

## STATE, SOCIAL POLICIES AND CRITICAL HISTORICAL PEDAGOGY

*ESTADO, POLÍTICAS SOCIAIS E PEDAGOGIA HISTÓRICO-CRÍTICA*

*ESTADO, POLÍTICAS SOCIALES Y PEDAGOGÍA HISTÓRICA CRÍTICA*

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**ABSTRACT:** The article aims to reflect and intervene in the debate about the possibilities for socialists to act within the public school of capitalist society with a critical but propositional perspective. To do so, it reflects on the class character of the State and, by extension, its public policies, the historical nature of education, as well as its specifically human character, and, finally, the contradictory character of the public school in capitalist society, which, at the same time that it reproduces bourgeois ideology, enunciates the universalization of education and the socialization of knowledge. The result of such reflection is a position in favor of pedagogical intervention inside the public school in defense of the teaching of the most developed knowledge, of an omnilateral human formation that is the result of the rupture with the alienation of individuals and society, and of the affirmation of the need to overcome capitalism and build socialism. Such positions refer to Critical Historical Pedagogy.

**KEYWORDS:** Education. Public school. Criticism against capitalism.

**RESUMO:** *O artigo objetiva refletir e intervir no debate acerca das possibilidades de os socialistas atuarem no interior da escola pública da sociedade capitalista com uma perspectiva crítica, porém propositiva. Para tanto, reflète sobre o caráter de classe do Estado e por extensão de suas políticas públicas, da natureza histórica da educação, bem como de seu caráter especificamente humano, e, por fim, do caráter contraditório da escola pública na sociedade capitalista, a qual ao mesmo tempo que reproduz a ideologia burguesa, enuncia a universalização da educação e a socialização do conhecimento. O resultado de tal reflexão é uma tomada de posição favorável à intervenção pedagógica no interior da escola pública na defesa do ensino dos conhecimentos mais desenvolvidos, de uma formação humana omnilateral que seja resultado da ruptura com o quadro de alienação dos indivíduos e da sociedade, e da afirmação da necessidade da superação do capitalismo e da construção do socialismo. Tais posicionamentos remetem à Pedagogia Histórico-Crítica.*

**PALAVRAS-CHAVE:** *Educação. Escola pública. Crítica ao capitalismo.*

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**RESUMEN:** *El artículo pretende reflexionar e intervenir en el debate sobre las posibilidades de actuación de los socialistas en la escuela pública de la sociedad capitalista con una perspectiva crítica pero propositiva. Para ello, reflexiona sobre el carácter de clase del Estado y por extensión de sus políticas públicas, el carácter histórico de la educación, así como su carácter específicamente humano, y, finalmente, el carácter contradictorio de la escuela pública en la sociedad capitalista, que al mismo tiempo que reproduce la ideología burguesa, enuncia la universalización de la educación y la socialización del conocimiento. El resultado de esa reflexión es una posición a favor de la intervención pedagógica dentro de la escuela pública en defensa de la enseñanza de los conocimientos más desarrollados, de una formación humana omnilateral que sea el resultado de la ruptura con la alienación de los individuos y de la sociedad, y de la afirmación de la necesidad de superar el capitalismo y construir el socialismo. Estas posiciones remiten a la Pedagogía Histórica Crítica.*

**PALABRAS CLAVE:** *Educación. Escuelas públicas. Crítica al capitalismo.*

## Introduction

The existing class contradictions in capitalist society and the clear direction that the State imposes on public schools to limit the education of individuals for the purposes of capitalist ideology and workforce reproduction divide critical thinking, especially that which is guided by defense of socialism, as to the possibility, or not, of a positive intervention, obviously against hegemonic, within this school.

The general object of this article is to discuss the possibility of a positive intervention by educators (teachers and managers) that aims to build a critical pedagogical alternative within schools and education systems, contrary to the hegemony of pedagogical guidelines of a reproductive nature of social relations and the capitalist ideology made official in Brazil from the educational policies developed by the State.

The study exposed here emerges from concerns about a certain tendency, not necessarily intentional, towards an almost tight separation between different objects of study. The existence of lines of research in postgraduate programs, with different researchers, despite their undeniable importance, has reinforced this tendency towards fragmentation. In this sense, the theoretical framework adopted by this article is given by the method of historical and dialectical materialism, which permeates the entire work of Marx and of Marxist authors who succeed him, and which allows dialectically associating different social phenomena from the conception of social totality, considering their structures and the dynamics of the historical movement that supports them. This method “is not reduced to research techniques and procedures, although it does not dispense its use and development” (DUARTE, 2020, p. 17, our translation).

The methodological path is to articulate studies on the relationship between social classes, the State and public policies in capitalist society – expressed in Shiroma, Morais and Evangelista (2004), Deitos (2010; 2012) and Xavier and Deitos (2006) – with the pedagogical question, from the studies of Dermeval Saviani (2005; 2012; 2013; 2015; 2019) and Duarte N. (2014).

In order to deepen the debate, in a first topic, the contradictory character of the State and its public policies is addressed and, in a second moment, the contradictory character of the school, as well as the possibility of positive intervention within it from the exploration of this character.

### **State and social policies in relation to capital**

The State concerns the entire apparatus that involves the structures of government, administration and defense and repression forces at the service of the established order. This, in the contractualist<sup>3</sup> view that underlies contemporary liberalism, is the result of a social contract in which individuals renounce the prerogative of defending their personal interests in a strictly individual perspective to do it from a supposedly collective perspective, moving from a state of nature to a state of society. In this sense, the State becomes a primordial institution for social harmony. As for Marxism, here conceived as the social theory based on the historical and dialectical materialism of Marx and Engels, the State emerges in the process of consolidation of the class society that is based on the division between owners and non-owners and serves as an instrument of domination of the first over society as a whole, in a process that, in general terms, disarms the population and imposes on it an institution that regulates the forms of domination and gives the means to exercise them through the government, bureaucracy and armed men.

This article adheres to the second conception of the State exposed here, according to which, in the context of capitalist society, the government at the head of the State “is nothing but a committee to manage the common affairs of the entire bourgeois class” (MARX; ENGELS, 2014, p. 44, our translation).

The bourgeois class is at the head of the State regardless of the government regime, whether representative democracy, constitutional monarchy or dictatorship, which means that

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<sup>3</sup> Contractualism developed between the 16th and 18th centuries from the theses of Thomas Hobbes, John Locke and Jean-Jacques Rousseau, who, despite the differences, maintain that the State arises in an agreed way from the will of individuals.

State policies are, as a rule, defined according to the interests of this same class. However, such interests are not always directly manifested, since this class is numerically a minority and, in a certain way, heterogeneous.

In order to constitute a "pacified" civil society, the bourgeoisie, through its political representations, confers on the State the role of producing mediations, that is, indirect instruments for exercising the domain that translate into social policies, without altering, however, its class character, as "the State is the expression of power and class relations" and the mediations it produces "culminate with the solidification of the interests of the ruling classes" (DEITOS, 2012, p. 205, our translation).

As "the mediation carried out by the State is central to the process of capital accumulation and maintenance of a certain policy, a certain political power and the markets themselves" (DEITOS, 2012, p. 215, our translation), this same State assumes a contradictory character, because at the same time that it serves the interests of capital, it is forced to make concessions in order to meet the needs of the population or to respond to pressures coming from organized sectors, mainly unions.

The contradictions of the State express the contradictions of the capitalist system which, in turn, is essentially directed towards the accumulation of capital, and which needs to guarantee and control the reproduction of the labor force at the lowest possible price. In this sense, it needs the existence of a reserve army, of a layer of unemployed that can never disappear, which by itself would be enough to justify the existence of state assistance.

The **State**, unable to overcome contradictions that are constitutive of society - and of itself, therefore - manages them, suppressing them in the formal plan, keeping them under control in the real plan, as a power that, proceeding from society, places itself above society, becoming more and more strange in relation to it. Public policies emanating from the State are announced in this correlation of forces, and in this confrontation, possibilities are opened to implement its social face, in an unstable balance of commitments, efforts and responsibilities (SHIROMA; MORAIS; EVANGELISTA, 2004, p. 8, authors' highlights, our translation).

If, on the one hand, poverty produced by capitalism plays the role of regulating the price of labor, on the other hand, it can put the system to the test when it reaches a very high level, because it can stimulate both the increase in crime and social revolts. Additionally, since reaching certain numerical strength in the context of the Industrial Revolution, the proletariat, through its organizations, has conquered social rights that create growing demands on the State. And this same State, "as characteristic of a strategic social and political-military institution of class society" tends to appear "as a key mediator of the process of social distribution of wealth

in the form of implemented social policies" (DEITOS, 2010, p. 211, our translation). Thus, social policies enable the reproduction of the workforce while balancing, or avoiding, tensions arising from popular demands, particularly from the proletariat.

It reinforces, then, the understanding that the State cannot be detached and seen as something apart from the historical context, that is, from the set of relations existing in society, let alone become ideologically "neutral". And, if by chance, it happens that a government seeks to break more or less radically with the bourgeois purposes historically attributed to the State and start to implement policies of satisfaction of workers with which the political nucleus of the bourgeois class does not agree, certainly, it would not be the case of the democratization of capitalism, but of the crisis of the State and the domination of capital. Because the State, as an instrument of class domination, is "impossible to overcome contradictions that are constitutive of society", denying itself, and then starts to manage such contradictions, "suppressing them in the formal plan, maintaining them under control in the real plane, as a power that, proceeding from society, places itself above it, becoming increasingly strange in relation to it" (SHIROMA; MORAIS; EVANGELISTA, 2004, p. 8, our translation).

The State, then, manages the social contradictions, becomes a mediator of minimal resources to carry out even a limited control of poverty, using social policies. However, as the bourgeois class is not homogeneous and depends on a political nucleus to guide the actions of the State so that it does not go astray, oppositions often occur within its own bosom against this nucleus. Oppositions that, if they conquer hegemony in bourgeois representations, can lead the State to assume extreme political and military forms that tend to question parts or even the whole of social policies. In this case, the State acquires a more police form that tends to be legally supported by exceptional laws.

Social policies can also be questioned and even denied without the need for the imposition of the police-state, if the political core of the bourgeoisie assesses that capitalism is not at risk if the mechanisms for managing contradictions, social policies, go back to the point of imposing levels below the poverty line for thousands or millions of people, because workers are not in the political and moral conditions to produce resistance to such a setback. This is the case of neoliberal reforms that aim to create conditions for increasing the rate of capital accumulation without raising the cost of reproduction of the labor force, if possible even lowering them.

The neoliberal reforms began in the governments of Margaret Thatcher, who held the position of Prime Minister of the United Kingdom from 1979 to 1990, and Ronald Reagan, President of the United States of America between 1981 and 1989 and began to constitute the

prescription from multilateral international organizations, such as the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank, to countries designated as emerging. In Brazil, neoliberal orientations were materialized in the 1995 State reform, under Fernando Henrique Cardoso.

This orientation was brought about by the country's dependence on these agencies due to the high external indebtedness, and the main expected results of this adjustment - or State reform, as it is conventionally called - has been the reduction of public spending and the opening of the internal market. The first through cuts in social programs and privatization of state-owned companies and the second through the elimination of subsidies and reduction of protectionist tariffs. This reform was presented by the official discourse as a necessary modernization to adjust to the new times, a modernization based on principles of rationalization of resources and optimization of the country's conditions to compete in the world market (DUARTE; DERISSO, 2017, p. 133, our translation).

In the scenario of State reform, education reform is envisioned, and its consequent adaptation to the neoliberal dictates of international organizations, deepening the utilitarian purpose that the ruling class has always endeavored to impose on this policy, which together with public health constitute the greatest social policies of the present time. And as a social policy, education constitutes a mechanism for managing the contradictions of capitalist society, that is, an expression of the power relations resulting from the class struggle.

To Xavier and Deitos (2006, p. 80, our translation),

[...] the examination of external and internal relations that were guided, in the last four decades, by operational, political and financial mechanisms anchored in international loans, carried out especially with multilateral organizations such as the World Bank, the IDB and the IMF, strengthen the propositions that move the state and economic policy and, consequently, the educational one, towards the objectives of the accumulation and reproduction of capital, subordinating to them the structure of the adopted national educational policy.

From the perspective of international organizations, the priority is solving problems that interfere with the country's economic development, with a view to strengthening the capitalist system at the international level and, in this sense, it reinforces an old orientation of the bourgeoisie, which is to attribute to school education the almost exclusive end of the reproduction of the workforce, associated with the ideological reproduction of the system. This objective, currently, is similar to the orientation adopted in Brazil in the 1960s and 1970s, which attributed to education the purpose of developing human capital for national development, under the influence of the so-called technical pedagogy, developed mainly in the United States of America.



After decades of pragmatism in Brazilian educational policy, the recent Secondary Education Reform resumes the unsuccessful project expressed in the Law of Guidelines and Bases of Education - LDB n. 5,692 of 1971 (BRASIL, 1971), which intended to give a professionalizing purpose to this level of teaching and the pragmatic or utilitarian orientation of international organizations is well expressed, as it complements, or deepens, the pedagogical orientation based on the so-called pedagogy of competences adopted by the Law of Guidelines and Bases of Education - LDB n. 9,394/96 (BRASIL, 1996).

### **The historical-critical pedagogy and the contradictory character of the school**

The scenario exposed in the previous topic can bring to light a certain pessimism about the possibilities of action, either in school or in society, from a critical perspective and the transformation of the existing reality. However, the perspective of transforming the school or society – or both – must be based on an analysis of the historical conditions and contradictions existing in each of these institutions. A project for the radical transformation of society must take as its starting point the class contradictions existing in that same society, and from there the conditions of existence of each of the classes, their tendencies for the conservation or transformation of the current social order, the ways in which such trends are expressed at the organizational level (parties, unions, social movements, cultural or religious organizations, etc.) and the power relations between classes potentially protagonists in decisive clashes. A project to transform the contemporary school, in turn, insofar as it is part of the broader project of social transformation, must be based on premises such as: conception of individual formation, conception and historical approach to education, conception of world that supports the social criticism contained in the project, since education and school are always conditioned by the society in which they are inserted. Thus, the criticism of the school is not dissociated from the criticism of the society that conditions it. Such assumptions follow the theoretical elaboration of Dermeval Saviani (2005; 2012; 2013; 2015), as we will see in the next lines.

The pragmatic and utilitarian view of the State regarding school education refers to the formation of an individual devoted, almost exclusively, to responding to the expectations of the capitalist system. However, public school users, as well as their parents, see the possibility of accessing knowledge in a more comprehensive way, even if they are not fully clear about what this scope would be. This contradictory feature of public school is present in the set of social policies developed by the capitalist state, which, on the one hand, mediate the interests of capital and, on the other, result from the pressure of popular demands and expectations.

It is in this space of contradiction that one glimpses the possibility of building a pedagogical alternative against hegemonic, which is based on the perspective of an omnilateral human education in opposition to the unilaterality of a school education for the market - or "for life", according to a slogan spread in order to justify the Reform of Secondary Education (DUARTE; DERISSO, 2017) – considering that every pedagogy presupposes a certain conception of individual formation.

In the perspective of building a positive intervention in the pedagogical plan, in contrast to the hegemonic and official pedagogical guidelines, in public schools, Dermeval Saviani lays the foundations for a historical-critical pedagogy, and for that, it is theoretically based on the contributions of authors such as Marx, Engels and Gramsci, among others, who, based on historical and dialectical materialism, support the thesis of omnilateral human formation, criticize capitalism and envision the possibility of taking the school as an arena for the class struggle of the proletariat.

According to Saviani (2013), when he advances his theoretical reflections in search of a pedagogical proposition for school education, the Brazilian public school came from a path of hegemony of technical pedagogy (SAVIANI, 2013), which founded educational reforms in the context of Military Dictatorship (1964-1985).

An expression of this technicality was Law n. 5,692/71 (BRASIL, 1971), which provided for high school education, in addition to the common core, the establishment of disciplines devoted to some professional qualifications, with the provision of professional certification for graduates, thus giving a terminal character to this level of education that, until then, was seen as preparatory to higher education.

Another expression of technicism was postgraduation, installed on the initiative of the “military regime according to the coordinates of the technocratic vision in the same spirit, therefore, of the technicist pedagogy”, whose objective was “the formation of high-level staff, in the scientific and technological fields, to boost the country's development” (SAVIANI, 2019, p. 468, our translation).

In Brazil, a first critical response to technicality is developed, especially within graduate programs in education, based on studies that criticize the school institution. According to Saviani (2019, p. 470, author' highlights, our translation), “The main references of these studies are the 'theory of the education system as symbolic violence', 'theory of the school as an ideological apparatus of the State' and 'theory of the dualist school’”. These works were published in France between 1970 and 1971 and, despite their critical nature, they were pessimistic about the possibilities of a counter-hegemonic intervention within the public school,



precisely because they understood that this is essentially a reproduction of social and of capitalist ideology. Therefore, Saviani (2012) characterizes them as critical-reproductive theories of education.

In 1984, Saviani (2013) presents a definition of educational work that refers to the general character of education and contemporary public school: “educational work is the act of producing, directly and intentionally, in each individual, the humanity that is produced historically and collectively by the group of men” (SAVIANI, 2013, p. 13, our translation).

We apprehend from this passage that the intentional educational act concerns the role of the educator in the broad sense, but it also refers us to the reflection of school education in capitalist society, whose intention tends to be determined by the bourgeois educational project that denies the historically produced humanity and encourages ideological reproduction of the system. And as an intentional act, it is necessary to consider the effects not only of the official teaching programs prepared by state agents, but also the individual action of the teacher or a group of teachers who are guided by building a counter-hegemonic alternative within the state school, in the sense of facing the character of ideological reproduction that it tends to assume due to the pressures of capitalism.

The definition of humanity contained in the passage by Saviani (2013) supports his definition of education and underlies the Historical-Critical Pedagogy. Such a conception is found in Marx and Engels (2007, p. 32-33, our translation):

[...] we must begin by verifying the first presupposition of all human existence and, therefore, of all history, namely, the presupposition that men must be able to live in order to “make history”. But, to live, one needs, above all, food, drink, housing, clothing and a few other things. The first historical act is, therefore, the production of the means to satisfy these needs, the production of material life itself, and this is, without a doubt, a historical act, a fundamental condition of all history, which even today, as well as for millennia, has to be fulfilled daily, hourly, just to keep men alive.

It is understood, then, that the activity of work, that is, the conscious activity of production of subsistence, is at the base of human formation, and that it constitutes a historical fact, because it triggers a process of accumulation of knowledge no longer exclusively in individual memory, but in collective or social memory. The transmission of this knowledge would be precisely the function of education.

Therefore, education should be understood as “a phenomenon specific to human beings”, because the understanding “of the nature of education involves the understanding of human nature” (SAVIANI, 2015, p. 286, our translation), which is not preexisting in the human

being in the strictly biological sense, but which results from that first historical fact. And this finding leads us to the thesis according to which “the human essence is not an abstraction intrinsic to the isolated individual. In its reality, it is the set of social relations” (MARX; ENGELS, 2007, p. 534, our translation).

In the work activity, human beings appropriate pre-existing knowledge and also produce new knowledge that will later be appropriated by other people. Such appropriations tend to qualitatively transform both the individual and society, producing objective knowledge available to other individuals and other generations. This relationship between appropriation and objectification of knowledge makes us think of human beings on two levels: strictly biological and cultural. On the biological plane, the human being results from the process of evolution of species, genetic influences and interference from the natural environment; on the cultural level, it results from the process of appropriation and objectification of knowledge. In summary: biological species and social being.

[...] what is not guaranteed by nature has to be historically produced by men; and that includes the men themselves. We can therefore say that human nature is not given to man but is produced by him on the basis of biophysical nature (SAVIANI, 2015, p. 287, our translation).

Without the purpose of discussing, just for the purpose of punctuating the issue, it should be noted that there is a tendency to classify knowledge into types, sometimes autonomous, such as: mythical, common sense, artistic, philosophical, religious and scientific. As if different types of knowledge could express different truths or realities, and as if the adherence to one or the other type of knowledge was a result of people's choice. Such epistemological relativism conflicts with the conception of knowledge and education that underlies this article, which is that knowledge presents itself in different degrees of elaboration, as a rule, inaccessible to most of the population. The existence of different types of knowledge is nothing more than a perception produced by different levels of appropriation of more developed knowledge and influences exerted by supposed knowledge produced under the influence of prejudices and ideologies.

In this sense, knowledge could be classified into different levels, not into types, from those that have not been properly elaborated and that result in the so-called common sense, which tend to occur within the limits of so-called everyday life, to those that have gone through a rigorous process of elaboration to the point of becoming specialized fields of knowledge, such as biology, chemistry, physics etc. These knowledge mix experienced and elaborated knowledge with beliefs derived from religion and prejudice.

Scientific knowledge underlies technological development which, in turn, drives the production and accumulation of capital. In this sense, Cascavel's Curriculum alerts to the fact that:

[...] the more the diffusion of knowledge is governed by economic laws, the more superficial the intellectual needs of individuals become, thus producing the defeat of knowledge and contributing to the intellectual emptying (CASCAVEL, 2008, p. 17, our translation).

In contrast to this direction of socially produced knowledge for the development of an almost exclusively instrumental science, this must be addressed within the school with the aim of forming individuals with the highest knowledge. Therefore, the role of the school is to “enable the acquisition of instruments that enable access to elaborated knowledge (science), as well as access to the rudiments of this knowledge” (SAVIANI, 2013, p. 14, our translation), that is, the knowledge that surpassed the levels of common sense and prejudice.

By extolling the most elaborate knowledge, recognizing them as superior, and stating that socially produced knowledge is a heritage of humanity and, therefore, should be appropriated by society as a whole, Historical-Critical Pedagogy surpasses the naive pedagogies that advocates the development of individual autonomy and a sense of democracy and solidarity that should, according to these pedagogies, constitute the foundations of a more democratic and solidary society, as if the problem of capitalist society was restricted to the action of greedy and insensitive people towards social problems rather than the monopoly of capital and, to a large extent, access to scientific knowledge by a single class of individuals.

The defense that Historical-Critical Pedagogy makes of the access to more developed knowledge is due, on the one hand, to the right of unrestricted access to socially produced knowledge, but, on the other, to the understanding that this same knowledge is useful to workers in the sense that they understand the existing mechanisms of exploitation, as well as to build a project to overcome the social order that enslaves them, as we can learn from the passage that follows:

The domain of culture is an indispensable instrument for the political participation of the masses. If members of the popular classes do not dominate the cultural contents, they cannot assert their interests, because they are disarmed against the dominators, who use precisely these cultural contents to legitimize and consolidate their domination. (SAVIANI, 2012, p. 55, our translation).

However, if the school makes the appropriation of knowledge to workers viable, this is in contradiction with “the capitalist society” which “is based exactly on the private

appropriation of the means of production”. This position does not place any illusion on the school of capitalist society but is based precisely on the contradictions of both the school and society itself, which "while demanding the universalization of the school form of education, it cannot fully realize it, because that would imply its own overcoming” (SAVIANI, 2005, p. 256-257, our translation).

In view of the above, the issue then becomes one of demanding the real universalization of school education through a unitary school that indistinctly guarantees access to the most developed levels of socially produced knowledge for children and young people. However, such a requirement, by itself, becomes sterile if it is not accompanied by an intervention on two fronts: first, in the context of teacher education, in order to develop, both individually and collectively, theoretical understanding of what is the human formation intended by the Historical-Critical Pedagogy, and within the school itself and the educational systems, in order to bring out the contradictions, and not to camouflage them or even to alleviate them.

Intervening in schools and educational systems is equivalent to intervening in the State itself, but we know that such a proposition encounters resistance and even opposition in sectors of socialist thought that "affirm that we can do nothing in the sphere of the State in terms of the struggle against capital" (DUARTE, 2011, p. 132). A statement that, according to the author, is "very little dialectical", because it does not consider the contradictions existing in the bourgeois state. Based on this view, its defenders "usually defend the so-called non-formal education that would be outside the influence of the State and capital", another proposition also "little dialectical, because, just as it considers school education [...] to have all the negativities, considers non-formal education as the bearer of all the positives” (DUARTE, 2011, p. 132, our translation).

## Final Considerations

As stated in the introduction to this article, we aim to problematize the possibility and feasibility of a positive intervention by educators (teachers and managers) in order to build a critical pedagogical alternative within schools and education systems, contrary to the hegemony of pedagogical guidelines reproducing the social relations and capitalist ideology made official in Brazil based on educational policies developed by the State. Based on this problematization, it appears that the instrumental control of the State by the bourgeois class directs the set of public policies towards meeting the interests of capital, which obviously has repercussions on education.

The direction of educational policy to meet business demands is contradictory with the original character of the republican model of state public school - heir to the Enlightenment and more particularly to the French Revolution of 1789 -, which is based on the premise that the promotion of social development operates in consonance with the development of human knowledge, particularly science, and its dissemination throughout the school institution.

As far as there is a contradiction, there is the possibility of overcoming it. In this sense, the contradictory character of public school – accentuated by the existence of the pragmatic and productivist model that is expressed above all in technicist pedagogy – allows critical thinking to capitalism to devote itself to the rescue of that orientation originally proposed by the republican model of state public school.

As neoliberal policies advance, questioning social policies that are more sensitive to the working population, and public school suffers from immediate, pragmatic and productivist pedagogies (such as technical pedagogy), the always democratic demand for a public, universal, free, secular and of quality school is highlighted.

The issue of quality, however, in addition to the material resources necessary for the functioning of the school, must be addressed through a pedagogy that focuses on the development of curricula and teaching plans based on the most developed knowledge (such as science, philosophy and art). From the perspective of Historical-Critical Pedagogy, the assimilation of such knowledge should equip the critique of capitalism and the break with the current alienation framework in this societal organization.

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