

The Manifest of the Pioneers of the new Education (1932): consolidation of interests

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ABSTRACT. In defense of an educational construction and organization at the national level, with the public school agenda, accessible and unitary, the presentation of the Manifest of the Pioneers of the New Education was launched in 1932, which in turn, was widely published by the Brazilian press in the period. This document is marked by the events in progress in society, such as the Revolution of 1930 and the entry of the industrial project present in the Vargas Era, among others, having in mind the civilizing, political and economic bias of power retention. In this scenario, the present study aims to analyze the renovators's proposals in the Manifest. For this purpose, it is subdivided into three moments: first, it describes the historical scenario of production and reproduction of illiteracy in the Old Republic (1889-1930); then, it presents the centrality attributed to the education in the process of modernization of society; and finally, it identifies the bourgeois order propagated in the educational system presented in the Manifest.

Keywords: manifest of the pioneers of the new education; national education.

Manifesto dos Pioneiros da Educação Nova (1932): consolidação de interesses

RESUMO. Em defesa de uma construção e organização educacional a nível nacional, com a 'pauta' escola pública, acessível e unitária, lançou-se em 1932 a apresentação do Manifesto dos Pioneiros da Educação Nova, que por sua vez, foi amplamente divulgado pela imprensa brasileira no período. Esse documento se encontra marcado pelos acontecimentos em curso na sociedade, como a Revolução de 1930 e o ingresso do projeto industrial presente na Era Vargas, entre outros, tendo presente o viés civilizatório, político e econômico de manutenção do poder. Nesse cenário, o estudo tem como finalidade analisar as propostas dos renovadores presente no Manifesto. Para tanto, o mesmo se encontra subdividido em três momentos, a saber: primeiramente descreve o cenário histórico de produção e reprodução do analfabetismo na República Velha (1889-1930); em seguida, apresenta a centralidade atribuída à educação no processo de modernização da sociedade; e por último, identifica no Manifesto a ordem burguesa propagada no sistema educacional.

Palavras-chaves: manifesto dos pioneiros da educação nova; educação nacional.

Manifiesto de los Pioneros de la Educación Nueva (1932): consolidación de interés

RESUMEN. En defensa de una construcción y organización educacional a nivel nacional, con la 'agenda' escuela pública, accesible y unitaria, se echó en 1932 la presentación del Manifiesto de los Pioneros de la Educación Nueva, que a su vez, fue largamente divulgado por la prensa brasileña en el periodo. Ese documento encontrase marcado por los ocurridos en el curso en la sociedad, como la Revolución de 1930 y la entrada del proyecto industrial presente en la *Era Vargas*, entre otros, teniendo en cuenta el sesgo civilizatorio, político y económico de la manutención del poder. En este escenario, el estudio tiene como finalidad de análisis de propuestas de los renovadores presentes en el manifiesto. Por lo tanto, el mismo hallase subdividido en tres momentos, a saber: primeramente describe el escenario histórico de la producción del analfabetismo en la Republica Antigua (1889-1930); luego, presenta la centralidad atribuida a la educación en el proceso de modernización de la sociedad; y por último, identifica en el Manifiesto la orden burguesa propagada en el sistema educacional.

Palabras clave: manifiesto de los pioneros de la educación nueva; educación nacional.

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Introduction

It became a consensus that school education in Brazil, despite numerous initiatives, was aimed at a few, since the colonial period, the empire, and the republic. Only in the 20th century, more specifically in the 1930s, did education become a 'national' theme, which does not imply that this expressed the materialization of public, universal and free schooling. And it is in this historical moment, marked by the rise of new political, social, and economic forces that education becomes more effective, a topic discussed by numerous intellectuals.

In these terms, the Manifest of the Pioneers of New Education (1932), cannot be understood as an isolated expression of the interests of a certain group of educators. On the contrary, it is a document that links the struggles within a society in transformation. The end of slavery in 1888, the growing process of industrialization and urbanization and the dissemination of liberal values are elements that must be considered in understanding the propositions present among the renovators.

Originally published on March 19, 1932, the Manifest expressed the diffuse interests of the middle classes in education as a mechanism for the democratization of society. There are countless questions that permeate the publication of the document and the projects for society that emerged within the disputes for the political direction of the newly created Ministry of Education and Health in Brazil.

Given its importance, this article seeks to analyze the proposals of the renovators present in the Manifest in a situation marked by the new political reorganization that materialized with the Revolution of 1930 and the rise of a project identified by the industrializing bias of the Vargas Era. In these terms, to achieve the proposed objectives, it is necessary to contextualize the historical period in which it was produced, as well as to identify some of the social and political repercussions caused by the document.

The historical scenario of production and reproduction of illiteracy in the old republic

The end of the Brazilian Empire and the Proclamation of the Republic in 1889 did not represent major transformations in the economic, social, or political sphere. It was a process of division between the dominant classes that was forged throughout the Second Reign (1840-1889). The changes that occurred after the prohibition of the slave trade (1850); the entry of immigrants with the expansion of the internal market; coffee expansion and the incipient process of urbanization enabled the emergence of new interests.

In these terms, the Republic was not the victory of modern Brazil over archaic Brazil, nor did the abolition of slavery represent a drastic break with the previous model. Former slaves freed in 1888 lived in a deplorable situation with unpaid work and the burden of being considered potential suspects. In other words, it can be said that the slaves were left to their fate (Bosi, 1992).

In rural areas, work relations continued to be contaminated by old abusive practices. In cities, the scenario was not substantially different: workers without rights accumulated in cities in degrading conditions.

The Republic was born under the sign of 'public order'. Heirs of political-philosophical evolutionist conceptions that naturalized the social, intellectuals and soldiers who founded the Republic defended the thesis of orderly progress. The non-revolutionary character of the Brazilian republican movement was already visible in the 'Republican Manifesto' of 1870: its signatories presented themselves 'as free men and essentially subordinated to the interests of the fatherland', who did not intend to convulse society, much less break with the structure current (Patto, 1999, p. 170, author's emphasis).

The oligarchic and authoritarian character, inherited from the colonial and imperial past, was a striking feature of the Old Republic (1889-1930). Social movements were treated as a 'police case'. For workers, republican liberalism had nothing to offer.

As an expression of the oligarchic society of the period, there is no lack of examples of State violence, supported by the oligarchies and the incipient industrial bourgeoisie, against workers in the countryside or in the city. It was a hygienist and worker disciplining project to maintain bourgeois order. Not by chance, illiteracy rates in the beginning of the 20th century in Brazil were extremely high. In 1900, 65.3% of the population aged 15 and over were illiterate. In 1920, the percentage remained virtually unchanged at 65%. In other words, even though, throughout the Old Republic, education was considered by many intellectuals to be the flagship for social development, the State was not able to create and organize a national education system (Braga & Mazzeu, 2017).

It is, therefore, in the scenario characterized by the precarious material situation that the workers were subjected, the result of a peripheral and dependent economy, in addition to the domination of the oligarchies, which produced school education for the few. The high number of people who did not even have access to school indicated that there was still a lack of schools and teachers. This was not a simple situational problem, but a striking feature in the formation process of a peripheral and dependent society.

The centrality attributed to education in the process of modernization of society

Despite the political hegemony of the oligarchies, the dominance of the colonels was progressively shaken after the First World War (1914-1918), which contributed to the growth of industrial activities and, at the same time, to the questioning of the reasons for Brazil's backwardness in relation to the most developed nations. The stimulus to industrial activities within the narrow contours of an exporting agrarian economy did not fail to generate significant changes within Brazilian society.

The political order that fundamentally favored the coffee economy was progressively questioned by different social actors. The years after 1920 were marked by political and social upheaval: the modernist movement, the emergence of the Brazilian Communist Party in 1922, in addition to the lieutenantism movement and the Prestes column. This scenario marked the process of decomposition of the Old Republic, as well as the fall of the governors' policy and the alliance between São Paulo and Minas Gerais, known as 'coffee with milk'. The dependent character of the exporting agrarian economy potentiated the oscillations in coffee prices, which affected the economy.

Industrial growth in Brazil, despite not constituting (itself) a deliberate policy of the State:

[...] it operated peculiarly, in the absence of endogenous production and scientific and technological development, in the absence of formal or informal mechanisms for training labor for new activities and in the absence of a significant internal market or enough to sustain industrial growth (Xavier, 2008, p. 18).

As a result of progressive industrialization, which does not mischaracterize Brazil's structural dependence on the hegemonic centers of capital, the theme of education was retaken as a source of progress and social development; as a producer of scientific knowledge; in addition to a social ascension mechanism through the selection of the most qualified.

Since then, the demand for education has grown. The defense of the universalization of the school was a flag to be defended by different social actors. It was in the hands of the middle classes and the bourgeoisie for different reasons, but also by the most conservative segments of society in the face of what they considered a threat from immigrants against the 'peaceful' and 'orderly' traditions of the 'Brazilian people'. In other words, the lack of schooling and the consequent illiteracy were seen as factors that generated the other problems present in Brazil.

On the other hand, the education of the people was understood as fundamental for overcoming backwardness and Brazilian development. For the bourgeoisie, it was a question of training the worker within the needs posed by the expanding industry; for the middle classes, the banner of equal opportunities was raised; for the labor movement, access to education was fundamental to the struggle in defense of denied rights.

With the war, however, the educational problem returns to the scene, on which the energies of the different groups are concentrated. The responsibility for all our problems is attributed to the precarious dissemination of education and an intense campaign against illiteracy begins. This struggle was transformed during the 1920s, when the first 'education professionals' appeared, introducing the ideas of the renewed school, and stimulating concerns about the quality of teaching (Paiva, 1987, p. 90, author's emphasis).

Faced with the crisis circumstances of the oligarchic regime, the dependency character of the exporting agrarian economy and the conflicts present in the social arena, the liberal notion of an open society gained space in which education would be the indispensable condition for guaranteeing equal opportunities, which ultimately justified social inequality, 'fair' because 'natural'.

In the crisis scenario that preceded the end of the Old Republic, the educational issue was taken up again by educators and politicians, whose visible unfolding can be seen in the state reforms in the 1920s., writing and calculating expressed the possibility of social transformation, economic growth, in addition to constituting a powerful ideological instrument for justifying bourgeois society.

Placing education as a basic institution for the promotion of economic and social development, both for society and the individual, the movement of renovators expressed the contradictions and transformations that agitated Brazilian society in the 1920s.

Belief in science and the idea of modernizing society through the school system, which until then did not exist in Brazil, were elements that united different intellectuals in defense of New Education. Not by chance, the years after 1930 were fertile in the production and dissemination of proposals identified with New Education. Faced with the cycle of reforms begun in the previous decade and the changes that took place in production relations, education came to be understood a national issue.

The pioneers' manifest and the modernization of the bourgeois order through education

The early 1930s are characterized by intense political and social polarization in the world and in Brazil. We were witnessing the strengthening of the Fascist State in Italy and its rise in other regions of the old continent. The 1929 crisis, which affected the capitalist nations, sharpened social tensions, and prepared the ground for war. The so-called Revolution of 1930, under the sign of change, exorcised, at least in terms of discourse, the practices of the old oligarchy. In this sense, education was not immune to the political and social upheaval of the period, considered strategic for the formation of the nation and a 'new' man, it became a target of dispute.

In a summary, we find in the New School movement intellectuals identified with liberal thought and even socialists, gathered around the defense of public, universal, secular, and free schools. In opposition, on the other hand, Catholics close to the integralist movement, united in the defense of confessional teaching and defenders of the centrality of the Church in the elaboration of social policies.

With the Revolution of 1930, marked by the rise of new social groups, the Ministry of Education and Public Health was created by Decree n. 19,402 (1930). Francisco Campos, an intellectual identified with the reforms that were taking place in the field of education, occupied the post of minister of the newly created portfolio. However, there was a consensus on education as a strategic theme for the needs of society's reform, the disputes between liberals and Catholics around the theme are also real. Given its proximity to the State, the Brazilian Association of Education convened a new national conference with the purpose of bringing to the government the demands that were considered necessary for the modernization of education in Brazil.

In this way, the provisional government, in the figure of President Getúlio Vargas and Minister Francisco Campos, questioned the intellectuals of the Brazilian Association of Education (BAE), with a view to legitimizing the educational policy. In the inaugural session of the IV National Education Conference, both highlighted the importance of education for the nation, as seen in:

Documentary analysis relating to the IV National Education Conference demonstrates that, in 1931, the boundaries between ABE and the Federal Government were difficult to demarcate. Observing the distribution of people who held positions in the ABE and in government bodies, we have a first indicator of the proximity between the ABE and the Vargas government. Thus, while Francisco Campos occupied the position of Minister of Education and Health and Belissário Penna occupied the position of President of ABE, in 1931 the former was elected as a maintaining member of the aforementioned association of educators and, in turn, its president accumulated, for a few months, the position of interim minister replacing Francisco Campos (Xavier, 2002, p. 18).

According to Romanelli (1999), when the Government requested the elaboration of guidelines for a national education policy to the IV National Education Conference, which took place in December 1931, which had as its theme 'The great guidelines of popular education' the stir around the Secular teaching and public schooling became so fierce that there were no conditions for meeting the government's request. In this sense, the performance of Nóbrega da Cunha stands out, who articulated the elaboration of the Manifest in the terms desired by the liberals, whose mission was delegated to Fernando de Azevedo:

[...] the performance of Nóbrega da Cunha worked as a strategy that aimed to guarantee to the group of educators in tune with the educational renewal the monopoly of the dialogue with the Government, shifting to that group separately, the task of responding to the request that it had been addressed to all the educators gathered at the IV National Education Conference (Xavier, 2002, p. 21).

Written in a short period of time and considering the importance of the document for the political position of the group, Fernando de Azevedo carefully chose the guests to write the document, "[...] taking into account the leadership position and also the diffusion capacity linked to professional practice in press bodies [...]" (Saviani, 2008, p. 234), aiming at a greater propagation of the document. In this sense, the Manifesto expressed an emblematic fact. The document represented a project that called for the development of an educational policy as a requirement for the nation's economic development. Its publication took place in March 1932.

Forged as a cohesion strategy for a group of educators who, despite their differences, joined forces to defend common purposes. The Manifesto clearly delimited the project of its signatories in the configuration process of education in Brazil, being self-proclaimed as a representative of what was most modern in education. In this way, they claimed the direction of the renewal of Brazilian education, pointing to it as the instrument for overcoming the social ills present in Brazil.

For the signatories of the Manifest, it was essential to create a public education system in Brazil that would allow the constitution of the individual under the parameters of technical and scientific culture as opposed to bookish teaching based on rhetoric. Under the rubric of new methods of education, the intellectuals committed to the movement claimed the only school constituted from work, with the political purpose of constituting the school at the service of the demands of the new society that was industrializing.

Presenting itself as new, the proposal materialized in the Manifest, without questioning the material determinants of inequality, expressed the desire to break with the clientelist practices present throughout the Old Republic. Therefore, allusions to the new and old permeated the document about the New School movement and traditional education respectively. It should be recalled that the late industrialization process characterized the period after 1930, which aimed to replace imports with domestic production and, at the same time, needed a new type of worker.

In these terms, the renewal with the adoption of new pedagogical methods in the school environment and the constitution of a public education system were understood as necessary tools to overcome the old oligarchic practices and the constitution of a modern and democratic society. It is emphasized that this type of discourse worked, and still works, as an instrument for legitimizing the bourgeois order, which despite the deviations, constituted the necessary instrument for correcting social problems.

The Manifest was not limited to a simple diagnosis of education in Brazil. In the words of Machado and Carvalho (2015), the document was prepared by civil society, with the aim of establishing an educational base for a legal bias. According to Gomes (2016, p. 115), it is “[...] an eclectic synthesis of the authors' educational ideas”. In a summary, it is possible to state that the Manifesto was guided by the proposition of a new social function for the school and claimed the role of the State in the constitution of a public, secular, free and mandatory education system.

However, despite the commitment of the signatories of the Manifest with the formation of a public education system, the text does not identify the material conditions that contributed to social inequalities. In fact, propagates the:

[...] fear of the uncontrolled rise of the 'masses' and consequent investment in measures to 'rationalize' social relations under the factory model; emphasis on the school and the expansion of its range of influence in society, as a resource to counteract the 'contagion' force of the new means of communication, controlling the unprecedented flow of ideas and images put into circulation through cinema, radio and print on an industrial scale (Carvalho, 2001, p. 67, author's emphasis).

It is an idealistic inversion that made education, instead of large estates and the dependence of the exporting agrarian economy, the great Brazilian problem. Education centered on social dynamics as a solution to the conflicts existing in the country, appends the real reasons, contributing to the deepening of inequality. This direction, as Carvalho (2001) reports, materialized in the Manifest as a project of civilizing transformation, with the objective of demarcating social positions through social control.

“In the hierarchy of national problems, none surpasses in importance and gravity that of education. Not even those of an economic nature can dispute its primacy in national reconstruction plans” (Manifest..., 2006, p. 188). In these terms, education is presented as an instrument of reconstruction, overcoming the great problems of the nation. On the other hand, poverty, backwardness, and social inequality would be consequences of the absence of a school system suitable for economic development. In this way, it was necessary to carry out the construction of the educational system at the national level, given that, the “[...] previous reforms, in which the lack of a global vision of the educational problem, the inspiring force or energy stimulant only changed form, creating different solutions to particular problems” (Manifest..., 2006, p. 190).

For the signatories of the Manifest, the moment demanded a renewed education, supplanting the old conservatism and the standards present in the forms of teaching. It is about raising the national spirit through the school, overcoming the low cultural level and economic backwardness. Expressing liberal postulates, the document links education as a fundamental requirement for training workers and promoting social wealth.

Although the document can be considered progressive for the historical circumstances, it is necessary to point to the idealism present in the flag that linked education as a promoter of economic development and equal opportunities

[...] for, if the organic evolution of a country's cultural system depends on its economic conditions, it is impossible to develop economic or production forces without intensive preparation of cultural forces and the development of aptitudes for invention and initiative which are the fundamental factors of the increase of wealth of a society (Manifest..., 2006, p. 188).

In fact, throughout the text, there is no diagnosis of an economy marked by large estates, agrarian-exporting and dependent on the actions of the great hegemonic centers of capital. As a result of the eclecticism of the text, whose signatories express different perspectives, there are propositions marked by the defense of social reform through education. Being that:

[...] the educators intended to reform culture by carrying out a broad educational reform that would modify the mentality of the new generations of the middle and upper classes, through an education that would form the national conscience of the country's elites, but also that would educate the popular classes so that they could raise their economic, moral and intellectual level, thus providing greater social mobility (Celeste-Filho, 2013, p. 77).

As can be seen in the Manifest, education was intended to develop the student's capacities, ensuring material development and the conservation of the social order. Therefore, the renovators advocated the creation of a public education system with a view to training the individual under the foundations of technical and scientific culture as opposed to literary and book culture. Thus, based on the so-called democratic postulates, the document proposed the formation of a new man for a society in transformation, with the State guaranteeing the right of access to school:

But, from the right of each individual to their integral education, logically follows for the State that recognizes and proclaims it, the duty to consider education, in the variety of its degrees and manifestations, as a social and eminently public function, which it is called to carry out, with the cooperation of all social institutions. Education, which is one of the functions that the family has been stripping itself of in favor of political society, has broken the framework of family communism and specific groups (private institutions), to be incorporated definitively among the essential and primordial functions of the State (Manifest..., 2006, p. 192-193).

The central character of education constitutes one of the foundations of liberal postulates, which met the demands and expressed in its democratic discourse the contradictions of a society marked by peripheral capitalism. Within the parameters of liberal thought, the individual's position stems from his capabilities and his merits. It is also through education that the practices of a harmonious and progressive society are forged.

It is not by chance that the period before the 1930 Revolution was characterized by the questioning of the middle classes, made up of commerce officials, armed forces officers, self-employed professionals, or civil servants, who claimed greater political participation and the expansion of educational opportunities. In this way, the document converges with the liberal aspirations of the groups that viewed the school as a mechanism for promoting equality. According to Romanelli (1987), these segments of the middle classes:

[...] claimed secondary education, and the popular classes, primary education. This is why the renovating movement understood that the time had come for the State to take control of education and that, therefore, it should be free and mandatory, given the needs of the new economic order being implemented. (Romanelli, 1987, p. 143).

With the banner of education as an individual right for all and the State as an institution that must constitutionally ensure such rights, the Manifest expressed the imperative need to expand social rights. At the same time, he criticized the fact that school education reached a small portion of the population, which was a privilege of the few. In this way, expanding the conditions of access to education and promoting the quality of teaching meant, from the perspective of the signatories of the Manifest, a possibility of constituting democracy in Brazil (Mélo, Mormul, & Machado, 2012).

However, it is important to point out that in a society marked by the division into antagonistic classes, the materialization of public, universal and free education is not enough for the realization of equal opportunities. The differences between the owners of the means of production and those who own only the workforce prevent the existence of 'equality of opportunity'.

In this sense, it can be assured that the Manifest remained faithful to the postulates of liberalism. The text written in a historical scenario characterized by industry innovations, pointed to education as a mechanism for the development of individual capabilities:

If the fundamental problem of democracies is the education of the popular masses, the best and most capable, by selection, must form the apex of a pyramid with an immense base. Certainly, the new concept of education repels elites artificially formed 'by economic differentiation' or under the criterion of independence (Manifest..., 2006, p. 200, author's emphasis).

In this perspective, democracy is the result of education. Thus, it is up to the school to form in the individual the ideals and practices of democracy. Like liberal thought, the differences would be explained by individual capabilities and, the most capable, 'recruited from all social groups':

The new education, extending its purpose beyond the limits of classes, assumes, with a more human face, its true social function, preparing to form 'the democratic hierarchy' through the 'hierarchy of capacities', recruited in all social groups, to whom the same educational opportunities are open. Its object is to organize and develop the means of lasting action to 'direct the natural and integral development of the human being in each of the stages of his growth', according to a certain conception of the world. (Manifest..., 2006, p. 191, author's emphasis).

Without denying the progressive character within the determined historical circumstances, it is necessary to warn that school education is not capable of transforming social structures and offering equal opportunities for all, even if there is a "[...] radical transformation of public education in all its degrees, both in light of the new concept of education and in view of national needs" (Manifest of the Pioneers of New Education, 2006, p. 196).

When analyzing the document, Machado and Carvalho (2015) state that:

[...] at first, the principles presented by the Manifesto reveal the intention to modernize education, but, on the other hand, it expresses a conservative action on the part of its signatories, consistent with the transformative perspective they defended in relation to the period republican. In a second moment, it is possible to identify the political project of modernizing Brazil that assumes the liberal ideals: to guarantee the free exercise of the vote and to fight in favor of public freedoms and against an illiterate, oligarchic and authoritarian state. The modern aspect of these ideals did not hide their traces of conservatism that then marked Brazilian society: the school was seen as a power mechanism through which it would be possible to inculcate liberal principles in the new generations through school rationalization to guarantee the consolidation and continuity of education. social order, since public education would enable, from the perspective of the Manifesto, the realization of the modernized ideals for the Country. However, the signatories of the document were also aware that the educational dimension is a complex phenomenon, which does not end in legal propositions. (Machado & Carvalho, 2015, p. 191).

From these statements, we understand that the conservative discourse present in the Manifesto of the Pioneers of New Education is linked to the interests present in the dominant layer of society, in which, through ideological discourse, that education is the solution to existing problems in the country, masks the core of the problem, marked by social inequality. Revealing consequently, as stated by Gomes (2016, p. 110), "[...] the idealizing character of the pioneers who assumed, as a mission to lead Brazil to the paths of progress through education [...]", attending to in turn, to private and collective interests according to Saviani (2008).

In this scenario, the document presents a discourse of change, "[...] whose intention was to educate the Brazilian people (civilizing project) and promote the development of the country [...]" (Machado & Carvalho, 2015, p. 179), since "[...] bourgeois society had produced class antagonism and class oppression, the exacerbated individuality of work and social dissatisfaction" (Machado & Carvalho, 2015, p. 184). Given this context, education was considered a mechanism to 'adapt' man to the relationships developed in society, as it called for a new configuration in economic development, a fact that highlighted the need to train a new type of worker, to legitimize the bourgeois order, in which education is configured as a mechanism to meet this objective.

"Although the Manifest had a great impact in the period in which it was written, it did not generate concrete actions, its pedagogical principles were not absorbed in the organization of the school, which was clearly traditionalist" (Machado & Carvalho, 2015, p. 188). But this aspiration to organize nationally through education made possible a gradual change in national education, since:

[...] outlined new guidelines for the study of education in the country and made it possible for educators to be aware of the existing problems in the area of Brazilian education and the need to remedy them. Therefore, this document represented the demand for significant changes in the structure of national education, in order to meet the needs required at the time, due to the development of society at the time, which was undergoing intense transformations, due, above all, to the rise of new social classes (Mélo et al., 2012, p. 100-101).

Thus, we show that the Manifest is configured as a document that marked the history of education in Brazil, by propagating the idea of rebuilding the Brazilian educational scenario. However, it is the result of a political game, in which economic interests were present. It established education as an element capable of resolving the social issues present in the country, through a microsocial bias, without considering all the facts, assuming a position as described by Saviani (2008) of educational policy, marked by a doctrinal character. In fact, serving the interests of a layer of society, marked by international influences that reflected in the national situation.

Final considerations

Given what was exposed throughout the study, we show that the Manifest has great historical relevance, in addition to reflecting on the current Brazilian educational situation, by addressing educational demands that have marked the history of Brazilian education. Understanding this document consequently provides us with an understanding of the current Brazilian educational situation.

The document presents new directions for educational development in Brazil, which express the Brazilian material base of the period. In this way, the historicity present now of presentation of the Manifest was configured in the interests embedded in the document. It is worth noting that, given the ongoing international and national changes in that period, what was exposed in the document served to establish political alliances, in which it was used as a political and economic artifact in the Brazilian educational scenario, widely propagated by the press of the period.

Given this context, in the Manifest we have the presence of conservative values, which act through civilizing, political and economic bias. The impact of the assimilation messages propagated by the document reinforces the idea of education as the savior of the world, as a source of resolution of the problems present in the country.

With the defense of a public school, integral and accessible to all, the Manifest was propagated by the press, after all, everyone has the right to equal education. Well, what a great utopia presents in a discourse marked by conservative interests, which is still present in Brazilian educational policies.

Therefore, the contribution of the Manifest to national education is to maintain power, as it emerged from a political game, marked by internal disagreements. It is noteworthy that the press was used as an indifferent resource, in an unsuccessful attempt to reorganize national education.

However, they did not consider, for obvious reasons (interest and maintenance of power), that modernization does not result exclusively from education, as it requires a more profound change in all spheres present in society.

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