



## Collective engagement in the secondary spring: the occupation of José Lins do Rego state school (São Paulo, 2015)

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### Abstract

This article analyzes an educational praxis experienced in the occupation of the José Lins do Rego school by students, teachers and social movements contrary to the Measure of Reorganization of the São Paulo school system in 2015. It analyzes the marxist literature (Poulantzas, 1980; Frigotto, 2015; Freire, 2006, 2013), official documents and photographs, using the method documentary (Bohnsack, 2007; Severo, 2007; Bassalo e Weller, 2011). The analyzes suggest a conception of the school as an educational space, in which the collective individuals engaged, horizontally, embody the educational praxis as a strategy favorable to awareness beyond the institutional one. That is, the identification among those who occupied the schools and appropriated the educational space gave rise to new meanings about the public high school at an historical moment in the formation of class consciousness among these individuals who envisioned the transformation of reality through collective action.

Keywords: Occupation of schools. Collective engagement. Educational praxis. Public high school.

### Engajamento coletivo na primavera secundarista: a ocupação da escola estadual José Lins do Rego (São Paulo, 2015)

#### Resumo

Este artigo analisa uma práxis educativa vivenciada na ocupação da escola José Lins do Rego por estudantes, professores e movimentos sociais contrários à Medida de Reorganização da rede de ensino de São Paulo em 2015. Analisa a literatura marxista (Poulantzas, 1980; Frigotto, 2015; Freire, 2006, 2013), documentos oficiais e fotografias, por meio do método documentário (Bohnsack, 2007; Severo, 2007; Bassalo e Weller, 2011). As análises sugerem uma concepção de escola como espaço educativo, no qual os sujeitos coletivos engajados no movimento de ocupação, horizontalmente, consubstanciam a práxis educativa como estratégia favorável à consciência para além do institucional. Ou seja, ante uma política autoritária, a identificação entre quem ocupava as escolas e se apropriava do espaço educativo suscitava novos significados ao ensino médio público em um importante momento histórico de formação da consciência de classe entre esses sujeitos que vislumbraram a transformação da realidade por meio de um agir coletivo.

Palavras-chave: Ocupação de escolas. Engajamento coletivo. Práxis educativa. Ensino médio público.

## Compromiso colectivo en la primavera secundaria: la ocupación de la escuela José Lins do Rego (São Paulo, 2015)

### Resumen

Este artículo analiza una praxis educativa experimentada en la ocupación de la escuela José Lins do Rego por estudiantes, maestros y movimientos sociales contraria a la Medida de Reorganización del sistema escolar de São Paulo en 2015. Analiza la literatura marxista (Poulantzas, 1980; Frigotto, 2015; Paulo Freire, 2006, 2013), documentos oficiales y fotografías, utilizando el método documental (Bohnsack, 2007; Severo, 2007; Bassalo e Weller, 2011). Los análisis sugieren una concepción de la escuela como un espacio educativo, en el que los sujetos colectivos que participan en el movimiento de ocupación consustancian, horizontalmente, la praxis educativa como una estrategia favorable a la conciencia más allá de la institucional. En otras palabras, la identificación entre quienes ocuparon las escuelas y se apropiaron del espacio educativo dio lugar a nuevos significados para la escuela secundaria pública en un momento histórico importante en la formación de la conciencia de clase entre estos sujetos que imaginaron la transformación de la realidad a través de la acción colectiva. Palabras claves: Ocupación de escuelas. Compromiso colectivo. Praxis educativa. Educación pública de alta calidad.

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### Introduction

The Master's dissertation that gave rise to this article aims to analyze an educational practice in the state school José Lins do Rego, located in the periphery of the southern zone of the capital of São Paulo, during the movement of occupation by students and other segments in public high schools before the *Reorganization Measure* of this state education network validated by the state government of São Paulo in 2015. It consolidates the dimension of analysis of the activities developed in a school and the forms of articulation between students, teachers and other collective individuals engaged in this occupation.

The mobilization of students that culminated in the occupation of schools between October and December 2015 became known as *high school spring* as a political option by the individuals who were engaged. The notion of *high school* is to designate the schooling phase of middle school students; and spring, the flowering season, after the punishment of winter, rescues an event in history known as Spring of the Peoples and the Arab Spring (HOBSBAWN, 1996).



According to Sanfelice (2010) observation, in the state of São Paulo there has been a set of public policies in education concerning a political project with a neoliberal ideological matrix, driven by the same political forces that came to power in 1995, with the election of Mário Covas (1995-1998; 1999-2001) by the then Party of the Brazilian Democratic Movement (PMDB). This was followed by the Party of Brazilian Social Democracy (PSDB) with Geraldo Alckmin (2001-2002; 2003-2006), José Serra (2007-2010), Alberto Goldman (April to December 2010). Geraldo Alckmin, the victorious candidate in 2010, was re-elected and governed the state until December 2018. Succeeded by João Dória (PSDB), who serves as governor of the state of São Paulo until 2022.

In this context of continuity in the management of the same political party, the curricular reforms and administrative structure, moved by the Secretariat of Education for the teaching network in São Paulo (SEE/SP), have caused confrontations between the government and the representative union of the teaching category, by student movements and other organized sectors of civil society. Thus, the policy for public education in São Paulo, which was announced in a note on the official website of the Secretariat of Education of the state of São Paulo (SEE/SP), has become the object of dispute by students. It consisted of dividing schools by a single cycle: first years of Elementary school, final years of Elementary school and high school.

It proposed, by state government decision, to transfer more than 311,000 students to other school units, so that it would close the activities in 94 schools, with the objective of assigning the buildings to the municipal government or for other purposes. In response to this announcement, the students mobilized around a movement known as "Don't Close My School" that culminated in the first occupation of the Diadema state school, in the São Paulo's ABCD region on November 9, 2015. This occupation was accompanied by the high school students of the Fernão Dias state school, in the neighborhood of Pinheiros neighborhood in the state capital of São Paulo and, in December, there were 213 schools occupied in all regions of the state of São Paulo. The events analyzed in this article correspond to the José Lins do Rego state school, which began on November 14, 2015.

In the analysis of the object of study – *the high school spring* – we adopted the neo-institutionalist Marxist literature as theoretical and methodological support to understand the place of young people as a *social class*. As Gaudêncio Frigotto (2015) did not refer to the concept of individual as a *social*

person, nor that of social class equivalent to income, nor that of occupation associated with *economic factors*, as liberals understand it. This affiliation escapes the Marxist perspective in view of the function it assumes to maintain the *status quo*. We therefore affiliate ourselves with Poulantzas (1980) who considers complexity in class determinations and does not restrict them to the economic sphere, but to the "political and ideological" spheres of capitalist society.

The idea of student engagement postulated in the research is in opposition to the bourgeois sense of voluntary youth central role as the neo-liberals also suggest. Guedes (2007) considers that the idea of *protagonist* in bourgeois ideology is individualistic and has generated implications that permeate the school, social and professional lives of young people, especially the poorest ones, in the countryside and in urban peripheries in Brazil. We therefore take the engagement of high school students in the occupation movement as a specificity in a new mode of social vindication, with political agents, individual of right assured before the law.

4 Thus, because they are inserted in different social realities, according to Frigotto (2015), the young segments of the population should not be considered in the singular, but in the plural, as "youth". This term is disputed by different theoretical, methodological and ideological currents, because it implies a process of recognition, sometimes of strangeness of these, in and with the world, especially the world of work (SPOSITO, 2008). The dispute should not, therefore, be considered something natural, as if it were given, finished, but faced in such a way as to understand that the relationship of young people with the world derives, primarily, from processes that imply family education, schooling and that overcome them.

We emphasize that, besides the analysis of literature and documentation, photographic images have gained prominence as a source of knowledge about the problem addressed. In the light of *the documentary method*, the procedure consisted of the *interpretation formulated*, with the content description of the photograph "[...] without comments or interpretations of the immanent meaning of the image" (BASSALO; WELLER, 2011, p. 303). The second moment of photographic analysis corresponded to the application of the *reflected interpretation*, with the analysis of the *perspectivist* projection of scenic choreography and the iconic or iconological interpretation, oriented by its formal and planimetric composition (BOHNSACK, 2007; SEVERO, 2007).



We also elected, as a research procedure associated with photographic records, semi-structured interviews with approximately thirty people who participated in the movement of occupation of the school, field of the empirical research. Four teachers and two militants from political parties, unions and social movements participated, totaling eleven individuals from that universe of relationships. Recorded in digital audio, they were transcribed and analyzed using the collective individual discourse technique (DSC, in Portuguese abbreviation). The application of the technique consisted in the production of a synthesis of first-person singular speech with key expressions, selected to compose a *central idea*. Each *central idea* was elected by the researcher, who, through the software DSCSoft, selected, organized and extracted the convergences in the speeches, also pointing out the disagreements among the interviewed individuals.

The choice made it possible to analyze contradictions and mediations in the composition of the discourse, on which we opted for textual reference in *italic* typography, to announce the "engaged collective individuals" in direct quotations.

## The school and the individuals

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The José Lins do Rego state school is located at Estrada (road) do M'boi Mirim, one of the main access roads to the districts of Jardim Ângela, Jardim São Luís and Capão Redondo, in the southern peripheral area of the city of São Paulo. This specific region of the fifth most populated city in the world comprises a population of 832,033 people, in a territory of 75.7 km<sup>2</sup>, which is equivalent to the demographic density of 19,759 inhabitants per square kilometer, one of the highest averages recorded in the last demographic census of 2010 in Brazil. In terms of reality, we consider the scenario of poverty and violence to which people living and/or working there are exposed, as well as the history of struggle and resistance in a territory whose population is "[...] predominantly black, migrant or descendant of northeastern migrants [...]" (BIRTH, 2010, p. 15).

In this context, the daily difficulties of individuals are problematized in a collective way through projects in education and popular culture, in which important collectives and social movements coexist in a scene of resistance composed, among other forms, by the Popular House of Culture, Community Small Courses, Evening Parties and Philosophical Coffees. Among these collectives

the Café Filosófico da Periferia (Periphery Philosophical Coffee) stands out, whose proposal is to take the philosophical discussion to the periphery and the Sarau Cooperifa (Cooperifa Evening Party), which is a resistance movement, already culturally recognized, that emphasizes culture under the prism of poetry. There has also been verified the capacity of articulation between the individuals that operate in a network, bringing together municipal and state schools, public universities, unions, and with the population that has not yet been inserted in institutionalized spaces (DASSOLER, 2012).

6 The announcement of the Reorganization Measure decreed by the state government of São Paulo in 2015, to be presented on a certain date, officially convened, aimed at redistributing high school students into units offering exclusively this stage of schooling, surprised students and their families, people directly interested and affected by the policy. It seems simple to say that the José Lins do Rego school already met the requirement of exclusively offering high school and, with the reorganization of the school network, the enrollment of students would be conditioned to the location of their residence. But, in reality, it was a matter of some young people having to process their enrollment in another school unit, in addition to having the compulsory transfer of so many other young people to schools closer to their homes. The changes took away from the students the right to choose where they wanted to study, and tended to break ties created for those who attended the institution in their schooling trajectory.

It was a Saturday, November 14, 2015. The Secretary of Education of the state of São Paulo (SEE/SP) had scheduled for that date the official call, DIA E, an allusion to something like "The day at school". Although the official agency gave the name to that "day", in the collective memory of the individuals interviewed the meeting became known and remains remembered as "D Day".

The terminology corresponds to a military word that denotes the day of an attack, or a surprise combat operation, in reference to the Allies' landings in Normandy during World War II. The name carries the urgency of the convocation, without being properly organized, making it similar, if not appropriate, from the official point of view. No one spoke to the students beforehand, so they did not have time to articulate. The management team, teachers, students, their fathers and mothers as well as members of social movements participated in the event at the José Lins do Rego school.



### Image 1

#### First assembly in the occupation of José Lins do Rego school



Source: Secundas, 2015.

In the image above it can be noticed, even without using any technological resource of facial identification, the presence of approximately seventy people, most of them standing. There is a smaller group, around nine people, who apparently are seated. In the center of the image there is an empty space separating who is sitting from who is standing.

To analyze the planimetric composition, we draw a horizontal line, starting from the center of the image and following the separation between the group of people standing and those who are sitting. In the upper plane is a group of women and men (adults), almost all of those standing, facing the image. On the right, in the lower corner of the picture, we see the presence of a smaller number of younger people, with their backs to the camera.

Regarding the "scenic choreography" (BASSALO; WELLER, 2011, p. 303), we can identify that the focus of the image is on the largest group of people standing. As can be seen on the top, on the background and left side of the image, there are other people present in the space where the photograph recorded the event, although they are not composing the shot plane.

We highlight as an important iconographic element the register of a man, on the left side, standing, with a hat on his head and arms crossed. The

symbol on his t-shirt suggests that he is a militant engaged in the Movement of the Homeless Workers (MTST, in Portuguese abbreviation). The scenic and iconographic elements, as identified in Image 1, reveal the photographic producer's intention to provide the basis for the analysis of the perspectivist projection. Draws attention the interest of the image producer in registering the presence of parents, students, teachers and militants of social movements in the courtyard of the state school José Lins do Rego, during the meeting of the so-called D-Day.

In analyzing the perspectivist projection of the image we consider the intentionality with which it was produced, therefore, the objective of who produced it. According to Severo (2017), this last stage of the documentary method is composed of instruments of analysis and interpretation suggestive of the individuals' worldview. In it, we consider the place occupied by the people involved in the scene, the economic, social and political context in which they are inscribed as a constituent part of the individuals' shared worldview.

For the engaged collective individuals, the mobilization of the Movement of the Homeless Workers in face of the meeting in the school was of a fundamental importance and it resulted from the fact that they follow the events in the region and are interested in having their children studying at José Lins do Rego school. Thus, the group attended the event in large numbers in search of clarification and "[...] the Movement of the Homeless Workers [MTST] had already agreed to support this occupation of the students of the unit" (SUJEITOS COLETIVOS ENGAJADOS, 2019).

## Collective organization of the individuals engaged

As we look at the following photograph, we notice at the bottom the presence of approximately thirty-three people gathered in a youthful-looking group, arranged in a circular shape. While in the upper part of the image, on the right side, posters are displayed on a yellow wall; in another wall, in the opposite corner, there is a blue door and a window.



## Image 2

### Deliberative meeting in the occupation of the José Lins do Rego school



Source: Secundas (2015)

Through the "planimetric analysis" of photography, "scenic elements" are revealed which, although they do not suggest having been choreographed, carry values and world views of the "image producer" (BASSALO; WELLER, 2011, p. 303). In the lower plane, in the center of the photograph, there is a young man in a black cap who stands out from the rest of the group; he looks at another one in a white t-shirt, blue shorts and black sneakers and, by the gesture with his hands and facial expression, is suggestive that he is addressing the group. In the right corner of the lower plane, we can see another young man with her right hand raised, while in the center of the photograph we see a young woman with reddish hair, looking at his gesture; there is another young woman in a lilac t-shirt making use of what appears to be a cell phone.

Also, about the intentions that depict the worldview of the producer of photography, we see the scene in which one student speaks, while the other raises his hand seemingly waiting his turn. The disposition of the individuals represented in the image, side by side, in a circle, corresponds to the central idea recovered in the discourse of the engaged collective individuals, that there was no leader, they all constituted themselves as leaders and the organization of the activities took place in a collective, democratic way in their assemblies.

For historian Eric Hobsbawm (1998), occupations in public and private spaces have been an important popular tool in various fields of class struggle, especially in the struggle for land and housing. In Brazil, this strategy has gained expression in occupations by the Movement of Landless Workers (MST, in Portuguese abbreviation) and the Movement of the Homeless Workers (MTST, in Portuguese abbreviation).

Corroborating this perspective, Thompson (1998) points out that historically the dominated classes tend to occupy the streets, avenues, squares and public and private buildings, in a process of becoming a social movement. Thus, student engagement can be understood as a process of mobilization and political articulation among individuals engaged in the politics they were fighting against and in defense of the right to education that they intended as excluded from the benefits derived from the social wealth they produced.

Thus, we can conclude from the analysis of the images of the events enrolled in the meeting known as Day D, that the occupation of the José Lins do Rego school had an important support from collectives and from people linked to the social movements in the region who were driving them in the political struggle. The students – collective individuals engaged (2019) in the movement – consider that the support of social movement activists was important in the way they organized themselves, including the division of tasks during the occupation. They point out, however, that decisions were taken in assemblies and all deliberations should converge towards consensus.

In the movement, we also highlight the language as an indispensable tool for the qualitative leap attributed to this political struggle in defense of certain rights, particularly education and school. In it, terms such as occupation and leadership were claimed by collective individuals in opposition to invasion and leadership.

In this sense, a polemic was established and the conceptual debate took shape in student assemblies and in the mainstream press. The engaged youth insisted on the use of the term occupation because they understood that the school space belonged to them, and thus the movement did not configure itself as an invasion of what belonged to someone else. From this point of view, the use of the term invasion would become pejorative of the ideology and practices that moved them, given the government's clear attempt to criminalize the occupations.



On the concept of leaderships, it gained status in the conduct of the students of the José Lins do Rego school, who acted in a decentralized manner. They set up commissions to go to neighboring schools that were also occupied, both to spread and gather information about what was happening there, and to bring food and cleaning materials donated and distributed among schools.

The research, focused on the dynamics of the movement in the school and on the decision making of the engaged individuals, highlighted the debate on themes such as: organization of the school space (disposition of tables and chairs during classroom activities) and the national and international economic, social and political conjuncture. In particular, at the occupation of the state school José Lins do Rego, the day always began with an assembly in which the daily tasks were distributed.

In this dynamic, some boys turned more to safety at the school door, taking turns all night long. Others took care of the kitchen, cleaning and the dormitories, which were the improvised classrooms. In addition, they took care of the façade and the internal painting of the school.

In addition to the daily routine, activities such as a reading workshop, a round of conversation on topics such as feminism, the black movement, the LGBTQ+ movement were also carried out. For the engaged students, the activities carried out during the occupation were not simple leisure, but something that implied knowledge. In the memory of the individuals everything was very enriching because it helped to break conservative paradigms and prejudices giving way to new perceptions of reality and of the school itself as an educational institution.

Among the interviewees, the idea is that everyone did a little bit of everything in a perspective of horizontality and collectivity as a result of sharing the coexistence with the Movement of the Homeless Workers, "[...] because they showed us so much that we didn't know, set up the commissions and we kept separating people" (SUJEITOS COLETIVOS ENGAJADOS, 2019).

In addition, the occupation triggered cultural activities and classes organized by the students themselves, whose dynamic was not properly understood by the leaders of the institution. There were those who were open to the community and even counted on the collaboration of people outside the school. They included militants from the Cooperifa Sarau (Cooperifa Evening Party), Café Filosófico da Periferia (Periphery Philosophical Coffee), Bloco do Hercu (Hercu

Gathering) and other collectives, Emancipa (Emancipate – a network of popular courses), Movement of the Homeless Workers, teachers from the Union of Teachers of Official Education of the State of São Paulo (APEOESP, in Portuguese abbreviation). Students from the University of São Paulo and other institutions of higher education invited to talk to the students, to develop workshops, among other educational activities, such as conversation rounds, evening parties and musical shows.

In addition to what was happening at José Lins do Rego school, in the course of this state movement, many schools were visited by famous artists of different cultural expressions: singers, actresses and theater directors. This school was gifted with the presence of rock and hardcore bands, besides a theater group. A teacher invited the poet Sérgio Vaz, of the Sarau Cooperifa (Cooperifa Evening Party), to develop an evening party on the sports gym.

In the list of artistic and cultural initiatives and public classes, the students also organized themselves in commissions and defined a list of demands, which was protocolled in the school's board of directors, in the South 2 Teaching Board and in the Secretariat of Education (SEE/SP). In this document, they demanded democratic management in the school, the participation of the student union in the School Council, more participation of the collegiate, and the monthly expenses of the school be published with accountability. They also asked for measures related to the infrastructure and maintenance of the school building, such as the establishment of a bathroom for alternative use, with no gender exclusivity – male or female –, general cleaning of the school, disposal of broken chairs accumulated in the teaching unit, maintenance of the electrical installation of the building; improvements in accessibility for students and other people with special needs.

They also demanded to experiment with the alternate use of the classrooms, among which the students would move and the teachers would remain in the same rooms that started the shift. Another important request was the type of food served in the school lunch that should be adequate for the meal time: breakfast, lunch and dinner. What was served to the afternoon time shift students should have similar nutritional characteristics to lunch, thus closing the cycle of a praxis they wanted.



## The educational practice in the occupation of the José Lins do Rego school

In the analyses we can see that the individuals involved organized a systematic criticism of formal schooling practices on the school environment, disregarding the potential of professionals, students, social organizations and the local community. According to Paulo Freire (2006, p. 41) in traditional education, considered the "banking education", the teacher deposits knowledge in students that they did not yet have, through authoritarian and alienating practices. For the educator, this pedagogy could blame them for school failure resulting from the type of education that focuses on teaching content distant from the reality of students and their families, from collective life and from transforming political and social practices. In contrast, Freire highlights the importance of praxis that implies "[...] reflection and action by men on the world to transform it. Without it, it is impossible to overcome the oppressor-oppressed contradiction" (FREIRE, 2013, p. 49).

Thus, the traditional pattern of the curriculum in schooling is criticized by engaged individuals because it is distant from the routine created by the occupation movement. In this movement, the students themselves coordinated the school's routines to ensure in that space the right to speak and to be heard for each and every one. In the occupation of the José Lins do Rego state school, the mobilization was to see in the other a new possibility of each being what he is.

In the periphery we have many people with a lot of talent, of everything, be it music, poetry, dance. And we took these things into the occupation, these spaces, environments of people can recite what they wrote and that sometimes they think don't is nothing, but the moment they speak, they realize that maybe they can do that it for life. So, this education that we have today, it inhibits that this person can have these spaces at least once. And this space is what exactly changes a persons life (SUJEITOS COLETIVOS ENGAJADOS, 2019).

The discourse of these individuals glimpsed the dimension of a transformative praxis for students and teachers through the collective coexistence in the process of occupation. The result was the engagement in the complex functioning of the school, from the organization in general, to cleaning, food, security,

classes, cultural activities, sports, among others. With the exception of administrative tasks and the official curriculum, the management team, employees and teachers responsible for these demands remained in charge, and they could not do the work, because the students prevented them from accessing the unit at that moment.

### Image 3

#### Activity during the occupation of José Lins do Rego school



Source: Secundas (2015).

The photograph shows nine people, with a tenth whose hand appears on the table in the lower left corner. The group is around a white table, with blue edges, on which we can see pens, magazines, handouts and other printed materials that seems to be a video pre-production associated with the occupation. At the top of the photograph we can see a red wall with a security screen, and at the right side we can see an apparent basketball hoop, suggesting that it is a multi-sports court.



About the formal composition, which refers to the planes in which image 3 is represented, we verify the evidence of depth of field in the scene register. In it, scenic elements are shown in both planes: in the lower part, on the left, there is a male, with a beard and a black T-shirt and, on the right, another female, with black tied hair, blue shirt and glasses, both making use of an apparent sheet of paper and pen, suggesting that people were writing. The scene also counts, as an iconographic element, with a white plastic tube, similar to a school glue, next to a magazine highlighted in the foreground, whose cover brings the image of a child.

In the upper part of the photograph, the background shows five young people who are apparently talking. On the right side, one of them turns to the person with long hair, white shirt, with a sheet of paper in his hands, looking at the content of the text in an apparent reading situation. In the center, still in the upper part, a person with short hair, black shirt with long sleeves with white letters print and resting his left arm on the shoulder of another with long hair, wearing black clothes and looking at each other.

We followed the photographic analysis with the perspectivist projection – which is able to reveal the intentions and world views of the photographed individuals and the producer of the image – who, in this case, could be one of the students, considering that the image is a record of the individuals themselves engaged in the occupation movement of the José Lins do Rego state school. The image records on the organization of the individuals engaged claimed the memory of the occupation, in which the school, as an educational space, was open to new practices of this nature. It provided, in this way, multiple learning, which perhaps the conventional classroom did not raise.

We emphasize, in this particularity, that the discourse on school education is historically associated with a project of society and state. For it converge, even if it is divergent from the political and ideological point of view, politicians, educators, researchers, parents, organized segments of society and the youth people registered in the public and free education system.

Chizzotti (2020, p. 16) contributed to this reflection by analyzing the speeches and proposals in education mentioned by politicians, among others, in the 2018 election and considered that the effectiveness of the schooling process should point to the "[...] achievement of the personal and social aspirations

of each student [ensuring] the integration of each citizen in social life and work and, thus, greater political and social consistency of the state”.

We have, therefore, an educational practice that was carried out by young people during the occupation and ascended to the Freirian conception. Thus, they assumed the direction of educational and cultural activities, their idealization, execution and evaluation. It was almost unimaginable that students would perform them efficiently these attributions, which belong to the agents of the institution. About this dynamic, the teachers engaged in the movement present their perception about the role played by students in the occupation movement, as individuals who taught and learned.

According to this understanding, to the memory of the collective individuals engaged in the occupation movement, they were able to

[...] organize a round of conversation at which all interlocutors were on the same level, that everyone could learn and re-signify together, creating strategies for this movement to resist a police harassment, it has brought a new bias of pedagogical understanding of what is to learn. So, the idea of learning for those involved was also tied to the idea of resisting (SUJEITOS COLETIVOS ENGAJADOS 2019).

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Here we have another important dimension in the discourse of those individuals engaged in political struggle: resistance. The identity of the people in that peripheral region of the city of São Paulo (NASCIMENTO, 2010) lead the individuals to act, as a way of resisting the compulsory policy of Reorganization of the school network and police repression by the state government. The resistance as a dimension in the struggle of the students engaged in the occupation was shown beyond the defense of José Lins do Rego school, but of the entire educational network. That is, to assure a format of school management that attended to the diversity of young high school students in the surrounding community.

Returning to Paulo Freire's (2006) ideology, we added to his pedagogy the category of humanization, associated with the meaning of transformation, resistance, collectivity, as an educational practice that mobilizes girls, boys, and young high school students involved in the occupation of the José Lins do Rego school. In this respect, the notion that the

[...] school is a learning space, but teaching is an element within a larger whole that is education. And the school occupation sent



this message to all of us: "Look, the school needs to do more than it has done". The school is not only a reproduction of concepts and mechanical content. The school is a space of dialogue, of humanization (SUJEITOS COLETIVOS ENGAJADOS, 2019).

We corroborate this concept of school as a space of multiple learning in interaction with economic, social and cultural diversity in society as a whole. In it, education means more than processing teaching and learning contents, technically translated by specialists for this purpose. In this field,

[...] there are undetermined zones of practice – uncertainty, uniqueness and conflicts of values – that escape the canons of technical rationality. [And so, a problem cannot be guided by] clear and consistent ends that can guide the technical selection of educational environment (SCHÖN, 2000, p. 17).

In this muddy terrain the education is based, as a political and pedagogical practice that is articulated and complemented in the teaching and learning processes with a view to social transformation. In this, lies the importance of the school in which the liberating educational practice is inscribed. As a political posture of educators, students, among others, the school is subsidized by scientific knowledge and by so many knowledges mediated by the common sense originating from the reality in which the individuals are inscribed with their reading of the world.

Through the reading of the world we have the reading of the word, and therefore "[...] teaching to learn is only valid when the students learn by learning the reason for the object or content [...]" (FREIRE, 2013, p. 112), which is being taught and learned by all the individuals involved in a certain process of learning and living.

In the reflections raised by the analyses there is evidence of the differentiation between the educational praxis, mobilized by students in the occupation of the José Lins do Rego school, and the formal education, which is heir to the Taylorist-Fordist model in the material production of existence. As affiliated to the Theory of Human Capital, it underlies neoliberal rationality in its most perverse forms of exclusion of most people in certain societies.

At this stage we have the limit of neoliberalism, that beckons for its overcoming, which, according to Dardot and Laval (2016), prescribes collective

actions such as the mobilizations that have been taking place on a world scale, capable of creating a rational novelty in which the

[...] common use prevails over exclusive private property, democratic self-government over hierarchical command and, above all, makes co-existence inseparable from co-decision – there is no political obligation without participation in the same activity (DARDOY; LAVAL, 2016, p. 9).

At that moment, the events that shake humanity with the Covid-19 pandemic, in the face of neoliberal barbarity beckons a staggering market and the exacerbation of poverty on a world scale never seen before in the history of capitalism. We, therefore, rescue the Freirian ideology that applies not only to Education, but to the treatment of human beings in general, opposing the urgency of freeing the popular classes from the oppression to which they are subjected. In this perspective, teachers and students are engaged in the defense of education as a possibility of social and political transformation, of the dialogue between popular knowledge of "lived life" and the knowledge that implies science whose reading of reality cannot escape the individuals to which they subscribe.

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## Final considerations

Initially, the intention of this research was to understand the manifestations of repudiation to the reorganization measure of the state educational network presented by the São Paulo state government in November 2015. We questioned the nature of mobilization as a personal struggle of high school students in defense of their free and public school; and the importance of popular participation in decisions – administrative, pedagogical, financial – of education as a subjective constitutional right. The course of the investigations revealed that the mobilization of these individuals in the high school spring took a stand in criticism of the policy adopted by the state government that was carrying out an education project that was underway nationally and internationally.

According to the theorizations of Hobsbawm (1998) and Thompson (1998) about occupation as a strategy of political articulation of the dominated classes against oppressions, we were able to understand the high school spring



as a struggle beyond resistance. The propositions emanating from students, teachers and other organized segments of civil society, although focused on the José Lins do Rego state school, were not limited to this educational space.

We emphasized that, although initially the collective did not have an effective agenda, it came to be consolidated with the specific demands coming from other occupied school units. Thus, both the adherence to the movement and the ending occupation decision were negotiated regarding the period and the form of disengagement. The mobilization scenario was intensified by solidarity in the face of repression by the military police, authorized by the state government, which would hurt the identity and collectivity among the individuals engaged in the struggle.

We also found that, in the face of the threat of not being able to choose the school where they intended to study and the closure of school units and classrooms, the mobilization based on the defense of these rights erupted. The problems that were recurrent in the state public school system were exacerbated, among them the overcrowding of classrooms. The authoritarian and repressive way in which state agents acted with the evidence of controversial policies became the fuse that triggered the articulation of the subjects engaged in this struggle.

Subsidized by the ideas of Paulo Freire (2006, 2013), the analyses on the conduct of the individuals engaged in this struggle announce the possibility of ruptures (and continuities). The engagement of students in the high school spring surpassed the appearance that it was motivated exclusively by the fact that they occupied a school as a way of reacting or responding to the compulsory policy of the São Paulo state government. From this perspective, the format assumed by the mobilization gained an active and, therefore, propositional character, since the individuals in the movement wanted to overcome the traditional model of education – banking education, authoritarian, compulsory – of school, of teaching, and foresaw a project that would configure this welcoming and, therefore, inclusive educational environment.

This organization identifies itself, according to the Marxist theory, adopted in this work, with political parties, trade unions of categories – teachers and other professionals –, institutions in the educational field, social movements among others. All were in the same trench, fighting for the guarantee of the

constitutional right to public, free, and socially referenced quality education for all people.

In the high school spring, the critical and propositional character of the student mobilization became evident in the face of the educational policy and internal organization of schools, driven by movements of this nature. The engaged individuals disagreed with the oppressive and alienating model of education, and engaged in an educational practice that gave life to the collective coexistence, horizontally organized in the occupied schools, thus approaching what was happening in other parts of Brazil. The identification among those who occupied the schools in São Paulo and appropriated the educational space as part of it, raised new meanings in an important historical moment that called for the formation of a class consciousness that glimpsed the transformation of reality through collective action.

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