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## Anarchist Educators and Freirean Pedagogy as Education for Freedom

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**Introduction:** This research investigated the references of the educational process that graduate students revealed as a memory of their own school trajectory, after being exposed to critical contents about the school curriculum of a graduate course in Education. **Objective:** Our objective – far beyond endorsing Freirean Pedagogies with anarchist educators, precursors of libertarian pedagogies – was to analyze, in the light of libertarian pedagogies, the Education references of the subjects interviewed. **Methodology:** Based on a micro-interpretative qualitative approach methodology, 3 questions about Education references were proposed to 32 students from two postgraduate classes in Education. **Results/Conclusion:** The results showed that, when being presented to critical theories, the subjects manage to qualify the Education to which they were submitted. Furthermore, they also reveal that anarchist educators remain current in Paulo Freire's ideals as a critical and political tool mediated by pedagogical thinking.

### KEYWORDS

Anarchism. Educational programs. Teaching. Teaching practice.

## Os Educadores Anarquistas e a Pedagogia Freireana como Educação para a liberdade

### RESUMO

**Introdução:** Esta pesquisa investigou as referências do processo educativo que sujeitos, alunos de pós-graduação, revelaram como memória da própria trajetória escolar, após terem sido expostos aos conteúdos críticos acerca de currículo escolar de uma disciplina de pós-graduação em Educação. **Objetivo:** Nosso objetivo – muito além de endossar as Pedagogias Freireanas com os precursores das pedagogias libertárias, os educadores anarquistas – foi analisar, à luz dessas próprias pedagogias libertárias, as referências de Educação dos sujeitos entrevistados. **Metodologia:** Com base em metodologia de abordagem qualitativa microinterpretativa, foram propostas 3 perguntas sobre referências de Educação a 32 alunos de duas turmas de pós-graduação em Educação. **Resultados/Conclusão:** Os resultados evidenciaram que, ao serem comunicadas as teorias críticas aos sujeitos, estes conseguem qualificar a Educação a que foram submetidos. Ademais, revelam também que os educadores anarquistas permanecem atuais nos ideais de Paulo Freire, como ferramenta crítica e política mediada pelo pensamento pedagógico.

### PALAVRAS-CHAVE

Anarquismo. Educação libertária. Teorias críticas. Educadores anarquistas.

## Educadores anarquistas y la pedagogía freireana como educación para la libertad

### RESUMEN

**Introducción:** Esta investigación abordó los referentes del proceso educativo que los estudiantes de posgrado revelaron como memoria de su propia trayectoria escolar, luego de ser expuestos a contenidos críticos sobre el currículo escolar de un curso de posgrado en Educación. **Objetivo:** Nuestro objetivo – mucho más allá de refrendar las Pedagogías Freireanas con educadores anarquistas, precursores de las pedagogías libertarias – fue analizar, a la luz de las pedagogías libertarias, los referentes en Educación de los sujetos entrevistados. **Metodología:** Con base en una metodología de enfoque cualitativo microinterpretativo, se propusieron 3 preguntas sobre referentes en Educación a 32 estudiantes de dos cursos de posgrado en Educación. **Resultados/Conclusión:** Los resultados mostraron que, al ser sometidos a teorías críticas, los sujetos logran calificar la Educación a la que fueron sometidos. Además, también revelan que los educadores anarquistas siguen vigentes en los ideales de Paulo Freire como herramienta crítica y política mediada por el pensamiento pedagógico.

### PALABRAS CLAVE

Anarquismo. Programas Educativos. Enseñanza. Política Educativa.

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## 1 Introduction

The year 2021 was the year in which the centenary of the educator Paulo Freire was celebrated, who, with courage, recovered from other historical times the critical reflection on teaching and student practice, guiding it in a political sense and aiming, above all, to the formation of free, autonomous, historical and political subjects. Freire's contribution to the education of Brazil and the world was not small.

We know that Freire was influenced by the philosophy of Karl Marx (1840), which revealed capitalism as an oppressive system for the working class of the world. The philosophy of Karl Marx (1818-1883) was contemporary to the anarchist movement of the 19th and 20th centuries, and, even if they had been constituted in two distinct currents, with conceptual distances from each other, both the anarchist movement and the philosophy of Karl Marx had also approximations, namely: in short, anarchism wanted the freedom of humanity in relation to the power of the State; and Marx's philosophy yearned for the freedom of the worker. In an age of political effervescence, post-Industrial Revolution, anarchism and Marxism, despite wanting human liberation, were competitors; currently, in the 21st century, the Marxist philosophy, despite not dealing specifically with Education, emanates the air of resistance to the bourgeois conception of Education, as well as the anarchisms.

The question that guides this work seeks to investigate which references of the educational process the subjects, graduate students in Education, revealed about their own school trajectory, after being exposed to the critical contents of a particular graduate discipline in Education. In other words, we seek to verify: a) How these students evaluate their own school trajectory after having known the critical theories of the school curriculum; and b) If there are links between anarchist educators and Paulo Freire.

Our objective – far beyond endorsing Freirean Pedagogies with the precursors of libertarian pedagogies, the anarchist educators – was to analyze, in the light of libertarian pedagogies, the Education references of the subjects interviewed.

Thus, based on a microinterpretative qualitative approach methodology, three questions were proposed about Education references to 32 students from 2 graduate education classes.

According to Robert Stake (2011, p. 48), “to do qualitative research is to find the meaning of personal experiences that transform people. To discover the defining moments in someone's life”.

The interpretations of the narratives collected through the three questions instigating a self-assessment and were anchored in Freirean Pedagogies and endorsed by the texts of anarchist educators. In this sense, the Freirean Pedagogies and the authors of Libertarian Education provided support for the analysis of the evaluations, in a transversal and

interdisciplinary way, in an approach that contemplated a historical and also a socio-political anchorage.

The evaluations were obtained during the period of **virtual**<sup>1</sup> meetings of the discipline entitled “Organization of the School Curriculum”, in a Graduate Faculty based in the central areas of the city of São Paulo. The theoretical alignment of the discipline was based on authors of critical theories of the **curriculum**<sup>2</sup>, from 1960 onwards.

The results of this study are intended to, in addition to contributing to the understanding of the nexus between the anarchist movement of the 19th-20th century and the pedagogies of Paulo Freire, show what references to Education the research subjects revealed after being communicated to politically through the critical theories of how was organized the school curriculum to which they were submitted.

In the development of this article, the first item to be dealt with will be the recovery of the modern roots of the anarchist ideal in Europe and the conception of libertarian education of its exponents. In the second approach, we will bring the marks, the scars, the signs of punishment and reward as a grammar of authoritarianism in institutionalized education. Subsequently, we proceed with the data from the research carried out in an educational institution with the necessary analyses, approaching the ideal of anarchist educators to the Pedagogies of Autonomy, of the Oppressed, among other works by Paulo Freire. So, we move on to weaving the Final Considerations.

## 2 The genealogy of anarchist ideals

Let's start our topic by pointing out that anarchism has its etymology in the Greek *anarchon*, which means without government, living without government, by its own government, or self-government. Indeed, although it may seem to belong to the borders of common sense, the explanation based on the etymology of the word should not be neglected, in order to prove that being an anarchist is being a member of a society with another form of government.

When we think of the State or a more or less organized collegiate, orchestrating the bureaucracy of the state machine, in such a way that few have the power to protect many, we are talking about the conceptual meaning of government, and this idea, today, is easily understood. When we think of a society without a State, understanding is sometimes, or many times, confused with a lack of organization.

Bakunin, when approaching governments, with a good pinch of irony, points out that:

[...] the great mass of men recognize, in an almost absolute way, the predominance of common sense in their daily life, that is, the predominance of

<sup>1</sup> The meetings were held virtually, from 08/17/2021 to 09/28/2021, due to the new Coronavirus-2019 pandemic.

<sup>2</sup> Paulo Freire, Pierre Bourdieu, Michael Apple, Gimeno Sacristán, among others.

natural laws accepted by all. The great misfortune is that a large number of natural laws, already recognized by science, remain ignored by the mass thanks to the vigilance of these tutelary governments which, as we know, only exist for the good of the people (BAKUNIN *apud* WOODCOCK, 2019, p. 338).

In this way, by the explanation presented by Bakunin, it is possible to understand that the mass accepts the natural laws by common sense, but little understands the same laws by science. In fact, this learned science, it is important to emphasize, is precisely circumscribed by the intellectual elites that define it.

Thus exposed, we realize that anarchism has more to do with another organization and another form of government. Therefore, the question is: what harm would there be in questioning the existing secular society? Why do we accept this kind of society and not another? The mistake, in a quick analysis, may be in the negative denotation that the word has assumed over time, plus other factors, so that the discussion is complex and has been crossing the multiple conceptions of anarchism that have emerged throughout history.

Marcos Raddi dos Santos (2020, p. 116), when defining the organization, emphasizes that: “Anarchism is a set of ideas and practices that aim to combat any type of coercive authority and any kind of administration, social management based on inequality and in the hierarchy”.

At present, and in the present social, economic and political circumstances in the world, it is almost foolhardy to approach the theme of anarchism, especially because it was deliberately associated with a destructive or even terrorist and inconsequential movement. As Woodcock (2019) clarifies, this association between anarchism and pyrotechnic actions of mass destruction is not correct, since the atomic bombs, the unleashed wars, the massacres, the misery, the suffering and the hunger imposed on the people, as well as the infanticide and femicide are not related to the anarchist movement at any time.

However, to think of a society without a State is to light kegs of gunpowder in every nation-territory, because no one will gracefully hand over power to another system without some form of revolution.

We can say – and this will come as no surprise to readers more familiar with the subject – that anarchists understand that the State is the producer of social ills and injustices.

The French geographer Élisée Reclus (1830-1905) was wise and visionary in answering the question “Why are we anarchists?”, stating that to be a revolutionary is to want justice, it is not wanting to starve your fellow man, it is not wanting to see a hardworking brother die. of hunger in silence, it is to believe more in the social faith, it is to take the poison out of the hands of traders who contaminate food in search of profit and even killing wholesale are honorable men (RECLUS, 2011).

History shows us that anarchist ideals, or freedom, somehow keep alive along with the

history of humanity. When we say that men and women, throughout history, have wanted to be free, we are talking about those who sought justice for all, those who recognized and repudiated authoritarianism, who knew that social justice was not a miracle from heaven and that, minimally, , solidarity, generosity, reciprocity and respect for the traveling brother of the same chronological time should be preserved.

According to historian Max Nettlau (2008, p. 29), complete (ideal) anarchists are those who desire and manage to reflect their desires by making them act, collectively and together with the other, but “if they existed in the past, they are for us unknown”. With this statement, we understand that the anarchisms that emerged were the possible and the real ones.

Nettlau (2008) also locates the anarchists in history, starting from Zeno of Cítio (333-264, B.C.), philosopher of Ancient Greece, founder of the Stoic school and who proposed human freedom from the alignment of man with nature, with himself (knowing oneself) and with the Universe. If, on the one hand, religions promised a heaven of freedom, justice and equality, on the other hand, philosophers, similarly, did so in the following dimensions, according to the author: “**the natural religion** that illuminated centuries of cruelty and ignorance [...] the attempt to give a reality to these abstract ideals was the greatest contribution that the libertarian idea made to humanity” (NETTLAU, 2008, p. 32, emphasis added). In other words, give reality to abstract ideas!

Anarchism had continuities and discontinuities, so that, in the limits between one time and another, it often suggests an erasure of previous movements. Between the Enlightenment and the French Revolution, William Godwin (1756-1836), through the publication “Investigation Concerning Political Justice and its Influence on Virtue in General and Happiness” (1793) attacks the system of punishment and reward of authoritarian education. Max Nettlau (1865-1944), the most important scholar of anarchist bases, attributed to the thinker William Godwin the resurgence of anarchisms in the Modern Age. The historian Francesco Codello (2007) clarifies that Godwin did not define himself as an anarchist, but opened the doors to the movement when he interpreted the libertarian ideas of the Enlightenment.

In the 18th to 20th centuries, the roots of that historic-libertarian anarchist movement outlined in the past emerged through the name of Joseph Proudhon (1809-1865), the “first man to accept the title of anarchist” (WOODCOCK, 2019, p. 15). Joseph Proudhon – the most distinguished anarchist, author of several books, among them, “What is property” – denounced property and capitalism as harmful structures and inimical to freedom. To get a sense of Proudhon's clarity and aversion to state structures that steal the liberties of beings, we must pay attention to his elucidations:

To be governed means to be inspected, spied on, directed, valued, weighed, censured, by people who have neither the title nor the science nor the virtue. To be governed means by every operation, every movement, every transaction, to be noted, registered, listed, billed, stamped, pointed, objectified, patented, licensed,

authorized, apostrophized, punished, reformed, aligned, corrected. It means, under the pretext of public authority and under the pretext of the general interest, to be trained, scrutinized, exploited, mystified, stolen; at the slightest sign of resistance, or at the first word of protest, to be arrested, fined, mutilated, vilified, beaten, humiliated, reduced to the minimum breath of life, imprisoned, shot, machine-gunned, condemned, deported, sold, betrayed, and as if that wasn't enough, disarmed, outraged, mocked. This is government, this is your justice and this is your morals (PROUDHON, 1979, p. 17).

In summary, governments, for Proudhon (1979), label people and reduce them to their bureaucracy.

The organization of countries is structured to be this entire list of verbal actions listed by Proudhon. Certainly, during the second half of the 19th century, he would not have known that we would become, even more, beings under guardianship, as he rejected. However, there are small communities, colonies spread around the world, resistant and that manage to organize themselves in a network of horizontal and voluntary relationships, instead of the State pyramid, but, even so, to some extent, they are monitored by the State.

It is not uncommon for us to become aware of small actions in this sense, that is, in which there is a network of mutual aid. Moments of urban tragedies, or even situations like this historic moment of the Covid-19 pandemic; in spite of the State, countless times the population, to some extent, self-organized to help others. This means that the essence of the anarchist movement, which heralds other forms of social organization, reappears, from time to time, like a will-o'-the-wisp, and its inherent contradiction is that it obtains popular and state approval.

If Proudhon was the first man of his time to call himself an anarchist, the political theorist, philosopher and sociologist Mikhail Aleksandrovich Bakunin (1814-1876) was the most brilliant member of the anarchist movement. Between January and July 1869 – in four publications in the newspaper *L'Engalit *<sup>3</sup>, with sections in French, Swiss and Spanish – he gathered texts that referred to the tensions between the concepts formulated between Bakunin and Karl Marx.

Marx made it clear that there would be a revolution in the social relations of production, that is, the revolt of the proletariat, and that exploitation and oppression should be banished from societies. Bakunin, contrary to Marx, idealized a society without a State and, in doing so, took up, more specifically, the importance of integral education as a form of antidote and struggle.

Although there were differences between the purposes of social change in Bakunin and in Marx (the letters to newspapers in which Marx attacked Bakunin were violent and virulent), but there were also agreements: Bakunin emphasized that the increase in wealth was directly related to the increase in misery, in his words: “the happier are the happy, the

<sup>3</sup> However, we will not delve into the letters, although the last of the four reveals a very mature Bakunin regarding Education.

exploiters of popular work, the more unhappy are the workers” (MORIYÓN, 1989, p. 35). For Marx, the social revolution by the proletariat would result in the disappearance of the political state. In fact, both wanted another kind of government and society.

Indeed, the proposal of libertarian education by anarchist ideals was the construction of the new man for the new society: “the new citizen for the new city, a libertarian and solidary society” (GALLO, 2007, p. 93).

### 3 The anarchist educators

Modern libertarian thought was disseminated in a historical period of tension and turmoil, mainly due to the first phase of the Industrial Revolution and the respective consolidation of capitalism as a hegemonic economic system.

We will bring to the present discussion two of the main anarchist thinkers, who were born and died in the 19th century, and who dealt in more detail with the social aspects of transformation through education, namely: Proudhon and Bakunin.

Pierre-Joseph Proudhon developed the libertarian interpretation of the Enlightenment; he opposed the Hegelian philosophy by believing in the collectivity, and he did not lose sight of the problem of work and workers.

The process through which machine-making replaced and declined manufacturing turned Proudhon's gaze towards popular educational action. In this way, he denounced the selective character of the education system that feeds social and class divisions. He strongly believed that men form character together with others and that the freedom of a human being does not end when it touches the limits of the freedom of others; on the contrary, it expands. A metaphor was created: a lit candle, when it touches the wick of another candle, extinguished, the light increases!

Education, for Proudhon, needed to be for everyone, and it should not be dual, that is, education to do or to think. In his view, whoever thinks does, and in order to do something, there must be the act of thinking. In this sense, any education that separates the hands that make and the minds that create does not serve the working class.

Proudhon's pedagogy conceived democracy and work as pillars. There should be justice and equal access to knowledge, so that education democratically reaches everyone, regardless of the individual's social class. Work should also be at the service of education. Proudhon observed that, in capitalist society, work was one of the faces of bourgeois domination, since there was a duality between manual and intellectual work.

Thus, Proudhon

strongly criticizes the instructional system that formalizes the separation between learning and teaching. [...] it is even more detestable to distinguish professional education from the real, useful, daily exercise of the profession, thereby producing the separation of powers and the distinction of classes (CODELLO, 2007, p. 101).

Proudhon defended polytechnic education, conceived in such a way that the worker would not be a slave to a single technical knowledge or that the worker would not abandon himself to the power of machines, that is, in the sense that his mind would not be impoverished. Otherwise, as pointed out by Codello (2007, p. 100): “the more the division of labor and the power of machines increase, the more the worker's intelligence decreases”.

About genius, Proudhon said that it does not give itself, as a donation. It is, in turn, the historical collectivity expressing itself. He claimed that the genius is not someone isolated in itself, but a legion, an egregore of ancestry, memory and collective voice assuming its expression.

Proudhonian pedagogy conceived education as the liberation of the working classes and also proposed education as the key to all the freedoms that could be conquered (CODELLO, 2007). In this sense, religious education should not occupy any place, as it develops a negative role of indoctrination and alienation, having, of course, no interest in forming free and complete people.

Mikhail Aleksandrovich Bakunin shares the educational ideas of integral formation, as observed by Proudhon. Both supported the idea that there would be no emancipation of the masses as long as there was distinction in education; there would be no social justice as long as there was no dissociation between the culture of doing and the culture of the intellect - notably manifested in the ideals that, to workers, all that remains is the knowledge of operating the world with their hands and, to the bourgeois, all the knowledge, from in order to dominate the workers (MORIYON, 1989). He also reports that in order to “establish equality between men, it is absolutely necessary to establish it in the education of children (BAKUNIN, 2019, p. 152).

The author anticipates the unsuspecting of the small and middle bourgeoisie, who would justify the false idea of equality in the world by claiming that there is a social, economic and scientific place for everyone. From this point of view, there remains, however, a question to be asked, namely: and for those who produce the world with their actions, with their minds and hands; would they be the first to enjoy their own creations? It is clearly perceived by the historical development that it is not. While workers, on the one hand, spend their time creating and transforming the world, on the other hand, science and the arts accumulate knowledge that will never be shared among all if there is no integral education (MORIYÓN, 1989).

On a scale of education, the petty bourgeoisie distances itself a little from the working class, but it distances itself a lot from the middle class and upper bourgeoisie, so Bakunin

warns:

When we speak of the privileged classes, we never mean that poor petty bourgeoisie, which, if it had a little more intelligence and heart, would soon join us to fight the upper and middle bourgeoisie that today humiliates it as much as she humiliates the proletariat (BAKUNIN *apud* MORIYÓN, 1989, p. 26).

The educational action that Bakunin advocates is anti-authoritarian and integral, to the point that children become wise by the experiences they carry out, and not by the instructions they receive from others. In this sense, it counts as “others”, especially the church, which by the thinker's desire should be destroyed and replaced by public instruction, rigorously scientific (CODELLO, 2007).

Proudhon and Bakunin share and align themselves in their ideas by rejecting the culture of the church imbedded in education. For both, this process is sustained by propagating fear, submission and the consequent obedience of children to the authority of the invisible, in order to make them insecure of their own creative potential.

In this context, social institutions that educate children must develop a concept of authority based on respect, freedom and autonomy, aiming at the integral development of young people. “Children do not belong to their parents or to anyone else: called to become free men, they belong to themselves and to their future freedom” (CODELLO, 2007, p. 119).

These children will constitute a new society, with new values, solidarity and freedom, without exploitation and oppression; education, therefore, must act in the maintenance of the new man. This new man must act as a political subject; political, firstly, because he understands his surroundings and, from that, starts to understand the gears of the systems that govern the social strata in the world.

On genius, like Proudhon, Bakunin also argues that “men of genius are precisely those who take the most from society, and who, consequently, owe it more” (BAKUNIN, 2019, p. 180). This author's conclusion leads us to the constitution of the historical subject that receives, from past generations, this set of intellectual and moral work loaded with representations, ideas, images and feelings. Undeniably, it is the basis of the anarchist conception.

Bakunin longed for the freedom of all mankind. “Neither god, nor state nor bosses” was a saying of the time, but already faded by historical time. The freedom of anarchists was that which was worth a life, a life full of material, intellectual and unrestricted powers in every being: “the one on the ruin of all Churches and all States” (BAKUNIN; VIANA; KROPOTKIN, 2021, p. 17).

If every human being born on this planet has its distinctive feature by fingerprints, so too should the latent faculties, those that spring from the inside and without the restrictive impositions that come from the outside.

## 4 Authoritarianism in Education

Historically, humanity has preserved its culture through traditions – and this is commendable. In Education, tradition has always been present, so that countless preservation actions have spanned centuries and, therefore, are called traditional actions.

Traditional education – one that preaches assessment, learning, didactics and methodology, efficiency and effectiveness, the latter, under the mold of a “factory school” – was hijacked by authoritarianism (SILVA, 1999).

In the educational process, authoritarian actions, over time, were glued to traditional acts of Education. Thus, more in the name of the teaching process (including obedience) and less of learning, the discipline emulated by the army became a key element: the queue of boys and girls became a necessary condition for the movement of children inside the schools; the teacher became the second mother/aunt; and the school became a second home, with a disqualification of the education professional and the school institution. This type of education, under traditional molds and fraught with authoritarianism, left indelible marks on entire generations.

It seems to be an outdated topic, but it is not. This is because the organization of school times is still thought of without the student, in order to “guarantee obedience and submission, [...] organizing individual and collective coercion using pressures and repressions that characterize the sociopolitical system in which we live” ( D'ANTOLA, 1989, p. 45).

If we ask, in a classroom of an adult course, about the bad and good times they experience in the school environment, the subjects will remember bad experiences, such as: situations of fear and domination, content and competition, meritocracy and decoration; such reminiscences are listed singly or collectively, randomly or in combination.

However, there are also good memories. The ones that recall the action of a certain teacher who enchanted, inspired, instigated: to think. Most likely, in a more simplistic analysis, this teacher, somehow, intuitively or through studies – or both – incorporated models that were antagonistic to those of authoritarianism.

The provisional result of these coordinated actions as educational measures can be seen when students narrate their realities and relate them to the school. Their narrative generally goes like this: it was because of her (school teacher), and despite her (school teacher).

Education, with its successes and setbacks, brought us here, but let us not forget that many people were left along the way and that colonization left us the legacies of subservience, as said Telmo Adams et al.:

From this perspective, the social space of colonialism for several centuries has imprinted ways of being deeply rooted in mental, social and institutional structures. This is coloniality (QUIJANO, 2005; MIGNOLO, 2010) as a legacy of colonialism, which, after the independence of Latin American and Caribbean countries, was perpetuated in the form of a matrix of vertical, centralizing relationships that generated subservience and domination. In such a conjuncture, it is understood, therefore, the secular political exclusion of the majority of the Brazilian people, whose “history is full of muffled voices and lives sacrificed in the name of faith, order, progress and, more recently, governability, sustainability or competitiveness” (STRECK; ADAMS, 2006, p. 96). The forms of participation and power relations reflect these conditionings incorporated in people and groups, specifically in the case of this research, educators and partners of solidarity economy enterprises (ADAMS *et al.*, 2015, p. 229).

In the 1960s, Paulo Freire, uncomfortable with language and depoliticized pedagogical practices, proved in Angicos-RN that it was possible, from reading his own reality and reading the world, to educate people with the writing of words and texts. This sociopolitical, critical, emancipatory and awareness-raising approach to different realities of social origin was followed by other authors who brought criticality as a watershed in curriculum theories.

However, there are still many educators who believe that Education and schools exist to train people for the job market. This is only a partial truth. Education exists to make human beings truly human, or even more human, understanding that the development of our humanity is a continuous process, without a specific end, or even as explained to us by Marcon, Scolari and Mezdri (2021):

An understanding of democracy that goes far beyond participation in elective processes of representatives. For this very reason, it implies educational processes, that is, there is no democracy without training for democracy and without democratic subjects. All this implies the formation of critical subjects, researchers and citizens (MARCON; SCOLARI; MEZADRI, 2021, p. 3).

The rules of the democratic living game, when incorporated by individuals, guide us, like a lighthouse, to a critical, purposeful, investigative, citizen existence.

## 5 Analysis and cross-referencing of research data

In the introduction of this writing, two topics were presented, namely: the first, with the recovery of the modern roots of the anarchist ideal in Europe and its respective conception of the libertarian education of its exponents; the second, in turn, looks for markers associated with authoritarianism manifested in institutionalized education. The two are disparate and completely dissociable, translating into the means that justify the ends: measures of freedom produce free men, while authoritarian measures produce alienated, submissive and frightened men.

In this way, we will analyze the representations that the students revealed from three questions that were proposed to them and that we will discuss later. As said, we will use Paulo Freire's thoughts (1996; 2000; 2003), in order to subsidize the analyses, so that our eyes

are attentive to: a) Analyzing, based on Paulo Freire's work, the memory awakened in students from the science about the educational measures to which they were exposed throughout their school trajectory; and b) Check if there are links between anarchist concepts and Paulo Freire's pedagogies.

Our research was based on the realization of virtual meetings of a postgraduate course in Education. From the beginning of the module, students were communicated and prepared to observe themselves, in order to be able to evaluate their own school trajectory in the light of critical theories of the curriculum, more specifically, by Paulo Freire.

Even before proceeding to the analysis of the representations awakened in the students, we present Chart 1, in order to help in understanding.

**Chart 1** – Questions asked to the research subjects and their answers.

Questions asked to students	Yes	no or did not know	Never thought about it
1) In your educational trajectory, have you ever had the opportunity to make a self-assessment of your own learning?		32	
2) Do you know who formulates and organizes the school curriculum?			32
3) Which of the topics covered in class most impacted you?		A tomada de consciência ('The raising of conscience')	

Source: elaborated by the author (2022).

When we asked the students if, at any time, in their educational trajectories, they had had the opportunity (or if they had any guidance) to carry out a self-assessment, the massive answer was: “no”.

At first, it was possible to understand that the representation of education that students communicate is of the received-education order – and not of the one constructed from an education in the historical movement, of significance and meanings. In this sense, they received an education that informs facts with certain dates, all under a capitalist grammar converted into “deserving it” – that is, into meritocracy..

What we still see, at the various educational levels, are authoritative, banking, classifying, selective assessments, so that students see the teacher as an evaluator and holder of knowledge. Under this organization, students do not participate as active subjects in the learning process. It is, therefore, banking education, as denounced by Paulo Freire, which throughout history still exists. The anarchist conception, due to its oriented to the fight against coercive authority or administration based on inequality and hierarchy (SANTOS, 2020), is an instrument, even, against the passivity of the individual.

The practice of self-assessment is in line with anarchist precepts. Paulo Freire (1996),

in turn, reveals a complaint, namely, the banking and authoritarian conception of education:

In this way, education becomes an act of depositing, in which the students are the depositaries and the educator the depository. Instead of communicating, the educator makes “communications” and deposits that the students, mere incidents, patiently receive, memorize and repeat. This is the “banking” conception of education, in which the only scope for action offered to students is to receive deposits, keep them and file them (FREIRE, 1996, p. 57).

Still for Freire, more specifically on evaluation, regarding the accomplishment of something that is historically denied to him, we find his considerations about the participation of the students: “The ideal, that sooner or later, a way is invented by which the students can participate in the evaluation” (FREIRE, 2000, p. 71). In these terms, the following questions are valid: How can one teach to participate, without promoting participation? How to teach autonomy, restricting freedom? How to teach solidarity through competition? With these questions, we reinforce that the means, in an education for freedom, justify the ends.

The second question of the self-assessment was: if the students, before having contact and discussing the subject, knew where the organization of the school curriculum came from. All said that they had never thought about the matter and that, not even during graduation, they had the clarification that it was a political issue of the State. In fact, the representation of the students was an Education as a donation from the government, and all the educational actions promoted at the school were designed for the good of the students. That is, it is the representation of an education contrary to free creative thinking, that is, chained and exerting force on the oppressed.

We use Codello (2007), based on Proudhon's thought, to clarify that a libertarian education for the people would never cross the minds of the oppressors. It is up to the State to program individuals to submission and obedience, never emancipate them.

Learning must become multipurpose and polytechnic with an increasing degree of difficulty in assignments. The instructional project, applied under the direct control of the workers, will consist of making the student go through the entire series of professional exercises, from the simplest to the most complicated, making it possible to extract from all this the rational and social meaning that is implied. This system is, however, incompatible with the State (CODELLO, 2007, p. 101).

In this way, the State will never be able to promote an egalitarian and libertarian education if it does not overcome the dichotomy between intellectual work and manual work. Or yet, dual education, school for thinking and school for doing, which means, in our reality: Education for the wealthy and proletarian education.

We continued in class with the anamnesis with the students and we were recovering the rigid times and habits of the school - such as queues, copies of the blackboard and books, lessons that should be memorized, such as multiplication tables and verbs, the sepulchral silence that should be kept, domination, subjection, classification by grades, competition, among others... – the students were perplexed, indignant and imagining, in their words, how

this process could effectively have been different, that is, with joy and feeling if stimulated to creativity. In summary, they noticed that learning does not mean suffering.

Codello (2007), still in this context, explains Bakunin's thinking about authoritarian teaching:

First, among all the families that often force their children to live in a non-serene and non-forming environment. This is mainly due to an authoritarian conception that parents have in their relationship with their children. Parents have the right to love and care for their children; certainly not to mistreat them and make them exploited by unhealthy and heavy work, still less should they corrupt and eliminate their intelligence and moral energy. [...] children do not belong to their parents or anyone else. “Called to become free men, they belong to themselves and to their future freedom” (CODELLO, 2007, p. 114).

We believe that this anti-authoritarian thinking is in the discourse of educators. However, we know that, despite the liberating discourse, there is a tendency in beings to retroact because they do not know how to act in the face of the new, since they were exposed to an education that castrates creativity. One of the axes of Freire's libertarian thought is exactly this: to observe discourse and practice, in order to be unique, free and of a new being.

In this respect, anarchist educators referred to a free society as the construction of a new man to form a new society. Freire (2003) shares this idea of freedom when thinking that one is a new society when there is no man or woman who exploits and lives at the expense of the work of others, which is exactly the inseparability of education and work, as stated the anarchist educators – a theme already explored in this article. Freire emphasized (2003, p. 68): “The new society is part of birth, it does not appear by decree or automatically. And childbirth, which is a process, is always more difficult and complex than simple and easy”.

The third and final question was about the topic that was addressed in the course and that most impacted them. Of the 32 students, 18 responded that they became aware that, during their elementary education, they suffered humiliation, castrations and unnecessary fears at school. The 32 male and female students stated that they were unaware of the state's homogenizing and class-selection power, manifested through the organization of the school curriculum.

Consciousness, in Paulo Freire (1979), is thus conceived:

Awareness is, in this sense, a reality test. The more awareness, the more reality is “unveiled”, the more one penetrates into the phenomenal essence of the object, in front of which we find ourselves in order to analyze it. For this same reason, conscientization does not consist in “being in front of reality” assuming a falsely intellectual position. Consciousness cannot exist outside of praxis, or rather, without the act of action – reflection. This dialectical unity permanently constitutes the way of being or transforming the world that characterizes men. For this very reason, awareness-raising is a historic commitment. It is also historical consciousness: it is a critical insertion in history, it implies that men assume the role of subjects who make and remake the world. It demands that men create their existence with a material that life offers them... Consciousness is not based on consciousness, on the one hand, and the world, on the other; on the other hand, it

does not intend a separation. On the contrary, it is based on the consciousness-world relationship. (FREIRE, 1979, p. 17)

In this same vein, Codello (2007) interprets Bakunin's thinking about the power of the school to elucidate or hide the awareness of individuals: "it is, therefore, often dormant in the people, because of the training they receive in state schools and which the enlightened bourgeois sell as popular instruction" (CODELLO, 2007, p. 127).

And, finally, means and ends must have a close relationship of coherence with each other, so that an education based on these precepts can build a freer society. We can infer that this proposal by Bakunin is related to Paulo Freire when he elucidates that we must narrow our word as the intention of an act as closely as possible to our act itself, so that what is said is, in effect, equal to what is done.

## Final considerations

The guiding question of this work sought to investigate which references of the educational process the subjects, graduate students in Education, revealed as a memory about their own school trajectory, after having been exposed to the critical contents of a particular graduate discipline in Education. Therefore, we seek to investigate: a) How these students evaluate their own school trajectory after having known the critical theories of the school curriculum; and b) If there are links between anarchist educators and Paulo Freire.

Our objective was to analyze, in the light of libertarian pedagogies, the references of Education of the interviewed subjects, as well as to make reference to anarchist educators as precursors of this type of Education.

The representation of education revealed by the students when guided to a self-assessment was a surprise and a lack of knowledge, as they had not yet had this experience. This is because the evaluation processes within schools still permeate banking education, in a movement to gauge the knowledge deposited. In this sense, it was possible to clearly verify the power of knowledge built with students through the analysis and deconstruction of their own representations.

When questioned about where the decisions on the content of the applied curriculum came from or the reason for such a selection and not another, they said they did not know. However, the discussions undertaken in the classroom – which denatured an authoritarian education as the only way of teaching – left the students perplexed. This is because they believed that all the actions to which they were subjected in the school trajectory were legal and pedagogical, including symbolic violence.

The awareness of reality itself was the tone of our meetings. And this force was felt by students as they were able to realize that we can effectively be subjects of our education.

When looking for the relationship between Paulo Freire's Pedagogies and anarchist ideals, it is worth stating that Freire never called himself an anarchist and, in the works consulted and cited here, there are no explicit anarchist references. However, he lived in a time that radiated resistance to the organization of the current system and, - it is necessary to emphasize that anarchist ideals had an enormous importance in the era of his thought and, even if they were difficult to understand for the population, they imposed themselves as generators of great fear for the political state organization. Such characteristics can still be verified today.

Paulo Freire did not explicitly mention the anarchists. However, he did not despise these political views either; in Freire, they structured the angles that form the words, between the words and behind the words, and these, filled with human – but above all, political – meanings became a watercolor of possibilities.

Paulo Freire seems to have incorporated the force that was left by the anarchists and, in motion, reorganized the narrative, providing a philosophy of liberation as a political-pedagogical tool.

It was in this brilliant way that Paulo Freire approached the anarchist idea and ideal, placing it in the contemporary world in a political way through the understanding of the social world and of a pedagogical praxis, as a tool for deconstructing the unique reality and rebuilding a diverse and changing world.

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