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ANÍSIO TEIXEIRA AND HIS CONTRIBUTION TO THE THEMATIC BRAZILIAN SOCIAL FORMATION: BRIEF CONSIDERATIONS

Rachel Aguiar Estevam do Carmo

Pedagogue graduated from Universidade Federal Fluminense. Doctor in Social Work from the Federal University of Rio de Janeiro. Screenwriter by ECDR-RJ. Adjunct Professor at the Center for Public Policy and Human Rights Studies NEPP-DH at the Federal University of Rio de Janeiro

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Abstract: This article seeks to present the educational thought of Anísio Teixeira within the scope of Brazilian social thought, by stating that his investigation started from the foundations that built the studies of Brazilian social formation from the 1930s onwards. For this, we will use the studies of Antônio Candido to demarcate the thematic phases around the enigma of the formation of the nation, a central theme in the debates of Brazilian researchers. The birth of the Brazilian bourgeoisie in the molds that Florestan Fernandes calls the composite pattern of bourgeois hegemony erupted in a strong process of modernization based on national development. This singular form of the bourgeoisie was permanently questioned by Teixeira in his writings and he dialogued with authors about the social limitations caused by the autocratic domination of the elites. Our intention is to present an Anísio beyond the debates of the new school, relocating historically as one of the precursors of the defense of education as a fundamental right of the citizen.

Keywords: Brazilian social formation, Anísio Teixeira, Composite pattern of bourgeois hegemony.

INTRODUCTION

Studies on the vast work of Anísio Teixeira are concentrated in the area of education and in a few research groups, making it difficult for researchers in the social and human sciences to access their studies. The reports of the students of the pedagogy course indicate that when they finished the course they didn't even analyze or read a book about their ideas, showing us that Teixeira's place in education is concentrated in the rapid studies on the history of pedagogical trends in Brazil, receiving more criticism for the new school project, and consequently about his thinking, than the extensive analysis of social processes

in the years that the Pioneer Manifesto da Escola Nova was defended in 1932. This is our concern in this article, which would be to bring social forms to the debate that built a set of drives that fomented on one side; the conservative constitution of the Brazilian bourgeoisie and others; the modernization project embraced by the main intellectuals of the time. In this modernization project, we included the Anisian work in which its principle in search of breaking the archaic is consistent with the main references of Brazilian social thought, namely, Sérgio Buarque de Holanda, Celso Furtado, Caio Prado Júnior, Florestan Fernandes, etc., in others. In words, his thought is part of a broad spectrum of researchers who were concerned with analyzing the archaic/modern antinomy in which the archaic would need to be extirpated to make room for the modern – as a teleological scope of development. What united the aforementioned researchers was precisely the idea of development (within and outside the framework of capitalism) as a possibility of expanding social, political, economic and cultural rights, guaranteeing human dignity and emancipation. In this sense, Teixeira combines his writings by dialoguing with researchers at the time, going beyond his actions within the State apparatus as one of the main leaders in defense of free public education.

His work will be analyzed from the books *Educação é não uma privilegio* (1994) and *Educação para ademocramo* (2007) in which we can see his dialogue with researchers who built the theme of Brazilian social formation immersed in the Latin American scenario. For the aforementioned authors, Brazil was understandable to be investigated if we analyze the processes of social formation of our continent as a whole. The broad view of social processes ensured the deepening of the particularity of Brazilian social formation.

In this sense, his work immersed in the debate on Brazilian social thought relocates our criticism to the aspect of development, in which at that time it was possible to think about national growth and modernization. We will not stay in discussions regarding the pedagogical limit of the New School project. We believe that even criticizing the aforementioned project would be possible after reflecting on the social processes that constituted Brazil. **Anísio as a social thinker:**

Anísio Teixeira has a trajectory of struggle in defense of the fundamental right that is free public education. To ensure education as a right, his thought crosses three interdisciplinary themes, but for didactic purposes, we separated as a way to identify the debate that the author investigates from 1930 onwards:

- Education and social development;
- Science and progress;
- State and social policies.

These three themes share a common social background. Anísio Teixeira attributed to the Brazilian elite the intention of preventing structural reforms due to the survival of the dominant fractions as a way to maintain the status quo. Such social order is due to the fact that the dominant political subjects, especially the bourgeoisie, agreed with the agrarian oligarchy as a strategy for consolidating the bourgeois order in Brazil. Florestan Fernandes' studies in his book *Revolution Bourgeois in Brazil* (1975) deepen the origins of the Brazilian bourgeoisie from the concept of composite pattern of bourgeois hegemony that would be the junction of the nascent bourgeoisie with the agrarian elite. Such a junction is due to the fact that the recent bourgeoisie erects through the process called social congérie that would be social groups linked to commerce, industrialists (in the sense of the modernizing thought) and to the State bureaucrats. This recent

birth did not guarantee that this group would hegemonize (in the sense of giving direction and domination to the social process), since its birth had been weak and therefore the need to link itself with the agro-exporting oligarchy in the process of constitution of the bourgeois social form. In this sense, Fernandes states that the composite pattern consists of the archaization of the modern and the modernization of the archaic (FERNANDES, 1975) and that the bourgeoisie emerges from the singularity of having two social forms (colony and modernization) that intertwined.

The composite pattern of bourgeois hegemony was consolidated after the 1930 government, creating mechanisms of domination not only in economic and political aspects. The aspects called by Fernandes as psychosocial and cultural act to demobilize the population, a process called cultural heteronomy, representing the expression of the form of bourgeois domination and consisting of ideological mechanisms to neutralize any type of social force within the order and/or against the capitalist order, thus preventing the popular and revolutionary organization of the masses. Heteronomy, a term of Weberian origin, helps us to understand the process of social control through consciousness. The form of social appeasement, as a result of the social organization being in a composite way, favored the process of maintaining order through "backward" social policies, but adequate to order. Teixeira was aware of the social control mechanisms promoted by the Brazilian elite.

In his book *Education for Democracy* (2007), Teixeira stated that the great educational problem (that is, of "backward" social policies) was inscribed in the absence of a contemporary spirit. In one passage, the author provokes us to reflect:

The great human problems, which combine complexity with a vast and profound

importance in the very lives of peoples, have always been disturbed in their solutions by the emotion of those who hope to free themselves from them with the thoughtless impatience of a tumultuous and blind action. (TEIXEIRA, 2007, p.41).

Anísio Teixeira brings philosophical studies to deepen the issue of Brazilian education, stating that national education has been strengthened more by the “patriotic side” than the “lucid side” (TEIXEIRA, 2007), that is, we are using emotion, patriotism, more than the reason, which would be the elaboration of serious educational policies as a way to potentialize the development of society, that is, to make it modern along the lines of the bourgeoisie. Teixeira believed that the way education was being treated increased barriers to quality education. According to the author, one of the consequences would be the lack of freedom or institutional autonomy. For Teixeira, the freedom to form and direct human thought is essential and education would be the engine that would allow the freedom to lead and think freely. This idea is in line with social policies, especially the educational ones directed by Vargasistas. The centrality of the federal government was one of its strong characteristics, imposing a direction in the conduct of a type of thought accepted by the dominant group. This way of understanding educational institutions takes away the freedom to think. Therefore, it is the State’s role for Teixeira: “[...] to maintain educational services, defending them from the immediate influence of governments, or from the profound influence of party ideologies” (TEIXEIRA, 1994, p.34).

His thought highlighted the issue of freedom as a way to break with bourgeois autocracy, in other words, Teixeira considered that the forms of social control (caused by cultural heteronomy) guaranteed the maintenance of social inequalities, which was

necessary to affirm that the resolution of the problem social question is based on a social rather than a technical question. So much so that the debate around traditional pedagogy referred much more to the allusion and overcoming of the social form of the archaic than to glimpses of the modern. For the author, the Brazilian school limits and reduces the socialization of the culture of humanity, in addition to ratifying the formalism prevailing within it, reducing the school to produce certificates and diplomas for entry into one of the privileged classes in the country (TEIXEIRA, 2007). The need to change the social function of the completely archaic school in relation to the modern time in which it was inserted comes from the change in the national organization. In this sense, fostering development consisted of the necessary step in breaking with the archaic, in addition to boosting (in a linear and theological way) national development.

One of the characteristics of the book *Education is not a privilege* is Teixeira’s centrality in defending institutional autonomy as a task of the State, as governments, directing the organization in an autocratic way, prevent new forms of school management from being developed. Teixeira knew that the educational problem was not in its internal structure of education, but in the constitutive social spheres of a democratic state, such as the political, social and cultural sphere. The author, when it comes to Brazilian democracy, states that democracy is an essay in the country, becoming a success if it guarantees the execution of social institutions in a perfect and safe manner, that is, if they follow the guidelines of a modern bourgeois society, that is, not composite.

In light of the brief analysis of Anisian thought, we highlight the book by Antônio Cândido entitled *A Educação pela Noite* and other essays (1989), in which he points

out the mutation of social thought through studies of Brazilian literature in which he explained two views: the mild conscience of delay and the catastrophic awareness of delay. According to Cândido (1989), the narratives were distinguished by the backward/modern antinomy, despite the view attributed to them, it can be perceived through the literary production on the studies of the country (nation). Cândido points out that until the 1950s there was a form of literary awareness that linked homeland to nature, compensating “[...] the material backwardness and weakness of institutions through the overvaluation of regional aspects, making exoticism a reason for social optimism.” (CÂNDIDO, 1989, p. 2), favoring a mild awareness of backwardness in which the exotic, pictorial in which the social representation expressed the harmony of social relations is associated, staining the marks of backwardness, misery and inculturation (CÂNDIDO, 1989).

However, traces of the catastrophic awareness of backwardness began to emerge in the post-1930s when writings signaled the nation's underdevelopment condition, explaining the unequal forms of bourgeois society and the defense against such forms. Teixeira is part of the list of investigators who denounced the composite organization of the Brazilian elite during this period. His studies focused on how much underdevelopment was associated with archaic forms, not yet overcome, which caused a brutal social inequality.

From the aesthetic movements of the 1920s; the intense aesthetic-social awareness of the 1930s-1940s; from the crisis of economic development and the technical experimentalism of recent years, we begin to feel that dependence is moving towards interdependence. This will not only make Latin American writers aware of their unity in diversity, but will favor works of mature

and original content, which will be slowly assimilated by other peoples, including those of metropolitan and imperialist countries. The path of reflection on development leads, in the field of culture, to that of transnational integration, as what used to be imitation becomes more and more reciprocal assimilation.

The reciprocal assimilation that Cândido (1989) points out would be the Latin American unity based on its common characteristic, that is, the Hispanic-Portuguese invasion process which characterized dependent social forms. The integration of literature is part of the unity of Latin American social thought to identify its ills without understating its origins. Teixeira continued in the phase of catastrophic awareness of backwardness, highlighting the horror of Brazilian elites in fomenting social inequality. His struggle both in public administration and even as a militant defended education as a right, even before the dissemination of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in 1948.

The answers regarding the questions of removing the idea of education as a privilege for a few, forces Teixeira, in 1957, to write one of his most forceful books. Education is not a privilege in which the author examines the educational situation and denounces two types of education, one aimed at the reproduction of elites and the other aimed at the massification of the population with minimal access to the school system.

If we consider the illiterate, as it would be lawful to consider, a more negative than positive element in the population, the Brazilian situation, from the point of view of common education, became worse in 1950 than in 1900. considering that the educational process is a selective process, designed to remove from the mass some privileged people for a better life, which will be made possible precisely because many will remain in the

mass at the service of the 'educated', so the system works, exactly, because it does not educate all but only a part. (TEIXEIRA, 1994, p.8)

The denunciation of the lack of universality of the educational institution expresses the struggle against the ills of a composite bourgeoisie that chooses not to promote universal access to the fundamental rights of citizens. In the passage above, the delay is criticized based on a comparison with two views on the situation of illiteracy, in which the stigmatization of the illiterate in the 1950s is either the project of the Brazilian bourgeoisie or because the wasted condition of not favoring the universalization of education in the context of national development, it is more serious than in the late nineteenth century, when modernization was still unthinkable in Brazil as a social project.

Anisian studies touch on the debate that crosses the studies of social formation, elucidating questions that are only answered when we refer the studies to the processes of constitution of the modern elite in Brazil. Establishing the relationship between Teixeira and Brazilian social thought relocates us to another perspective of criticism under which his work is intertwined with debates in the human sciences rather than reducing it to criticism of the project of remodeling the teaching-learning relationship in everyday school life.

CONCLUSION

We presented the general lines of the debate that is being revisited about the thought of Anísio Teixeira and that started as the object of the Master's in Education by the Postgraduate Program in Education at the Universidade Federal Fluminense.

With the in-depth studies on the theme of Latin American social formation, especially Brazilian social formation, the works of the

classics of education gain a dimension that transcends the very place of debate in which they were produced. Our intention is to relocate the Anisian debate beyond the studies that traditionally locate it as an advocate of the Escola Nova Movement. His work is consistent in affirming the integration of Brazilian social thought in the context in which Candido calls the researchers who denounced the damage caused by the composite form of the Brazilian bourgeoisie in the set of studies linked to the catastrophic awareness of backwardness. The bourgeois horror in Brazil is in its autocratic form in which a large part of the population is subordinated to the denial of the possibility of social ascension.

Teixeira denounces in his two books *Education for Democracy* (2007) and *Education is not a privilege* (1994) a problematic discussed in the field of Brazilian social formation. Recovering its transcendence in the aforementioned debate is more than necessary for us to reallocate intellectuals that are part of Brazilian social thought in a context in which the idea of development was an objective goal. Getting to know the authors who defended the universalization of education provides scholars on the subject with a broad knowledge of the history of education as part of Brazilian social history in which new reinterpretations redefine old slogans. In the current context of retrogression of political, economic, social and cultural rights, redefining slogans is an urgent task both for the theoretical reorganization of the struggle and for the rigorous investigation of social practice.

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