

Challenges to the formation of communist consciousness in higher education: theoretical thought and the desire for practical achievement¹

Desafios à formação da consciência comunista no ensino superior: pensamento teórico e vontade de realização prática

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ABSTRACT

The article aims to present the contributions of Historical-Critical Pedagogy and Historical-Cultural Psychology to educational work in higher education based on the relationships between teaching, learning and human development. It is understood that if Pedagogy guides the selection of content and teaching procedures, Psychology reveals who is the specific recipient who will appropriate the content, through teaching procedures. The discussion is based on two interconnected movements of analysis; the first focuses on the teacher and his teaching activity in its political-pedagogical dimension; the second focuses on the student, highlighting the formation of consciousness, which occurs through the movement of apprehension of the multiple determinations of social reality, through the appropriation of theoretical-conceptual systems, highlighting the collective activity of study, research and intervention in the areas of University education. In both teachers and students, the formation of “revolutionary consciousness” in its psychological dimension can only be known concretely

RESUMO

O artigo objetiva apresentar as contribuições da Pedagogia Histórico-Crítica e da Psicologia Histórico Cultural ao trabalho educativo no ensino superior a partir das relações entre ensino, aprendizagem e desenvolvimento humano. Compreende-se que se a Pedagogia norteia a seleção de conteúdos e procedimentos didáticos, a Psicologia revela quem é concretamente o destinatário que se apropriará dos conteúdos, por meio dos procedimentos de ensino. A discussão baseia-se em dois movimentos de análise interligados; o primeiro focaliza o professor e sua atividade de ensino em sua dimensão político-pedagógica; o segundo focaliza o estudante pondo em destaque a formação da consciência, que se dá pelo movimento de apreensão das múltiplas determinações da realidade social, por meio da apropriação dos sistemas teórico-conceituais, destacando a atividade coletiva de estudo, pesquisa e intervenção nos âmbitos do ensino superior. Em ambos, docentes e discentes, a formação da “consciência revolucionária” em sua dimensão psicológica somente pode ser conhecida concretamente pela unidade entre

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through the unity between social consciousness and personal consciousness. Therefore, it is argued that higher education needs to provide conditions for the student not only to appropriate explanatory theories about the objects studied, but to experience their use through the incorporation of conceptual systems, theoretically mobilizing psychic processes in deciphering and intervening in reality.

Keywords: University education; Communist consciousness; Historical-Cultural Psychology.

consciência social e consciência pessoal. Por isso defende-se que a educação superior necessita dar condições para que o estudante não apenas se aproprie de teorias explicativas sobre os objetos estudados, mas experimente a sua utilização a partir da incorporação dos sistemas conceituais, mobilizando teoricamente os processos psíquicos na decifração e intervenção na realidade.

Palavras-chave: Ensino Superior; Consciência comunista; Psicologia Histórico-Cultural.

1 Introduction

The article aims to present the contributions of Historical-Critical Pedagogy and Historical-Cultural Psychology to educational work in higher education based on the relationships between teaching, learning and human development. Educational practice occurs with a collective of students and, contradictorily, is oriented toward developing people's personalities in the learning process, with educational institutions having to face the challenges of managing, in the same teaching situation, the group and personal dimensions of a collective work. The basic problem in achieving this task is determining the social relations that emerge in the particularity of higher education in the young university students' formation since it is through educational practice that interpersonal encounters are dynamized, establishing limits and possibilities for the development of conscious activity and human *praxis*.

The task of developing the collective character of educational work is characterized as the first challenge in a society marked by alienated production relations, as the organization of pedagogical practice in an educational institution that is guided by collective values occurs as a subversion of the capitalist system, which is organized to meet the interests of the owner part of society. Collective organizations are characterized by the formation of groups of a special kind, whose structure is guided by economic-

social and political-social contents that are conscious of the mode of production in which they develop and whose horizon is not just immediate interpersonal relations, but the social totality (PETROVSKI, 1984). This deeper dimension of group activities constitutes the non-psychological layer of group structure and refers to the *social sense* of activity within human practice. The criteria for estimating the collective character of a group must observe three aspects: 1. the assessment of compliance or not of its basic social function in society; 2. identify whether the group is under social norms, in the case of the author's reality, the socialist way of life, and, finally; 3. judge the group's capacity to allow each member to develop fully (PETROVSKI, 1984).

In opposition to collectives, the author called diffuse groups the social encounters that happen from non-conscious relationships with the social totality and are guided by more immediate interests, which are utilitarian and individualistic in capitalist society. If the determinant of collectivity is interactions guided by common and socially valuable purposes, activities and their content are centered on this. According to Petrovsky (1984), such a proposition goes against the dominant ideas represented by the liberal worldview. Based on the naturalization of the competitive individual, guided almost exclusively by personal interests, this vision translates an illusory representation of social reality that justifies the non-integration of most people into the benefits of the "wealthiest" things produced by humanity. This event is the challenge facing educators, including those in higher education.

When dealing with higher education as a particular segment of the educational system, we recognize that this stage of education has distinct specificities from the previous ones (Early Childhood, Elementary and High School Education). However, it remains close to them. This contiguity is part of systematized education, in which certain scientific knowledge is organized into curricular structures, serially organized and in a certain logical order, to be transmitted to students. Despite the differences, educational practice is based on the articulation of the *content-form-recipient triad*, so this inherent totality is a necessary point to be considered from the initial grades of the educational system

to the most advanced courses, regardless of the areas of knowledge in which it is inserted and the level of teaching. Since the higher education system operates under the same social determinations posed by the contradictions of capitalist society, including the social division between work planning and its execution, it suffers from challenges similar to those at previous levels: it is faced with the problem of knowledge disaggregation. The fragmentation of productive processes is expressed in the education system by early specialization, culminating in selecting and classifying access to knowledge according to the immediate needs of capitalist production.

We recognize that the recipients of higher education are young adults. Despite the immense difficulties of precisely demarcating the unity and transition processes between adolescence and adulthood⁴, we will consider initial youth as the beginning of adulthood so as not to be confused with the adolescence moment. In one way or another, this moment of adult life has the work as its reference, aiming to build independence and personal autonomy. Thus, to scientifically understand who the recipient of higher education is, it is necessary to consider what relationships the student body establishes with productive activity since these are bases for the development of collective projects, personal challenges and concrete interests of the student⁵.

⁴ In legal terms, the Child and Adolescent Statute (Estatuto da Criança e Adolescente – ECA) defines the legal age of majority as 18. According to Elkonin (1987), the period of adolescence is made up of the unity between early adolescence (10 to 14 years old) and adolescence itself (14-18 years old). Therefore, we take adulthood beginning at 18 years old as a chronological parameter. Establishing the final limit of early youth is more difficult, as official documents vary between 25 and 29. Considering the formation of psychism, we will take the range between 18 and 24 years old as the period of early youth, the moment in which the subject's autonomous and independent life begins, and his direct relationship with the problem of productive work.

⁵ Young adult development toward a conscious practice, considering the reality of the class society that exploits and dominates, can be thought of from the dialectic between *professional study activity and productive activity or work*. There are variations in the conditions of class inequality in capitalist society: young people who work during the day to ensure higher education at night; young people who dedicate themselves fully to higher education; young people who do not have the horizon of training at undergraduate level due to the needs to make up family income; young people who work with the prospect of one day being able to deepen their studies (ABRANTES; BULHÕES, 2017).

The proposed analysis starts from the unity between Pedagogy and Psychology, using the Historical-Critical Pedagogy and Historical-Cultural Psychology frameworks because both are based on Dialectical Historical Materialism (DHM). If Pedagogy guides us in selecting content and teaching procedures, Psychology reveals the specific recipient who will appropriate the content through teaching procedures (MAGALHÃES; MARTINS, 2020).). Who is the young university student with whom higher education works? What are the criteria for identifying teaching content, and what forms of work best suit this particular moment in their education?

In this logical path, the discussion centers on training young university students to develop two discussion topics. The first analysis movement will focus on teachers in higher education, defending the need to maintain a conscious relationship with the pedagogical method they adopt. The teacher needs to understand how this teaching segment is structured and organized in today's capitalist society, recognizing its acute contradictions and social determinations articulated to the dominant class interests, aiming at the hegemony of a technical/instrumentalist formation instead of the multilateral formation we defend. Their determinations will allow teachers to take a conscious stance in this counter-hegemonic struggle when they know the disputes at stake. The second movement of analysis, interrelated to the previous one, focuses on the defense of the formation of a specific type of consciousness, one that, through the unity of form and content of teaching, enables an understanding of the totality of social reality, leading the subject to engage in a transformative and revolutionary *praxis*. Here, we address the goal to be achieved by the teaching-learning-student development relationship, following the task summarized by Pistrak (2013) on educating fighters who work in an associated and collective way, capable of self-direction, creators of new conditions and social relations, toward the overcoming of class society. An extremely difficult task under the existing conditions but indispensable, nonetheless.

2 Higher education and the necessary conscious relationship with the pedagogical method

The problem of higher education training based on the DHM requires considering multiple relationships that were only mentioned in this introduction. However, aware of these limits, we highlight once again that these determinations are articulated as a unit in educational practice in three aspects: *contents education*, observing the epistemological and political dimensions of the teaching and learning process, the *ways of teaching*, highlighting the educational practices of higher education and the particularities of *young adult* student arriving at university.

In the commodity society, marked by the contradiction between capital and labor, opposing interests determine disputes within higher education, establishing clashes over the meaning of the practice undertaken by the educational system in general and higher education in particular. Even in cases where the explicit objectives appear to be the same, educational policies are articulated in the struggle between capital and labor, stressed by distinct objectives according to the worldview and part of society they aim to benefit. Thus, even if some sectors of the university claim otherwise, educational policies in a divided society always take sides in the class struggle.

Aiming at a brief contextualization, since the 1970s, Chauí (2001) addressed the transformations conducted within Brazilian Universities by the demands of neoliberal business logic and coined the concept of "operational university". In summary, this concept explains the internal transformation of the university into a service provider, managed under the business logic of flexible, competitive, heteronomous accumulation, which increasingly distances itself from a democratic political perspective. The neoliberal vision that begins to assert itself within it determines what and for whom it is produced, what and for whom it is taught through the investment policies of the Bourgeois State. From this perspective, Souza (2017) points out that collective work gradually dissolves, opening space for all forms of harassment, isolating individuals and promoting different forms of suffering and illnesses due to precarious work. The author

mentions the pauperization of teaching working conditions, unstable relationships, the destruction of the rights of those in the public sector, lower salaries and high productivity demands, and a growing bureaucratization of the procedures inherent to teaching. For Souza (2017), the logic of capital intensifies contradictions "(...) which are agilely handled by capital so as not to become a confrontation, but transmuted into (supposed) personal conflicts between workers, which increases competition among workers, who no longer recognize themselves as such" (SOUZA, 2017, p. 179).

Considering the University as a space not only for the transmission-assimilation of elaborated knowledge but also for producing knowledge with a scientific basis, the other side of this business logic can be attested to by the so-called academic productivism. This aspect shifts the purposes of scientific research that could be aimed at solving problems of life in society, relevant to society as a whole in the most diverse areas of knowledge, to the mass production of *papers* guided by limited and restricted objectives such as achieving *rankings* access and citations, aiming to obtain resources in Public Notices, grants, among others. Thus, the university is subject to *productivism* to access funding, increasingly bureaucratically organized to control the content of what is researched and taught, based on competition for resources.

Several authors have already demonstrated the harmful results of this logic, both for research professors and the research itself, which becomes superficial and lighthearted, in addition to encouraging all types of intellectual dishonesty and unethical behavior. Tuleski, Alves and Franco (2017) highlight the need to get rid of illusions when it comes to the alleged false idea of scientific "neutrality" and the interference of private interests whose goal is not only to privately appropriate collectively produced knowledge but to restrict research into the limits of the benefits of capitalist production. It is necessary to overcome the naive conscience by being clear that "science and political positioning are not separate and that capitalism, now in an open way, dictates the rules of knowledge production, restricting the pseudo-autonomy of scientists" (TULESKI; ALVES; FRANCO, 2017, p.206).

In this context, the education of young university students has as one of the possibilities for practical achievement to act toward adapting to the capitalist processes of production and reproduction of life, demarcating alienating projects of professional construction, harboring ideological fads and modernizing discourses that result in their semi-qualification and light education, targeting the needs of the labor market in its selectivity. Expressions of this model are superspecialization, technicality and directly addressing the practical problems of valuing capitalist value, training young people to be exploited in work or to work as agents of exploitation and domination, producing conniving and actively people conforming to inequality.

On the other hand, a collective of workers competes for the university to perform critical training, whose educational activity aims to promote a radical understanding of the productive process in its contradictions. It is necessary to place the professions of young students in the reality of the productive world to achieve this comprehension, demanding multilateral training and the principle of totality, considering the knowledge produced and the production process itself based on historical circumstances. This focus guides professional practices and scientific creation toward content linked to the problem of human emancipation. These contradictions are expressed vividly in everyday university life in disputes surrounding the elaboration and implementation of political-pedagogical projects, subject menus and programs, and the distribution of vacancies for competition in the cases of public universities, that is, in each decision to be made.

We defend a counter-hegemonic Higher Education, which is not guided by a curriculum limited to merely technical-instrumental knowledge aimed exclusively at the job market but which develops a certain "worldview" articulated with collective values based on the need to surpass and emancipate from relations of exploitation and class domination, which implies a non-compartmentalized understanding of existing phenomena, whether in nature or society. The particularity of higher education lies in the task of producing a scientific relationship with reality among students as a

whole, considering not only the horizon of that appropriate established knowledge but also developing the resources to produce new knowledge as a form of artistic or scientific reflection of reality or by updating and posing philosophical problems.

This proposition, which will be better explored in the next topic, demands a brief discussion about this segment's objectives, contents and teaching procedures. Suppose the objectives or purposes indicate **what to teach for, why and to whom**. The contents indicate **what** should be taught, with a view to human emancipation and the procedures **for doing so**, highlighting the need for a working method. We will draw on Pistrak, Vygotsky and Saviani to support our analysis.

Regarding the purposes, Pistrak (2013) stresses in his time that the objective of training in systematized educational institutions should be revolutionary construction. The formation of the person should focus on the recognition of being part of an international collective of workers who fight for a new social organization, for a classless society: "Concretely, the issue leads to the new generations understanding, firstly, which is the essence of this process of struggle that encompasses humanity; secondly, what place the oppressed class occupies in this struggle; and, thirdly, what place each young person should occupy in this fight" (PISTRAK, 2013, p.113).

Vygotsky (2001b), in a clash with the existing pedagogies of the pre-revolutionary period, underlined the importance of starting from the students' concerns to produce new interests and needs through the knowledge to be appropriated, emphasizing the role of the educator as the "organizer of the social educational environment". What would this role be so that it is not confused with the idea of erasing the role of the educator, so common in pedagogies guided by Piagetian constructivism: "(...) his rule will always be one: before explaining, be interested; before forcing to act, prepare for action; before appealing to reactions, prepare the attitude; before communicating something new, raise the expectation of the new" (VIGOTSKI, 2001b, p. 163). Therefore, he emphasizes the formation of new interests and motives in students.

Suppose the purpose is to educate for transformation. Neither the teacher nor the student should be passive in the pedagogical process. Similarly, knowledge and the teaching-learning activity must highlight that phenomena are interconnected and interrelated; therefore, the scientific approach presupposes studying a particular object concerning others within concrete circumstances and in constant movement. It is about the dialectic of and in the nature and metabolism of human beings with nature through work. The purpose of the educational process, which articulates both content and teaching procedures, stresses its task against the hegemony of bourgeois pedagogies, explaining its political role. "Political paper means showing how power relations occur and what the bases of power are. This would then lead to the discovery of the place that takes part in the production process" (SAVIANI, 2004, p. 205). Awareness of the role played in social relations of production on the part of teachers and students allows the organization of the interests of the working class around the problems they face.

It is important to note that systematizing the purposes of higher education by orienting educational work to meet the interests of the working class does not represent the production of a supposed artificial sectarianism based on education but, on the contrary, means recognizing that there is a part of society, a class, that explores and dominates the other. Therefore, positioning itself in favor of the interests of the working class means defending the overcoming of exploitation and domination, that is, overcoming the private appropriation of human "wealth" and social relations resulting from a form of work that divides the moments of planning and execution of production, organizing social segments into "specialties" in which the largest portion of the population is responsible for fulfilling functions linked to the achievement of a work designed by others, with remuneration lower than the minimum for a dignified life. Educational practice guided by the interests of the working class is an education that has as its horizon serving society as a whole, thus, humanity as a perspective.

Regarding content, Pistrak (2015) points out that they need to teach how to establish a relationship with production processes and how the different branches of production are articulated in society. Pistrak, Vigotski, and Saviani defend polytechnicism as a fruitful way of overcoming the fragmentation of content, encyclopedism, the detachment from practical human reality by verbalism, knowledge seen as static, and common characteristics of bourgeois hegemonic education. Vygotsky (2001b) explains that both general education (basic education) and vocational education, which we will approach here as training provided within universities, should follow the following formula: "everyone should know something about everything, and everyone about something" (VIGOTSKI, 2001b, p. 275). In other words, everyone should know the general and more specific aspects fundamental to understanding social reality and, likewise, master the set of knowledge in the area linked to the work they perform in society. Thus, the axis for the contents would be human work in its most developed form, represented by different forms of technique used in industries and the countryside.

In the development of Historical-Critical Pedagogy, the reflection on which contents to teach, in terms of general principles and considering the non-adaptive purposes of capitalist society, is directed at the need to form conscious activity in students so that they can reproduce concrete reality in its objectivity in thought, aiming at *praxis*. The teaching activity aims for students to enter into a relationship with complex human objectification, establish active links with science, art and philosophy, and produce a worldview that recovers the role of the human being in history. Given the dialectical unity between theory and practice, the need for the socialization of conceptual systems is affirmed so that these theories can function as means of personal consciousness, thus enabling the psyche to be "leveraged" by human history.

The identification of objective knowledge results from breaking illusions artificially created by the dominant ideology and from the difficulties in producing knowledge. The curricular organization must systematize students' relationships with knowledge that denies the

representation that human beings walk behind the things they create, reifying social relationships and overcoming the idea that things produced by human beings have a life of their own. So, the knowledge that should make up educational relations is organized by *de-fetishizing* content (DUARTE et al. 2012), presupposing polytechnic training.

Regarding procedures, we highlight some aspects listed by the authors, which can shed light on university teaching in times of proliferation of distance learning and pedagogical fads such as the "inverted classroom", among others. Pistrak (2013), in his book on the "commune school", discusses the procedures used to achieve the aims of a socialist education: 1. The organization of collective theoretical-practical studies in personal/social interest centers; 2. The self-organization or self-direction of students from the simplest to the most complex activities to exercise collectively organized work; 3. Integrating school education activities with extracurricular collective social movements, linking the university and everyone's lives to society's general problems.

This direction, within capitalist society, is directly opposed to the increasingly fragmented organization of university education, the emptying of curricula and the training of teachers and students whose horizon is only the eternal competition between peers, aiming to achieve rankings of performance, using scores created by evaluation and development agencies. It represents a counter-hegemonic practice that explores the contradictions between what is officially declared an educational project and the concrete reality that produces barriers to the effective socialization of knowledge. It is argued that the dissonant can allow the lethargy to be broken and that a movement of "counter-internalization" is possible, according to Meszáros (2008), uniting the university and life in society toward the interests of the class that lives from work. As Saviani (2011) highlights, it is necessary to link the specific subjects' contents to broader social purposes and not understand that each content is watertight and valid on its own, detached from social practice. Discarding or suppressing political debate ends up reproducing liberal theories of society and their idealistic

illusions, treating educational relations in the model of capitalist competition and taking the market as a defining fetish for content and forms of teaching.

The social relations within higher education determined by this logic can produce what they call defeat people. Consequently, there is the affirmation of social hierarchy with the disguise of the ideological discourse of meritocracy. Personal stories and biographies are disregarded, and through competition, students are mobilized toward objectives that everyone cannot achieve, characterizing conservative social relations as the capitalist way of existing. In this logic, the university reproduces a system where a few "chosen ones" can rise to prominence and social prestige. Aware of this not-always-declared reality, students often *incorporate* the alienated senses formed institutionally and the Manichaeian ideas of success or failure that oversize the personal aspect in the reproduction of life. Thus, a university that could conquer spaces for collective life and encounters with knowledge becomes an inhospitable place for competitive logic, teachers and students' illnesses.

Therefore, we argue that knowledge that integrates epistemological, technical, and political aspects needs to be systematically organized for the revolutionary training of students so that they can compose the individual capabilities of the student body. The challenge of training at undergraduate and postgraduate levels is related to the appropriation of knowledge with relative stability and the development of scientific production, demanding the formation of scientific skills and attitudes aimed at the collective, from the perspective of socially useful work to lifeful humans. The collective work in higher education is to transform young students into contemporaries of their historical time, equipped with a conscience guided by the values of the common good and capacities for creative and ethical practical action. There is no way to carry out this historical task without being equipped with a pedagogical theory that does not conform to the dehumanizing reality of capitalism.

Training in higher education is articulated based on the unity between teaching, research and extension. It presupposes the scientific link with reality in these three dimensions of university activity, always related to the

elaborated knowledge and its production processes through collective thought. Taking the production of knowledge as a perspective aiming at theoretical development, it is considered that in the unity of opposites between known and unknown, research is organized by what is unknown to the collective human being, identifying what is necessary to develop as knowledge, having as a reference the social practice. Through conceptual systematization, thinking is addressed toward practical and theoretical problems, identifying aspects of reality that must be explored by scientific production and methods of knowing reality, taking the particularities of the scientific object as a perspective. Training for research demands knowledge related to the particular object of study of science and the research methods that will guide investigation procedures, and it is not possible to perform such a task without the socialization of theoretical systems.

In unity with teaching and research activities, higher education presupposes extension activities, emphasizing the relationship between university and society. In extension, the objectification of knowledge systematically worked on in the field of research occurs, with the individual capabilities achieved by the student body, formed from teaching activities, gaining objective meaning in social practice. The achievement of practices within society enables students and teachers to understand the limits of ideological arguments that present society as harmonious and direct thought toward the concrete problems of collective life. Extension activities indicate perspectives for socializing knowledge and identifying social problems that require systematic research in a given knowledge field.

Notably, the necessary theoretical link between the future professional and reality can be made possible through a system of actions that involve teaching, research and extension, defining the contents with which the student will be involved. Exploring this unit concerns the training *didactic dimension* in higher education since it integrates political and epistemological aspects of educational work.

Concrete life determines the understanding of what the purposes of higher education are, what problems are relevant from the point of view of the working

class and what knowledge is necessary for forming a person who is aware of himself and the world in which he participates. The instrumentalization of the student body aims not at knowledge by knowledge (mere reproduction) but fundamentally the need to acquire knowledge that qualifies the performance of future professionals toward human emancipation (transformation), which leads us to the next topic.

3 Historical-Cultural Psychology and the formation of revolutionary consciousness

The central concepts of Historical-Cultural Psychology (HCP)⁶ allow us to understand the social determinations placed on the omnilateral development of human beings in class society. It encourages the struggle to build relations of production organized by the principle of collective ownership of socially produced wealth and the need to overcome relations of exploitation and domination of one class over another. Professional and scientific practice is produced in connection with training people with the *capacity* to face historical problems and act collectively to surpass the social circumstances that limit human freedom. In this sense, in unity with educational work, it takes as its problem to deal with the contradictions and transits between the particular forms of *social consciousness* in development and the process of forming the *personal consciousness* based on the achieved maximum historical possibilities. The organizational perspective of this process, determined by educational activity, is guided by the principle of collective ownership and the socialization of knowledge to achieve the common good.

⁶HCP was developed in the Soviet Union in a transitional society. The historical tasks were articulated with the process of overcoming class society, proposing the collective development of a corporate form organized by the principle of the common good and oriented toward the omnilateral development of the human being. Scientific activity was developed by a group of researchers and was forged from the perspective of the formation of the human psyche based on the determinations of social activities oriented to communist formation. For further deepening, consult Tuleski (2008) and Silva (2022).

Concrete life defines the analytical perspective of this psychology, stating that the structure of social activity determines and challenges the formation of the consciousness structure since human activity is the mediation in which the individual appropriates the particular social contents of society and, in the same relationship, the genre human achievements. Ontological development occurs when the individual participates in increasingly complex and challenging social activities, culminating in the possibility of forming the person with subjective means of engaging with problems that surpass their immediate life without denying it. The individual appropriates historical challenges by incorporating them personally and sharing them as needs to be overcome in a relationship in which the removal from immediate life through conscious analysis presupposes the movement of returning to it, surpassing its apparent form and requalifying practical action. The most complex and differentiated activities require human psyche achievements and conscious activity formation at higher levels of functioning (LEONTIEV, 2021).

Suppose we take the development of humanity as a reference. We must recognize that concrete life and historical movement precede knowledge processes. However, considering the psychological dimension and the person's formation, conceptual systems exist prior to individuals (LEONTIEV, 2021; LURIA, 2001). From this perspective, theories do not represent abstract creations of the human mind. Still, they are human experiences concerning particular real crystallized as conceptual systems, which function as idealizations of the fundamental aspects inherent to objective human practice. They allow the person's rational relationship to function based on historical universality. They enable individuals to evaluate objects and phenomena that appear empirically, overcoming the apparent form from the theoretically mediated relationship (DAVIDOV, 1988).

According to the authors of Historical-Cultural Psychology, theoretical thought characterizes the most complex and developed form of a conscious relationship with reality. This resource of interpretative mediation of reality in its movement does not appear in individual life abruptly but develops

throughout individual life grounded on historical circumstances and qualitative leaps in the individual's relationships with reality. Vygotski's (2001) discussion on the dialectic between everyday concepts and scientific concepts represents the position on qualitative transformations in the individual's epistemological relationship with reality. According to the author, the everyday representations expressed in concepts, despite forming a functional image for routine life, do not have the achieved objectivity by the scientific and methodical relationship with reality. In this sense, the author indicates the superiority of the scientific concepts for interpreting reality since theoretical concepts synthesize the multiple relationships that make up the thought object and the movement of its formation, identifying essential aspects of the phenomena to thought.

At the beginning of individual life, the appropriation of spontaneous concepts can represent advances in development from language acquisition. During social activities and life challenges, they begin to represent the interpretative limits of reality. The educational process becomes necessary for appropriating scientific concepts to ensure that the person conquers and incorporates a theoretical structure to connect to reality, objectively interpreting reality. The Soviet authors present the movement of formation of conscious activity in individuals in establishing rational relationships with the reality that overcome immediate sensations in three ways: *demonstrative-operative thought*, linked to perception and characteristic of the early years of life; *concrete-imaginative thought*, enabling the formation of general representations about reality; *scientific thinking*, articulating scientific concepts, enabling access to internal qualities of objects and phenomena of reality (DAVIDOV, 1988).

According to the general theory, scientific thought begins in the final years of high school, characterizing a psychological neo-formation of adolescence (VIGOTSKI, 1996). However, this same theory is based on the perspective that this qualitative development does not occur naturally and spontaneously but is determined by education and teaching processes that aim to develop theoretical

thought. For this reason, we observe that when we do not build an educational system aimed at forming a theoretical relationship with reality based on the principles of dialectical logic, not all adolescents will achieve this more elaborate form of bond with reality at this moment in life.

In the educational system determined by utilitarian principles and the emptying of scientific content at fundamental and secondary levels, it will not be possible for most students to establish a theoretical link with reality. This observation is fundamental to the topic of our interest since the majority of students who arrive at university do not have consistent scientific training. Therefore, emancipatory action in education must consider the formation of the theoretical link with reality, considering the *recipient subject* of higher education and planning in political pedagogical projects the development of students' intellectual autonomy. The theoretical thought that could be constituted in adolescence, forming the basis for beginning higher education training, becomes a task for early youth.

Davidov (1988) distinguishes between thought forms within scientific activity, highlighting the logic of thinking about reality in research methods. The author presents the particularities of scientific productions based on formal logic and the specificity of investigations founded on the DHM, stating that it is from this that it is possible to produce new knowledge about reality, also resulting in forms of theoretical thought to interpret objects and complex phenomena of the real, projecting the historical possibilities of its movement.

The author characterizes empirical thought as a means of rational understanding of reality, as a path of observation of reality that emphasizes the identity or otherwise of real objects, verbally designating them into classes of objects. Understanding that this form of link with reality is based on formal logic and presents possibilities of reaching conclusions through the management of judgments and general representations. It indicates that this knowledge is limited to describing the externality of reality, pointing out its limits to theoretical thought. Organized by the principle of identity, it seeks to describe the object in its attributes: quantity, quality, and measure, among others,

characterizing these processes as a moment of research that is insufficient to explain the real in movement (DAVIDOV, 1988).

The relationship with reality based on empirical thought would have validity for a static reality, describing what exists based on already constituted categories of knowledge. However, it has little explanatory power over complex phenomena and processes that need to be known in their historical development. Discussing the limits of empirical thought, Davidov (1988) argues that theoretical thought, from dialectical logic, should guide educational processes so that the socialization of the theoretical way of connecting to reality is possible. Noting that the concept can only be so named within a system, theoretical thought operates through scientific concepts, constituting itself as an activity of consciousness that reproduces the idealized object in its system of connections and relationships. In this way, the theory is characterized simultaneously as a "reflection" of the material object, as a means of mental reproduction and as a resource for reaching the internal structure of the thought objects.

The content of theoretical thought concerns the domain of objectively interrelated phenomena, surpassing the logic of observation of isolated objects outside an integral system. The orientation of theoretical thought is not restricted to the mere description of reality, despite using descriptive moments as an initial stage in the process of knowing. In the meantime, it fundamentally explains reality, identifies its contradictions and internal transits, and learns the contradictory trends of its development. In short, the theoretical way of knowing contemplates future trends in developing the studied object, guiding the practice to strengthen certain tendencies and oppose others. As a result, it is evident that the theoretical relationship with reality presupposes the practical and transformative implications of reality. We understand that this is one of the important tasks of higher education.

The initial developers of this psychological approach and their followers, who have not strayed from its philosophical basis, emphasize that the neoformation or new synthesis of psychic functions occurs when effective social

conditions are made possible for the individual. At the time of transition to adulthood (adolescence), the constitution of thought through scientific concepts stands out. In this conception, scientific conceptual thought of a dialectical nature occurs late in development. Vygotsky (1996) is emphatic in stating that the quality of this form of thinking, surpassing formal logic, may not be constituted since the more complex psychological functions they develop from the concrete conditions of the subject's life, from effective activities that produce them. He highlights that this form of thought develops from the appropriation of content that requires it, considering the form-content unity for developing thought about reality within activities that demand it. In other words, teaching activities that aim at the mere verbal reproduction of concepts by the student to obtain a grade or approval in curricular subjects contribute to an inertia of the contents, a stagnant and static view of them, not qualifying the practice of the individual about reality.

Considering the above, students' recurring questions about why and why I must study certain content or theories gain meaning beyond pragmatism and/or immediate utilitarianism. The contents, theories and techniques of the most diverse areas of knowledge, in the perspective adopted here, need to reveal to the student who the human being is, how he developed and develops historically and how such knowledge was produced and is produced from his links with social practice (SAVIANI, 2004). In this direction, Pistrak (2013, 2015) argues that the knowledge taught must be linked to "current affairs", understood as the problems humanity must face collectively.

Suppose we understand that thought through concepts develops self-perception, self-observation and self-knowledge. In that case, we see the importance of this for **self-awareness**: "(...) decisions or responses given to problems posed in and by reality will depend on knowledge that reveals the real, leads to its essence and does not leave the individual at the mercy of appearances" (TULESKI, 2016, p. 266). The theoretical relationship with reality allows the student to understand their existential situation based on understanding the determinations of a concrete situation.

Self-awareness, more than self-knowledge restricted to the perception of personal characteristics, concerns the understanding of determinations that produce a situation in which the person develops the concrete and complex situations in which they need to make decisions. Therefore, Vygotski (1996, p.72) states that "together with self-awareness, freedom and intention are formed", a process in which the relationship between actions and the set of these to objectives or purposes is consciously established, connecting the personal and the collective.

The measure of a person's freedom is related to the appropriation of historical means of confrontation for liberation and engagement in collective tasks that form a community of struggle for the emancipation of those who are exploited and dominated. Vygotski (1996, p. 73) highlights that "(...) both knowledge of nature and knowledge of personality are realized with the help of understanding other people, with the understanding of those around you, with the understanding of social experience".

The authors of Historical-Cultural Psychology claim that it is impossible to think of a unique life project without a society project that guides it. Nevertheless, what happens when school education does not promote conceptual development from a dialectical perspective? We probably have precariousness in exercising self-control, behavior self-control and reality analysis. Narrow knowledge, narrow horizon. The intensification of contradictions in capitalism creates fewer possibilities for full humanization and greater conditions for reproducing alienation. A subject is forged and estranged concerning himself, others, and reality. Therefore, Vygotsky (1996) tells us that imagining and organizing effective actions toward a new society requires the development of abstraction. Drawing up plans, individually or collectively, requires theoretical-conceptual development, and, in this direction, Lenin's (2020) statement takes on new meaning: without revolutionary theory, there is no revolutionary process. From a dialectical materialist perspective, without analyzing the development of the corporate forms that preceded it, understanding the movement of history and its

determinations, the basis of a revolutionary theory, becomes impossible to organize collectively within this movement, seeking a given purpose. However, theory in itself, far from the masses, is useless; it needs to become a tool of struggle by allowing the understanding of the social totality. In short, this process is nothing more than the development of theoretical thought that organizes human *praxis* in the direction of transformation.

Historical-Cultural Psychology denies and combats both idealistic subjectivism and mechanistic determinism in the explanation of the human psychic activity and proposes to objectively understand the process of formation of conscious activity, integrating into its field of concerns the practical processes that act in the formation of a person, highlighting the social *contents* with which it actively interacts. It works with the conquered historical possibility that allows each individual to contribute originally to collective life, overcoming circumstances to realize the *new* that is necessary for humanity.

The formation of revolutionary consciousness represents the development of a bond with the reality that goes beyond the immediate and everyday knowledge of fragmented daily life and that knows reality methodically for what it is and with awareness of what needs to be overcome and developed. Thus, the horizon of higher education is an imaginative relationship with reality that designs technical, theoretical and artistic solutions and identifies philosophical problems to liberate human beings from the determination of reality. In short, it is about considering training for the future by emphasizing the production of an active and fulfilling imagination. Cultivating an active imagination presupposes the development of *theoretical thought*, aiming to produce a reflection of reality in its dynamic objectivity, the formation of *human feelings* (intellectual, aesthetic, moral) as Zaporozhets (2017) explains, considering the construction of sensitivity mediated by values of the common good and *emancipatory praxis*, without losing sight of the process of creating the *will to achieve* human liberation.

4 Final considerations

The relationship between learning and student development immediately brings us to the problem of teaching, so we defend that it is impossible to scientifically train students at a university without knowing pedagogical theories and the purposes of education. We highlight the need to identify cultural elements decisive for human formation, considering the relationship between educational practices and the development of students' personalities within class society.

In the first section, from the perspective of the teaching staff, we reflect on the imperative relationship between the professional and the pedagogical method, emphasizing in educational work the particular challenges of training in higher education and the horizon of training professionals who fight for human emancipation. Then, taking as a reference the development of the student body, we made notes on the contributions of Historical-Cultural Psychology to the formation of "communist consciousness", starting from the recognition that the development of the human psyche can only be produced by considering social activities and the dialectical unity between *social* and *personal consciousness*.

In the context of the challenges of building social relationships in university that allow the appropriation of theoretical systems to all students, we stress the need to overcome both naive forms of thought and models of analysis restricted to the externality of real objects. We indicate theoretical thought, based on historical materialist dialectics, as the most complex way of problematizing and explaining the concrete world since the objective understanding of reality and the practical struggle for human liberation characterize the functioning of consciousness in this logic.

The communist form of consciousness in higher education represents a relationship with reality implicated in the world's practical problems. It is a mediation that develops in *praxis* and is forged as a unity that articulates the epistemological challenge of producing objective knowledge about reality and the political struggle to produce a social reality that overcomes class

exploitation and domination. Higher education is a determination of the process of students' personalization that involves the preparation of scientific thought, the development of self-consciousness and the production of attitudes toward the world guided by the collectivist organization and the principles of the common good.

Desafíos para la formación de la conciencia comunista en la educación superior: el pensamiento teórico y el deseo de logros prácticos

RESUMEN

El artículo tiene como objetivo presentar los aportes de la Pedagogía Histórico-Crítica y la Psicología Histórico-Cultural al quehacer educativo en la educación superior a partir de las relaciones entre enseñanza, aprendizaje y desarrollo humano. Se entiende que si la Pedagogía orienta la selección de contenidos y procedimientos de enseñanza, la Psicología revela quién es el destinatario específico que se apropiará de los contenidos, a través de procedimientos de enseñanza. La discusión se basa en dos movimientos de análisis interconectados; el primero se centra en el docente y su actividad docente en su dimensión político-pedagógica; el segundo se centra en el estudiante, destacando la formación de la conciencia, que se da por medio del movimiento de aprehensión de las múltiples determinaciones de la realidad social, a través de la apropiación de sistemas teórico-conceptuales, resaltando la actividad colectiva de estudio, investigación e intervención en las áreas de educación superior. Tanto en profesores como en estudiantes, la formación de la “conciencia revolucionaria” en su dimensión psicológica sólo puede conocerse concretamente a través de la unidad entre la conciencia social y la conciencia personal. Por lo tanto, se sostiene que la educación superior necesita brindar condiciones para que el estudiante no sólo se apropie de teorías explicativas sobre los objetos estudiados, sino que experimente su uso a través de la incorporación de sistemas conceptuales, movilizándolo teóricamente procesos psíquicos para descifrar e intervenir en la realidad.

Palabras clave: Enseñanza superior; Conciencia comunista; Psicología Histórico-Cultural.

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