

Physical Education: a pedagogical action and its legitimacy as a social practice in MST Itinerant School

*Gabriela Machado Ribeiro**

*Elizara Carolina Marin***

Abstract: This paper presents the research that investigated the pedagogical action in Physical Education classes and its legitimacy as a social practice in the Itinerant School Filhos de Deus (Children of God), of Acampamento 8 de Março (Encampment March 8), in the municipality of Tupanciretã, Rio Grande do Sul (RS). This is a qualitative research developed through interviews and observations. The results of the research show that the content developed in Physical Education in this school suffers a critical bias when problematized by educators. However, since the school is inserted in a system that enslaves, excludes, and expropriates, it experiences constant conflicts with the construction of these horizons.

Keywords: Physical Education. Education of the population. Rural settlements. Social conditions.

1 INTRODUCTION

This article is part of our interest to understand the basic school education in the countryside, through the social movement, which opens the debate on education in this context: the Landless Movement (Movimento Sem Terra) (MST).

We investigated how the Landless Movement experienced basic education armed with curiosity to know the diversity of contexts in which the pedagogical practice of

* Physical Education Specialist . CEFD. Researcher of the Grupo de Pesquisa em Lazer e Formação de Professores (Research Group on Leisure and Teacher Education) (GPELF) from Universidade Federal de Santa Maria (UFSM). Santa Maria, RS, Brazil. E-mail: gabimacrib@yahoo.com.br

** Adjunct Professor of CEFD/UFSM. Coordinator of Grupo de Pesquisa em Lazer e Formação de Professores (GPELF). Universidade Federal de Santa Maria (UFSM). Santa Maria, RS, Brazil. E-mail: elizaracarol@yahoo.com.br

Physical Education happens, and conscious of the importance of its development in interaction with social context¹.

The objectives of this research were to identify and analyze what are the Physical Education pedagogical practices adopted in the MST Itinerant School and understand why they happen the way they do and how legitimate they are as a social practice in this educational context.

The research was carried out by means of approaching and interacting with the subjects of the MST, and was based on observations, interviews and experiences with the educators and students of the Itinerant School Children of God, of the Encampment² 8 de Março, located in the municipality of Tupaciretã, RS. It was a participatory research, which shows

[...] its potential to displace universities to concrete reality. This type of research basically modifies the classic academic structure as it reduces differences between object and subject of study (BORDA, 1990, p. 60).³

Throughout the second half of 2007 and the first half of 2008, we made six field trips to Encampment 8 de Março to interview nine educators: four laymen, four students of teaching and an undergraduate on Countryside Studies. It should be noted that these trips were made possible through a linking to the Research Group on Education and Territory⁴ (GPET)⁵ and the participation in the Integrated Project of

¹ For a better understanding of the text, we should explain that Landless, written with capital letters, refers to the proper name, the socially constructed identity by members of the movement, while landless, in lowercase, denotes the condition of absence of ownership or tenure of employment (CALDART, 2004).

² Based on Fernandes (1996), we understand MST encampment as the occupation of large estates, and settlement as the conquered territory, i.e., the possibility of territorialization.

³ “[...] sua potencialidade no deslocamento das universidades para o campo concreto da realidade. Este tipo de pesquisa modifica basicamente a estrutura acadêmica clássica na medida em que reduz as diferenças entre objeto e sujeitos de estudo”

⁴ Grupo de Pesquisa em Educação e Território

⁵ The interventions made by GPET in the MST schools, regarding thinking, planning and developing activities with the group of Landless students, try to respect and implement the purposes of the Pedagogical Political Project of the Itinerant School in what concerns content and work methodology founded on dialogue.

Working with Teachers and Students of the MST Itinerant Schools⁶, developed by the group.

In addition to the field research, the methodology combines bibliographical review on education in MST and Popular Education; documentary survey of the Landless Movement's own work on education, the Itinerant school and Physical Education as a curricular subject.

The systematizations focus on the historical settings of the MST; on the actions of the movement to articulate its own educational process; on the physical and pedagogical structure of the itinerant school; on Physical Education as a curricular subject; and on the difficulties encountered in the development of Physical Education in this space-time. The following authors were fundamental for the development of this research: Caldart (2000, 2001, 2004), Freire (1977, 1983, 1993), Stédile and Goergen (1996), documents from the ITERRA (2004) and the Dossier MST School⁷ (MST, 2005).

2 APPROACH AND CHARACTERIZATION OF THE OBJECT OF STUDY

Currently, the MST has been defined as one of the most important social movements in Brazil, and is globally recognized. This recognition was earned because it is a movement that opposes the neoliberal policies that have led to serious consequences such as unemployment, precarious working conditions, higher rates of poverty, social inequality, rural exodus and intensification of the agrarian problem.

The MST, faced with this situation, articulates its struggle for land reform, land rights, conquest and consolidation of the worker's economic conditions to stay in the land, a rural development that ensure better living

⁶ This project has been developed since 1997 by UFSM students and teachers of the Geography and Pedagogy courses in the Itinerant Schools of the MST Encampments.

⁷ Dossiê MST Escola

conditions and access to health, education, culture, leisure, etc for their population.

History reveals that long since Brazilian agrarian structure is concentrated in the hands of a few, so the struggle for land rights marks the Brazilian historical process⁸. The most recent and significant events that have occurred since the 1950s and 1960s, which had national coverage and mobilized thousands of rural workers, were the Peasant Leagues⁹, organization of the Union of Farmers and Agricultural Workers of Brazil¹⁰ (ULTAB) and the Movement of Landless Farmers¹¹ (MASTER). However, Neto (1999, p. 11) notes that "only in the late 70s, through action, did the peasants conduct their struggle, beginning the occupation of lands in the state of Rio Grande do Sul."¹²

The nationwide foundation of the MST consolidated in 1984, although the actions of landless rural workers have started in 1978, with the conflict in the Nonoai Indian reservations, RS. The determining factors that launched the movement, according to Stédile and Goergen (1996), were economic, social and political.

The MST has in its history many struggles and achievements. It has performed over two thousand occupations with three hundred thousand families, and conquered seven million hectares of land (MST, 2004). These numbers are continuously increasing due to the continuous actions, which, it is worth noting, are responsible for the achievements.

When targeting the emancipation of the working class, the MST is not contented with only the conquest of land, since it is a movement that aims to build alternatives within the current social context. Some of the strategies have defined

8 Among these struggles are: War of Canudos, BA, in 1893; The Contestado War (Guerra do Contestado), SC, in 1920, Prestes Column (Coluna Prestes), in 1924.

9 Ligas Camponesas

10 União dos Lavradores e Trabalhadores Agrícolas do Brasil

11 Movimento dos Agricultores Sem Terra

12 "somente no final dos anos 70, é que os camponeses efetivaram, através da ação, sua luta, dando início à ocupação de terras no estado do Rio Grande do Sul"

education, which is seen by the Movement as something that goes beyond the school (CALDART, 2000), as a maker of new forms of relationships, different from those experienced in contemporary society.

3 THE MST AND ITS ACTIONS TO SEARCH AN EDUCATIONAL PROCESS OF ITS OWN

The educational process of the Movement of Landless Rural Workers¹³ has been a journey of struggles. Education stands out as one of the innovative and important instrument of struggle for land and social transformation, and it is based on the socialist pedagogy, as evidenced by its pedagogical proposal.

In the MST universe, education does not imply only conquering physical space for the school, but also valorizing the countryside, instigating those involved to critically position themselves against the capitalist society and to be subjects of their history. They should be not individual, but collective subjects, bound to a social struggle and to the socialist history project, who demand a new way of educating.

Because of the difficulties of the Landless in joining and attending traditional schools, due to their formal structure, there arised the need for a differentiated pedagogical space. The traditional educational institutions develop a work that, in most cases, do not grace, but ignore and disregard the reality of the students, especially those belonging to the MST.

Education is seen by the MST as one of the pillars of human development, which is closely linked to a particular political project and a world view. In the light of what is stated in the Dossier MST School (2005, p. 161) the educational process is

¹³ Movimento dos Trabalhadores Rurais Sem Terra

[...] one of the dimensions of formation, understood, both in the broad sense of the human formation, and in the narrower sense of staff formation for our organization and for all the workers' struggles.¹⁴

The first reports about education in the Settlements were made in early 1980s. These documents emphasize a different school for the countryside, especially for the settlements. To think and develop proposals on "what school do we want?" and "how to organize the Settlement school?" (MST, 2005) were concerns that guided the actions of educators involved in the Settlements and Encampments organized by the MST.

In the late 1980s, the Department of Education was created, after an internal reorganization of the Movement, which was divided into sectors of activity. Through the sector of Education, the Itinerant School begins the construction of a pedagogical proposal aimed to serve the interests of rural workers. The Itinerant School is organized within the Encampments and Settlements, and aims to serving children, young people and adults who have never attended school or who have had restricted access to schooling. This is a way found by the MST to provide access to school education during the periods in which the camped families are awaiting to be settled by the state.

The fight for the legalization and recognition of the Itinerant School in Rio Grande do Sul takes place during the occupations. Through numerous claims, the Movement won, on November 19, 1996, the formalization of the Itinerant School as a free public school, ensuring the campers the right to education and enforcing the State's duty to provide education to all citizens (MST, in 2005).

Currently, the MST - RS Itinerant Schools are public schools, organized within the Encampments, linked to the

¹⁴ “[...] uma das dimensões de formação, entendida, tanto no sentido amplo da formação humana, como no sentido mais restrito de formação de quadros para a nossa organização e para o conjunto das lutas dos trabalhadores”

Elementary School Nova Sociedade (New Society). It is known as the Base School¹⁵, which accounts for the organizational and institutional process of the Itinerant School. The Elementary School Nova Sociedade, located in Nova Santa Rita, RS, is considered a benchmark of the Movement, and therefore, was chosen to legally ensure the Encampments' schools, with the main function of legitimizing the document of the Itinerant Schools.

So that the educational work be carried out, the following entities are responsible for implementing the pedagogical proposal: the state directory of the MST - RS, the Encampments' educational team and the state education sector.

4 THE POLITICAL – PEDAGOGICAL PROJECT OF THE ITINERANT SCHOOL

After a reflective work with the bases, in which parents, teachers, students, leaders and, especially, campers could express their difficulties and expectations about the school, a Pedagogical Political Project for the Itinerant School was drafted (MST, 2005).

According to Caldart (2002, p. 32), the educational rural project defended by the Movement states social practices as practices that "conform (form or deform) the subjects"¹⁶. In that sense, one can say "[...] that there is not really how to educate the rural subjects without transforming the dehumanizing social circumstances and without preparing them to be the subject of these changes"¹⁷. Among these social practices, we find, especially, labor relations.

15 Escola Base

16 "Conformam (formam ou deformam) os sujeitos"

17 "[...] que não há como verdadeiramente educar os sujeitos do campo sem transformar as circunstâncias sociais desumanizantes e sem prepará-los para serem os sujeitos destas transformações"

The school is organized by philosophical and pedagogical principles related to the pedagogy of the Landless Movement and to the State Public Education principles and guidelines. The school seeks to develop education as an ongoing process of formation and transformation, focusing on the various dimensions of the human being and encompassing the scientific knowledge and relevant content for the rural life and the construction of memory and the humanist values in a participatory and egalitarian way. Taking reality and culture of the movement into consideration, the school context is a space organized collectively and cooperatively, which aims to develop and promote human values and rescue human dignity (MST, 2005).

Among the principles that guide the practice of the Itinerant School are: collective leadership, cooperation, students self-organization, defense of the working class, activist education, cultivation of memory and history learning, job training, organizational training, economic training, political training, theory- practice relationship, among other principles.

5 UNDERSTANDING AND TREATMENT OF THE CONTENTS OF PHYSICAL EDUCATION IN THE MST ITINERANT SCHOOL: DATA ANALYSIS

The notebooks of the education sector, the elaboration and publication of the documents that guide the pedagogical action for all the MST schools began in 1990. In this material, there is an indication of lines and general principles, but when referring to pedagogical practice on the school routine, the focus is on elementary education. There is not yet a document that guides high school and technical practices in the schools.

In general, Encampment and Settlement schools offer the early years of elementary school (1st to 4th grade), but few do offer the final years (5th to 8th grade). Very few schools

offer high school level and even fewer offer the technical level.

The Itinerant School Filhos de Deus, in Tupanciretã – RS, offers seven stages of education (preschool, 1st Introductory, 1st normal, 2nd, 3rd, 4th and 5th stages), each of which are supervised by two teachers. The structure of the school consists of four classrooms made of canvas (containing a blackboard and furniture built by the members of the Encampment), a kitchen / dining room and an office / library, also made of canvas, and a patio, where Physical Education classes take place.

The contents of the various areas of knowledge in the Itinerant School are built in the course of the educational process and must consider the learners needs and respect the historically constructed contents that are socially useful and have a concrete meaning in the students' lives.

Physical Education, seen as an important area of knowledge in the formation of the Landless, works on the initial grades from the perspective of bodily expression. Some of the contentes are: theater, dance, exercise, music and games.

In the subsequent stages, Physical Education classes aim at the development of different aspects. The proposals regarding the period from 5th to 8th grade, according to the MST Dossier (2005, p. 149), aim to:

[...] build healthy bodies and minds; build bodies that are physically fit, resilient and ready to fight, work and be at leisure. In this sense, it is recommended that the Physical Education classes predominantly focus on: exercise (assemble fixed sequences of exercises that work the whole body), long, rhythmic walks, running, long and high jump, rope, baton, throwing, relaxation exercises for the body and the mind. As for the games, one can take advantage of the space where the subject is taught to teach the rules and techniques of the major sports and

recreational games. As to playing games, it is best if they are played in the collective leisure moments and organized by the students themselves.¹⁸

These propositions beckon to utilitarian and countervailing perspectives that aim to develop some actions (gymnic exercises, walking, relaxation exercises) to obtain specific results (healthy bodies and minds). But they evidence, on the one hand, a divergence with the Movement's society and education project, but on the other, if the MST's struggle is largely expressed in the tension of the marches, occupations and displacements, which demands learning, this incessant movement can be made possible by dealing with the content of Physical Education.

According to reports of educators of the Itinerant School Filhos de Deus, the MST schools attach importance to Physical Education, as, unlike the other state schools of Rio Grande do Sul¹⁹, they ensure its students from 1st to 4th grade two Physical Education classes per week. The other state schools have to rely on the goodwill of Physical Education students or on teachers who understand the importance of the subject for this age group and work with the students through projects.

In the Itinerant School, however, educators say that Physical Education is one of the few moments that brings together all students. As an educator highlights:

¹⁸ [...] formar corpos e mentes saudáveis, com preparo físico, resistência e disposição para a luta, o trabalho e o lazer. Neste sentido, é recomendado que os momentos de Educação Física sejam dedicados predominantemente para: ginástica (montar seqüências fixa de exercícios que trabalhem todas as partes do corpo), caminhadas longas e cadenciadas, corridas, saltos em altura e distância, corda, bastão, lançamentos, exercícios de relaxamento corporal e mental. Em relação aos jogos, pode-se aproveitar o espaço da disciplina para ensinar as regras e técnicas dos principais jogos recreativos e esportivos. Quanto à prática dos jogos, o melhor é que fique no espaço de lazer coletivo a ser organizado pelos próprios alunos.

¹⁹ RS is one of the only Brazilian states that has no Physical Education teacher in the early years of elementary school. The Physical Education classes are assumed by teachers of the initial years of elementary school (in RS, they are called "unidocentes"), with degrees in Pedagogy or Teaching.

[...] here, in the Encampment, we do not have a place where they can play, a playground, there is not a lot of space to play. Physical Education classes are a moment when they can relax, where they meet, talk, chill, have fun.²⁰

In this context, the subject constitutes a time and a space for learning and for leisure events. Due to the lack of appropriate spaces, the children's recreational activities consist, to a large extent, in creating games and reproducing activities learned in Physical Education classes. According to the educator:

[...] Even when there are no physical education classes, they are always playing, playing the games we taught. [...] This game of "farinhada" and "sapata", they play all the time; when we go through the Encampment, there they are, playing "farinhada".²¹

The surveyed teachers indicate that, in Physical Education classes, they develop contents that they learn in other forums for dialogue and coexistence of the movement (meetings, congresses, time of formation of the MST - regional and / or state - and training courses for educators offered by the Movement). Physical Education classes are also based on the experiences of educators in other instances of the movement and they affect the daily life of students. The students incorporate the contents of these classes in their daily life in the Encampment, and this helps make Physical Education classes different.

The continuity, in the school, of the different experiences in the various scopes of the Encampments

²⁰ [...] nós aqui no acampamento não temos um lugar onde eles possam brincar, um parquinho, não tem muito espaço pra brincadeira. Esse momento da Educação Física é o momento deles relaxarem, onde eles se encontram, conversam, descontraem, se divertem.

²¹ [...] mesmo quando não tem aulas de Educação Física eles estão sempre brincando, jogando, fazendo as brincadeiras que a gente ensinou. [...] Essa brincadeira da 'farinhada' e a 'sapata', é a gente passar pelo meio do acampamento e lá estão as crianças brincando de fazer a farinhada.

characterizes the moment of alternation between what is lived in the largest instance (State Management, National Management, Institute of Education Josué de Castro, etc...), in School Time and in Community Time. This dynamics reflects the constant pedagogical presence of the very movement itself, which is

[...] the main educational subject of the landless formation process, because the different educational experiences of each person who integrates it, be it an occupation, the camp, the march, a school, go through it (Caldart, 2004, p. 325). RT, 2004, p. 325).²²

Regarding the process of teachers training, it is necessary to clarify that Josué de Castro Educational Institut (IEJC), training institution to which they are linked, develops its education / training process on an alternate basis between the School Time (period in which the greatest influence is from school - IEJC) and Community Time (period in which the greatest influence is from the community). This is a moment of experimentation, socialization of knowledge, field research and activities oriented by the school (ITERRA, 2004).

From this perspective, Caldart (2001) claims that the moment of alternation allows the exchange of knowledge and the strengthening of family ties and the students bonds with the Encampment or Settlement, the MST and the land.

Another important aspect of Physical Education in the school of the researched Encampment is related to the organization of the school space. Depending on the planning of educators, there are moments in which all the students of the different classes of the same period²³ attend the same

²² [...]sujeito educativo principal do processo de formação dos sem terra, no sentido de que por ele passam as diferentes vivências educativas de cada pessoa que o integra, seja em uma ocupação, um acampamento, uma marcha, uma escola. (CALDART, 2004, p. 325).

²³ In Brazil classes are either in the morning or in the afternoon. So by "period" we mean morning or afternoon.

Physical Education class. This work dynamics is the result of the fact that the space where PE classes take place was located near the classrooms. The bustle in the courtyard hindered the development of the other classes.

Other factors that facilitate this organization are the fondness of some educators to work with the content of Physical Education and the teaching internship they attend in the Bachelor of Teaching and Countryside Studies courses at IEJC. As shown in the following report:

When an educator learns a new game or a new exercise, he/she teaches it to all the students and other educators during Physical Education classes. Some educators are better able and like more than others to make jokes and play with the youngsters.²⁴

Although it was not an initial plan, this development became an alternative that reinforces respect, sense of community and solidarity among the students, i.e., it reinforces fundamental assumptions of the Landless Movement. The emphasis on these principles is necessary to the extent that, as highlighted by an educator, "[...] children come from a different essence, they come from the outside, they were not born here, they come from an individualistic society and the people here have to work on it".²⁵

We observed that, in the coexistence and in the development of activities among different age groups, elder people help and respect the younger. Besides, there are not many conflicts in regard to gender differences, age or learning phase, as highlighted by an educator: "[...] sometimes the very little ones play with the big ones. The big ones do not care;

²⁴ Quando um educador aprende uma brincadeira nova ou um exercício novo, ele ensina para todos os alunos e demais educadores durante as aulas de Educação Física. Alguns têm mais facilidade e gostam mais que os outros de fazer brincadeiras e jogar com a gurizada.

²⁵ "[...] as crianças vêm de uma essência diferente, elas vêm de fora, não nasceram aqui dentro, vêm de uma sociedade individualista e a gente aqui dentro tem que trabalhar isso".

when some big guy says something, the others defend the little guy saying he should play with them".²⁶

According to the educators' report, there are times when the students resort to the experiences they had when they were students in formal schools to develop their lessons, adapting them to the local context. As examples they mention long jump, running, ball games, stretching, warm ups and also traditional games.

According to one of the coordinators of the education sector, Physical Education is one of the subjects which educators find more difficult to innovate and carry out what was planned. This difficulty is mainly due to lack of access to reference materials related to the subject. They stress that material resources are scarce, that the state incentives greatly diminished, which makes it even harder to work. They only possess a football and some games made by them and by the students.

In the interviews, they make it clear that the educational work is based on Freire's perspective, who proposes that teaching should be done by making use of generative themes that emerge from the social context. In this perspective, the teachers work on average two weeks with a generative theme and meet to assess whether the students could understand and grasp the subject content. If the objectives were achieved, they would propose a new generative theme, relevant to the group. According to them, without assessing the practice, the Itinerant School becomes like a traditional school. With this method, they believe that there is no need to conduct tests, because the students would only learn new content if they were prepared for it.

Paulo Freire's (1983) proposal - which arises from the concern with the oppressed classes -, with regard to the pedagogical action from generative themes, is part of a

²⁶ "[...] às vezes tem uns bem pequenininhos jogando no meio dos grandes. Os grandes não se importam, quando algum fala alguma coisa os outros defendem e dizem pra deixar"

liberating education, as opposed to a banking model of education. In a banking model of education, the relationship between educator and student is vertical. The educator holds all knowledge while the student is just a receiver. In the liberating education, however, knowledge comes from the actual experience of man, and he recognizes its historical and transformative character.

In this sense, the more we articulate knowledge about the world, the more the students will feel challenged to seek answers and, consequently, the more encouraged they are, the more they will be brought into a state of critical and transformative consciousness in the face of reality. This dialectical relationship is increasingly incorporated as educators and learners become subject of their process.

As regarding the relationship theory/practice of the pedagogical proposal, the teachers seek to work the specific contents of each subject through the generative themes, relating them to the experience of the campers, focusing on the valorization of and care with the land. They mention, however, certain difficulties in realizing this process. The difficulty is in part due to the educators' training who, in general, are either layman or are initiating their training courses (Bachelor of Teaching and Countryside Studies). However, despite these limitations, they seek to improve their skills through frequent group discussions, in which they share what they know, thus helping each other; through the study of the MST's materials on education; through participation in training courses offered by the Movement (IEJC) or by educational institution in partnership with the Movement (UnB, Unijuí, UCS and other institutions).

Another hindrance in the MST school is the high turnover of teachers, due to the very characteristic of the lives of people that belong to the Movement (they are settlers, they move to other encampments or start working on another sector in the same encampment). To ease this difficulty, the education sector of the Encampment 8 de Março established

that the educators would work in pairs. Each educational stage has two educators in order to prevent the work from stopping if one needs to leave.

Although there are contradictions in the educators' statements, we can say that Physical Education is understood as a capital area of knowledge in human development and plays an important role in the daily life of the Itinerant school. Despite the hegemonic discourse associated with Physical Education - "it's good for the health", "It is important for children to have fun and stop the horseplay around the shacks"²⁷ - you can see that, in their lessons, the educators give a dimension to their PE classes that goes beyond these statements. When they speak of the activities they propose, they show concern in rescuing the cultural identity of learners and the values implicit in the activities, and they seek to problematize them.

Among the activities observed in the research field, there is a game called "Black boy from Africa"²⁸, in which children enact the situation experienced by the slaves. The children (that play the black slaves) are distributed in a delimited area, except one, who will play the role of the "overseer"²⁹. The "black slaves" should be alert to a possible lapse of attention on the part of the "overseer" and try to escape to another location. If one "slave" is arrested, he is taken to another area, but others can save him. In this game, the teacher emphasizes the importance of collective organization (some may distract the "overseer" so the others can flee), the need to sympathize with someone's problems (the "free" slaves sympathize with the prisoner) and brings back the treatment foisted upon the black during slavery.

Following this line of thinking, the contents of Physical Education, particularly in the early stages of elementary

27 "faz bem para saúde"; "é importante para as crianças divertirem-se e pararem de 'aprontar' pelos barracos"

28 Negrinho da África.

29 Feitor.

school, are developed through generative themes relevant to the group with which one is working.

In light of this perspective, an example of activity performed during the interventions of the Research Group on Education and Territory (GPET) in the researched Encampment, which aims at working some content of Physical Education, was the game "Every jack to his trade"³⁰. With this game, we aim at working space-time notions, agility and coordination, as well as discussing the socio-spatial exclusion to which the landless are submitted, and values such as solidarity and equality of conditions.

To carry out the activity, the children were distributed on the property next to the school within circles drawn on the ground, each representing a "monkeys' branch". It was explained to the children that each of them would be a "monkey" and each "branch" would represent the "monkeys'" home. At every utterance of the phrase "Every jack to his trade"/"Cada macaco no seu galho", the children should run and change "branch", and one circle (the "branch") would be erased. The game would be over when only one circle remained on the ground, with all the children within it.

After the game, the children were gathered to talk about issues such as: was it good not to have a branch? Why? Is it good not to have where to live? If this happens to someone, what can he/she do? Through this game, it was possible to discuss with students the process of social exclusion in which they dwell. The goal was to emphasize the sense of community – after all, everyone had to be in one "branch" only, and it means that there was not room for everyone and that some people had to share their space with others. We also wanted to spark critical thinking, leading the children to reflect

³⁰ "Cada macaco no seu galho". Literally, this expression means "Each monkey on its branch", and the sense is the same as in "Every jack to his trade". But to explain how the game develops, we'll maintain the words "monkey" and "branches", which would substitute "jack" and "trade".

on the everyday situation of the community, fostering an inter-relationship between the real and ideal, the social and political.

6 FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

The MST rejects the model of society based on the concentration of land and exploitation of labor, so it struggles to build a project of society that goes beyond the capital. It views the school as a fundamental space-time entity, which adds value to cooperative, solidary and autonomous work, bound to the land and to the system of small properties. The Movement and, consequently, the Itinerant School, being inserted in a system that enslaves, excludes, and expropriates, experiences constant conflict in the construction of these horizons.

With regard to the educators' perception on the importance of Physical Education, the survey showed that there are conflicts between discourse and pedagogical practice. The educators's hegemonic discourse about the relevance of Physical Education in the lives of students, proclaiming improved health and quality of life, lacks, in reality, a real understanding about the specificity of Physical Education in the formation of subjects in the MST's context.

We must remember that the history of Physical Education shows that its creation is done under the influence of the hegemonic thinking of the ruling classes, and by definition, Physical Education should assume a social role in the formation of subjects, but it does not. By emphasizing the formation of a healthy man, strong and agile, Physical Education tends to adapt man to society, alienating him from his status as a historical subject, able to interfere in the transformation of society (SOARES et al., 1992).

It is worth noting that even though the educators say that the activities developed in Physical Education are recreational and instrumentalist, these activities suffer a

critical bias when problematized by educators. So, when bound to the local context, Physical Education classes contribute to the human formation of the subjects, adding value to the educational project advocated by the MST.

The contact with this context instigates to think and rethink educational practice and the operationalization of Physical Education knowledge as a specific process of collective reflection. The contact with this context also brings to mind the fact that an academic education enables reflection, problematization and experiences with different socialcultural environments in which the teachers can work. Examples of these environments are the countryside and social movements. Establishing an educational relationship with the individuals who live in the countryside "[...] necessarily requires a reflection and an understanding of their lifestyle, their interests, their needs for development and their specific values"³¹ (BRASIL, 2007, p . 8).

To this end, the university fulfills the primary role of questioning what is established, of mediating the conditions for overcoming the practical problems of reality.

The results of this research allow us to bring to the attention of the academy, particularly the Physical Education course, discussions and reflections on the academic formation that does not take into account elements of cultural diversity. The syllabus is based mainly on the urban context and excludes from the discussion, problematization and construction of methodologies, the minority groups and contexts such as popular education initiatives, social movements, rural areas, among other contexts.

The routing of actions is a challenge that is not only about the initial training, but requires effort - and urgently - in the direction of continued education. It should be noted that the MST signals for a society in movement, under

³¹ "[...] requer necessariamente uma reflexão e um entendimento do seu modo de vida, dos seus interesses, das suas necessidades de desenvolvimento e dos valores específicos"

construction, and it challenges the university and the school to think about the horizons of their pedagogical practices.

Educação Física escolar: a ação pedagógica e sua legitimação enquanto prática social na Escola Itinerante do MST

Resumo: Este artigo apresenta a pesquisa que investigou a ação pedagógica nas aulas de Educação Física e sua legitimação enquanto prática social na Escola Itinerante Filhos de Deus, do Acampamento 8 de Março, no município de Tupanciretã, Rio Grande do Sul (RS). Trata-se de uma pesquisa qualitativa, desenvolvida por meio de entrevistas e observações. Os resultados da pesquisa revelam que os conteúdos desenvolvidos em Educação Física nessa escola vem atribuindo um viés de criticidade ao serem problematizados pelos educadores. Todavia, estando a escola inserida em um sistema que escraviza, exclui e expropria, ela vivencia constantes conflitos com a construção desses horizontes.

Palavras-chave: Educação Física. Educação da população. Assentamentos rurais. Condições sociais.

Educación Física: La acción pedagógica y su legitimidad como práctica social en la Escuela Itinerante de MST

Resumen: Este artículo presenta la investigación que investigó la acción pedagógica en clases de Educación Física y su legitimidad como una práctica social en la Escuela Itinerante Filhos de Deus (Hijos de Dios), del Acampamento 8 de Março (Campamento 08 de marzo), en el municipio de Tupanciretã, Rio Grande do Sul (RS). Esta es una investigación cualitativa desarrollada a través de entrevistas y observaciones. Los resultados de la investigación muestran que el contenido desarrollado en la Educación Física en esta escuela sufre un sesgo crítico cuando problematizada por los educadores. Sin embargo, puesto que la escuela está en un sistema que esclaviza, excluye, y expropria, experimenta constantes conflictos con la construcción de estos horizontes.

Palabras clave: Educación Física. Educación de la Población. Asentamientos rurales. Condiciones Sociales.

REFERENCIAS

ALBUQUERQUE, J. O.; CASAGRANDE, N.; ESCOBAR, M. O.; TAFFAREL, C. N. Z. A prática pedagógica da Educação Física no MST: possibilidades de articulação entre teoria pedagógica, teoria do conhecimento e projeto histórico. **Revista Brasileira de Ciências do Esporte**, Campinas, v. 20, n. 2, p.121-140, jan., 2007.

BEZERRA NETO, Luiz. **Sem-terra aprende e ensina**: estudo sobre as práticas dos movimentos dos trabalhadores rurais. Campinas: Autores Associados, 1999.

BORDA, Orlando Fals. Aspectos teóricos da pesquisa participante: considerações sobre o significado e o papel da ciência na participação popular. *In*: BRANDÃO, Carlos Rodrigues (Org.). **Pesquisa participante**. 8. ed. São Paulo: Brasiliense, 1990. p.125-144.

BRASIL. **Panorama da educação no campo**. Brasília: MEC, 2007.

CALDART, Roseli S. **Pedagogia do Movimento Sem Terra**: escola é mais do que escola. Petrópolis, RJ: Vozes, 2000.

_____. O MST e a formação dos Sem-Terra: o movimento social como princípio educativo. *In*: GENTILI, Pablo; FRIGOTTO, Gaudêncio (Org.). **A cidadania negada**: políticas de exclusão na educação e no trabalho. São Paulo: Cortez, 2001. p.42-62.

_____. **Pedagogia do Movimento Sem Terra**. São Paulo: Expressão Popular, 2004.

FERNANDES, Bernardo Mançano. **MST**: formação e territorialização. São Paulo: Hucitec, 1996.

FREIRE, Paulo. **Extensão ou comunicação**. Rio de Janeiro: Paz e Terra, 1977.

_____. **A importância do ato de ler**: em três artigos que se completam. São Paulo: Cortez, 1993.

_____. **Pedagogia do oprimido**. Rio de Janeiro: Paz e Terra, 1983. Coleção O Mundo Hoje, 21.

ITERRA. Cadernos do ITERRA. Instituto de Educação Josué de Castro: método pedagógico. **Cadernos Iterra**, Veranópolis, n. 9, 2004.

MST. **Agenda do MST**, 2004.

_____. **Dossiê MST Escola**: documentos e estudos 1990 – 2001. São Paulo: Expressão Popular, 2005.

OLIVEIRA, Amauri A. B. de; SILVA, R. B. da; LARA, L. M.; RINALDI, I. P. B. A Educação Física escolar em Maringá: experiências de ensino aprendizagem no cotidiano das aulas. **Revista Brasileira de Ciências do Esporte**, Campinas, v. 28, n. 2, p.69-83, jan., 2007.

RIO GRANDE DO SUL. Secretaria de Educação. **Projeto político-pedagógico das escolas itinerantes do Estado do Rio Grande do Sul**, 2002.

SOARES, Carmen Lúcia *et al.* **Metodologia do ensino da Educação Física**. São Paulo: Cortez, 1992.

STÉDILE, João Pedro; GÖERGEN, Sérgio. **A luta pela terra no Brasil**. São Paulo: Página Aberta, 1996.

Recebido em: 07.10.2008

Aprovado em: 06.03.2009