

200 anos de educação para os povos do campo no Brasil: entre conquistas e desafios

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Resumo

Este artigo tem como objetivo analisar a historicidade da educação destinada aos povos do campo no Brasil, nos últimos 200 anos (1822-2022). Para isso, investigamos o contexto rural brasileiro, como a escola fora pensada para povos camponeses, o surgimento da Educação do Campo, as discrepâncias entre Educação Rural e Educação do Campo e as políticas públicas educacionais destinadas a esses sujeitos. Assim, problematizamos as contradições históricas entre campesinato e agronegócio, a emergência dos movimentos sociais e as conquistas das políticas públicas, bem como os desafios ainda enfrentados em meio ao cenário atual. Desse modo, o estudo, além de problematizar a educação dos povos do campo, destacou a importância das legislações conquistadas.

Palavras-chave: Brasil; Educação do Campo; Políticas Públicas.

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200 years of education for rural people in Brazil: between achievements and challenges

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Abstract

This article aims to analyze the historicity of education aimed at field people in Brazil, in the last 200 years (1822-2022). For this, it will investigate the Brazilian rural context, how the school was designed for peasant people, the emergence of Rural Education, the discrepancies between Field Education and Rural Education and the public educational policies aimed at these subjects. Thus, it will discuss the historical contradictions between peasantry and, the emergence of social movements and the achievements of public policies, as well as the challenges still faced in the current scenario. In this way, the study, in addition to problematizing the education of field people, will highlight the importance of the conquered legislation.

Keywords: Brazil; Rural Education; Public policy.

200 años de educación para la población rural en Brasil: entre logros y desafíos

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Resumen

Este artículo tiene como objetivo analizar la historicidad de la educación dirigida a la población del campo en Brasil, en los últimos 200 años (1822-2022). Para ello, investigó el contexto rural brasileño, cómo la escuela fue diseñada para el pueblo campesino, el surgimiento de la Educación del Campo, las discrepancias entre Educación del Campo y Educación Rural y las políticas públicas educativas dirigidas a estos sujetos. Así, discutió las contradicciones históricas entre el campesinado y el agronegocio, el surgimiento de los movimientos sociales y las conquistas de las políticas públicas, así como los desafíos aún enfrentados en el escenario actual. De esta forma, el estudio, además de problematizar la educación de la población del campo, resaltó la importancia de la legislación conquistada.

Palabras clave: Brasil; Educación del Campo; Políticas públicas.

Introduction

To analyze the advancements and challenges of Rural Education in Brazil over the last 200 years, it is essential, first, to reflect on the educational projects designed for rural workers, the historical context of education for these peoples, the construction of policies, and the ongoing challenges they face. Additionally, it is necessary to make an effort to understand Rural Education in its entirety, aiming to assess the historical trajectory while staying true to its objectives, and analyzing the antagonistic context of social classes within the prevailing capitalist system.

Rural Education originates from the class struggle between rural workers and the bourgeoisie⁴, emerging from a scenario where the historically conceived educational project was aligned with the interests of the dominant class. This educational model proposes an approach focused on the rural subject, created by and for them, implying the protagonism of those demanding education (CALDART, 2009).

In this sense, this study aimed to analyze the historicity of education for rural communities in Brazil over the past 200 years (1822-2022). A bibliographical research on Rural Education was conducted, based on authors who discuss the theme, using the contributions of: Calazans (1993), Fernandes (1999), Caldart (2009), Leite (2002), Paulo Freire (1996), Mészáros (2008), Carvalho (2011), Moraes (2018), Souza (2020), Freitas (2018), and Santos (2017). Furthermore, a documentary analysis was carried out on the public educational policies that encompass rural subjects, including decrees, resolutions, opinions, the Law of Guidelines and Bases (LDB 9394/96), and the Brazilian constitutions.

To achieve the outlined objective, the text is divided into sections, beginning with a brief analysis of social classes and the peoples living in rural areas. Next, we highlight the 200 years of education for rural peoples in Brazil, analyzing how it was conceived for this space, what national legislations stated, and the contradictions between Rural Education and Rural Education for the Countryside. Subsequently, public policies on Rural Education in Brazil are highlighted, including achievements in recent decades, the challenges faced, and the setbacks encountered.

Brief Analysis of the Peasantry and Agribusiness in Brazil

Reflecting on the peasantry in Brazil refers to a social class fraction that is quite heterogeneous, composed of small farmers, riverside dwellers, rubber tappers, landowners, quilombo remnants, and settlers, among others. It is also a class with a dual character in the social process: it is simultaneously

⁴ Barros (2018) makes observations about the class struggle in rural areas and highlights that there are those who control the means of production (the agrarian bourgeoisie) and those who only possess labor power (rural workers).

landowners and owners of labor power (ALMEIDA, 2008). From this perspective, in capitalist society, the peasantry finds itself in contradiction with the dominant production model, which is characterized in the countryside by large-scale production and the appropriation of land.

The protagonist in the capitalist system is agribusiness, which encompasses various productive activities directly related to the production and sub-production of agricultural and livestock products, a result of the Green Revolution⁵, after World War II, with the modernization of agriculture through machinery and agricultural inputs. It constitutes a global development model, dominated by financial capital oriented by the external market, with production concentrated in large-scale exploitation units (TEUBAL, 2008).

Agribusiness has its roots in latifúndio (large estates), which in Brazil was directly tied to the colonial economic structure that aimed to produce on a large scale to generate profit for the Portuguese Crown through the export of spices found in Brazil (SILVA et al, 2014, p. 5). In the history of the country's colonization, the land has always been owned by the dominant class, initially taken forcefully from Indigenous peoples and, later, denied to enslaved people. Thus, the accumulation of private property, a characteristic of capitalism, is responsible for creating the contradiction between large landowners and those without land.

Regarding land appropriation in the country, one of the first laws after Brazil's independence in 1822, dealing with agrarian rights, was the Land Law (Lei de Terras, Law No. 601) of September 18, 1850. Approved in the same year as the Eusébio de Queirós Law⁶, which aimed to end the slave trade, this legislation was the means by which large landowners and politicians sought to prevent Black people from becoming landowners. By establishing that land could only be acquired through purchase, sale, or donation from the church, only the dominant class would retain property, since workers were deprived of the resources to buy land.

Therefore, land ownership in Brazil is tied to those who hold capital and is denied to the working class, whose labor continues to be exploited in exchange for mere subsistence. Thus, the reality of the peasantry, which is composed of subjects who have historically been subjugated, becomes cheap labor for large landowners, as Marques asserts (2008, p. 56):

In Latin America, the social reproduction of the peasantry has never been in such a critical state. Many peasants are kept in a permanent condition of semi- or sub-proletarianization, in extremely precarious working conditions, whether in rural or urban areas. Temporary labor in sugarcane cutting in Brazil is an example of this situation. This occurs either because resorting to wage labor is what allows the peasant to maintain land ownership, or because it

⁵ The term "Green Revolution" is used to refer to the process of transformation in agriculture on a global scale, which occurred through the development and incorporation of new technological means in production. This phenomenon began in the second half of the 20th century, between the 1960s and 1970.

⁶ The Eusébio de Queirós Law, or Law No. 581, of September 4, 1850, enacted during the Second Reign, prohibited the entry of enslaved Africans into Brazil, criminalizing those who violated it.

is the alternative found to earn the necessary income for their livelihood.

Furthermore, the dispute over land and other basic rights that are denied, such as education, materializes in the countryside. When peasants do not sell their labor, they survive through family farming, fishing, and other sustainable ways of living with the land. However, agribusiness, which is expanding and requires large amounts of land for exploitation, pressures rural people to vacate their lands, and due to mechanization, some are forced to sell their labor.

Latifúndio (large estates) is a necessary base for agribusiness, while simultaneously giving rise to the peasantry's struggle for land and a sustainable mode of production. Thus, the fight for land pits these two modes of production against each other: on one side, large-scale production using pesticides and genetically modified seeds; on the other, peasants who advocate for sustainability and land reform. The latter is urgently needed in the country, as demonstrated by a study conducted by the Non-Governmental Organization (NGO) Oxfam in 2019, which analyzed land distribution in Latin America and concluded that less than 1% of agricultural properties control almost half of Brazil's rural land.

In summary, the contradictions between the peasantry and agribusiness stem from a history of exploitation, expropriation, and land accumulation in Brazil, creating tensions and conflicts. Agribusiness, which is the protagonist in the capitalist system due to large-scale production and profit, is characterized by latifúndio and development driven by capital (SANTOS, 2017). In contrast, the peasantry fights for land reform, for a sustainable way of living with the land, and for the quality of life of workers. However, as seen, the State perpetuates the interests of the dominant class and serves to maintain capital. Therefore, peasants defending their rights must confront the system and hold the State accountable.

200 Years of Education for Rural Peoples in Brazil: Between Achievements and Challenges

Education in rural areas in Brazil has historically been marked by exclusion, leaving enduring scars to this day. The process of schooling, from 1500 until the early 20th century, primarily served the agrarian elites, remaining inaccessible to much of the rural population. As highlighted in the studies by Calazans (1993), educational projects for the countryside were linked to the economic interests of capitalism, demonstrating that schools are part of a whole that, within the capitalist system, must adapt to its modes of production.

Brazilian education, at all levels and modalities, from colonization to the present day, has always had a dualistic character, privileging the dominant class. When it comes to rural Brazil, this is no different. With a history of an agrarian paradigm centered on land

concentration in large estates, it is observed that, until the early decades of the 20th century, the State showed little concern for schooling rural populations. The justification was that the labor force in the predominant agro-exporting model of this period especially in coffee cultivation did not require schooling to perform its work (SANTOS; SOUZA; 2012, p.2).

The first Brazilian Constitution, in 1824, addressed education in Article 179, item XXXII: “Primary education is free to all citizens”, but it excluded a large portion of the population, as citizenship at the time was tied to titles and owned property, excluding women, enslaved people, and dependents. Access to education was therefore marked by exclusion, disregarding the poorest peasant populations the peasantry.

Thus, rural education was only effectively addressed starting with the 1891 Constitution, as this document proposed a reorganization of the entire educational system. However, it gained prominence in debates in the second decade of the 20th century, due to the industrialization of the country and the strong migratory movement of rural people to cities (SILVA, 2000). This Constitution granted autonomy to states and municipalities, creating the legal framework for decentralized educational initiatives, which were not realized due to the absence of a national system to coordinate educational policies. Only some initiatives emerged at the municipal level, such as night classes for adult basic education in urban concentration areas.

Rural education was formally incorporated into Brazilian legislation with the 1934 Constitution, amidst a large debate to curb the rural-to-urban migration flow and, thus, increase productivity in the countryside. In this context, during the 1910s and 1920s, when peasants left the countryside in search of better working and living conditions, overcrowding cities, schools were conceived and promoted in rural areas (LEITE, 2002). This led to the emergence of the movement known as Pedagogical Ruralism:

[...] Pedagogical Ruralism, a movement that discussed, developed, and disseminated proposals for the schooling of rural populations. The Ruralist Movement focused on emphasizing education as a means of ensuring that people stayed in rural areas. [...] Pedagogical Ruralism constitutes a framework whose influences are still present in the discussion and practice of schooling in rural areas today (ANTUNES-ROCHA, 2012, p. 56).

Pedagogical Ruralism was the tool found at the time to, through education, reduce rural exodus and keep people in the countryside. One of the explanatory axes used to justify rural schools was the "lack of love for the land," which was said to be produced by ignorance. According to the movement, this ignorance caused peasants to leave the countryside or destroy nature. Schools operating in rural areas valued the "simple" way of life in the countryside and portrayed the city as a "mirage," thus preventing the attraction of impoverished rural populations to urban areas.

However, with the expansion and mechanization of agribusiness, and the need for land to

cultivate monocultures by agro-exporters, the presence of peasants in rural areas became unnecessary, except for those who could operate machinery. Additionally, the lack of public policies focused on education in rural areas was one of the main reasons why rural people were once again denied access to education and the right to land. Over time, most of the few schools that existed in rural areas were closed, and the children of farmers had to travel to the city to attend school.

[...] The unilateral policies practiced by public administrators, resulting in the closure of rural schools affecting thousands of communities, occurred without prior discussions about the advantages and disadvantages of opening or closing schools in rural areas. This disregarded the principle of community participation in decisions regarding education and public education policies, directly impacting thousands of citizens, especially children and adolescents. [...] Measures for closing or abandoning schools in Brazil have been occurring since the 1960s, sparking discussions about the potential impacts they would have on the education system and society as a whole. However, there were no specific debates about the quality of education and school transportation for rural populations (FERREIRA; BRANDÃO, 2011, p.2).

Rural schools were closed without any debate with the community, resulting in significant impacts on their lives. Students had to travel to the city to attend schools that were neither built nor designed for them. Furthermore, there was no discussion about the quality of transportation that would take students, leaving them at the mercy of political goodwill. The numbers are high and highlight the severity of the lack of oversight regarding the continued presence of schools in rural areas. According to the Landless Workers' Movement (MST),⁷ an updated survey based on INEP data on the number of educational institutions in Basic Education reveals that, between 1997 and 2018, nearly 80,000 rural schools were closed in Brazil.

Thus, it is evident that the State's actions toward the peasant population have always been guided by the interests of capital. When the settlement of people in the countryside was deemed necessary, the creation of Pedagogical Ruralism was the tool found at the time to, through education, reduce rural exodus and keep peasants in rural areas. Later, with the expansion and mechanization of agribusiness, and the need for land, the presence of these subjects in rural areas was no longer necessary for capital. As a result, the lack of public policies and the closure of rural schools followed. However, social movements rose in defense of this population, advocating for a different model of education, giving rise to Rural Education in contrast to Rural Education for the Countryside, the latter being guided by the interests of capital.

The Rural Education that has predominated in the country, according to authors such as Ferrari (1991) and Calazans (1993), has historically been conceived from an urban perspective, with a capitalist and exclusionary outlook. From the beginning, in the Brazilian context, schools were

⁷ Available at: <https://mst.org.br/2019/11/28/80-mil-escolas-fechadas-no-campo-brasileiro-em-21-anos/>. Accessed on: December 12, 2020.

designed to serve the elites, and in rural areas, the agrarian elites excluded peasants, enslaved people, and Indigenous peoples, who were only considered labor and did not require schooling. Later, as pointed out in the previous section, educational programs for the countryside remained tied to the economic interests of capital, disregarding the needs of peasants and failing to respect their ways of being and living. The concept of Rural Education, present in the historical discourse of the State, deepens the segregating root and empties the cultural and political meaning of a project for the countryside and the peasant population (BARBOSA, 2015)

The Rural Education model implemented in Brazil gave rise to one of the counter-hegemonic movements advocating for education that values rural peoples, the Landless Workers' Movement (MST), which emerged in 1984 when rural workers, who were leading struggles for land and societal democracy, gathered at the 1st National Meeting in Cascavel, Paraná. There, they decided to create a national peasant movement with three main objectives: to fight for land, to fight for agrarian reform, and to push for social changes in the country. Since then, this movement has advocated for the rights of rural peoples to education, land, healthcare, and more (SANTOS; SILVA; SOUZA, 2013).

In this context, the first debates on the quality of education were held at the 1st National Meeting of Educators of Agrarian Reform (ENERA), organized by the MST, with support from the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the National Conference of Brazilian Bishops (CNBB), and the University of Brasília (UnB) in 1997. Later, at the 1st National Conference for Basic Education in the Countryside, held in Luziânia/GO, public policies for Rural Education in Brazil were articulated (SANTOS; SOARES; SOUZA, 2020).

Thus, from the articulations of social movements, Rural Education is conceived and built. According to Caldart,

Rural education takes a stand, acts, from a particularity, and does not abandon the perspective of universality, but fights for its inclusion in it. [...] Rural Education has focused on the school and fights for the conception of education that guides its practices to decentralize from the school, not becoming hostage to its constitutive logic, precisely to be able to go well beyond it as an educational project. [...] It engages in the struggle for workers' access to the knowledge produced in society and, at the same time, problematizes and critiques the dominant mode of knowledge [...] (CALDART, 2009, p.38).

The educational project of Rural Education, in its very genesis, is conceived within a horizontal relationship of belonging, identity, and valorization, as Caldart (2009, p. 41) states: "At its origin, the 'of' in Rural Education has to do with this protagonism: it is not 'for' nor even 'with': it is of the workers, rural education, of the peasants, pedagogy of the oppressed".

One of the key points of difference between Rural Education and Rural Education for the Countryside is, in addition to their origins, the defense of distinct societal models. On one hand, an

antagonistic reality that devalues the rural worker, and on the other, a vision of a just, democratic society with protagonists being the subjects themselves, not capital (SANTOS, 2020; SANTOS; BARBOSA, 2022). The defense of Rural Education encompasses the struggle for schools in the community, with critical and liberating pedagogies (FREIRE, 1996). Schools that defend rural life, its ways of being and living, and that recognize the importance of family farming, as well as the countryside as a place of life.

In summary, it is possible to observe the presence of two distinct models of education for rural populations: Rural Education and Rural Education for the Countryside. The former, historically linked to economic interests, aligns with capitalist dictates and is conceived from the urban space (SOUZA, 2020). The latter, in contrast, emerges from the struggle of social movements, with rural workers as the protagonists, valuing their culture. Thus, contradictions arise between two educational projects with distinct characteristics, as outlined in the table below.

Box 1: Rural Education and Field Education: Characteristics and Convergences

Rural Education	Field Education
Defined based on labor market objectives;	Constructed by social movements;
Depicts the countryside from a capitalist perspective, viewing the subjects in an inferiorized manner;	Valorization of the rural worker, human development as a right;
Conceived from the urban world;	Conceived from the reality of the subject, valuing their culture and relationship with the land;
Protagonism of agribusiness.	Protagonism of family farming

Source: prepared by Soares (2020).

Unlike Rural Education, which sees agricultural space as a place for capital production, Field Education advocates for the diversity and emancipation of individuals. Rosa Lucas, when addressing Field Education, emphasizes:

Breaking with the old paradigm of development that harms the environment, which is based on profit at any cost and benefits only a few, must be a broad commitment from many sectors. Overcoming the current model, which has significantly compromised natural resources, requires new thinking, a new meaning for human actions and attitudes, new values, customs, and traditions that must come into conflict with the pillars of the old idea of progress, used as a synonym for development (LUCAS, 2008, p. 124).

Furthermore, social movements in the countryside have secured, in the last decade, numerous public policies that encompass Field Education. These policies have become a field of dispute, as they were not conceived by the State but have their genesis in the tireless struggle of social movements. Thus, the achievements of legal frameworks are important, as well as their

implementation, since they represent rights that go against the prevailing capitalist societal model.

Public Policies of Field Education in Brazil: Between Achievements and Challenges

Public policies, according to Santos and Carvalho (2019, p. 4), “can be defined as a characteristic set of actions promoted by governmental actors, with the aim of producing specific outcomes in various areas such as social, educational, health, culture, etc.” In this sense, educational public policies are actions directed towards education. It is also important to note that policies are not always voluntarily constructed by government officials; often, they are victories achieved through the struggles of counter-hegemonic social movements.

In the context of the construction of public policies, the historical context of the 1990s in Brazil becomes evident, when the State underwent "reforms," establishing the so-called welfare state, due to the need to adapt to the new context of capital in the post-war period.

Between 1930 and 1970, while the neoliberal approach spread, the world experienced the expansion of the welfare state, based on a developmentalist conception of capitalism. This was an attempt to overcome the crisis of the first cycle of classical liberalism, which ended in the early 20th century amid World War I and the 1929 crisis. [...] In Latin America, the exhaustion of the first wave of neoliberalism in the 1990s, followed by the rise of progressive governments, created the illusion that neoliberalism had passed. It also had a complementary effect: it drew our attention to the economic reforms and their impacts, diverting our focus from the dark side of neoliberalism (FREITAS, 2018, p.14).

Although some reforms in the 1990s constituted advances in the right to education, such as the creation of the Law of Guidelines and Bases of Education (LDB 9394/96), it was during the coalition government of the Workers' Party (PT), which began in 2003 and lasted until 2016, that several public policies supporting education in rural areas were established. Regarding Field Education, especially during the mandates of Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva (from 2003 to 2006, and from 2007 to 2011), there was greater openness to the demands of social movements in rural areas, particularly the Landless Workers' Movement (MST), which in the last decade succeeded in making their demands legal normative frameworks.

In the following table, we highlight the public policies that support Field Education in the country, starting in the 1990s and continuing to be developed until 2015.

Box 2- Legal Frameworks of Field Education

Political and Legal Frameworks	Year of Creation	Description
Law No. 9394/96, Articles 23 and 28	1996	Law of Guidelines and Bases of Education (LDB)

Law No. 9.424/9 (Article 1)	1996	Provides for the Fund for Maintenance and Development of Primary Education and for the Valuation of Teaching (FUNDEF)
CNE/CEB Resolution No. 1	April 2002	Establishes Operational Guidelines for Basic Education in Rural Schools
Law No. 10.880	June 2004	Institutes the National Program for Support to School Transportation (PNATE)
CNE/CEB Opinion No. 01/2006	2006	Recognizes the application of Pedagogy of Alternation in Family Training Centers through Alternation (CEFFA)
Decree No. 6.040	February 7, 2007	Institutes the National Policy for Sustainable Development of Traditional Peoples and Communities (PNPCT)
Procampo	2007	Creation of the Program for Support to Higher Education Training in Field Education Degree – PROCAMPO
CNE/CEB Resolution No. 2	April 2008	Establishes Operational Guidelines for Basic Education in Rural Schools (complementary) Establishes criteria and procedures for the automatic transfer of financial resources from the ProJovem Campo – Saberes da Terra Program to States
Resolution/CD/FNDE No. 45	August 2009	Field Education Policy and PRONERA
	November 2010	Establishes guidelines for the transfer of financial resources to Higher Education Institutions within the Active School Program
Decree No. 7.352/2010	September 2010	[...] Provides FUNDEF resources to community institutions that work in Field Education [...]
	July 2012	PDDE Field - Direct Money to the School Program
Resolution/CD/FNDE No. 26	August 2012	PDDE Water in the School
	August 2012	National Curricular Guidelines for Quilombola School Education in Basic Education
Law 12.695	November 20, 2012	Provides for the allocation of financial resources, in accordance with the operational and regulatory guidelines of the Direct Money to the School Program (PDDE), [...] to promote the improvement of education quality and socio-environmental sustainability in schools
Resolution No. 36	May 2013	ORDINANCE No. 86/2013, which establishes the PRONACAMPO – National Field Education Program

Ordinance No. 86/2013	2013	Provides for the Fund for Maintenance and Development of Primary Education and for the Valuation of Teaching (FUNDEF)
Ordinance No. 674	August 2013	ORDINANCE No. 674 – Establishes the National Commission for Field Education, a consultative collegiate body, with the responsibility of advising the Ministry of Education on the formulation of policies for Field Education.
Resolution No. 38 (Article 1)	October 2013	Establishes guidelines and procedures for the payment of scholarships and research grants within the School of the Land program.
Law No. 9394/96, modified by Law No. 12.960, Article 28	Modification in March 2014	The closure of rural schools.
Ordinance No. 505	May 2015	Creates the National Commission for Vocational and Technical Education for the Countryside in Public Networks (CNEPT)

Source: prepared by Soares (2020).

A major legal milestone achieved for education for rural populations at the federal level was CNE/CEB Resolution No. 1, dated April 3, 2002, which establishes the Operational Guidelines for Basic Education in Rural Schools. At the historical moment in which it was collectively constructed, it expressed a legal instrument for dialogue between the State and Society in the pursuit of rights. The Resolution outlines the responsibilities of each state entity tasked with ensuring quality education for all, including rural peoples. Thus, this document became a significant tool for rights and advocacy for rural populations (CARVALHO, 2011; SANTOS, 2020).

An important legal milestone was approved by the National Congress in December 2006, Constitutional Amendment No. 53/2006, which created the Fund for the Maintenance and Development of Basic Education and the Valorization of Education Professionals (Fundeb), replacing the Fund for the Maintenance and Development of Primary Education and the Valorization of Teaching (Fundef), created by Constitutional Amendment No. 14/1996. With Fundeb, the scope of funding was expanded to include education stages and modalities previously excluded from Fundef, such as Field Education, Indigenous Education, and Quilombola Education.

Subsequently, for the first time in the country and in legislation, the term “Field Education” emerged, thus no longer referring to education for rural subjects but to Field Education. This new "denomination" carries specific meanings and significance, as mentioned earlier. Therefore, CNE/CEB Resolution No. 2, dated April 28, 2008, establishes in its Article 1 that,

Field Education encompasses Basic Education in its stages of Early Childhood Education, Elementary Education, Secondary Education, and Technical Vocational Education at the secondary level integrated with Secondary Education, and is intended to serve rural

populations in their various forms of life production – family farmers, extractivists, artisanal fishermen, riverside dwellers, settlers and encamped people from the Land Reform, quilombolas, caiçaras, indigenous peoples, and others (BRASIL, 2008).

Also in the field of legislation, it is essential to highlight Decree No. 7.352, dated November 4, 2010, which establishes

Article 1: The Field Education policy aims to expand and improve the provision of basic and higher education to rural populations and will be developed by the Union in collaboration with the States, the Federal District, and the Municipalities, in accordance with the guidelines and goals established in the National Education Plan and the provisions of this Decree (BRASIL, 2010).

Thus, Field Education reaffirms itself as an educational public policy. Furthermore, this document establishes the National Education Program in Land Reform (PRONERA), which until then was only a program, but with this decree, it transforms into a permanent state policy aimed at providing quality education for rural subjects, who are fighting for the equal redistribution of land in the country. Therefore, it plays a significant role in securing rights for peasants, particularly those who are at the forefront of the land reform struggle.

It is also important to highlight programs such as the National Field Education Program (PRONACAMPO), which aims to provide financial support for states and municipalities to develop their respective Field Education policies through coordinated actions that serve rural and quilombola schools. Meanwhile, PROCAMPO supports the implementation of regular degree courses in Field Education at public higher education institutions across the country. In addition to these, there is also the National Textbook Program for Rural Schools (PNLD Campo), which aims to provide specific textbooks for public schools participating in the National Textbook Program.

Another important legal achievement was Law No. 12.960, sanctioned on March 27, 2014, which amended the Law of Guidelines and Bases, Law No. 9394/96 (BRASIL, 1996, Art. 28), by adding a sole paragraph):

The closure of rural, indigenous, and quilombola schools will be preceded by a statement from the normative body of the respective education system, which will consider the justification presented by the Department of Education, the analysis of the impact assessment of the action, and the opinion of the school community.

This law makes it more difficult to close rural schools, as the school community has the right to be heard, and the Department of Education must justify the need to close the school's activities. It is a powerful addition to the law that, in addition to hearing the community, also values schools located in rural areas.

We also highlight Ordinance No. 505, from May 2015, which creates the National Commission for Vocational and Technical Education for the Countryside in Public Networks

(CNEPT), with the purpose of overseeing actions related to Vocational and Technical Education for the Countryside in Public Networks; proposing reference frameworks and guidelines for public networks' work in Vocational and Technical Education for the Countryside; as well as overseeing the implementation of the Training Scholarship in Pronatec Campo and proposing improvements in the processes (BRASIL, 2015).

In addition to the legal frameworks highlighted here, we know that, according to the ideals of an egalitarian school, whether it is a rural school or not, it is necessary to consider the diversity of the student body when constructing the Political-Pedagogical Project (PPP) and in pedagogical practice. As stated in the Law of Guidelines and Bases - Law No. 9394/96, in

Article 26- The curricula for early childhood education, elementary education, and secondary education must have a common national basis, to be complemented in each education system and in each educational institution by a diversified part, required by the regional and local characteristics of society, culture, economy, and students. Paragraph 1: The curricula referred to in the caput must necessarily include the study of the Portuguese language and mathematics, knowledge of the physical and natural world, and of social and political reality, especially in Brazil. (BRAZIL, 1996, p. 19, emphasis added).

It is important to note that, when analyzing public policies in Brazil starting from the 1990s, significant achievements can be observed in the years that followed, particularly during the period when the Workers' Party (PT) was in power. Therefore, since 2003, during the PT governments, Moraes (2018, p. 80) describes that “the structure of ghettos suffered minor scratches. Minor for the costs of the big house, but of great significance for the lower class.” However, starting in 2015, no new public policies were instituted. This is due to the political and media coup of 2016, which institutionally removed President Dilma Vana Rousseff, democratically elected in 2014 (FREITAS, 2018).

In this scenario, the openness that occurred in the last years of the PT governments for the creation of policies is now replaced by the purpose of destroying "public education of public management" and not just reforming it. Under the current president Jair Messias Bolsonaro (2019), neoliberals defend the state only as a provider of public resources, not as a manager, exempt from the obligation of providing free, quality public education, turning it into just a "service" within the free market.

Since the beginning of his government, President Bolsonaro has signed decrees directly affecting Field Education. One example is the dissolution of the Secretariat for Continuing Education, Literacy, Diversity, and Inclusion (SECADI/MEC) by Decree No. 9.465, dated January 2, 2019. Taffarel and Carvalho (2019) emphasize the importance of SECADI in ensuring quality and equitable education through public policies aimed at social inclusion, which originated from the struggle for

education and agrarian reform. The authors also draw attention to the fact that this imposition represents unprecedented setbacks and the destruction of rights for the working class.

Additionally, as a setback from the current government, Decree No. 10.252 of February 20, 2020, abolished the General Coordination of Field Education and Citizenship, which was responsible for managing PRONERA. Furthermore, it changed the responsibilities of the National Institute for Colonization and Agrarian Reform (INCRA), transferring and subordinating agrarian policy to the Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock, and Supply (MAPA). In response, the National Forum of Field Education (FONEC) issued a statement denouncing the extinction of PRONERA, pointing out that after 20 years of struggle, the government is dismantling the political space for the creation and management of one of the largest public Field Education policies in Brazil.

Desse modo, diante dos constantes retrocessos, é possível perceber no sistema capitalista vigente, as constantes reformas que caminham para corrigir algum detalhe, mas sem modificar a ordem estabelecida, pois em sua lógica totalizadora é irreformável, como afirma Mészáros (2008, p.25-26):

[...] Changes under such limitations, a priori and prejudiced, are only admissible with the sole and legitimate aim of correcting some defective detail of the established order, so that the fundamental structural determinations of society as a whole are kept intact, in accordance with the unalterable demands of the global logic of a particular production system. The forms through which a multiplicity of conflicting particular interests must align with the pre-established general rule of social reproduction can be adjusted, but the general rule itself can in no way be altered.

The changes that occurred in recent years, in terms of the achievement of public policies, were admissible up until the point where they fit into the pre-established order. When structural changes occurred, capital adjusted itself once again to return to its cycle of contradictions. The general rule, the antagonistic structure of exploitation and expropriation of rights, can in no way be altered.

Despite the important advances, we highlight that there are many challenges to be overcome, which have been the subject of confrontations between antagonistic classes. Santos and Barbosa (2022); Santos, Santos, and Santos (2021); and Santos and Nunes (2020) make us reflect that we must continue fighting in the context of Field Education to:

- Advance in the consolidation of Field Education in rural areas, so that students can have the right to study in their communities of origin, as established by Resolution No. 1/2002;
- Create fronts of struggle to prevent the closure of rural schools, as established by Law No. 12.960/2014;
- Ensure democratic management in schools through the direct election of school leaders by the school community. This should be implemented through legal provisions created in municipal

and state legislations, as well as through Resolutions or recommendations from municipal and state councils.

- Conduct training actions so that the school community understands education financing, as well as the importance of participating in decision-making spaces through community assemblies, where vital community issues are discussed when constructing the Multiannual Plan (PPA), the Budget Guidelines Law (LDO), which is made annually, and the Annual Budget Law (LOA). We clarify that what is not included in the budget cannot be claimed. And if it is, insisting on the execution of the allocated amount is part of the pedagogical and political work of the school and education workers.
- Develop a deeper understanding of the reality, culture, and way of being, thinking, and acting of indigenous and quilombola peoples, and all rural subjects, by planning strategies and actions in the Political-Pedagogical Project (PPP) of the schools.
- Develop the PPP democratically, ensuring agroecology is included in the school curriculum.
- Find mechanisms to ensure work as an educational principle, the link between education and productive processes, and the discussion of different dimensions and methods of worker formation, vocational education, comparing this accumulation of theories and practices with the specific experience of work and education of peasants.
- The community's culture should be part of the educational framework in schools.
- Self-management must be an important aspect to be implemented in the educational process, among other aspects.

Overcoming these challenges is a sine qua non condition for achieving quality education in rural areas. Despite the advances made for social inclusion in this space, if the objective is not the historical overcoming of social exclusion, materialized in the expropriation of land, the realization of Agrarian Reform, and the guarantee of public state policies, not government policies, it will be impossible to achieve the goals of the rural working class (SANTOS; BARBOSA, 2022). The opposite of this is the implementation of a political-ideological reconversion to an ultra-neoliberal political and economic model, as we have observed in Brazil in recent years. For qualitative change to happen, a counter-internalization is necessary, which is only possible through the political and social praxis of collective subjects.

Final considerations

The educational praxis from a critical perspective must be integrated into the context of self-management in both formal and informal activities, such as all spaces for political claims and knowledge construction. In this way, workers become aware of their historical role in society, acquiring knowledge to make collective decisions about productive activities, based on political emancipation and the construction of citizenship. In this sense, it is possible for them to understand the multiple determinations and have a comprehensive view of the phenomena presented, expressed socially in the absence of adequate investment in education, in order to overcome the apparent view and understand the essence. We observe that with the reflective capacity of social movements, through the assumptions of Field Education, it was possible to create strategies to correlate forces between the classes in the rural context.

Therefore, it is important to highlight the role of rural social movements in the fight to overcome the prevailing capitalist mode of production and in securing rights expressed in legal regulations. One of the main actions that must be implemented as a goal is the guarantee of democratic management in rural schools.

When analyzing the history of education for rural populations presented in this text, we realize the reality is not linear, as social Darwinism claims. On the contrary, we understand that history is constructed through the actions of individuals in social contexts, reflected in the relationships of space and time and in the reality that results in the formation of consciousness. Through this rationality, it is possible to perceive that the working class's struggle in this investigated context has advanced and acquired rights expressed in the normative frameworks presented as achievements in educational policy. This dialectical movement constitutes a qualitative leap conditioned by the unity and struggle of opposites, which we can observe in the confrontation between agribusiness as the dominant class and peasantry as the working rural class.

This contradiction demonstrates that all phenomena of reality are interconnected and that they do not express themselves in an absolute and unchangeable way, as metaphysical materialism claims. Rather, this material formation, represented in the text by the struggles of social movements, made changes in the history of education for peasants, which can be observed in the search to overcome Rural Education through its opposite, Field Education. Thus, when analyzed through the lens of dialectical materialism, we can observe that this phenomenon progresses progressively, producing transformations that lead from one stage of development to another, resulting in a qualitative leap observed in the achievements of educational policies for the field.

That being said, we know that all phenomena of reality are in a state of interdependence, ranging from the universal to the particular and singular. Therefore, they are not immovable; on the contrary, they are continuously moving and transforming reality. This is why education, as a tool for the construction of critical knowledge, is indispensable. Only in this way can we overcome social contradictions in the rural context. Thus, it is urgent to surpass the social and productive relations of capitalism as the hegemonic project represented by agribusiness in rural areas. For this, Field Education, as a historical project of the working class, plays a very important role in the acquisition of critical consciousness for the emancipation of peasants.

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