

The polytechnic training of brazilian workers: an identity in “construction”¹

La formación politécnica del trabajador brasileño: una identidad en “construcción”

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Abstract

This article aims to discuss the impacts of public policies on professional education in Brazil, through excerpts from the song “Construção”, by Francisco Buarque de Hollanda (1971). Based on studies about Professional and Technological Education (PTE) carried out by Ciavatta (2005), Frigotto (2009), Kuenzer (2017), Moura (2010) and Ramos (2008), a brief exposition of Brazilian legislation on secondary and professional education since the 1970s is elaborated. The dialectical historical materialism, as a conceptual theoretical dimension, constitutes the epistemological basis. It is evident that the duality between basic education and vocational education in Brazil reflects the social duality caused by the capitalist socioeconomic system and its contradictions.

Keywords: Work; Education, Capitalism; Polytechnic education; “Construção”

Resumen

El presente artículo tiene como objetivo discutir los impactos de las políticas públicas para la educación profesional en Brasil, por medio de fragmentos de la canción “Construcción”, de Francisco Buarque de Hollanda (1971). A partir de los estudios sobre Educación Profesional y Tecnológica (EPT) realizados por Ciavatta (2005), Frigotto (2009), Kuenzer (2017), Moura (2010) y Ramos (2008), se elabora una breve exposición de la legislación brasileña sobre la enseñanza secundaria y profesionalizante desde la década de 1970. El materialismo histórico-dialéctico, como dimensión teórico-conceptual, constituye la base epistemológica. Se evidencia que la dualidad entre enseñanza básica y enseñanza profesionalizante en Brasil es un reflejo de la

¹ The word “Construction,” featured in the article’s title, refers to an MPB (Brazilian Popular Music) song written and performed by Francisco Buarque de Hollanda in 1971. The composition is structured in such a way that the final word of each verse is a proparoxytone, creating a distinctive rhythmic and aesthetic effect when heard in its native language, resembling the repetitive motion of a machine or an assembly line. The translation presented in this article was produced by the authors and is intended solely to facilitate understanding of the sociopolitical context represented in the composition.

dualidad social provocada por el sistema socioeconómico capitalista y sus contradicciones.

Palabras clave: Trabajo; Educación; Capitalismo; Politecnia; “Construcción”.

1 INTRODUCTION

Upper secondary education, the final stage of basic education, constitutes a level of schooling whose understanding is polysemic² and the object of numerous reforms. According to Nosella (2015), the conception of upper secondary education, far from being linear or merely a terminal stage, assumes a strategic role within the nation’s social structure, given the close political and cultural relationship between secondary schooling and the social advancement associated with this level of education. The perspective adopted toward this stage of schooling depends largely on one’s conception of national hegemony. Regarding reforms, Kuenzer (2007) points out that Brazil underwent nine reforms in secondary education alone. With the amendments introduced to Law No. 9394/96, the Law of Guidelines and Bases of National Education (LDB), in 2017, through the so-called upper secondary education reform, numerous additional changes were implemented, some of which are discussed throughout this article.

It is from this perspective on the conception of national hegemony, combined with the ongoing debates surrounding upper secondary education, that this article is structured. The 1970s in Brazil were marked by the dictatorship and by transformations in the world of work resulting from the development of the secondary and tertiary sectors. Productive forces and the euphoria of the so-called “economic miracle” period impacted educational policies through significant legislative changes, which nevertheless failed to alter the structural and educational duality.

In this sense, the present article seeks to discuss some of the fundamental aspects concerning the impact of public policies on professional education in Brazil. To this end, the discussion draws upon a work from the vanguard of Brazilian popular music, namely the song Construction, by Francisco Buarque de Hollanda (1971), in order to establish an analogy between the content expressed in the composition and the form of education being constructed during a historical moment marked by interests and ideologies that ultimately, in the case of education, maintained its duality.

In seeking a dialectical and historical reflection in the present article, we adopted historical-dialectical materialism as the theoretical-methodological foundation, since “[...] the core of historical materialism was the insistence on the historicity and specificity of capitalism and the denial that its laws were the universal laws of history” (Wood, 2011, p. 16).

² Polysemy is the multiplicity of meanings of a word or expression.

The investigation was based on the studies of authors such as Ciavatta (2005), Frigotto (2009), Kuenzer (2017), Moura (2010), and Ramos (2008), whose research on Professional and Technological Education (PTE) enables an analysis of the vicissitudes of the object of study, with a focus on the period beginning in the 1970s.

In addition to the introduction and final considerations, the text is organized into three sections: i) “Work, Education, and Class Consciousness”; ii) “Work, Science, Technology, and Culture”; and iii) “Work, the Flexible Accumulation Regime, and the New Upper Secondary Education.” In each section, an epigraph from the song Construction is used alongside the theoretical framework in order to carry out the proposed analyses.

2 WORK, EDUCATION AND CLASS CONSCIOUSNESS

*“He climbed the construction site as if he were a machine
Raised upon the platform four solid walls
Brick upon brick in a magical design
His eyes dulled by cement and tears”*

(Chico Buarque)

The epigraph presents an excerpt from the song Construction, by Francisco Buarque de Hollanda, which portrays the panorama of Brazil in the early 1970s, still under the effects of the 1964 civil-military coup. Written in 1971, the song employs metaphors to represent the exploitation and alienation experienced by workers, in this specific case, on a construction site. At that time, censorship was severe and criticism of the ruling government was prohibited, which explains why the author used a lyrical text to denounce the apparent oppression established with the aim of transforming Brazil into a global power through a “Brazilian model of development,” whose main driving force was education, which also served as a means of imposing the ideology of the authoritarian government (Niskier, 1974, as cited in Moura, 2010, p. 67).

The worker-character referred to in the verses contained in the epigraph suffers from the precarious conditions established by the “economic miracle,” Brazil’s developmentalist phase grounded in industrialization and external debt. In response to the population’s demands for higher levels of schooling, in 1971 the government promoted an extensive reform of basic education through Law No. 5.692/71, making upper secondary education (which from that point onward became known as second-level education) compulsorily vocational.

However, this reform only impacted public education, since private schools continued to follow a propaedeutic curriculum aimed at meeting the aspirations of the elite. In this regard, Moura (2010, p. 68) concludes that Law No. 5.692/71 sought to suppress the structural duality between basic education and professional education, the former generally intended for the education of the elites and the latter provided to the children of the working classes. Concerning the social interrelationship among the concepts of work, social class, and education, Frigotto (2009, p. 168) emphasizes the need to understand that the polysemy of the category of work is the result of a social

construction whose meaning represents class domination within capitalist society, understood as “a class dispute that can only be comprehended through its historicity.”

In the epigraph, the verse “he climbed the construction site as if he were a machine” reflects a worker belonging to the working class, deprived of class consciousness, whose manual labor (“raised upon the platform four solid walls”), possibly underpaid and exploitative (“his eyes dulled by cement and tears”), results from a project of education in which labor is conceived as “a relationship between the inputs applied and the outcome of production” (Frigotto, 2009, p. 168). In a society grounded in the capitalist socioeconomic model, education is directed *toward work* rather than *through work*; meaning there is no interest in an omnilateral and polytechnic education based on labor as an educational principle and capable of overcoming the historical linkage (that occurs generally in upper secondary education) between basic education and the labor market, since this would imply a project aimed at the integral development of individuals, “from the perspective of human emancipation, which can only occur insofar as individual projects become coherent with a collectively constructed social project” (Ramos, 2008, n. p.).

To explain the concept of work as an educational principle, Ciavatta (2005) and Frigotto (2009) draw upon Karl Marx’s studies on capitalism, in which work is understood, *a priori*, as an activity intrinsic to the constitution of human beings as social beings - that is, labor - through which they transform nature in order to sustain their existence and, in doing so, build society, transform it, and make history. For Karl Marx (2004), labor, by creating use values - useful labor - presents itself as an eternal condition of human life.

However, by establishing private property and taking possession of the means of production in the nineteenth century, the bourgeoisie transformed labor into a commodity through the exploitation of workers and the extraction of surplus value, thereby reorganizing society into distinct classes, the bourgeoisie and the proletariat, two antagonistic parts of a socioeconomic system sustained by contradictions and marked by recurrent crises. Frigotto (2009, p. 172) warns that:

“[...] the fundamental reason, therefore, for the need to understand the polysemy of the category of labor is not merely - and above all - not semantic, theoretical, or epistemological, although mediated by these dimensions, but rather historical-social, ontological, and ethical-political in nature.”

Thus, an education *through labor* requires overcoming the dualities between propaedeutic education and education for work, as well as between intellectual labor and manual labor, and “integrating the intellectual dimension into productive labor, in order to educate workers capable of acting as leaders and citizens” (Ciavatta, 2005, p. 2). Such transformations are complex in nature and require that “the great mass of those who belong to and possess the real experience of the working class” become aware that labor and employment are not synonymous, just as they must overcome the notion “of class as a continuum of stratifications, a common sense imposed by

sociological, economic, and political thought and daily sedimented by the media” (Frigotto, 2009, p. 172).

Consequently, it is through this “awakening of consciousness” that the worker-character in this first part of “Construction” by Francisco Buarque de Hollanda would cease to perceive as “magical” the design formed by the result of his labor in stacking bricks and could transform his discontent tears into contestation.

3 WORK, SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY AND CULTURE

*“He climbed the construction site as if he were solid
Raised upon the platform four magical walls
Brick upon brick in a logical design
His eyes dulled by cement and traffic”*

(Chico Buarque)

The second part of the song begins with similar verses, whose alteration occurs through the substitution of the proparoxytones that conclude each line. The choice of words with stress on the antepenultimate syllable is another device employed by Francisco Buarque de Hollanda in order to produce, in Brazilian Portuguese, the same ending sound in each verse, creating an effect of repetition, almost mechanical, similar to the noises produced by an assembly line or another repetitive form of labor (such as stacking bricks, for example). The alteration of the words at the end of the verses also allows for a shift in perspective regarding the narrative, since a transformation occurs in the worker-character representing the working class; he is now class-conscious and faces his destiny with greater awareness: “he climbed the construction site as if *he* were solid.” Likewise, the verse “his eyes dulled by cement and traffic” alludes to a perception of the transitory nature of worldly things, materiality (cement), social relations, and the political conjuncture (traffic).

Although the song presented in the epigraph dates from the early 1970s, it is possible to establish a comparison between the transformation undergone by the worker-character and the transformation experienced within the Brazilian political landscape a decade later. In the early 1980s, the dictatorship gradually began to lose strength and opened space for a civilian government. Throughout the decade, popular pressure for direct elections brought together artists, intellectuals, religious leaders, political parties (such as the Workers’ Party (PT), founded in 1980), along with many other figures from the political sphere. This process of the country’s redemocratization made possible the promulgation of the 1988 Federal Constitution, which brought benefits to education, such as the Law of Guidelines and Bases of National Education (LDB - Law No. 9394), enacted in 1996, by which time compulsory vocational education had already dissipated. As a result, vocational upper secondary education remained concentrated primarily in the Federal Technical and Agricultural Technical Schools, as well as in the “S System³” (SENAI, SESI, SENAC, SESC, SEBRAE, among

³ The “S System” (Sistema S) is a group of Brazilian institutions linked to the productive sectors of the economy and focused on vocational training, education, and social assistance. Its main organizations

others), created in 1942 and strengthened throughout the following decades, thereby revealing “a governmental choice to transfer to private initiative the task of **preparing labor** for the productive world” (Moura, 2010, p. 65, author’s emphasis).

The LDB (Brazil, 1996) made it possible to bring to the forefront, during its drafting process, the discussion concerning the until-then consolidated duality between upper secondary education and professional education. The first draft of the LDB proposed an upper secondary education oriented toward restoring the relationship between knowledge and labor practice, which would make explicit “how science is converted into material power within the productive process” (Moura, 2010, p. 70). This proposal envisioned a *genuinely* polytechnic and integrated form of education, in which schooling would provide students with an understanding of the science underlying the processes and techniques of material production across different historical moments, as well as an education for and through labor that would also encompass science, technology, and culture. Through such an education, students from the working classes, upon graduation, would be capable of performing both intellectual and manual labor and *could afford* to continue their studies immediately after upper secondary education without the need to enter the labor market prematurely.

The epigraph of this section exemplifies a polytechnic and integrated education by presenting a worker-character who erects four “magical walls, in a logical design”; that is, he possesses knowledge of the theory underlying the process of “stacking bricks” and producing structures, unlike his predecessor, who, despite constructing “solid walls,” considered their design to be “magical,” thereby revealing an education primarily oriented toward the execution of manual labor.

This proposal for a polytechnic vocational education was gradually weakened as a result of the clash of class interests, with the ruling class determined to provide the children of the proletarian classes with a minimal, technician, and skills-based education. Furthermore, the LDB (Brazil, 1996) places professional education neither within basic education nor higher education, relegating it to the status of complementary training: “in other words, professional education is not part of the structure of **regular** Brazilian education” (Moura, 2010, p. 71, author’s emphasis). Still in 1997, through Decree No. 2.208, the government of Fernando Henrique Cardoso, committed to the global neoliberal agenda⁴, made the separation between upper secondary education and professional education compulsory, thereby rendering the former strictly propaedeutic. Regarding this still current need to overcome the deeply rooted duality between professional education and basic education, Kuenzer (2017, p. 333) emphasizes that:

include SENAI (industrial training), SESI (social services for industry workers), SENAC (commercial training), SESC (social services for commerce workers), and SEBRAE (support for micro and small enterprises).

⁴ The expression “global neoliberal agenda” refers to a set of economic and social policies associated with neoliberal philosophy, which seeks to promote economic liberalization, reduce state intervention in the economy, and advance free-market principles on a global scale. Neoliberalism is an economic ideology that gained prominence during the 1970s and 1980s, significantly influencing economic policies around the world.

[...] on the other hand, there are the institutions and intellectuals who have historically sought to construct a project of education that serves the interests of the working class and who advocate for the organization of a curriculum that organically and consistently integrates the dimensions of science, technology, culture, and labor as ways of attributing meaning to school knowledge and, through an integrated approach, fostering greater dialogue among curricular components, whether they are organized as disciplines, areas of knowledge, or other forms provided for in the National Curriculum Guidelines for Upper Secondary Education (DCNEM - Brazil, 2012).

Thus, although Brazilian society has historically mobilized in an attempt to implement a polytechnic vocational education, its current characteristics and its insertion into a neoliberal capitalist global socioeconomic context constitute obstacles to the universal implementation of polytechnic/technological education in its original sense. This is because the economic inequalities inherent to capitalism compel “a large portion of the children of the working class to seek insertion into the world of work, aiming to complement family income, or even to sustain themselves, well before the age of 18” (Moura, 2010, p. 74).

Consequently, the ruling classes provide an educational context that ensures the entry of working-class children into the labor market, although such training does not represent an effective contribution to their continuation of studies in higher education.

4 WORK, THE FLEXIBLE ACCUMULATION REGIME AND THE NEW UPPER SECONDARY EDUCATION

*“He sat down to rest as if he were a prince
He ate rice and beans as if it were the finest meal
He drank and sobbed as if he were a machine
He danced and laughed as if he were another one”
(Chico Buarque)*

The epigraph of this third section presents a worker-character who is completely alienated from his proletarian condition. A product of a period in which the flexible accumulation regime⁵ is in force, the worker-character finds himself seduced by the discourse of mass media, an elaborate form of mediation developed by

⁵ According to Queiroz (2010), the flexible accumulation regime is a concept developed by sociologist and economist David Harvey to describe changes in forms of economic organization that occurred in the last decades of the twentieth century. This regime represents a transition from the Fordist mode of accumulation to a new form of economic organization, known as Toyotism. Fordism was characterized by mass production based on assembly lines, rigid work standards, and a clear separation between manual and intellectual labor. Toyotism, on the other hand, introduced practices such as just-in-time production (producing only when necessary), production flow management, flexibility in production to quickly adapt to changes in demand, active worker involvement, emphasis on total quality, multi-skilling of workers, and a culture of continuous improvement.

capitalism to transmit its ideology. Although he is aware that he suffers labor exploitation, he remains pacified by commodity fetishism - the desire for consumerism, even when he often lacks the economic means to fulfill it - and by the bubble created by social media algorithms, in which topics are filtered according to personal preferences and there is no space for contradictions.

By rendering its contradictions invisible - contradictions that constitute the core of capitalism, with class struggle being the principal one - the responsibility of this socioeconomic system is displaced, and it comes to assume a benevolent appearance before the working class, which, in turn, comes to exalt meritocracy and consumerism. Rodriguez (2014, p. 133) explains that “the mass media and discourse theories lead us to focus attention on images, symbols, and codes, where fetishism is the source that operates in consciousness and thought, and in this trance, alienation is produced.”

Thus, the worker-character remains unable to break out of the bubble of alienation that surrounds him and is led to direct his discontent toward any discourse that opposes his own, as exemplified by the intense polarization currently observed in society, whose narratives are essentially grounded in subjective defenses of the individualization of the subject, which foster the formation of a worker who does not see himself as part of the working class, but only in relation to himself and to the company.

Oblivious to the contradictions of the system, the proletarian “sits down to rest as if he were a prince” and “eats rice and beans as if it were the finest meal,” because, as Rodriguez (2014, p. 132) explains, “fetishism is more important than recognizing the existence of problems such as poverty and social inequalities.” By “dancing and laughing as if he were another one,” the worker-character reaffirms the absence of class consciousness and succumbs to a discourse in which “social problems are explained and addressed through the construction of new abstract narratives that deny the class struggle inherent in capitalist society” (Rodriguez, 2014, p. 132). Abstract consciousness, detached from social reality, reveals the ontological relativism and epistemological skepticism⁶ in which society finds itself.

In this sense, epistemological skepticism has a negative contribution, namely that it finds no meaning in knowledge, calling into question the search for truth. Likewise, ontological relativism directs thought toward the denial of truth and ends up relativizing knowledge, opening paths for every truth to have its own subjective rationale.

It thus becomes natural that, within this neoliberal economic context and flexible accumulation regime, educational public policies follow the same logic, particularly those regulating upper secondary education, commonly considered a stage of basic education preparatory to the labor market. Kuenzer (2017, p. 333) warns that, in recent years, the private sector, represented by the institutions that are part of the All for Education (Todos pela Educação) movement, supported by the leadership of the Ministry of Education (MEC), has expanded discussions on public policies that enable the flexibilization of upper secondary educational pathways. In this way,

⁶ Epistemological skepticism and ontological relativism are terms borrowed from Moraes (2009).

students would be able to choose between an academic track or technical-vocational training. Furthermore, according to the author,

the controversy is established around the relationship between rigidity and flexibility; for the private group organized with the support of the Ministry of Education (MEC), the current National Curriculum Guidelines for Upper Secondary Education (DCNEM/2012) are rigid, since they establish a single, disciplinary pathway with an excessive number of curricular components, from which the flexibilization of educational pathways is proposed (Kuenzer, 2017, p. 333).

The DCNEM (Brazil, 2012) establish as the core of the upper secondary curriculum the categories science, culture, labor, and technology, understood as fundamental for a polytechnic education of individuals at this stage. However, similarly to Frigotto's (2009) analysis of the concept of labor, it is necessary to take into account the polysemy of these terms within a capitalist context, in which the re-signification of vocabulary in favor of maintaining the system is a historically proven fact. Silva and Colantonio (2014), in their article entitled "The National Curriculum Guidelines for Upper Secondary Education and the Proposals on Work, Science, Technology, and Culture⁷," provide an important analysis of the formative potential of these concepts from the perspective of Critical Social Theory⁸ and conclude on the need "for reflection and critique regarding educational pathways and the conceptual and epistemological bases within which such pathways operate" (Silva & Colantonio, 2014, p. 625).

This discussion regarding the DCNEM (Brazil, 2012) loses its validity, however, in 2017, with the enactment of Law No. 13.415, which establishes new guidelines and foundations for upper secondary education, incorporating the terms set out in Provisional Measure No. 746 of 2016, which served the interests of the private sector. Once again under the pretext of eliminating the duality between basic education and vocational education, upper secondary education is reshaped, with its workload progressively increased in order to achieve full-time schooling, and a "curricular organization determined by the Law that follows the principle of flexibility, with cost reduction, which contradicts the expansion of duration" (Kuenzer, 2017, p. 334).

Law No. 13.415 (Brazil, 2017) allows for the organization of the curriculum based on different educational pathways, making only Portuguese language and Mathematics compulsory throughout the three years of this stage. Kuenzer (2017, p. 336) highlights the authoritarian manner in which this law was constructed, without the possibility of in-depth discussion, and the replacement of the concept of *the integral formation* of individuals proposed by the DCNEM (Brazil, 2012) with a fragmentation

⁷ In Brazilian Portuguese: "As Diretrizes Curriculares Nacionais para o Ensino Médio e as proposições sobre trabalho, ciência, tecnologia e cultura".

⁸ Brandão (2018) argues that Critical Social Theory originated in the Frankfurt School, where a group of twentieth-century critical thinkers developed a social theory focused on the intersection between philosophy and sociology, influenced by Marx, Freud, and Weber. These thinkers, such as Adorno, Horkheimer, and Marcuse, analyzed modern culture and society and emphasized the influence exerted by the culture industry, the alienation generated by capitalism, and the need for a critical approach to understanding and transforming social structures.

of the current curriculum, which, under the guise of *full-time*⁹ (integral) upper secondary education, weakens propaedeutic education through the reduction of theoretical subjects and empties vocational technical education, since the educational pathways are optional and their availability varies from one education system to another.

The New Upper Secondary Education, established by Law No. 13.415 (Brazil, 2017) and currently in force, has been the subject of extensive debate within civil society, as its implementation was contradictory and generated significant public dissatisfaction, especially among young people, the target audience of this stage of basic education. This led the federal government, through the Ministry of Education, to promote a public consultation entitled *Evaluation and Restructuring of the National Upper Secondary Education Policy*, which between April and July 2023 received 10,995 contributions and aimed to

open a dialogue with the school community, teaching professionals, technical teams from education systems, students, civil society, researchers, and education specialists in order to gather input to support the decision-making process of the Ministry of Education (MEC) regarding the review and restructuring of Brazil's National Upper Secondary Education policy (Brazil, 2023).

A new proposal for upper secondary education, established by Bill No. 5230/2023 and presented by the executive branch, which redefines Brazil's National Upper Secondary Education Policy, had its approval vote postponed to 2024.

5 CONCLUDING REMARKS

*“For this bread to eat, for this ground to sleep on
The birth certificate and the permission to smile
For letting me breathe, for letting me exist
God repay you”*

(Chico Buarque)

In order to address the initially proposed objective, namely to identify the impacts of public policies on vocational education, we have drawn upon analyses that point to the main impact of educational policies in the field of professional training: the formation of managerial and intellectual elites aligned with the hegemonic interests of the current production model. This reflects an educational duality that cannot be resolved through isolated reforms, as its overcoming involves structural dimensions of a political, economic, and cultural nature.

⁹ In Brazilian Portuguese, full-time education is also referred to as *integral education*, meaning an educational model that combines both school shifts, morning and afternoon, into a single extended period. Therefore, the term integral is often misused in a way that creates confusion in society, as people may not clearly distinguish whether the discussion refers to integral education or full-time schooling.

Thus, throughout the text, it has been demonstrated, through a dialogue between legislation and the theoretical framework, that there is extensive discussion on this topic in academic production within the field. Therefore, it is necessary to begin these final considerations by presenting the following syntheses:

- a) In the first section, based on the worker-character present in the song, it was possible to analyze that education, when oriented toward work, subsumes the subject to the condition of a mere producer of commodities, and labor as an educational principle becomes a category whose realization becomes increasingly distant.
- b) In the second section, the analyses reveal a glimmer of hope with the country's redemocratization process and the subsequent approval of a new LDB (Brazil, 1996), although vocational education becomes an "appendix" to basic education. Attempts to distort the limited progress achieved by the new law are presented by the government of the 1990s, whose political and economic context favors the maintenance of structural duality.
- c) In the third section, the worker-character is observed as alienated from his own class condition and imbued with subjective narratives that prevent him from perceiving objective truth. Ideological disputes surrounding vocational education, with discourses that promote equality, further distance the possibility of achieving a polytechnic and omnilateral form of vocational education.

Although there is still a long way to go for vocational education to be integrated with basic education and to become truly polytechnic, the possibility of collective participation in the discussion that will lead to the restructuring of upper secondary education represents a major advance and, above all, a democratic movement toward the consolidation of this identity in construction. In this way, if in the 1980s it was popular pressure that promoted the necessary changes in society and triggered an "awakening of consciousness" in the worker, such pressures are still indispensable today, a moment in which alienating discourses have been most successful in prevailing. This is because the duality established in Brazilian education, which primarily affects the working class, is the result of a social duality instituted by the capitalist system, as Ramos (2008, n. p.) states:

We can therefore see that the history of educational duality coincides with the history of class struggle under capitalism. For this reason, education remains divided between that intended for those who produce the life and wealth of society through their labor power, and that intended for leaders, elites, groups, and segments that provide orientation and direction to society. Thus, the mark of educational duality in Brazil is, in fact, the mark of modern education in Western societies under the capitalist mode of production.

The song by Francisco Buarque de Hollanda ends with verses of gratitude that are initially without a clear addressee, but when contrasted with the rest of the lyrics, indicate that they are directed either at the capitalist employer, owner of the means of

production, or even at capitalist society in general. The worker-character wishes that “God repay you” for his precarious conditions of existence and labor, since he himself lacks the material conditions to do so and can therefore only offer his goodwill (in this case, faith in the improvement of living conditions and faith in God).

A reality that can only be transformed through counter-hegemonic struggle and the federal government’s commitment to an educational project that truly integrates work, science, technology, and culture, based on public policies that do not trivialize competencies, but rather allow for the continuation of academic studies and promote the qualification of workers to be capable of performing both manual and intellectual labor, “a quality education, [...] that enables the appropriation of the knowledge constructed by humanity up to this point, access to culture, etc. Not only an education for manual labor” (Ramos, 2008, n. p.).

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