

FOR EDUCATION WE SHALL FIGHT THE GOOD FIGHT: WORKER EDUCATION AS A FIELD OF DISPUTES BETWEEN CATHOLICS AND ANARCHISTS DURING THE FIRST BRAZILIAN REPUBLIC¹

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Abstract

This article discusses the context of socioeducational changes that occurred during the First Republic of Brazil, when urban-industrial growth and the increased organizational and numerical force of workers began to be felt, giving rise to the growth of disputes of different groups regarding the education of workers. It focuses on the polemics waged between members of the Catholic clergy and anarchist militants to get the workers to join their concepts of education.

Key-words: workers' movement, education, polemics, anarchism, Catholicism.

PELA EDUCAÇÃO LUTAREMOS O BOM COMBATE: A INSTRUÇÃO OPERÁRIA COMO UM CAMPO DE DISPUTAS ENTRE CATÓLICOS E ANARQUISTAS NA PRIMEIRA REPÚBLICA BRASILEIRA

Resumo

Neste artigo aborda-se o contexto de transformações sócio-educacionais ocorridas ao longo da Primeira República brasileira, quando o crescimento urbano-industrial e o aumento da força organizativa e numérica do operariado começou a se fazer sentir, ensejando o crescimento de disputas de diferentes grupos em torno da educação dos trabalhadores. Observam-se as polêmicas travadas entre integrantes do clero católico e militantes anarquistas pela adesão operária às suas concepções educativas.

Palavras-chave: movimento operário, educação, polêmicas, anarquismo, catolicismo.

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POR LA EDUCACIÓN LUCHAREMOS EL BUEN COMBATE: LA INSTRUCCIÓN DE LOS TRABAJADORES COMO UN CAMPO DE DISPUTAS ENTRE LOS CATÓLICOS Y LOS ANARQUISTAS EN LA PRIMERA REPÚBLICA DE BRASIL

Resumen

El artículo aborda el contexto de transformaciones socio educativas ocurridas a lo largo de la Primera República en Brasil, en el cual el crecimiento urbano-industrial y el aumento de la fuerza organizativa y numérica de los obreros empezaba a ser sentida, intensificando las disputas de distintos grupos alrededor de la educación de los trabajadores. Se observan las polémicas trabadas entre miembros del clero católico y militantes anarquistas por la adhesión obrera a sus concepciones educativas.

Palabras-clave: movimiento obrero, educación, polémicas, anarquismo, catolicismo.

PAR L'ÉDUCATION NOUS BATTONS LE BON COMBAT: L'INSTRUCTION DES TRAVAILLEURS COMME UN DOMAINE DE DIFFÉRENDS ENTRE LES CATHOLIQUES ET LES ANARCHISTES DANS LA PREMIÈRE RÉPUBLIQUE BRÉSILIENNE

Résumé

L'article aborde le contexte des changements sociaux et éducatifs qui se sont produits le long de la Première République brésilienne, où la croissance urbaine et industrielle et l'augmentation de la force organisationnelle et numérique des travailleurs a commencé à être perceptible, augmentant les différends des groupes distincts autour de la formation des travailleurs. Observeront les polémiques entre les membres du clergé catholique et des militants anarchistes par l'adhésion de la classe ouvrière pour leurs conceptions éducatives.

Mots-clé: mouvement ouvrier, éducation, polemics, anarchisme, catholicisme.

In order to analyze disputes concerning the education of workers in which members of the Catholic clergy and anarchist militants were involved during the period known as the First Republic, this article is divided into two parts. Initially I discuss the main educational conditions under which these clashes occurred, attempting to situate them in the socioeducational context of the period. In the second part I deal with the disputes between contending groups, with a view to perceiving the strategies and resources mobilized in the clashes and the importance given to workers' education at the time.

First it is necessary to explain that regarding the term polemics, I use Ventura's definition (1991), according to which this is "a literary genre that combines the novelty of the public space, traditional values such as honor and dueling, and a good dose of personalism" (p. 12). The public space can be understood as that space in which life takes place outside the sphere of family and close friends, in which "complex and disparate social groups would have to ineluctably come into contact" (Sennett, 1989, p. 32). In the case examined here, the press is the vehicle used to circulate, in the public space, the polemics through which our contenders dueled, using their words as weapons, since, as Benito Schmidt puts it, "in an unarmed society like ours, in which the monopoly of violence belongs to the State, duels can be transformed into polemics, and instead of blood a lot of ink is spilled" (Schmidt, 2000, p. 64).

This said, let us contextualize the educational issues in which the polemics to be discussed occurred. It should be observed that, although during the imperial period the need to invest in education in order to form the elector-citizen was already acknowledged, and that especially once the Law of Free Birth had been enacted in 1871, the political circles were already discussing the importance of education for the children who were born free and for the children of poor, free workers - giving rise, among other measures, to the elaboration of an opinion by Rui Barbosa² with a view to reforming elementary school to make it free, mandatory, lay and based on observation and experimentation, by means of the intuitive method (Machado, 2005) - these measures remained restricted to the schools founded in the Neutral Municipality (Rio de Janeiro).

In other provinces of the Empire, such as São Paulo, the 1870s and 1880s were also marked by the discussion of educational issues, which gained the pages of the Republican newspapers and led to heated polemics and criticism by columnists who called themselves advocates of education and presented examples of successful educational experiments performed in nations considered civilized, above all in the United States (Schelbauer, 2005).

When the Republic was proclaimed, during the provisional government, the Ministry of Public Education, Post Office and Telegraph was instituted in April 1890, with Benjamin Constant Botelho de Magalhães as its first minister. During the period in which he headed this Ministry, Constant returned to a proposition contained in the last Throne Speech in May 1889, advocating a single, uniform plan of education in all states, which should become national and collectively adopted by the government and by society as a whole (Cartolano, 1994, p. 110). This measure was not taken any further, and the newly created

² Expert opinions on the reform of secondary and higher education in 1882 and the reform of primary education and several complementary institutions of public education in 1883 (Machado, 2005).

Ministry limited itself to elaborating an educational reform that was once again restricted to the Federal Capital³. In the opinion of Maria Tereza Penteadó Cartolano, “public education was not a priority for investments by the Federal government” (1994, p. 122). According to the author, “education had such a lack of prestige and the political purposes involved in creating the new Ministry were so clear, that it was extinguished on December 26, 1892, eleven months after the death of Benjamin Constant” (Cartolano, 1994, p. 122). Matters pertaining to public education, science, letters and arts were assigned to the Ministry of Justice and Domestic Affairs (Atos do poder legislativo, 1892, v. 1, law n. 2223).

However, although they were limited, these changes, combined with those that were inherited from the Empire, appear to have had some effect, at least quantitatively, since the seat of government presented illiteracy rates well below those recorded in other states: according to the 1890 census, less than 50% were illiterate in the Federal Capital, whereas in the country as a whole this rate was up to 85.21% (Paiva, 1973, p. 70). While in Brazil the census data reveal that in the first twenty years of the 20th century the literacy rate remained practically the same, in São Paulo the relative weight of the literate population, considering the total population, increased from 24.72% to 29.82% (Infantosi, 1983, p. 50).

However, even though the Benjamin Constant reform, for its importance at that point, could be considered a model and reference for other reforms that might occur in the states and municipalities because of the administrative and political decentralization of the new regime, and even if it was possible to perceive some concern with education in the legislators’ debates - from which derived the establishment of the first elementary schools in states like São Paulo, Paraná, Minas Gerais, Espírito Santo, Rio Grande do Norte (Bencostta, 2005, p. 70), through which it was intended to ensure universal and free access to education - the limitations of this system cannot be ignored. They were pointed out by Jorge Nagle, especially the lack of schools and lack of places to cover the entire demand, which kept the legislation distant from national reality (Nagle, 2009, p. 27).

This situation, supported by the liberal concept of State, not only gave the states and municipalities of the federation a great amount of autonomy in matters of education, including the possibility of constituting or not education networks, but also left broad spaces for educational initiatives outside the government sphere. Some of these initiatives go back to a long tradition, as in the case of Catholic confessional schools. Other initiatives were connected to the action of individuals or groups who, imbued with knowledge, religious creeds, conceptions of the world, political views or the need to make a living, began to open schools in many different corners of the country. The pedagogical methods could be supported by transforming ideals, traditional or innovative educational concepts, or simply ensure the daily bread of the teacher who taught the first letters and arithmetic to their students based on what they had learned.

Anyway, during the First Republic the issue of education created a greater space for disputes, which could already be seen since the Empire. For this article, the interest lies mainly in the disputes waged by members of the clergy and anarchist activists regarding

³ Decree n. 981, of November 8, 1890, Federal Senate - Subsecretariat of Information. Available at <http://www.histedbr.fae.unicamp.br/navegando/fontes_escritas/4_1a_Republica/decreto%20981-1890%20reforma%20benjamin%20constant.htm>. Retrieved on August 27, 2013.

the education of workers. These disputes, however, occurred within a much larger field of change. According to Jacqueline Hermann, the institution of the Republic and the consequent separation between State and church in Brazil caused relief and apprehension among Catholics: “Relief because the new times allowed a freedom of action vis-à-vis temporal power that had long been demanded by the church leaders and apprehension because the project of the new Constitution [...] presented clear proposals to limit the action of the Catholic Church” (Hermann, 2006, p. 123). Among these limitations was the laicization of public education.

On the other hand, released from the obligations and control of temporal power, the Catholic Church in Brazil was able to further the movement of Romanization, which was characterized by the institutionalization of the holy and by a strengthening of the hierarchy, and had its culmination in obedience and affirmation of papal infallibility (Azzi, 1977). Romanization was one of the sides of the coin, whose other side was ultramontanism, through which, since the publication of the *Qui pluribus* encyclical in 1846, the church took a position against rationalist and anticlerical views, claimed that social, political and economic matters were connected to religious matters, defined the currents that advocated freedom of religion and of thinking as enemies and attacked the right of parents to decide on their children’s education (Souza, 2000).

However, during the final decades of the 19th century the Catholic Church had not only to acknowledge the existence of a “social question, but also to see it as a structural problem inherent in capitalist logic” (Amaral, 2007, p. 28). During the pontificate of Leo XIII (1878-1903) part of the Catholic thinkers began, on the one hand, to acknowledge the economic and social problems and, on the other, to condemn class struggle as the way to solve them.

Issued in May 1891, the papal encyclical *Rerum Novarum* in general lines reinforced the right to private property and the need for harmony between the social classes, condemned socialist and anarchist ideas, and, resorting to corporatism, pointed at it as way of solving social problems by advocating that

Just as the symmetry of the human frame is the result of the suitable arrangement of the different parts of the body, so in a State is it ordained by nature that these two classes should dwell in harmony and agreement, so as to maintain the balance of the body politic. Each needs the other: capital cannot do without labor, nor labor without capital. (*Rerum Novarum*, n. 19)

When thinking about the social question, the church tried not only to recover the space lost with the advent of modernity and with the spreading of socialist and anarchist ideas, but also to legitimize itself as irradiating a “moral conscience of the world” (Souza 2002, p. 37), trying to consolidate its position as an institution that normatized the social logic that was being established. Hence, on the one hand it determined that the workers should

fully and faithfully perform the work which has been freely and equitably agreed upon; never injure the property, nor outrage the person, of an employer; never resort to violence in defending their own cause, nor to engage in riot or disorder; and have nothing to do with men of evil principles, who work upon the people with artful promises of great results,

and excite foolish hopes which usually end in useless regrets and grievous loss. (*Rerum Novarum*, n. 20)

On the other hand, employers should

not look upon their work people as their bondsmen, but respect in every man his dignity as a person ennobled by Christian character. [...] but to misuse men as though they were things in the pursuit of gain, or to value them solely for their physical powers - that is truly shameful and inhuman. (*Rerum Novarum*, n. 20)

In Brazil, during this period, bishops were making an effort to change the image of the prelates, until then considered high functionaries in the service of the government, and to identify them as members of the church hierarchy whose authority came directly from the pope. Another precaution was to ensure the clerical character of the rituals by defining the presence of a priest as essential to the ministrations of the sacraments, in order to remove lay people from leading religious activities and to reduce the autonomy of popular religiosity. On the other hand, it became necessary to give the clergy a better education and remove them from excessive contact with non-religious activities, beginning to give greater value to the reformed priests endowed with the characteristics desired by ultramontanism. This new type of clergy found space in the urban milieu and was characterized by obedience to the bishops (Dallabrida, 2005).

This context of the strengthening of order and hierarchy in the relations within Catholicism made it necessary, besides renewing the old religious orders, to send to Brazil European Catholic congregations that could establish more solid ties with the Roman Curia. At the end of the 19th century, Italian and French Capuchins, Spanish, Austrian, Italian, Portuguese and German Jesuits, Italian Salesians, German Franciscans, French Dominicans, Dutch and Bavarian Redemptorists all arrived in Brazil. There were many members of religious orders who were being trained or had recently been ordained, whose functions no longer would be restricted to a contemplative life within their orders. On the contrary, they were to become involved in charity and education and to participate in Catholic workers' associations (Dallabrida, 2005).

Among these associations, Claudio Batalha highlights the three most influential ones during the First Republic: the Center of Catholic Workers of 1889 in São Paulo, later transformed into the Metropolitan Center of Catholic Workers in 1907; the Christian Workers' Federation, which was active during the decade of 1910 in Pernambuco, and the Catholic Confederation of Labor (1919), in Belo Horizonte, "a kind of central organization of Catholic workers' unions" (Batalha, 2000, p. 28).

In the sphere of education, in order to deal with the lay character of public education and other competing forms of teaching, the Brazilian church authorities dedicated themselves to establishing a national network of Catholic schools, and few congregations, both male and female, did not become involved in creating schools (Dallabrida, 2005). One of the fields in which these orders acted was the teaching of workers' children. As to this issue, *Rerum Novarum* recommended: "in regard to children, great care should be taken not to place them in workshops and factories until their bodies and minds are sufficiently developed. For, just as very rough weather destroys the buds of spring, so

does too early an experience of life's hard toil blight the young promise of a child's faculties, and render any true education impossible" (*Rerum Novarum*, n. 42). In working with the workers and their children, the church sought both to avoid the dissemination of ideas of contestation among the new generations and to reapproach the families to the Catholic faith.

Workers' tenements were privileged sites of this insertion. In these tenements there would be no lack of parish priests or schools organized by congregations. In São Paulo, for instance, in the first decades of the 20th century, several of these tenements were built. They included Mariza Zélia, in the neighborhood of Belenzinho; Prudente, in Ipiranga; Crespi, in Mooca (Rago, 1985, p. 177). In the Vila Maria Zélia, established by entrepreneur Jorge Street, the Sisters of the Immaculate Conception taught until 1920, when the company was sold to the Scarpa group (Morangueira, 2006, p. 122).

Much has already been said about the disciplinary character of these institutions. Margareth Rago, for instance, emphasized that they based their pedagogy on a rigid order. In her words, children would learn "to respect, that is, to fear, to submit to the hierarchical superiors, to timetables, to regulations, to directions, to respond appropriately to stimuli at the school institution or in the work process" (Rago, 1985, p. 153).

However, even without denying the disciplinary character of Catholic pedagogy, which also helped make workers keep their distance from contestatory movements or ideologies and gave rise to alliances between the clergy and both the entrepreneurs and the government, one must not ignore that, as Jesse Jane de Souza underscores, the church as an institution was imbued with a broader and more profound purpose, which is to be understood as a theological-political project that "moves in time with a sense of permanence and incorporates to its doctrinal tradition the new challenges imposed by the temporal order" (Souza, 2002, p. 25). For the author, "when one loses sight of this dimension of the church's action, it is no longer possible to understand the fetish of its profound domination" (Souza, 2002, p. 25).

Among the several temporal challenges faced by the Catholic Church during the First Republic was the organization of the workers. In Brazil, this was marked by the rise of different currents of activism, including the Anarchists, Socialists, Communists and Positivists. These groups differed in many aspects related to the concepts and forms of action, but tended to find an important point of convergence in anti-clericalism.

Another point of approach of the different ideological tendencies of activist workers during the First Republic was the Enlightenment hope in education as a weapon for workers' emancipation. Thus, for these different currents, education was the wonderful light and the school considered true would be the one whence the light of knowledge would emanate to the intellect. Based on this certainty, groups or individuals of various theoretical-ideological lines founded schools from North to South of the country.

What concerns us here are those founded by the Anarchists, because it can be seen that, due to their ideas and the characteristics of their activism, no other group concerned itself so systematically with founding schools or with the dissemination of a pedagogical proposal. It should, however, be explained that when I use the term Anarchists, I am referring to those who postulated diffuse versions of anarquist thinking, to which they had access by reading various authors such as Proudhon, Malatesta, Kropotkin, Bakunin and,

especially, through translators and disseminators of their works, such as Neno Vasco, who had come Portugal.

But despite the great diversity of formulations and appropriations of libertarian thinking that marked their action, these activists had a few common views, including the advocacy of workers' rights, particularly the achievement of the eight-hour work day, the campaigns in favor of what would be considered the moral edification of the working class through education and also the use of press organs as the main means to disseminate ideas and to indoctrinate society.

As Fernando Antonio Peres remarks, the preferred method of the anarchists was "propaganda through words" (Peres, 2010, p. 104), both oral and written. This occurred by means of lectures, talks, political rallies, theater plays, musical concerts, recitals of poetry and singing, publication of printed matter - engravings, illustrations, books, leaflets, opuscles - creating free courses and publishing newspapers. Thus, among these activists, encouraging reading and literacy were central topics in their propaganda efforts (Peres, 2010).

In the writings disseminated by the akkratist press the Catholic Church was presented as the main obstacle to the progress of thinking, because it forbade the faithful from learning about other doctrines and prevented their contact with works of other religions or currents of thinking. On the other hand, they often cited educators who, as they saw it, would ensure "an education for the full development of the human consciousness" (Peres, 2010, p. 82), especially Paul Robin, Sébastien Faure and Francisco Ferrer.

Among them, it was Paul Robin, a Frenchman, who systematized the anarchist theses on education in a libertarian pedagogy and played an important role in the debates on this topic during the congresses of the International Association of Labor. Between 1880 and 1894 he implemented the first real experiment of libertarian teaching, when he ran an orphanage on the outskirts of Paris (Gallo and Moraes, 2005).

However, among the Brazilian activists, the Catalan pedagogue Francisco Ferrer was the most cited by the anarchists, who not only pointed to his model as a frame of reference of a rational and modern school, but also honored him on the anniversaries of his death⁴ (Tragtenberg, 1978). Ferrer's modern school operated in Barcelona between 1901 and 1905, when it was closed by the government. His pedagogical method, with a strong positivist inspiration, gave prominence to the teaching of natural sciences. However, this was active learning, in which the children were instigated to make their own discoveries. Like Robin, Ferrer advocated a holistic education, seeking to take into account the physical, professional and ethical-moral aspects of the students (Gallo and Moraes, 2005, p. 89).

Encouraged by the rationalist pedagogy along Ferrer's lines, the libertarians who were active in Brazil made an effort to establish schools in different places in the country. A few even operated for a while, while others were very ephemeral. Among them, in Porto Alegre, the Eliseu Reclus school was founded in 1906, which was installed in the same

⁴ Ferrer was accused of being the intellectual mentor of the Tragic Week, in July 1909, a popular rebellion that occurred in Barcelona - propagated in the wake of a general strike - and was characterized by the burning of convents. In it direct confrontations occurred between workers and the populace on the one side and government forces on the other. He was sentenced to death by the government of king Alfonso XIII and shot on October 13, 1909 at the fortress of Montjuic.

building as the newspaper *The Struggle*, and the Modern School in 1918, which at one point had about 400 students of both genders. In 1923 the Society for Rationalist Teaching was also created in Porto Alegre (Corrêa, 1987; Petersen, 2001).

This movement was expanded with schools like Germinal, in the state of Ceará (1906), The May 1 Workers' School in Rio de Janeiro (1912) and the Modern School of Petrópolis (1913) (Rodrigues, 1992). In the city of São Paulo Modern Schools n. 1 (1912) and n. 2 (1913) (Peres, 2010, p. 113) were founded. In this context of the expansion of the network of anarchist schools, which obviously caused discomfort among the Catholic ranks, members of the clergy began to use their press organs to fight for space against the libertarian educators. This involved an endless series of attacks and counterattacks that show both the views of the world and of education and the argumentative strategies of each group.

One of these polemics was started by a Franciscan monk called Pedro Sinzig, who arrived from Germany as a novice in 1893. Among other activities, he ran the Vozes publishing house in Petrópolis between 1908 and 1913 and participated in the editorial team of the periodical of the same name until 1920 (Santos, 2004). He promoted the modernization of the printing house of the Franciscans, which began to produce teaching materials initially for the Escola São José, a free school in Petrópolis, and later for several other Catholic schools. Sinzig also wrote many books - novels, short stories and novellas - with a doctrinal character and became known for his book *Through novels: a guide for the conscience*, of 1915, in which he established a critical classification of the literary works that were circulating at the time, aiming to guide the reading of Catholic families (Santos, 2004, p. 9). Through the *Voices from Petrópolis* magazine he waged heated polemics with those who, in his opinion, threatened what he considered the good press. *Good Press* - we should mention in passing - was the name of a center that he founded in 1910 to propagate what in his opinion was healthy reading.

In November 1913 *Vozes de Petrópolis* published an opuscle signed by Pedro Sinzig called *Ferrer: martyr or rogue?* In the text the Franciscan speaks at length about his participation in a meeting of Anarchists who, according to him, had come from Rio de Janeiro to publicize the rationalist teaching of Francisco Ferrer and to propose the establishment of a modern school in Petrópolis. The main purpose of the religious was to show that he had spent a whole day among the anarchists, debated and won a heated discussion against them, showing that actually Ferrer was a rogue, not a martyr, and that he had managed to prevent the founding of their school.

The response to this opuscle did not take long and was published by the press organ of the Brazilian Workers' Confederation, the newspaper *Workers' Voice*, of Rio de Janeiro. In a text titled *Words of a Franciscan* the author of the article questioned the monk's honesty about Ferrer's biography and told the readers to look at the work *Francisco Ferrer: some data for history*, explaining that "in this booklet the biography of the unforgettable master is done with maximum clarity". He also deplored the lack of depth in the analysis by Pedro Sinzig about the situation of the workers in Barcelona before the "tragic week" (*Workers' Voice*, jan., 1, 1914, p. 2).

This polemic is an example of a vast repertory of disputes for the hearts and minds of workers throughout the First Republic. In several regions of the country, people who disseminated rationalist education occupied a large number of pages in newspapers that

they founded or with which they collaborated to render homage to the memory of Ferrer and defend his pedagogical views, taking a position against Catholic thinking and advocating a new form of education that would break with the Catholic view of the world.

The strategies of both groups varied regarding the content, but were similar as to form of presentation. The polemics mobilized discourses of knowledge in which each of the contenders tried to show that they had a profound repertory of arguments in defense of their cause and sufficient erudition and information to point out the mistakes of the rival cause. Not rarely, however, the defense of the educational views could be as forceful as the personal attacks and disqualification of the opponents, who were at some times treated as naive or ignorant, at others as unscrupulous and acting in bad faith.

One the ways of legitimizing one's own discourse was to endow it with scientific character. In the period involved, many of the workers' leaders, inspired by the example of their European peers, adopted and disseminated scientificist concepts. Batalha (1995), for instance, mentions that the term marxism was used at the end of the 19th century as a synonym for scientific socialism or positive socialism. Seixas (1995), along the same lines, says that the dominant theoretical character present in the genealogy of socialism and of anarchism in São Paulo and Rio de Janeiro was a tributary of the European positivist culture of the 19th century.

Both authors underscore, however, that this situation was not Brazilian exoticism, a case of ideas out of place or a symptom of an ideological binge (Batalha, 2005) of our activists. Rather, this attitude is said to have been present in the European matrix of socialism, were it Marxist or anarchist, in that context. In the international sphere, this view was in accordance with a classical way of thinking of the worker's leaders. As Dora Barrancos puts it,

the movement in favor of the participation of those who, thanks to their work, transformed the physiognomy of the world became stronger in the second half of the 19th century, at the same time as science proved to be a universal value. At that moment the conviction became rooted that at this "banquet" [of science and progress] precisely those who really evidenced them most should not be missing, i.e. the workers. (Barrancos, 1996, p. 17)

Thus, the scientificist influence on the pedagogical proposals that were in vogue at the time was a major legitimizing argument of the anarchist groups, which defended the primacy of reason and the use of rationality in an enlightened, active pedagogy, with a view to transforming the ways in which the workers and their children thought and acted.

Catholic educators slowly began to acknowledge the importance of scientific knowledge, as long as it remained subordinated to faith, and along this line they sought to give the proletarian families education and arguments that would enable them to better resist both the appeals of rival ideologies and the laicizing excesses of the State. Even defending religious education and trying to keep the families away from ideas considered dangerous, the Catholic schools acknowledged the need to prepare their wards for a rising new world of urban and industrial work.

Besides, a few religious groups began to take an interest in the dissemination of science and to create vehicles for this purpose. This is the case, for instance, of the

aforementioned magazine *Vozes de Petrópolis*⁵, launched in 1907 by the directors of the printing works of São José School. In a subtitle it defined itself as a *Monthly Religious, Scientific and Literary Magazine* and claimed in the first editorial: “*Vozes de Petrópolis* will be general, not purely religious in character. The magazine will publish varied articles that will have an up-to-date nature. No domain of science and technique, of theory and practice, will be excluded from the program” (apud Neotti, s. d., p. 48).

In other words, this publication concerned itself not only with the affirmation of religious ideals vis-à-vis the group of contestants, but also with the formation of a Catholic group of intellectuals that could, *pari passu* with the advance of scientific knowledge, respond to the challenges of their time. For this, it published varied articles about science and culture, and among its interests were physics, biology and biographies of scientists⁶.

Both in the case of the Catholic discourse and in that of the Anarchists we see the importance of the circulation of ideas that arrived especially from Europe and the United States through books, pamphlets, newspapers, letters, opuscles and travelers and that here, combined with the local traditions and needs, found spaces for reflection in very different groups. In common these groups had their belief in an idealized model of European civility and the deeply rooted certainty that Brazilian workers were in a state of backwardness and abandonment and in urgent need for regenerative actions.

Thus one can see that, for different reasons and by different paths, sometimes the arguments present both in the clerical texts and in the anarchistic ones converged. Another example of this convergence of arguments may be found in the fact that both groups pointed at the lack of discipline and vices as reasons for the downfall of the workers, and exhorted them to give good examples to their children, occupying their few hours of rest in healthy activities and applying themselves to their studies.

Aside from the convergences, one should not forget, however, that we are dealing with a struggle that, on the one hand, aimed at reaffirming and, on the other, at challenging the power of the church as the moral guide of humanity and as disseminator of a symbolic capital that, as Bourdieu puts it, would ensure that it marked its position as holding the “monopoly of the management of the holy” (Bourdieu, 2005, p. 43) over against the lay people, who were “objectively defined as profane, in the double sense of being ignorant of religion and strangers to the holy and to the body of administrators of the holy” (Bourdieu, 2005, p. 43).

Of interest to this discussion is the fact that in order to inculcate a “religious *habitus* among the profane” (Bourdieu, 2005, p. 43), the church could avail itself of the fundamental resource of education. In Bourdieu’s words, “individuals receive from school above all a repertory of truisms, not only a common discourse and language, but also terrains for encounter and agreement, common problems and common ways of

⁵ In its institutional memory, Editora Vozes refers to the choice of the name of the magazine as follows: “The printing house of the [São José] School has decided to create a Catholic magazine for culture. Brother Ambrósio, who at the time was a subscriber to the German newspaper *Stimmen der Zeit*, suggested *Vozes de Petrópolis*, which was accepted and gave rise to the current name of the publishing house”. Available at <<http://www.universovozes.com.br/editoravozes/web/view/istoria1900.aspx>>. Retrieved on August 28, 2013.

⁶ Apparently, the success of this publication ultimately led to renaming the enterprise that created it. Hence, in 1911 the São José School printing house began to be called Tipografia da Vozes and later Editora Vozes de Petrópolis (Neotti, s. d., p. 48).

approaching such common problems” (Bourdieu, 2005, p. 207), which, in his view, provides them with “a common body of categories of thinking that enable communication” (Bourdieu, 2005, p. 205) through which those involved become “predisposed to keep up a relationship of complicity with their peers” (Bourdieu, 2005, p. 206).

Even relativizing these statements for the case being studied here, since Bourdieu (2005), when dealing with the power of the school culture, refers to the French system of education, I think that it is possible to see that, in the context analyzed here, a powerful weapon used by the Church was the propagation of its discourse inside a school culture that was being formed. It did so both by stimulating Catholic teachers to take the exam to become teachers of public schools, with a view to combatting “lay teaching from inside” (Dallabrida, 2005, p. 79), and by expanding the network of confessional schools that previously concerned themselves only with the instruction of the elites, but at the beginning of the 20th century also turned to workers and their children.

Further, we might think, following a suggestion of Roger Chartier, that the expansion of the religious habitus required the expansion of school culture. According to this author:

The two forces that require education are the church and the communities themselves. For the church, reading includes the books of devotion, breviary - an essential element of Christian education - and catechism [...] Based on this more or less functional literacy (because it must adjust to the message or to usefulness in everyday life) we arrive, over the 19th and 20th century, at the definition of reading as access to culture. (Chartier, 2001, p. 77)

However, once acquired, the practice of reading was not necessarily limited to a single orientation, as Edward Thompson points out when commenting on the habits of English workers: “A shoemaker, who had been taught his letters in the Old Testament, would labour through the *Age of Reason*” (Thompson, 1987, p. 304). Besides, the fact that many did not know how to read did not prevent workers from accessing written content. Giving another example, Thompson mentions that “illiterate labourers would, nevertheless, go each week to a pub where Cobbett’s editorial letter was read aloud and discussed” (Thompson, 1987, p. 304). People could likewise read in the boardinghouses or in workers’ neighborhoods or in political meetings; and also, still according to the English historian, concern about information generated among workers of different professional groups the need to organize reading clubs and schools, which, on the other hand, motivated radical thinkers to dispute the reading public with Christian societies (Thompson, 1987).

Returning to the context of this study, I believe that it is possible to think that, taking into account distances and proportions, something similar might have happened also with the workers of Brazilian urban centers who, thanks to access to individual or collective reading, encountered many different polemics and had their attention disputed by many contending groups. As to the press, both groups analyzed here benefitted from the new printing and reproduction techniques, the increased number of printing presses and the development of greater efficiency in the delivery of printed materials due, among other factors, to the new and faster means of transportation (Luca, 2008, p. 137). This ensemble of characteristics also fostered the circulation of ideas, exchanges and solidarities, both on a national and international level. This situation led Chartier to claim that “after Gutenberg

all of Western culture can be seen as a culture of printing, since instead of remaining restricted to the administrative and ecclesiastic uses [...] the products of the printing presses and of typographic composition influenced all practices and relationships” (Chartier, 1992, p. 238).

It does not, therefore, come as a surprise that in Brazil the press was also the main vehicle used by Catholics and Anarchists to propose their ideas. Concluding, this is a major demonstration that the country was being integrated into a new juncture, in which the lettered culture became an important space to disseminate knowledge and views of the world, which demanded, on the other hand, the expansion of schooling to new population groups, including the urban workers, who then began to play an increasingly important role in Brazil’s political game.

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