing them with references as for theory and policy to improve the rural education, fostering the pedagogical work for the historical demands of education for the working class and the historical project beyond the capital;

9) that the internalization of signs, the formation of concepts, the superiority of scientific concepts in relation to common concepts, the enhancement of the capacity of theorizing, the development of the human psyche and its higher psychological functions are responsibility and social function of the school;

10) the theoretical basis advocated by the historical-cultural psychology finds the most absolute echo in the current of historical-critical pedagogical thought and its foundation concerning the education of the human being in the Communist society as a reference for contemporary education (Martins, 2011, p. 43-57; Duarte, 2011, p. 07-21; Della Fonte, 2011, p. 23-42).

This course aims at the certification of teachers of multigrade classes of rural schools of Bahia, by means of the *Escola da Terra* Program, with the degree of Specialist in Historical-Critical Pedagogy for Rural Schools, developing the theoretical foundation through a process of continuing education, which provides for pedagogic periods at the

university (UFBA) and pedagogic periods working in schools, in communities, in the municipalities, aiming to develop a consistent theoretical basis, based on the parameters of the historical dialectic materialist theory. It is expected that the teachers are able to observe, understand, analyze, synthesize, explain the teaching-learning process in the initial grades, propose improving activities for the pedagogical work developed in public schools, multigrade classes, to confront the contradictions and present enhancing methodological possibilities, in the organization of curricula, and in the public policies of Rural Education.

The course started in 2014, with 750 enrolled people, in six centers – Campo Alegre de Lourdes, Campo Formoso, Euclides da Cunha, Feira de Santana, Vitoria da Conquista, Xique-Xique – and was completed in December 2015. Of these teachers enrolled for the course, 383 had the requirements to incorporate the curriculum of the Specialization in Historical-Critical Pedagogy for Rural Schools, Multigrade Classes. The other 367 obtained certification in Improvement.

Organized in six modules (each consisting of 20 hours of present classes – in the University Period – and 40 hours of semi-present classes – in the School-Community Period) structured in four complex systems: a) the Mode of production of life and work as an educational principle; b) the ontology of the social being, the human development, the theory of knowledge, and the learnings under the responsibility of the school; c) the Organization of the pedagogical work, the curriculum, projects, programs according to a program of life; d) the public educational policies that organize the network of education, the schools, and the classroom from the perspective of human emancipation.

In the first module, the fundamentals were treated based on the concrete reality, which required the approach on Mode of Production and work in General to pedagogical work.

The second module presented the specificities of the work process, so teachers approached the historical-dialectical materialism focusing on four fundamental axes: the Conception of Rural Education, Pedagogy and Policy Project for Rural School, Organization of the Pedagogical Work and Curriculum for Rural Schools, and Funding for Rural Schools.

In the third Module, the ontology of the social being, the theory of knowledge and of the teaching-learning process was addressed, along with the social function of the school. The development of higher psychological functions, the children's personality dimensions to be developed, and the access to products and means of production of culture, science, humanities, arts, and physical education. Contents on curricula, projects, programs, and teaching methodology were developed for the rural school.

In the fourth module, the fundamentals and foundations of the process of acquisition of first literacy and literacy of children in multi-

grade system were addressed, having as main reference the Concepts of development and learning according to the theoretical foundation of Historical-Cultural Psychology and Historical-Critical Pedagogy (Martins, 2013). The module focused on studies related to nine-year basic education; Theories of literacy (first literacy and literacy acquisition); Psycholinguistic aspects of literacy acquisition (development of writing, production of texts, text genres); Forms of grouping among children in multigrade classrooms.

In the fifth module, the pedagogical research and practices in Rural Education were addressed, studying the Pedagogical Practice and the work with the fields of knowledge: in this Module, the principles for the organization of the teaching were highlighted, considering the more general work-capital relations and the relations specific of the pedagogical work in multigrade classes: objective-evaluation, content-method, time-space, teacher-student-community-State. Students learned to use the teaching materials of the program, to use of the Pedagogical Kit in dealing with the knowledge of the fields of sciences, humanities, arts, and physical education.

In the sixth module, the issue of educational management of rural schools in the state of Bahia was addressed, so the teacher understood the management of rural education and school from the perspective of historical-critical pedagogical theory, identifying the possibilities of managing school space and the daily life of the community mediated by improving educational practices, based on the conception of educational management founded on the Historical-Critical Pedagogy.

Importantly, the work developed with the teachers took into account that science advances by incorporations and that the critical position in relation to the theories that underlie the education of the human person in contemporary society is essential (Duarte, 2004a; 2003). In this sense, the Course is open with theoretical explanations promoted by Newton Duarte on the choice regarding theoretical principles that cannot be devalued with the laudation of eclecticism and pragmatic spirit (Duarte, 2011, p. 07-21). The authors of pedagogical and educational theories are considered, especially regarding possible contributions to overcome New School, technicist, and reproductivist approaches (Saviani, 2012). For that, the historical and theoretical contextualization of the historical-critical pedagogy is fundamental in the study of teachers. Other authors of educational and pedagogical theories are considered within this perspective of studies. In this sense, there is critical consideration of other authors that deal with educational and pedagogical theories such as Libâneo (1990), Gentili (1998), Freire (2005) and others.

Analysis of the training course, through the Reports of the Participants, tutors and trainers, allows us to affirm that the main merit, recognized regularly in all the documents, was the consistent theoretical

basis, with adherence to the concrete reality of the rural schools and the discipline in the studies with the didactic material in the hands of all teachers in training. The great challenge was to maintain the regularity concerning the funding and the effort to carry out the federative pact, federal, state and municipal government, involved in the *Ação Escola da Terra* of the PRONACAMPO Program.

To analyze the effects and contributions from the Specialization Course in Historical-Critical Pedagogy for Teachers of Rural Schools, the Multigrade classrooms, the course completion papers required for the incorporation of the specialist curriculum were analyzed. There were a total of 383 technical-scientific reports, according to requirements from the UFBA's curricular proposal. From these reports, data on effects on pedagogical work and contributions to change the curriculum were collected. According to the teachers' own written opinions, we observed in the reports analyzed that the effects were recognized in the organization of the pedagogical work and in its scientific foundation. As for the contributions of the course to the rural schools, the teachers mentioned in their reports, in addition to the expansion of their theoretical basis on the nature and specificity of Education, the relevant contribution of the Course to redimension the understanding about the social role of the school, the fundamentals about teaching and learning based on the historical-cultural theory and the consideration of what is the essential, the main, the fundamental, the classical, as a criterion for the selection of contents for the pedagogical work (Saviani, 2013a, p. 11-20) in organizing the curriculum for schools in rural areas.

Conclusion

We once again defend, now facing the proposal from the SECADI/MEC of the *Escola da Terra* Program, that for universalization of basic education in rural areas and to *improve the quality of school performance in multigrade classes of schools in rural areas* a global policy is necessary, organized and permanent, with adequate funding and public, transparent, simplified, and with social control management and, fundamentally, with participation of the people of rural areas, with the Movements that organize their fights. It is necessary a consistent theoretical basis founded on the fundamentals of the Marxist theory. It is necessary to base the teaching and learning on the historical-cultural theory and consider that which is the essential, the main, the fundamental, the classic as criterion to select the contents of the pedagogical work, to organize the curriculum of rural schools, according to what is acknowledged by the very teachers in continuing education.

The initial and continuing education should be emphasized, prioritized and elaborated consistently by HEIs and be in harmony with the most advanced proposals for the training of teachers developed in the country, following the example of the proposal of the *Associação Na-*

cional de Formação de Profissionais da Educação [National Association of Training of Education Professionals] (ANFOPE)¹² and of the proposals in development in teacher training courses implemented by HEIs and organized by the *Programa Nacional de Educação em Áreas de Reforma Agrária* [National Program for Education in Areas of Agrarian Reform] (PRONERA) such as, for example, the courses on Pedagogy of the Earth and the programs to obtain a Teaching Degree in Rural Education, when based on historical-dialectic materialism, among other experiments, developed by the SECADI/MEC itself, whose perspective for training is human emancipation, which means the emancipation of the working class from the subjection to the capital.

Funds earmarked must be adequate to ensure concrete conditions for work, production of science and technology, implementation and maintenance of this technology in rural areas, and to ensure that the student remains at the rural area. This leads us to recognize the importance of advocating an increase in the percentage of GDP earmarked for the Brazilian education.

The stage of mere misorganized program must be overcome to include the *Sistema Nacional Integrado de Educação* [National Integrated System of Education], in which the federated entities are supposed to assume the responsibilities in the implementation and consolidation of a policy that ensures everyone a free, public, and quality education in rural areas, with a high quality standard.

It is essential a strong relationship with the Social Movements of Rural Areas (the landless, the riverside dwellers, *quilombolas*, *caiçaras*, and indigenous people affected by dam, pasture, extractive activity) and other rural workers, such as the salaried rural workers, artisanal fisherfolk, farmers, family farmers, forest dwellers, *caboclos* and others who produce their material conditions of existence from the work in rural areas, so the program can be characterized as a policy of Basic Education in Rural Areas.

So the changes in the Program ensure the arguments here exposed, the different experiences and evaluations of the executors of previous programs and, especially, the change in the program's theoretical basis, from the perspective of a historical-dialectic materialist foundation of education, a theoretical foundation of Marxist basis, a foundation as expressed in the *Fórum Nacional de Educação do Campo* [National Forum of Rural Education] (FONEC) in its Creation Letter.

We also point to the effective execution of that which is established in Decree No. 7.352/2010, which addresses the rural education policy and the PRONERA, with the aim of advancing to an effective and expanded public policy of initial and continuing education of teachers of rural areas for basic education and that comprise all types of rural schools in their actual demand in Brazil, with the prospect of a sovereign nation project.

Finally, we point out the career, positions and salaries, social security, assistance and health of teachers. Without valuing the teaching profession by means of adequate salaries, enforcement of the minimum required salary law¹³, adequate retirement, solidarity, no proposal is sustained. Teachers should be very well paid, have proper working conditions, and undergo permanent continuing education.

The direction of Rural Education depends fundamentally on the long-lasting fight among individuals who identify with and are inserted in antagonistic projects of society and education. The position of the Social Movements of Rural Areas, organizing the people of the country, the position of National and State Forums such as FONEC, launched in August 2010, the position of the other bodies of working-class fight, such as political parties and Trade Unions, will have a decisive influence on these directions. We cannot be indifferent to this which is vital for the people in rural areas – *quality public education as a right of all and a duty of the State*.

On our part, we affirm that the science, the rural education is not only a product of reason, but a product of society, which is born from the necessities of material production. Now, it is up to us to resist with clear ideological position, which is expressed in a collective will, for a historical orientation present in the working class. Remembering that the lower the resistance, the more the neoliberal policies advance.

For those who fight on the side of the working class and that are not in withdrawal, but willing to fight to win, the great historical reference to guide the pedagogical work in rural areas, the production of knowledge, the human education, and the intervention in public policies is the transition program, where we find the “objective assumptions of socialist revolution” (Trotsky, 1995, p. 43).

The data of reality update the contents about the class struggle. The strategic task is to enter the daily struggles to find points of support between a system of claims that starts from the current objective conditions and lead to the conquest of power; power to set the direction of public policies, of the education project, of the pedagogy-policy project of the school and of the clear and precise guidance of the pedagogical practice of the rural school and, within it, the directions of the human cultivation.

The task is not reforming or humanizing capitalism, or reforming and humanizing the current education. The history of class struggle has proven that this is impossible. The task is not to strengthen the reconciliation of classes, to fabricate false consensuses or to be subjected to the dictates of international bodies. What is required is attention to the tactics, even those small and partial. *The revolutionary movement tirelessly defends the democratic rights of workers and their social benefits acquired. Rural Education is a Right and not a handout, repeat the rural workers*. This task consists in the systematic mobilization toward sei-

zure of power. Update of the historical content of the *Frente Única*, built based on complete freedom in discussion, but total unity in action, the alliance between rural workers and urban workers and the program of revolution from the demands of the large masses must be our reference for resistance.

We must not forget the historical lessons from the fight of workers for their claims. *Education of the people in charge of the State is absolutely unacceptable, as is unacceptable the subjection of Rural Education to the neoliberal educational policy and its hegemonic characterization nowadays.*

One thing is determining, by means of a general law, the resources; and another, completely different, is establishing the State as educator of the people. Contrarily, what should be done is subtracting from the school any and all influence from the government: “[...] it is the State that needs to receive from the People a severe Education” (Marx, 1975, p. 55). It is one thing subjecting rural schools to the interests of the capital, and another is treating education pedagogically, critically, reflectively, and creatively, in the pedagogy and policy project of the rural school.

One thing is the government fulfilling that which was established in article 205 of the Federal Constitution of the Federative Republic of Brazil which establishes education as *a right of all and duty of the State and of the family* having, as one of the principles of education, *equal conditions for access and permanence in school* (Brasil, 2011). Another thing is the ideological interference from the policies of a government that has demonstrated, over its management, the difficulty of meeting the priority claims of the working class considering the relentless force of the capital in the public management of the Capitalist State.

To conclude, it is noteworthy that we cannot be indifferent to the discussions and decisions concerning the Rural Education and the *Escola da Terra* Program:

Indifference operates powerfully in the history [...] What happens, happens not because some want it to happen, but because the mass of men gives up their will, lets do, lets knots gather that afterwards only the sword can cut, lets laws be enacted that afterwards only the revolt will see revoked, lets man hold the power that afterwards only a riot may overthrow (Gramsci, 1976, p. 121).

Building, with political and ideological responsibility, the proposals for Rural Education is our educational task. Interacting with consistent theoretical basis with children and young persons is our responsibility. Rural Education and, within it, the *Escola da Terra* program cannot be discussed outside the framework of the ongoing revolution to overcome the subsumption of labor to capital.

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Notes

- 1 The basic bibliography supporting the Specialization Course on Historical-Critical Pedagogy is based, among other works, on the publications of Saviani (2012; 2013a); Marsiglia (2011); Martins (2013), and Saviani and Duarte (2012).
- 2 Brasil (2013a, online).
- 3 Approximately 3,106 municipalities of the total 5,570 Brazilian municipalities participated of the *Escola Ativa* Program.
- 4 In 2012, budget cuts amounted to R\$ 55 billion.
- 5 Balanço... (2012, online).
- 6 Concerning this matter, see the studies of Marsiglia and Martins (2010).
- 7 The ideals of the New School have roots in liberalism and represented a reaction to the Traditional School. Many of these pedagogical ideas were already put into practice in the late 19th century amidst the rise of capitalism. The basic ideas are: the centrality of the child in learning relations; respect to hygienic norms; disciplining of body and gestures; the scientificity of the schooling of knowledge and social practices; fostering of the act of observing, inferring, in the construction of knowledge. Such ideals find resonance in the Manifest of the Pioneers, in 1932. (WebArtigos, 2009, online).
- 8 Among these studies, we highlight the study of the GEPERUAZ Group – Grupo de Estudo e Pesquisa em Educação do Campo da Amazônia [Group for Study and Research on Amazon Rural Education]. Further information in Hage (2008 online).
- 9 Formulations from authors such as Kolling, Cerioli and Caldart (2002); Kolling, Nery and Molina (1999); Molina (2004) contributed to reformulations of the program regarding the guidelines for Rural Education.
- 10 These municipalities have, altogether, 608 rural public schools with multigrade classes (Brasil, 2013b).
- 11 Regarding the claims from teachers, see: Universidade (2010a, online).
- 12 Documento... (2012, online).
- 13 See Brasil (2008a).

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