



Education in the Catholic Press (Ribeirão Preto, Brazil, 1949-1959)

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ABSTRACT. The representations of education disseminated by the Catholic press between 1949 and 1959, are analysed. There was a great expansion of public education during this re-democratization period in Brazilian society, resulting in restricting denominational education and debates between Catholics and liberals on the new National Education Law and Guidelines. The newspaper *Diário de Notícias* published in Ribeirão Preto SP Brazil, by the Diocesan Curia, is discussed. Current study investigated how the Catholic press addressed the childhood theme, the aims and expansion of primary education, the inclusion of the popular classes in the school, the Adult Literacy Campaign and the goals of preparatory or vocational secondary education. Conservative positions, foregrounded on the enhancement of civic and patriotic values and religious education as the foundation of family and society, were forwarded.

Keywords: education and catholic press, history of education, education and the press, catholic education, catholic church and education.

A Educação nas Páginas da Imprensa Católica (Ribeirão Preto-SP, 1949-1959)

RESUMO. Este texto analisa as representações sobre educação veiculadas na imprensa católica entre 1949 e 1959, período de redemocratização da sociedade brasileira, no qual ocorreu uma grande expansão do ensino público, resultando na contenção da educação confessional e nos embates entre católicos e liberais em torno da discussão da Lei de Diretrizes e Bases. Para a análise, tomamos como referência o jornal *Diário de Notícias* que circulou na cidade de Ribeirão Preto, interior do estado de São Paulo, publicado pela Cúria Diocesana. O estudo assinala como a imprensa católica abordou a temática da infância, os objetivos e a expansão do ensino primário, a inserção das classes populares na escola, a Campanha de Alfabetização de Adultos e as finalidades do ensino secundário propedêutico ou profissionalizante, apresentando posições conservadoras, pautadas na valorização dos valores cívico-patrióticos e na formação religiosa como fundamento da família e da sociedade.

Palavras-chave: educação e imprensa católica, história da educação, educação e imprensa, educação católica, igreja católica e educação.

La Educación en las Páginas de la Prensa Católica (Ribeirão Preto-SP, 1949-1959)

RESUMEN. Este texto analiza las representaciones sobre educación difundidas en la prensa católica entre 1949 y 1959, período de redemocratización de la sociedad brasileña, en el cual ocurrió una gran expansión de la enseñanza pública, resultando en la contención de la educación confesional y en las oposiciones entre católicos y liberales en cuanto a la discusión de la Ley de Directrices y Bases. Para el análisis, tomamos como referencia el periódico *Diário de Notícias* que circuló en la ciudad de Ribeirão Preto, interior del estado de São Paulo, publicado por la Cúria Diocesana. El estudio señala cómo la prensa católica trató la temática de la infancia, los objetivos y la expansión de la enseñanza primaria, la inserción de las clases populares en la escuela, la Campaña de Alfabetización de Adultos y las finalidades de la enseñanza secundaria propedéutica o de los centros de formación profesional, presentando posiciones conservadoras, basadas en la promoción de los valores cívico-patrióticos y en la formación religiosa como fundamento de la familia y de la sociedad.

Palabras clave: educación y prensa católica, historia de la educación, educación y prensa, educación católica, iglesia católica y educación

Introduction

The freedom to teach and the autonomy of the states concerning education during the federalism established in Brazil with the Proclamation of

Republic in 1889 brought some lasting consequences in the process of the country democratization of education. The Republican Constitution of 1891 ratified the decentralization from the Imperial period through the Additional Act

of 1834. Thus, the cumulative attribution of the Union and the states government prevailed over the public education. The monopoly over high education was in charge of the Union and the states were responsible for legislating and keeping the primary, secondary and professional education. The federal government omission concerning the provision and funding of public education in order to maintain it, increased the educational inequalities between the regions/states of the country. Regarding the consequences of federalism in Brazil, it is worth mentioning Gilda Araújo's claim:

The federative issue assumed, then, an important role in the organization of Brazilian education and in the historical development of it on the following decades, as the way it was established, it excluded, similarly to the North-American model, the education as one of the national tasks to be guided by the Union. (Araújo, 2005, p. 201)

In the transition of the nineteenth to the twentieth century, facing the deep changes in the relations between State and Church, with the extinction of priests and the implementation of secular education in public schools, the Catholic Church used the principle of freedom to redirect its intervention in education, creating schools. As the historiography on this theme shows (Alves, 2005; Leonardi, 2008; Lustosa, 1977; Manoel, 1996; Moura, 2000, among others), during the First Republic the arrival of Religious Congregations dedicated to youth education was intensified in Brazil. This catholic performance in education has been characterized as a strategy of Church to accelerate the Romanization process and safeguard the domination of Catholicism in Brazil. To this respect, Lustosa's claim is enlightening:

The religious congregations, male and female ones, will be in charge of this task which for them was also a Church work. The number of religious institutions that settle or are established in Brazil to supply the schools market is impressive when compared with other tasks. It will be through them that Catholicism will provide precious services to the middle and upper class, without forgetting, however, the lower class, at the same time it will benefit from favors and prestige, as well as the vocations, which will mostly come from the middle class. (Lustosa, 1977, p. 54).

From the 1920s Church was visible in the political scenario in the country due to Romanization. Thus, it mobilized its intellectuals and established organizations such as D. Vital and the Catholic Electoral League. During Getúlio Dornelles Vargas's government (1930-1945), Church opted for collaborating with the State. As Azevedo

(2004, p. 112) claims,

The Constitution of 1934 records some results of this attempt such as the establishment of religious education in public schools, the presence of military chaplains in the Army and the State grant for the assistance activities connected with Church.

Along the twentieth century, Church also used the press – newspapers and magazines – to spread its values and keep its influence upon society (Gonçalves, 2008). Besides the national magazine *A Ordem*, Church encouraged the publication of regional material, aiming to debate the liberal perspectives and guide the Catholics' position towards a variety of aspects of social life, emphasizing education.

According to Moura (2000), in the 1930s, around 80% of secondary students were enrolled in private schools and most of them belonged to Catholic Church. Still according to this author, from 1889 to 1945, 489 Catholic Schools were created in Brazil and, between 1945 and 1964, the performance of Church in higher education was enhanced with the establishment of Catholic Universities and Colleges of Sciences and Letters¹.

Debating about education was a Church interest both on institutional and ideological perspective. As Aline Dalmolin (2012) highlights, until the Second Vatican Council (which started in 1962 and finished in December 1965), Brazil Catholic press presented an apologetic character, addressing the Romanization projects and Catholic renovation.

The Second Vatican Council reoriented not only the Catholic press, but also the paradigm of the Church performance towards the State and Civil Society, approaching it for the social movements and the defense of human rights and also democracy. (Azevedo, 2004).

This paper intends to analyze how education was dealt with, discussed and problematized in the Catholic newspaper *Diário de Notícias* (1949-1959) that was published by the Diocesan Curia of Ribeirão Preto, a city from the countryside of São Paulo State. The study of representations about education that were spread in the Catholic press seeks to understand the educational sphere organization, as well as the role of this newspaper as an educational tool and also maintenance and reorganization of the Catholic Christianity. The research covers the period from 1949 to 1959, using the copies which were found in the Public and

¹ In 1946, the Catholic University of Rio de Janeiro was recognized and the Catholic University of São Paulo was founded. During the process of the Law of Guidelines and Basis (LDB) the following universities were established: Catholic University of Rio Grande do Sul (1948), Pernambuco (1952), Campinas (1955), Minas Gerais (1958), Goiás (1959) and Paraná (1960) (cf. Moura, 2000).

Historical File of Ribeirão Preto.

The importance of using the newspaper in the historical researches has been emphasized by several authors, for instance, Capelato (1988), Luca (1999; 2006), Darnton and Roche (1996), Campos (2009), among others.

According to Capelato (1988) the newspapers deserve some attention from the historians for being one of the most important sources of historical information. They report events, but are also part of them. In this sense, they report multiple aspects of social life, allowing us to understand the past. As Campos (2009, p. 18) notes, the press has a social and cultural practice. The printed text on a newspaper “[...] is coercive and educational in itself, as it intends to persuade the reader somehow.”

As every source of research, the newspaper also needs to be inquired about the context of its production, its nature as a support of the written subject and as a text that spreads world conceptions and social representations. To this respect, Fonseca (2005) warns for another dimension of a newspaper – it is a political-ideological actor and must be understood as such “[...] essentially as an instrument of manipulation of interests and invention in social life.” (Fonseca, 2005, p. 30). According to this author, press is also an institution in which public and private matters are mixed, in which the citizens’ rights and interests are confused with the newspaper’s owner’s. The limits between one and others are very thin. In press there is a great persuasive force which forms not only opinions, but also collective representations, aspirations and beliefs.

The focus on the Catholic press has been increased in the last decade, especially in some researches such as, Gonçalves (2008), Dal Molin (2010), Campos (2010), among others.

In the copies of the Catholic newspaper *Diário de Notícias*, some articles, editorials and published notes on education were selected². Thus, in the first half of the text, we show a chart of the expansion of education in the State of São Paulo, discussing the participation of private and Catholic schools in the development of education in this state. Afterwards, we focus on the economic, political and social aspects of Ribeirão Preto, highlighting the distribution of local newspapers and how education is dealt with. Finally, we analyze the writers, journalists and Catholic teachers’ representations

about the educational problems which are published in *Diário de Notícias*.

The public and private educational development of São Paulo

In the scenario of the coffee strong economy in the state of São Paulo, one of the biggest chains of public and private education of the country was developed in the first half of the twentieth century. During all the First Republic, the state governors prioritized the expansion of primary education, establishing schools, investing in teachers’ formation at training schools and updating the public education.

In the private education scope, the Catholic confessional schools performed an important role in the ‘paulista’ education, keeping the male and female secondary schools and teacher training courses.

During the Vargas ‘Age’ (1930-1945), São Paulo governors started an expansion of the secondary public education and extended the training education institutions. In the following period (1945-1964), the educational policies towards the public education democratization were intensified in this state, aiming the primary school universalization, the illiteracy eradication, the accelerated extension of the teachers training courses and secondary education. These public policies on education reverberated around the private education system, contributing towards the slowdown in the expansion of private education, especially in the secondary education scope.

In 1939 there were 629 secondary education institutions in Brazil, 530 of them were private and 99 public. Almost one third of the schools were in São Paulo state (196) which also had almost half of the public schools of the country (43) (Schwartzman, Bonemy, & Costa, 2000, p. 206). In 1938, while there were 2.552.395 students enrolled in primary education in Brazil (81,86% in public schools and 18,14% in private schools), in the secondary education there were only 143.289 enrolled students, most of them in private institutions (29,28% in public schools and 70,02% in private ones). This situation started to deeply change in the 1940s and 1950s. In 1945, there were 256.467 students enrolled in the secondary education in Brazil (Brasil, 1962). In 1964, 19 years later, the number of enrolled students had been increased at four times, expanding to 1.368.177. (Brasil, 1964).

Only three state high schools were kept by the government during the First Republic in São Paulo state – one in the capital city, one in Campinas and another in Ribeirão Preto. Consequently, it was the private and confessional initiative to provide part of

² The Public and Historical File of Ribeirão Preto does not own the complete collection of this newspaper. Only some editions were found as follows: July through December 1949, January through December 1950, January through June and October through December 1951, December 1955, May and November 1957, March 1958 and December 1959.

demanded vacancies at this education level. According to Souza e Diniz (2014), in the beginning of the 30s, there were 29.239 enrolled students in secondary school in São Paulo state, 27.842 in private schools (92,2% of enrollments) and 1.397 in the three state high schools. The expansion of the secondary school system starts from 1930, when the states became responsible for granting high schools instead of the municipalities. Between 1930 and 1947, 58 official high schools were created in this state (Diniz, 2012). From 1947, the state government started to implement policies of intense expansion of creation and establishment of high schools and public schools. Between 1947 and 1964, 623 new schools were created.

As a result of this accelerated expansion of public high school, there was a progressive decrease in the number of private schools in the state. Actually, we can say that the impact of the public system growth on private education in São Paulo state has not been deeply studied yet. There is also a lack of wider studies about the total number of Catholic schools, offered courses, enrolled students and the localization of these education establishments. Nevertheless, the heated discussion upon the freedom of education *versus* public school, which mobilized a lot of intellectuals and the 'paulista' press in the 50s of the twentieth century, reflects deep tensions present in the educational field, shown by the confrontations between public and private institutions (Barros, 1960).

Education in the 'paulista Petit Paris'³ press

In the transition from the nineteenth to the twentieth century, Ribeirão Preto was considered the world coffee capital. The agricultural production consolidated the coffee elite and attracted immigration to work in the coffee crops⁴². The railway, the Mogiana Company, arrived in the city in 1883 and became a driving force for the economy and urban modernization. In the first decades of the twentieth century, there was a diversification of economy through the deployment of factories and trading houses and the urban area started having electric power, water service and sewage, schools, newspapers, arborization, mansions and theater

(Sant'Ana, 2010; Jayme, 2012).

The coffee economy suffered great impact with the New York stock market crash of 1929. However, Ribeirão Preto resumed its economic growth through the agricultural diversification with the production of sugar cane, cotton, oranges, soya and rice. Together with the rural prosperity, there was the industry, commerce and services development, becoming the main economic center of the Mogiana region.

In the 1940s and 1950s, several newspapers were distributed in Ribeirão Preto, for instance: *A Cidade*, *O Diário da Manhã* and *Diário de Notícias*⁵. The social issues and the political struggles were continuously portrayed in the local press. The redemocratization of the country from 1945 reestablished the elections for city mayors and city councilors, mobilizing the public opinion and the political ideologies. In fact, in the 40s and 50s of the twentieth century, Ribeirão Preto experienced a fast population growth. As a result of it, some social problems were enhanced, such as the increase of mendicancy, urban violence and the increased numbers of abandoned children. In the end of the 50s of the twentieth century, the city had a population of 140.000 inhabitants. Although the agricultural economy was relevant, the urbanization was intense within this period and the economic diversification was present in the industries establishment, in the commerce and services sector growth. These socioeconomic changes resulted in the expressive increase of the middle class derived from the expansion of the self-employment and state bureaucracy, generated by the increase of civil service. The diversification also reached the elite. Besides the traditional families that had got rich with the coffee production, the entrepreneurship of migrants and immigrants connected with industry, with the great commerce and agribusiness enlarged the local elite. In this complex and dynamic society, the main educational problems of the country and the region had some emphasis in the local press. In the pages of *Diário de Notícias* it is possible to view Church position towards public, private and Catholic education.

Diário de Notícias and the Church attitude towards the educational problems within the national and local scopes

The newspaper *Diário de Notícias* was founded in the Ribeirão Preto on June 1, 1928, by José da Silva Lisboa together with the merchant Osório Camargo. Few years later, Lisboa moved to Rio de Janeiro,

³ Ribeirão Preto started being called 'petit Paris' due to the wealth derived from coffee. The city got unthinkable bohemian environment for the wilderness. With the arrival of a French waiter, Francisco Cassoulet, in 1894, the Cassino Eldorado was opened. It imported singers, dancers and prostitutes from France for the powerful 'colonel's' pleasure. The roulette and the baccarat turned the nights enjoyable, full of French champagne and cigars which were lighted with bills of five hundred thousand réis (Cione, 1992).

⁴ On June 19, 1856, the village of São Sebastião de Ribeirão Preto was officially established. On July 15, 1870, the church was opened, where there is a light source at the XV de novembro square nowadays, which is still the 'heart' of the city. The village grew around the church, becoming a parish and afterwards a town. Four years later the Town Hall was founded (Cione, 1992).

⁵ O *Diário da Manhã* was the most distributed newspaper in Ribeirão Preto in the 1950s achieving twelve thousand copies. The newspaper *A Cidade*, in circulation since 1905, was the voice of the Paulista Republican Party in the city.

leaving the newspaper with his brother, Dr. Oswaldo da Silva Lisboa, who sold it to Professor Oscar de Moura Lacerda in 1943. Since it was a family-owned newspaper, the target audience of *Diário de Notícias* was the local elite and the middle class. According to França (2013), in the 30s and at the beginning of the 40s in the twentieth century, this newspaper published a column named Religious Life, in which news about the Catholic Church were published, such as Mass schedule, festivities, processions and information about the local bishopric.

Given the death of Professor Oscar de Moura Lacerda in 1944, the newspaper was bought by the Diocesan Curia of Ribeirão Preto, which was its owner until 1978, when the newspaper was sold. Such purchase can be understood as one of the measures that characterized the renovation desire the assistant Bishop D. Manoel da Silveira D'Elboux⁶ presented. Since 1942, the diocese had the Diocesan Bulletin, which was monthly published and spread news about church and its members, besides moral and doctrinal articles. However, a daily newspaper had a wider and more efficient reach for the evangelization interests of Church within local scope. O *Diário de Notícias* became the official organ of the Diocese of Ribeirão Preto and a means of spreading the Catholic attitudes towards several issues. According to Freitas (2006), at the beginning of the 1940s, the bishops d. Alberto José Gonçalves and d. Manoel da Silveira D'Elboux, assisted by the Diocese priests, attempted to boost the Catholic worship in the region, aiming to restrain other religions. Consonant with the general guidance of Church, the Diocesan clergy of Ribeirão Preto acknowledged the struggle against the religious ignorance as something fundamental, taking the believers to study Catholicism and become members of religious societies. The newspaper *Diário de Notícias* was a great instrument of the Diocese interests' spread. Priests, the catholic intellectuals, teachers and, in the 50s, d. Luis do Amaral Mousinho wrote on the newspaper.

Following this text, we highlight the way how this newspaper approached the problem of

democratization in primary education, the Campaign of Adult Literacy and, finally, the discussion about the future of secondary education: propaedeutic or professionalizing.

The redemptive mission of primary education

The defense of religious education, Christian formation of children and family-centered base in public schools for the constitution of the Brazilian nation permeated the editorials, the columns and news about education which were published in *Diário de Notícias*. The newspaper emphasized, for many times, the importance of school and teacher in children's formation. The columnist José Lima claimed that the educational problem was extremely important for the moral interest of the nation. The priests who cared the well being of souls and the purity of customs and had great civism postulated the serious problems of the country, especially people's education. They fought against quackery and superstitions, in a holy war against the harmful 'neo-malthusianism'. Lima (1949) had even appealed to teachers and doctors to join the priests to fight against the educational problems.

Shall we not forget, however, that God and Brazil demand all of us to be capable of accomplishing our duties as Brazilians and Christians, shall we honor the wonderful nation in which we were born and glorify the divine Creator for our actions. (Lima, 1949, p. 3)

Religion and nation were totally interlaced on the pages of this newspaper, in which the discourse was never purely religious, but it was always imbued with the idea of nation and homeland. Although there was an attack towards the secular school, the Catholic Church considered itself as a State partner, defending democracy which, at that moment, was seen as the best remedy for fighting socialism. Connected with these themes, the religious education was highlighted.

Priest Rosseti (1951), for instance, defended the need to have one or more weekly classes of religion. As for him, there should not be a separation between religious education and secular education.

The democratic freedom made way for all the worships and the freedom of conscience. The school was in charge of its specific function of teaching and educating our youth. It supposes, in fact, the division of man in its unitary constitution of soul and body, spirit and matter. On the other hand, positively, with the moral and religious education, Church will widely help the State, forming its subjects to be great citizens. The religious education must not be separated from the secular education. The man has a triple physical, intellectual and moral

⁶ The Diocese of Ribeirão Preto was founded by the Pope Pio X on June 7, 1908 by the *Bula Diocesum Nimiā Amplitudinē* in the context of division of the diocese of São Paulo and creation of new congener institutions in the countryside: Ribeirão Preto, Campinas, Taubaté, São Carlos do Pinhal e Botucatu. The first bishop of the diocese of Ribeirão Preto was D. Alberto José Gonçalves, who was in the bishopric from 1909 to 1945. The second bishop was d. Manoel da Silveira D'Elboux, who initially acted as an assistant Bishop and afterwards, between 1946 and 1952, as an effective one. D. Manoel created the Diocesan Federation of the Marianas Congregations, an organ that worked for guiding and forming the mariana youth, he also launched the first Diocesan Bulletin in 1942. Apart from it, he started the Mariana Concentration in the diocese, motivated the believers to participate in the Catholic Action and also installed in the worker suburb of Ribeirão Preto the Pious Union of the Daughters of Mary. He was replaced by D. Luis do Amaral Matosinho, who ruled the diocese between 1952 and 1962. On April 19, 1958, Pope Pio XII elevated Ribeirão Preto to Archdiocese level by the *Bula Sacrorum Antistum*. Concerning the history of the diocese of Ribeirão Preto, check Freitas (2006).

development to be formed. Thus, the moral basis will not do without moral and religious education (Rosseti, 1951, p. 5)

It is noted that the preoccupation with ensuring an education that provided a mainly moral formation was more important than the disputes over the education monopoly. Although it defended the democratic principles, *Diário de Notícias*, evidently radicalized the speech when defending the religious education and teachers as more efficient, for the future generations formation. Thus, great expectations were raised on the primary education and its teachers: the redemptive school, the priest teacher.

Through the press it is realized that the autonomy of private schools, by its statutes, and the everydayness of classroom, permeated by the relation of teacher/student, enabled infinity of situations (atheist and priest teachers, confessional schools that did not teach religion, secular schools that taught religion).

According to Saviani's (2008) claim, some catholic schools were responsible for great educational innovations in methodology and contents, putting ideas spread by the new-schools into practice, such as, the introduction of Freinet and Montessori's ideas.

The newspaper *Diário de Notícias* was one of the means used by confessional schools of Ribeirão Preto for advertising the educational services offered by Church. Whole page advertisements were common, in which, besides the advertisement of education establishments, the pedagogical practices, such as, parties, graduations and parades were published. Meetings, lectures and courses promoted by catholic schools were constantly spread, featuring the presence of educators from several parts of the country.

Although there was a movement of renovation within the Church itself, which reflected on education, the conservatives were alert and resisted. To this respect, the Priest Adalberto Nunes, a columnist of *Diário de Notícias*, pronounced in July 1949, claiming that the progressive catholic formed an aside community, within the church. They did not assume a clear position politically and doctrinally, and they kept on changing according to the time. The priest, facing Marxism, claimed that:

[...] they desire that the authentic Christianity and atheist communism hug each other, Christ and Stalin understand each other and the Christian social doctrine allies with the Marxist social doctrine (Nunes, 1949, p. 5).

In his opinions, such position was unbearable

and condemned in the Gospel, when Jesus affirmed it was impossible to serve two masters.

The newspaper writers were not contrary to the educational innovations in Private Education, however, in the religious schools, the modernization was subjugated to the catholic doctrine and dogmas. Although it supported the changes and the pedagogical renovations, *Diário de Notícias* made its restrictions, revealing the conservative side of it. While for the liberals, the state and bureaucratic apparatus were the main mechanisms of control, for *Diário de Notícias*, the dogmas had this purpose.

The analysis of the articles upon education which were spread in *Diário de Notícias* shows that the Catholic press of Ribeirão Preto was not unaware of the pedagogical problems of primary education, especially about the school indiscipline. In 1949, with the headline 'The surveillance of school behavior', written by educator Leontina Silva Busch, *Diário de Notícias* cleared showed that the school was not a place for the unruly ones.

School is a social environment where the child easily reveals its good and bad habits. [...] But they gradually adjust to the school life and in this effort to get adjusted they show the misconduct [...] There is not even a child presenting perfect conduct. The misconducts in the group activities are natural and even necessary so that repairs can be made, the censure of the more reflective fellows. But there are children who present excessive behavioral faults in active interaction with others. They are the ones that have a predominance of anti-social tendencies, the irritable, the absorbent tyrannical, the aggressive ones. [...] The duty of school, besides alphabetizing, is socializing the child, i.e., teach them to get adjusted to the environment, to interact playing or working with partners in an environment of understanding, camaraderie, tolerance, in its language and gesture. If the child resists [...] These maladjusted children must be sent to especial corrective schools, where the moral recovery happens upon the basis of a precise diagnosis and with adequate activities (Busch, 1949, p. 3).

As for the newspaper, the problem relied on the students and, as an extreme solution, it defended the corrective schools. The model of the current school was never questioned. Although it showed the complexity and the new challenges the school would have to face and cope with, there was not a deeper discussion about this new educational organization, because *Diário de Notícias* was, at this moment, the spokesperson of Conservatism and tradition.

The support of church for the Campaign of Adult Literacy

The local press of Ribeirão Preto was not indifferent to the Campaign of Adult Literacy

launched by the federal government in the end of the 40s in the twentieth century. In July 1949, *Diário de Notícias* published the results of a research carried out at the University of São Paulo concerning the sociocultural condition of the illiterate. The newspaper, which defended the illiteracy eradication, supported the governmental initiatives and urged the society's help:

In a research performed by the teacher Noemi Rudolfer from USP (University of São Paulo), it was observed that the illiterate not only feels inferior, but is also victim of exploitation. Thus, 25,65% claim to have been damaged concerning money and documents. Among the interviewees 87,50% claimed they had found some difficulties and obstacles which placed them in a humiliating position. The illiterate is a victim of the educational system weakness that the Campaign of Adult Literacy intends to solve. Once again population is called to participate. Contributing towards this educational problem, which needs the citizens' support so badly, we will be helping millions of illiterates' freedom, who are victims of a feeling of inferiority that needs to be stopped. (O Analfabeto, uma vítima, 1949, p. 2)

This campaign gained worldwide visibility. *Diário de Notícias* informed that, as for Unesco, the experience of Brazil was positively seen by the international organs, even with an effort so that common policies were implanted in all the American continent.

The Brazilian newspaper published that there will be an Inter-American conference of adult literacy and education in Brazil. According to the newspaper, choosing Brazil meant the government efforts for broadcasting the supplementary education were acknowledged. Five themes will be discussed during the conference: The situation of illiteracy in America and the guidance for the statistics unification, primary education and illiteracy, the organization of campaigns against illiteracy, goals and techniques to be deployed in the campaigns and finally, the adults' alphabetization and education in general. (A Unesco e a educação de adultos, 1949, p. 4)

Still in 1949, the newspaper published an interview given to *Jornal do Brasil*, by Lourenço Filho, director of the Department of National Education, in which he declares the extent of the campaign the Ministry of Education was performing all around the national territory.

It is important to turn reading into a habit, as a tool of civilization and culture, of spread of useful knowledge and of support towards everyone's self-education. It is necessary to teach reading, reading with this aim. Publishers such as Melhoramentos and Ipê are collaborating with the Campaign. [...]

Education is a right of all, according to the Constitution. And it is important to stick to this principle, also educating teenagers and adults, besides all the effort towards children's education. (Campanha de Educação de Adultos, 1949, p. 4)

The Campaign of Adult Literacy, which was really welcomed by press, would provide the Brazilians illiterate the 'status' of citizens. In the *Ribeirão Preto* journalists' representations, the illiterate were 'social disabled' whose weak socioeconomic situation depended on them to be changed. Thus, press reaffirmed the current speech, since the end of the nineteenth century, which legitimated the decrease of people in political participation, something that would only be changed, in the Constitution of 1988, with the inclusion of the illiterate in the election process.

The press attitude towards the dilemmas of secondary education

In 1950, *Ribeirão Preto* had a population of a hundred thousand inhabitants and it had only a state school which offered secondary education, ten high schools (only one official); five teaching training schools (one official); one state industrial school and two industrial and commercial private schools. According to Sant'Ana (2010), data from the Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics – IBGE, in 1956, there were about 4.600 enrolled students in the Secondary School, about 4% of the population.

Thus, it is possible to understand the socioeconomic status attributed to this educational sphere. Authorities were present in events and openings provided by the secondary schools. Directors and teachers were eminent people who stood out in society. Doctors, lawyers, engineers, journalists, politicians who worked at schools, gained 'status' at the same time they raised the educational establishments 'status'. The political and social life permeated these institutions, which were responsible for the formation of the past city governors and also the current ones.

As well as broadcasting the activities organized by the city catholic schools, *Diário de Notícias* also honored the events organized by SESI (Social Service of Industry) and SESC (Social Service of Commerce). The newspapers also diffused official visits, celebrations, parades, events in which the schools took part with their fanfares and acrobatic. The authorities and people chose their favorite ones, leading each school to do even better the following year so that they were the best.

Press portrayed the prevailing stratification in the education of the city and consequently, the

socioeconomic place of each social group. Concerning the education of low classes, the newspaper spread a simple graduation, in the school itself or at the professionalizing school, the Mass at the suburb church, the ceremonies and the proms that were held at Clube Operário or at the Legião Brasileira headquarter. Regarding the elite education, other sociocultural spaces were emphasized: the Mass at the Cathedral Metropolitana chaired by the Bishop, the high school students' graduation at the luxurious Teatro Pedro II, the proms held at the club Associação Recreativa with the presence of bands and famous orchestras.

In the 40s and 50s of the twentieth century, the Secondary Education was highly discussed in national and regional press. On the newspapers of Ribeirão Preto, the federal government received a lot of criticism, being blamed for the excessive legislative and administrative centralization around this level of education which was more and more demanded by population. The private establishment's owners' greed, which placed profit over the commitment with education, was also reported, as well as the criticism towards the encyclopedic curriculums, the useless contents for the youth's formation, the ghost schools, the frauds in examinations, etc.

In 1951, Ribeiro wrote some criticism on *Diário de Notícias* concerning schools that acknowledged themselves as religious-like establishments, but declared in their statutes not to teach religion. According to the author's opinion, the saddest thing was observing that the catholic families were enrolling their children in these institutions. And he warned:

[...] remember, these catholic people, who prefer cheaper education or a more 'modern one' taught in these neutral schools, who are digging the grave of their own family and homeland. But there was still something: [...] it is comforting to see that in Brazil religion is taught in many schools and high schools, despite the lack of priests. There are a lot of teachers, apostles who are able to share the spiritual knowledge with their students [...] (Ribeiro, 1951, p. 4, author's emphasis).

However, unfortunately, there were also the 'materialist' teachers, who were considered as very bad influence for the future generations, as Nunes (1951) claims:

The object of teaching comes first, which is the truth and not the teacher's fantasies. Secondly, the teacher's authority towards their students, who can be easily induced or driven to a mistake, to the false concepts of life and a completely false opinion concerning people and things that surround them, as

the pupil rarely can judge whether the teacher's instruction is true or not. (Nunes, 1951, p. 5).

These professionals' behavior received a lot of criticism; the articles always ended with a censure and reminded the teachers of their duty and commitment with the profession, viewed as a mission and priesthood. In 1949, *Diário de Notícias* reported the teachers' absences:

Evil exists and its tendency is to spread more and more. And to make matters worse the students feel stimulated to miss classes too. What results will teachers and students' absences bring for education? They will be the worst ones, for sure. However, it is not fair to blame the teacher because their majority fulfills their duties. We cannot blame the school direction, which cannot act as police in order to avoid evil. The teacher must be a correction model, as teaching does not only mean passing on knowledge, but also stimulating good examples for the students' behavior. It is necessary that teachers and students fulfill their tasks, their duties, so that education achieves good results. (Professores e alunos, 1949, p. 3)

Also present on the newspaper was the criticism about the decrease of quality of education. The educator Lucia Magalhães (1951) reported three aspects as being crisis generators in the Secondary Education:

[...] excessive cheapening of the privileges of official acknowledge, granted hundreds of establishments which are way far of being capable of satisfactorily managing secondary education. However, they issue diplomas concerning everything which are the same as for the official establishments and the private ones that are capable and qualified. [...] the general lack of students' interest in studies is another fact that contributes a lot for the current crisis (Magalhães, 1951, p. 4).

It is noteworthy that Magalhães did not address a single reason for the problem; she made a wide analysis, approaching the education institutions, teacher formation and the students' performance. In many other matters, the educational establishments' owners' voracity highlighted the most. They were worried about getting rich from the 'education business' much more than granting quality. The poorly trained teachers, the profession viewed as a 'temporary job', lack of preparation and indifference were also mentioned as being responsible for the low level of students' performance and the poor results of examinations. The idea that the Secondary Education offered to the elite was high quality was really far from being a reality, or, at least, unanimity among the catholic educators of Ribeirão Preto, in the 1950s.

In spite of the action, which were mainly carried by the state government, and the changes in legislation that attempted to grant better access to secondary education, the conservative thought prevailed. And this permeated the *Diário de Notícias* journalists and writers' ideas: the secondary education was not for the low classes, it was for the elite who ruled the country. The problems were realized, pointed, reported, derided, but there was not an effective proposal, a project so that concrete and structural changes were made in the Secondary Education. According to Fausto (2004), there was still a dualistic standard in education, maintaining two parallel systems of education: one for nation and another for the elite. The first one started in primary school and continued in the few professionalizing high schools. The second one, which also began in primary school, continued in the secondary school, which was organized aiming to conduct the elite towards higher education and more privileged positions in society.

Final considerations

The publication of the newspaper *Diário de Notícias* by the Diocese of Ribeirão Preto can be seen as a strategy of the catholic clergy in order to broadcast Christian values to the society of this city and its surroundings. Through the newspaper, the literate catholic turned the diocese work visible and participated in the public discussions about the local, regional and national problems, making the Church attitude clear. Together with other catholic prints, the educational issue was an important and recurrent theme on the newspaper pages. The education centralization can be explained by its political and cultural role in the citizen's formation, diffusing values and ways of thinking and living, and also by the extent of the Church work on the educational field.

Concerning the primary education and the adult education, the literate who wrote on the newspaper, reaffirmed the defense of the education universalization and the great necessity of popular education as a means of human promotion. However, they also emphasized the messianic character of school as a moral and civic values disseminator. Nevertheless, concerning secondary education, the catholic literate attitude kept clearly favorable to the elitization of this educational level, supporting the humanistic curriculum and its propaedeutic character. Apart from supporting the catholic schools regarded as great ones, the newspaper sought to boost catholic values, aiming at the behavior standardization, mainly for the youth.

The moral, civic and patriotic values defense was linked to the educational theme. Other problems which were sensible for the catholic culture were associated to it, such as, the relation between education and national development, the freedom of teaching, the social goal of the secondary education and the restraint on communism.

A direct attack towards communism and socialist countries was always present in *Diário de Notícias* of Ribeirão Preto. It was on the editorials, the articles, columns and on the papal encyclicals. This attacks exalted democracy, patriotism and the dogmas of church as efficient and powerful antidotes against the 'red danger' progress. Religion and state were united in a speech that was never only religious, but was also imbued with the idea of nation and homeland. Although there was an attack towards the secular school, the Catholic Church considered itself as a state partner, supporting democracy, which at that moment was seen as the best remedy in the struggle against socialism. The conservative democracy was evidently limited to the participation of population within the principles of the rule of law, without questioning the socioeconomic inequalities and the poor distribution of income of the country ever.

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