



Weaving threads about the radio programs of the *Movimento de Educação de Base* in Tefé/AM (1963-1980)¹

Tecendo fios sobre os programas radiofônicos do Movimento de Educação de Base em Tefé/AM (1963-1980)

Tejiendo hilos sobre los programas radiales del Movimiento de Educación Básica en Tefé/AM (1963-1980)

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Abstract

This article aims to analyze the educational proposals developed by the *Movimento de Educação de Base* in Tefé/AM via radio programs in the period from 1963 to 1980. The *Movimento de Educação de Base* (MEB) created in 1961 had the aim of teaching adults in the regions to read and write. North, Northeast and Central-West of the country. As regards the MEB in Tefé, it began its activities in 1963, offering riverside populations courses and radio programs that dealt with different themes. In order to understand MEB's actions, we analyzed documentary sources and established a dialogue with authors who deal with the *Movimento de Educação de Base* in different contexts and temporalities. With regard to the methodological basis, we approached the ideas of Barros (2019), Certeau (2017), Ginzburg (1989).

Keywords: Basic Education Movement; MEB Tefé; Broadcasting.

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Resumo

Este artigo tem como objetivo analisar as propostas educativas desenvolvidas pelo Movimento de Educação de Base (MEB) em Tefé/AM, via programas radiofônicos, durante o período de 1963 a 1980. O MEB, criado em 1961, tinha o intuito de alfabetizar adultos das regiões Norte, Nordeste e Centro-Oeste do país. No que se refere ao MEB em Tefé, suas atividades se iniciaram em 1963, oferecendo cursos e programas radiofônicos que versavam sobre diferentes temáticas às populações ribeirinhas. Para compreendermos sua atuação, analisamos fontes documentais e estabelecemos diálogo com autores que tratam do MEB em diferentes contextos e temporalidades. No que se refere ao embasamento metodológico, aproximamo-nos das ideias de Barros (2019), Certeau (2017) e Ginzburg (1989).

Palavras-chave: Movimento de Educação de Base; MEB Tefé; Radiodifusão.

Resumen

Este artículo tiene como objetivo analizar las propuestas educativas desarrolladas por el Movimiento de Educación de Base en Tefé/AM a través de programas radiales en el período de 1963 a 1980. El Movimiento de Educación de Base (MEB) creado en 1961 tuvo como objetivo enseñar a leer a los adultos de las regiones. y escribir. Norte, Noreste y Centro-Oeste del país. En cuanto al MEB de Tefé, inició sus actividades en 1963, ofreciendo a las poblaciones ribereñas cursos y programas de radio que trataban diferentes temáticas. Para comprender las acciones del MEB, analizamos fuentes documentales y establecimos un diálogo con autores que abordan el Movimiento de Educación Básica en diferentes contextos y temporalidades. En cuanto a las bases metodológicas, nos acercamos a las ideas de Barros (2019), Certeau (2017), Ginzburg (1989).

Palabras-clave: Movimiento de Educación Básica; MEB Tefé; Radiodifusión.

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Introduction

The *Movimento de Educação de Base* (MEB), conceived as a national project, was created in 1961 and aimed to teach literacy to adults in the North, Northeast and Central-West regions of Brazil. As for the MEB in Tefé, its activities developed over the course of forty years (1963-2003), offering literacy courses and training in radio programs to riverside populations, which covered different topics, such as adult literacy, health education, nutritional education, childcare, religious guidance, cooperativism, trade unionism, among others. In this article, the objective was to analyze the educational proposals developed by the MEB in Tefé/AM, via radio programs, from 1963 to 1980. However, we will emphasize adult literacy and actions related to unionism and cooperativism, since they were more prominent there.

In order to understand the performance of this movement, within the established time frame (first *MEB* administration in Tefé/Dom Joaquim de Lange), we chose as documentary sources the monthly, half-yearly and annual reports, the pedagogical proposals, the terms of agreements and the scripts of radio programs. To establish a dialogue with these sources, we appropriated the works of Kadt (2007), Fávero (2006), Paiva (2009), Peixoto Filho (2003), Raposo (1985) and Wanderley (1984), who discuss the MEB from different perspectives and temporalities. Regarding the methodological basis, we dialogued with Barros (2019), Certeau (2017) and Ginzburg (1989), who helped us think about the role of the historian, the ways of doing history and the treatment of documentary sources. For Certeau (2017), in history, everything begins with the act of separating, gathering, and transforming certain objects distributed in other ways into documents, and it is necessary to think of them as symptoms of the forces that constituted them. Thus, in order to understand the historicity of the MEB in Tefé, it was necessary to consider the context in which the sources were produced, who produced them, and with what intentions.

The *Movimento de Educação de Base*: a national project for adult literacy

In the early 1960s, the *MEB* was created, which was linked to the *Conferência Nacional dos Bispos do Brasil* (CNBB) and was funded by the Federal Government. Its activities began in 1961 and its aim was to teach adults to read and write in the Northeast, Central-West, and North regions. The idea of creating radio schools to develop MEB activities came about when Jânio Quadros, a presidential candidate, made an electoral visit to Sergipe and learned about the activities carried out by the radio school of the *Diocese* of Aracaju. The aim of the school was to teach rural adults to read and write. At the time, Jânio Quadros and Dom José Távora, who were responsible for the radio schools, discussed the possibility of creating an educational program via radio in order to provide the less privileged classes with the right to education (Kadt, 2007).

At the beginning of Jânio Quadros' term, an agreement was signed by means of Decree No. 50,370, of March 21, 1961, which established a five-year work plan (1961-1965), which could be extended. To carry out the activities, the Federal Government would make available approximately one hundred and fifty million *cruzeiros* to the CNBB every two months, with the purpose of promoting the creation of approximately fifteen thousand radio schools (MEB, 1966). Jânio Quadros' government was brief, and he resigned after only seven months in office. After his resignation, Vice President João Goulart took over, remaining in office from September 1961 to April 1964, when he was deposed (Skidmore, 1982).

During João Goulart's government, through the “program of basic reforms”, the aim was to achieve the country's “political emancipation” and, to this end, it was necessary for Brazil to progressively disassociate itself from its dependence on foreign nations and their financial agencies. In his speeches, the president advocated structural reforms whose burden would not

fall solely on the so-called “less fortunate”. Such reforms should stimulate industrial development, the restructuring of agricultural production and the integration of the domestic market, combining economic development with social development, that is, justice and peace. In João Goulart's view, the basic reforms would transform Brazil into a “strong and independent nation”, which would expand and strengthen the domestic market, making it less and less dependent on other countries. To achieve these objectives, some measures would be necessary, such as electoral, tax, banking, exchange rate, administrative, university, urban and agrarian reforms (Silva, 2019).

It was in this context of political effervescence that the *CNBB* developed an educational plan and sought to develop basic education, through radio schools, among the less favored population, prioritizing regions whose social and economic indicators were more vulnerable. The *MEB* gradually expanded its area of operation, going from 11 systems² in 1961 to 60 systems in 1963, and the course of these years was considered one of the most promising. According to Duarte (1972), the *MEB* reached its highest point in the statistical curves in 1964, reaching approximately four hundred thousand students. At that time, in addition to the activities developed in the Northeast, North and Central-West regions, the *MEB* also operated in some municipalities in the state of Minas Gerais. Amazonas was included in the Movement from 1963 onwards. The following table shows the number of systems implemented between 1961 and 1963.

Table 1: MEB Systems from 1961 to 1963.

Federation Unit	Number	Systems ³
Amazonas	02	Manaus/Tefé (*)
Pará	03	Belém (*), Bragança, Conceição do Araguaia
Maranhão	03	Caxias/Viana (*), São Luís
Piauí	01	Teresina
Ceará	04	Crato, Fortaleza, Limoeiro do Norte, Sobral
R. G. Norte	03	Caicó/Natal (*), Mossoró
Paraíba	01	Cajazeiras (*)
Pernambuco	09	Garanhuns/Pesqueira/Palmares (*), Afogados de Ingazeira, Caruaru, Itacuruba, Nazaré da Mata, Recife, Petrolina
Alagoas	02	Maceió, Penedo
Sergipe	03	Estância/Propriá (*), Aracaju
Bahia	11	Amargosa, Barra, Caetité, Feira de Santana, Ilhéus, Rui Barbosa, Salvador, São Gonçalo, Senhor do Bonfim, Vitória da Conquista, Juazeiro (*)
Minas Gerais	14	Araçuaí, Belo Horizonte, Caratinga, Governador Valadares, Juiz de Fora, Luz, Marliéria, Montes Claros, Monte Santo, Oliveira, Pará de Minas, Teófilo Otoni, Três Corações, Viçosa (*)
Goiás	01	Goiânia
Mato Grosso	02	Campo Grande, Cuiabá (*)
Rondônia	01	Porto Velho (*)
		Total: 15 States e 60 Systems

Source: MEB (1963, p. 6).

² A local organization of the MEB, created in a specific Prelacy or Diocese, is called a system, which constituted a local team to prepare the programming of radio schools (Duarte, 1972, p. 23).

³ (*) Systems started in 1963, the others were created in 1961/1962.

The data presented in the MEB's 1963 annual report reveal that the majority of the systems were located in the states of Pernambuco, Bahia and Minas Gerais and, of the 60 established in the first years, approximately 50% were created and began their work in 1963, as is the case of Minas Gerais, Rondônia and Amazonas. In order for an MEB system to be implemented in a *Diocese or Prelazia*, the local bishop had to express interest, together with the State Government. This was the case of Minas Gerais, for example, which despite not being in a region considered underdeveloped, had 14 systems created in 1963. It was from a fruitful climate and alliance between Church and State that the discourse developed that a broader human formation was necessary, that is, in the development of its various dimensions: scientific, political, ethical and aesthetic. According to the *MEB's* 1961 annual report, basic education should provide people with:

a concept of life that makes them aware of their physical, spiritual, moral and civic value; a lifestyle that, through personal, family and social techniques and habits, guides each person's practical behavior; a mystique of life that, acting as an inner force, ensures effective dynamism and enthusiasm in fulfilling duties, exercising rights and, in general, achieving the goals of existence (MEB, 1961, p. 1).

Regarding the role of the Catholic Church in conducting basic education, Kadt (2007) emphasizes that it was linked to the following reasons: on the one hand, the Church that assumed the role of educating and evangelizing and, on the other, political interests such as expanding the electoral contingent and reducing illiteracy. Thus, Dom José Vicente Távora, Archbishop of Aracaju, formally submitted to the Presidency of the Republic, on behalf of the *CNBB*, the proposal to create a basic education program using radio schools. The *MEB* began its activities based on the structures left by successful education initiatives in the late 1950s, in the Northeast Region of the country. According to Paiva (2009, p. 51):

the implementation of an educational system based on radio stations shortened distances, facilitating peasants' access to education, giving them opportunities to develop as members of a larger community. Radio represented, in concrete terms, technology at the service of the education of the peasant man.

The existence of Catholic radio stations was essential to reach the populations of rural areas, since the difficult access to the most remote regions and the lack of resources left the peasant population on the margins of society. In its early years, the *MEB* aimed to provide the rural population with an education that raised awareness. In its work, it sought to educate individuals within the context in which they were inserted, valuing cultural reality and showing the possibilities of choice, as well as the most viable paths for their fulfillment. According to the 1961 annual report, basic education should “[...] aim at and ensure that each person has a minimum of knowledge, the ability to judge, techniques of conduct and well-being, which will enable them to achieve their full potential, to surpass themselves, and to progress in all accessible directions” (MEB, 1961, p. 1).

In order to achieve this purpose, the work developed by the *MEB* was carried out by monitors, accompanied by supervisors who visited the local contexts where the *MEB* carried out its activities. In this way, they sought to understand the challenges and possibilities in order to collectively seek solutions to problem situations, providing students with the opportunity to take action and engage in different activities. In its pedagogical practices, the *MEB* sought to raise awareness among people in society through motivation and changes in attitude, leading

them to the process of politicization. According to Paiva (2009), for an individual to become politicized, it was necessary to be aware of their role as a socially active subject, as well as to act critically and collectively to change it.

From 1964 onwards, the relation between the State and the Catholic Church, especially with the group known as progressives, began to be shaken due to political and ideological issues, which directly impacted the work being developed by the *MEB*. In view of the new order in force, the systems were temporarily suspended and the booklet “*Viver é lutar*” was seized. According to Fávero (2006), approximately 50 thousand copies of this booklet were printed and distributed, in early 1964, to the systems in the Northeast, some in the North and Minas Gerais. Of these printed materials, approximately three thousand copies were seized by the police, which were in the printing shop in the state of Guanabara.

In this context, all popular education and culture movements were closed and only the *MEB* managed, through many negotiations with the State, to overcome the situation and resume its activities. In view of this, it is necessary to reflect on the positions of the groups of Catholics who represented the Church: what were their objectives? Why did they express an interest in education? What were the returns or benefits received? Raposo (1985, p. 28) presents clues on these issues.

The Church became aware of the urgent need to reorganize itself and adopt a deliberate position in favor of solving the social problems that afflicted the popular classes in rural areas. The Church was, therefore, aware that its non-intervention could alienate these populations who, as D. Távora stated, had been faithful to the Church for centuries and deeply religious. It is clear then that the Church's sensitivity to social problems was not mainly due to the subhuman living conditions in which the populations of rural areas lived, since this was not a recent fact; quite the opposite, it was a secular reality. What was new was that these populations were beginning to deliberately break with their submission to reality and to perceive the need for a new collective resistance.

In this game between the Church and the State, the *MEB* was directly affected, and began to face difficulties as a result not only of its more awareness-raising activities, but also of the divergent relation established in the political sphere and of the cuts in essential financial resources for the continuation of the work. Such divergences increased the level of distrust of the State, which was taking away the autonomy of the Church and shaking the agreements established in favor of adult education (Kadt, 2007).

The clashes, in this context, caused part of the episcopate to reflect about its role, giving in to government pressure, redefining the objectives and guidelines of the *MEB*. However, not all bishops and systems of the *MEB* were open to change, which was understood as confrontation and resulted in punishments that the State deemed necessary.

Based on the analysis undertaken, we found that the *MEB* systems, which were willing to adapt to the new order in force, modified the previously created concept of awareness and began to have as their purposes “[...] evangelization; then literacy, catechesis, religious education, the transmission of general knowledge [...], leadership training, pedagogical guidance and the valorization of criteria” (Fávero, 2006, p. 114). Those who refused to change were accused of being communists, Marxists and subversives and punished for this.

Amidst a climate of distrust and accusations, the *MEB* reformulated its ideas, objectives and methodology to survive that period. According to Kadt (2007), at the height of the military regime, the *MEB* acted much more from the perspective of catechization than of awareness. Kadt (2007, p. 229) adds that “[...] most of the Movement’s documents published after the April 1964 coup show enormous resistance to discussing conflicts and injustice, as well as methods to overcome them, except in general abstract terms”. Thus, in some regions, the *MEB* assumed a position less committed to the struggles in favor of social inequalities.

Thus, it is possible to see that the *MEB* used tactics at certain times and strategies at others (Certeau, 2017). To dialogue with the State, it adopted survival tactics, negotiating, retreating, articulating proposals and, at the same time, played in the field of strategies, to involve the popular masses and faithful in its educational, cultural, religious and political actions, thus demonstrating to the State that it represented a portion of the population that was lacking basic rights, such as education, health and culture. In this ideological game, the Church, composed of at least two groups (conservatives and progressives), was losing space, power, public resources and representation.

The period of the military regime was marked by repression and intense monitoring. Censorship was established and the siege imposed by the government gradually tightened. According to Kadt (2007), the *MEB* was “under fire” and some bishops decided to ally themselves with those who did not agree with the activities developed by the Movement in the fight against oppression and inequality. Thus, the climate between the Church and the State became increasingly tense, at least for a portion of the episcopate.

In view of these differences, the situation of the *MEB* became unsustainable and, from 1967 onwards, the Movement began to lose space in several Brazilian states, suffering a progressive decline in the number of systems, schools and the number of students enrolled. According to Kadt (2007), peasants in the Northeast Region had lost “[...] interest in radio schools that could no longer discuss the real problems faced by the people, nor ensure the promise of significant political participation for the literate” (2007, p. 154). In 1967, many *MEB* systems preferred to close their activities for political and ideological reasons, as well as for lack of resources, thus leading to a shift of the *MEB* to the North of the country. Kadt (2007, p. 234) presents the progression of *MEB* radio schools in this region:

At the end of 1965, the North contributed 23% of all radio schools, 20% of students and 16% of local staff (not counting those who worked at Nacional, in Rio). Two years later, after the Movement had shrunk to 21 systems, radio schools in the North came to constitute 75% of the total, students from there represented 53% and the 80 employees in the area were 44% of the staff working outside Rio de Janeiro.

In light of these data, we can see that the history of the *MEB* in the North Region went *pari passu* with the process of establishing the military regime, adapting to different contexts and rethinking its practices for the sake of survival. At times, it placed greater emphasis on literacy and evangelization and avoided discussions about politics and social inequality. According to Kadt (2007), the geographic immensity, natural conditions and difficulties faced in the field of communication and transportation contributed significantly to the displacement of the *MEB* to the North of the country and made the actions developed in this region different from the others. The author refers to the people of the Amazon region as:

isolated and primitive, poor and even more deprived of educational opportunities than the peasants in other parts of the country, the inhabitants of the Amazon rely only on themselves to take care of their own survival, without the support of nearby neighbors. Their cultivation techniques are the simplest. It is essentially a collector of products from the tropical forest and rivers (wood, chestnuts, rubber, fish) and does so with the help of the most primitive instruments (Kadt, 2007, p. 235).

Amid political and ideological differences, lack of resources and distrust on the part of the State, the Catholic Church received international recognition for the work developed by the *MEB*. In 1968, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) received around 49 applications for the Mohammad Reza Pahlavi⁴ award and, among the candidates, the *MEB* was the winner. The judges of the competition were unanimous in granting the award, recognizing its efforts to teach adults to read and write through radio schools, in addition to its contributions to the economic, social and cultural development of less favored regions.

Despite this recognition, the last years of the 1960s were marked by a serious financial crisis for the *MEB* and in the Northern Region it was no different. This aspect had a direct impact on its structure, pedagogical work and training of coordinators, supervisors and monitors.

The challenges were present in all *MEB* systems and, in Amazonas, more specifically in Tefé, the Movement sought survival tactics (Certeau, 2017), such as partnerships with national and international institutions. From then on, it began to receive resources from the *Catholic Organization for Relief and Development Aid* (Cordaid)⁵ in the Netherlands and the Organization of German Catholic Bishops for Cooperation and Development (Misereor)⁶ in Germany.

The *MEB* surfing the waves of *Rádio Educação Rural de Tefé*

The *Rádio Educação Rural de Tefé* programming gradually overcame the challenges and varied the issues addressed. In general, they were related to literacy, conversations with monitors and sector animators, lectures with representatives of popular animation groups, information, announcements, news, musicals, guidance on solving problems faced by the population in riverside communities, responses to letters from monitors and students, and celebrations on civic and religious dates. Below we present the chart with the main radio programs of *Rádio Educação Rural de Tefé*, throughout the 1970s.

⁴ The Mohammad Reza Pahlavi award aimed to stimulate and recognize actions developed by people, institutions, associations, schools, universities, unions, movements, among others, that developed adult literacy programs and contributed to overcoming illiteracy (*MEB*, 1968, p. 1).

⁵ It is a social organization created in the Netherlands, whose mission is to combat poverty in fragile and conflict-ridden regions. Available at: <https://www.cordaid.org/en/>. Accessed on: February 24, 2020.

⁶ Organization founded in 1958, its objective is to combat hunger and disease in the world. In its role as the development agency of the Catholic Church in Germany, it offered cooperation to combat poverty worldwide. Available at: <http://www.misereor.org/pt/>. Accessed on: February 24, 2020

Chart 2: The *Rádio Educação Rural de Tefé* Programming

Name of Radio Program	Courses/Activities/Themes	Days of the Week	Time/Shift
<i>Programa de Alfabetização</i>	Functional literacy: reading and writing	Monday to Friday	07am – 10am 7:30pm -8:00pm
<i>Show das Crianças</i>	Children's entertainment	Daily	10am – 11am
<i>Celebração da Missa</i>	Evangelization	Sunday	8am
<i>Conversando com o Ouvinte</i>	Primary school supplementary education, unionism, cooperatives, among others.	Monday to Friday	Night 180 minutes
<i>Conversa com as Comunidades</i>	Various guidelines for the population of riverside communities: radio schools, health and leisure.	Saturday	Night 30 minutes
<i>A Hora do Esporte</i>	Sports news and broadcasting of football matches: local, regional and national	–	–
<i>Recordando o Passado</i>	Music requested by letters	Saturday	–
<i>Avisos para o Interior</i>	News/General Notices	Daily	Night 30 minutes

Source: MEB Reports 1978, 1979 e 1980.

The *Rádio Educação Rural* relied on the collaboration of the MEB Tefé team to format several radio programs, such as the “*Programa de Alfabetização*”, “*Conversando com o ouvinte*” and “*Conversa com as Comunidades*”. The radio’s programming was a reference for the population living in the communities, especially because it was the only option for the residents. The school or the monitor’s house were regularly visited by the student listeners and residents of the surrounding area. To broadcast the various radio programs, *Rádio Educação Rural de Tefé* faced many challenges:

In the beginning, everything was difficult: the schools’ equipment was captive, the station was poorly tuned and to set up a school we had to use steel antennas that were 10 to 20 meters long on poles that varied from 4 to 6 meters high, sometimes requiring 2 antennas. The radio program was almost entirely from the MEB and had a very good and close-knit work team. The audience was 100% [...]. The people began to be served with the messages ‘announcement program’ and ‘musical program’, later the ‘melodies for birthdays’. Then came the national and international news programs collected with great sacrifice, [...] recording the news from *Rádio Globo do Rio* and *Rádio Guaíba* at alternating times every hour [...]. As the MEB promoted local sports, the program ‘*A hora do esporte*’ was created and in the musical section [...] the program ‘remembering the past’ was created, with bohemian music on Saturdays. That is how the programs [...] made by the MEB were created. Dom Joaquim [...] gave us all the support. Later, Father Paulo [...] created the program ‘*Show das Crianças*’, in the morning [...]. His connections gave the opportunity to broadcast the 8 am mass on Sundays for the people of the countryside [...] (MEB Tefé, 1990, p. 1-2).

Therefore, there was a diversified programming, which mainly served the population that lived in riverside communities. With the collaboration of the MEB team, several programs were developed, such as “*A Hora do Esporte*”, which broadcast local, regional and national football matches. The program “*Recordando o Passado*” served listeners, especially on Saturdays, with romantic songs requested by letter. Over time, two programs were created that aired daily: “*Show das Crianças*”, broadcast in the morning, directly from *Cine São José*, and “*Avisos para o Interior*”, in the evening, focusing on more general news, in addition to notices to the families of people who were in the city to resolve personal issues, mainly health-related. The Radio reserved time for religious programming, such as the celebration of mass, on weekends.

When talking to authors who discuss the MEB in other regions of the country, it was possible to see that radio also played a fundamental role in the dialogue between the members of the MEB teams and the rural populations, who lived isolated and without assistance from the State. This is the case, for example, of the MEB Goiás, which developed a radio program to advise the less favored population. Peixoto Filho (2003, p. 86) highlights that:

The radio program *A Comunidade se Reúne* was created to play an advisory role via radio, presenting stories about the problems common to rural communities, publicizing experiences and requesting suggestions for debates. This program was presented on Saturdays, with theatrical dialogues, whose characters, taken from the daily life of rural life, served as an animating element in the meetings that were held in the communities [...]. In its preparation, the Central Team counted on the participation of monitors and people who, although they were not MEB employees, collaborated on a daily basis. This program, always seeking to demonstrate the importance of dialogue among different groups and people in a community and among themselves, contributed to the creation of educational tools that would enable monitors and leaders to come up with solutions and seek organizational forms [...].

In Tefé, from the 1970s onwards, radio programs were no longer the only means of reaching out to the population, since the Movement also began to develop activities in person. In 1977, in the state of Amazonas, the MEB was present in seven systems, with a coverage area of 13 municipalities, serving approximately 197 riverside communities, thus reaching an average of 35,853 people (MEB, 1977). Its actions, whether systematic or unsystematic, were highly prominent for decades. Among them, we can mention the program “*Conversa com as Comunidades*”, of a cultural/informative nature, broadcast on Saturday nights, lasting 30 minutes and with the purpose of establishing dialogue, disseminating news, clarifying doubts, making suggestions and providing guidance based on demands forwarded by localities. In addition to creating an exchange among radio schools, each community could publicize the work that was being done. We will present as an example the script of the program of August 14, 1971, lasting 30 minutes, which highlighted the work done in a riverside community called “*Ilha do Icê*”:

PREFIX TECHNIQUE

TEACHER - Listening friends from the communities, good evening to all of you [...]. Friends, how are we doing with the work? I think everything is good, because at this time of year everyone is worried about production, right? Some are already being financed by ACAR, for this year's planting. But friends, here we are with our program every Saturday, talking to the communities, and in today's program we are

going to talk a little to our friends from the community of *Ilha do Icé*, which after a long period was stopped without even one community work. But before we start our chat today, I invite my friends who are still out of the loop to come in and sit in their respective places, to listen carefully to our conversation today.

CURTAIN TECHNIQUE

TEACHER - Well friends, as I just said that this program is for communities, let's now talk a little with our friends from the community of *Ilha do Icé*. Well, the community of *Icé* is currently looking to take a step towards the development of its locality. This week the community started community work, where they worked on Mr. Paulino's farm, and eight people showed up on the same day, that is, the 3rd. Some people went to collect wood, the next day they went to Cipriano's *ajuri*, and seven people showed up to plant. On the 7th, nine people went to tie together wood belonging to Mr. Francisco and Mr. Raimundo. On the 10th, the community got together to plant Mr. Manuel's farm, and now there has been much other work done by the same community led by Mr. Francisco. [...] My friends, this is really what a community should do, it is to work together for better production and a more peaceful life, because if everyone lived in a community, [...] there would be no one left with a bad life, because what one had, the others would also have, because no one is better than the other, there is no point in us wanting to work alone, because it does not bring much result, whereas in a community, one helps the other and production increases, and once production increases, we profit much more. Isn't that true?

CURTAIN TECHNIQUE

TEACHER - Well, friends, as I was saying, the *Icé* community is moving again, and that's it, my friends. Let's move forward, let's not lose heart, because we still have plenty of time for the meeting, as scheduled every morning. To that end, President Francisco Ferreira dos Santos invites all members of the board and members to a meeting tomorrow at his residence to discuss community and school matters, because the people need a school, because working without knowing anything is like not working at all. We all need a school, so that we and our children can study. [...] Let's go, friends of *Icé*, and study. Let's not pay attention to people who don't want the best for us. What happened at the school was simply a rumor, a conversation, that the MEB would no longer care about the school. Absolutely, that's a complete lie. [...] The MEB wants to work together with you, but what we want is for everyone to do what we're doing. [...] Now, one thing is certain, once no one wants to study or live in a community, we will practically stop giving them our support. This is not just the MEB, but also *Caritas*, *ACAR* and other organizations that work with our friends in the interior. Therefore, [...] we will put an end to all these conversations and start studying, we will improve our school [...]. We live in a community, so why all the fighting, all the talk of one wanting to harm the other? It is a shame that at the moment we do not have any boats here, but as soon as they return we will once again support the communities as before. We will do everything possible to get the

schools that are closed back up and running [...]. We are not saying this with anger, absolutely not, on the contrary, we are trying to guide you in everything that is currently harming you, so let's move forward, let's work together and we will see how our lives will improve (Script, MEB Tefé, 1971, p. 1-2).

In this program, there was an incentive for the population to study and develop work collectively. In addition, the meetings that would take place in the communities and the topics to be discussed were publicized. The topics were diverse and generally covered supplementary education, the mothers' club, liturgical action, health-related activities, community work carried out in agriculture and the construction of community houses (MEB, 1978). Thus, the aim was to advise residents to live in harmony, to be aware of the planting period and the choice of the type of plantation, giving priority to those that would yield the quickest return. It also advised the population to avoid "gossip" and disagreements, as these issues were not beneficial and could generate difficulties or losses not only individually, but collectively. In this sense, the *MEB* sought to work on aspects related to awareness, politicization, change of attitude and instrumentation of the communities, based on themes related to everyday life. For Wanderley (1984, p. 225):

A change in attitudes was understood as: critical attitude, attitude of appreciation, attitude of change and attitude of cooperation. And the instrumentation of communities represented the qualification and information in terms of analysis instruments (reading, writing, interpreting relationships, etc.), production instruments (health and hygiene procedures, using legislation and customs related to production and consumption, etc.), and organizational instruments (group work techniques, knowing how to found and boost clubs, unions, etc.).

The *MEB* team sought to combat individualistic attitudes in person and via radio, that is, they raised awareness among the people about the importance of collective work. Each community followed a rhythm, while some had not yet organized themselves, others were already more advanced and it was up to the *MEB* team to encourage those who were more developed to help others, since the collaborative spirit was preached, that is, everyone should live in communion, helping one another.

At the end of the "*Conversando com as Comunidades*" program, letters from *MEB* students and monitors were read. As for the students, there were requests for songs, birthday greetings, general information and, based on these letters, the supervisors evaluated the students' writing skills. The student was encouraged by the teacher-announcer and the monitor to write for the program, since they would hear their name, their location and their school on the radio. In this type of programming, there was interaction between the local *MEB* team, the monitor, the students, and the communities. In addition, hearing the name of one's own community on the radio was a source of pride for everyone.

Regarding this issue, Souza (2013, p. 212) points out that, generally, *MEB* students would request clarifications via letter about "[...] class topics, asking about treatment for illnesses, recipes for home remedies, agricultural procedures [...] etc." In the script of the Tefé system's "*Conversa com as Comunidades*" program, broadcast on August 21, 1971, lasting 30 minutes, aimed at students at the Santa Maria school, it is possible to see that the letters sent by *MEB* Tefé students were analyzed for writing and mathematical operations. In these letters, the students requested snacks, music, among other requests.

PREFIX TECHNIQUE [...]

CURTAIN TECHNIQUE

TEACHER - listen to the program *Conversation with the Communities*, a program developed and broadcast by the *Movimento de Educação de Base* for communities in the countryside, continuing its program. At this point, we will present the first part of the week's birthdays.

From the Santa Maria school in Rio Copeá, teacher Dirce received a letter from student Dionísio Alves. Hello, Dionísio, good evening to you! Look, your letter is great, your accounts are also all in order, we are pleased with that, Dionísio, and we hope that you will always remain steadfast, because only then will our Brazil truly move forward. If only they already knew what you already know, it would be great. To you and the good people at your school, our hug!

Also from the Santa Maria school, we received a letter from student Joaquim Correia, saying that everything is going well at his school, what he really doesn't like is that there is no lunch. Look, Joaquim, we don't have a snack either, and there's nothing we can do about it, since your school is in the municipality of Maraã. If it were in Tefé, we would try to get a snack for all of you, but that's not possible. We hope you'll always write to us, and here's our hug to all of you [...].

We received a letter from the Santa Maria school from student Valdecir Semião. Hello, Valdecir, good evening to you! Look, we received your letter and we're very pleased, because in your letter you show that you're even capable of writing to someone without any fear of mistakes. As for the melody you requested, we'll play it on the program on Monday, talking to the listener [...]. Well, my friend, we'll wait for another letter from you, and our hug to you! (Script, MEB Tefé, 1971, p. 4).

Regarding the letters sent by the monitors, Souza (2013, p. 212) states that, generally, the issues raised in the correspondence were related to the organization, the functioning of the school and the measures taken regarding the behavior of the students. As well as “[...] conversation during classes, disregard for the monitor’s instructions and guidance, dating at school, problems with the radio, smoking habits, among others”. As for the “*Conversa com as Comunidades*” program in Tefé, the content related to information about the reality of the school, student attendance, requests for teaching materials, requests to give lectures about specific topics, among others. Based on the analysis, it was possible to perceive that there were complaints from students and *MEB* monitors in Tefé, especially regarding the lack of teaching materials and school meals.

PREFIX TECHNIQUE [...]

CURTAIN TECHNIQUE

TEACHER - From the Janamã locality we received a letter from the monitor Jacinto Cruz, informing us that he sent the attendance sheet. We received it, Jacinto! Now, regarding the chalk you requested, we did not send it because the person who came to deliver it did not wait for a reply, and that was the reason we did not send it. We hope that as soon as someone from there comes, they will send it to us here and it will be attended to. Our best regards to you!

From Nogueira, teacher Dirce received a letter from the monitor Teresa Batalha, inviting her to give a talk on Father's Day. Look, Teresa, it is not possible to meet your request, because at the moment we do not have a boat, everyone is traveling, otherwise she would go there with you, but there will be plenty of opportunities. We hope for your understanding and here is our good night to you! (Script, MEB Tefé, 1971, p. 5).

It is possible to notice that, in the *MEB* radio programs, there was no discussion of specific content, this was planned based on themes and occurred not only in the literacy courses, but also in other training programs. There was a choice of subjects related to language, calculus, history, geography, moral and civic education, hygiene, health, religious instruction and general knowledge. Thus, there was no intention of working on disciplines in a static way. In this sense, Paiva (2009, p. 76) highlights that “[...] the monthly work unit defined the subject to be worked on each week, [...] which was discussed and explored in depth in a weekly meeting and, based on this meeting, each person prepared their lesson plan which [...] was called a script, lasting 30 to 45 minutes”. In *MEB* classes, there was a connection between theoretical discussions and “practical notions”, that is, based on the content covered, there was guidance on how to apply it to everyday life.

Although the programming of *Rádio Educação Rural de Tefé* was varied, the centrality of the discussions revolved around adult education/literacy, trade unionism and cooperatives, advising actions related to agriculture, food and health (*MEB Tefé*, 1990). The speeches were permeated by issues related to human beings, their condition and their relationship with society. It proposed to raise, based on the programs offered, reflections on civic awareness, inequality age and social interaction, especially for those who lived isolated and deprived of relations based on the spirit of collectivity and solidarity. When discussing civics, for example, the *MEB Tefé* adapted to the government policy of the military regime, which included the debate on moral and civic education, which aimed to shape the behavior of the population based on moralist precepts.

The *MEB*'s literacy classes in Tefé had a generating word as a starting point and, from there, sought to establish a connection with the social, political, economic and cultural problems of the population. Its meaning was expressed through orality, in addition to exploring the visualization of a poster that projected the spelling and the image that represented the word used. Orality was the main resource used in the process of decoding the presented word.

Regarding discussions about “unionism” in Tefé, these took place through lectures, guidance and mainly through courses, via radio or in person, as they depended on the availability of the local team and the resources made available. The proposal for the Unionism course was designed with the aim of training union leaders to raise awareness among workers about the importance of joining the rural workers' union. The union's function was to fight for workers' rights, but to do so, it was necessary for everyone to get involved in mobilizations and demands, thus engaging in a collective cause. Unionism in Tefé stood out and, in a way, was one of the most encouraged activities, and through them, riverside populations sought unity to demand their labor rights. According to Wanderley (1984, p. 284):

The work of rural unionization was a cornerstone of the *MEB*'s educational process, influencing the radio systems teams, the class schedules, the training sessions, and, in a certain way, demanding more from the agents. A constellation of converging factors influenced the need for the Movement to devote special attention to this area of activity: the encouragement given by the episcopate to the creation of rural organizations, in statements and in the CNBB Emergency Plan (1962), the guidelines issued by the encyclical *Mater et Magistra*, the requests from students and communities, and the collaboration requested by Christian groups structured for the purpose of unionizing in the dioceses.

In this way, the *MEB* contributed to strengthening the union struggle from the 1960s onwards, especially in the North and Northeast regions. Based on this assistance, it was possible to systematize and demand a series of issues that left the less privileged population dissatisfied. Among these, we highlight the daily challenges, commuting to work, exhausting work hours, low pay, the exploitative relation between employer and employee, and conflicts at home due to lack of what is necessary for family maintenance. Regarding the training of community leaders to work in these courses, we found that the majority were male, that is, there was a predominance of men in the participation of certain subjects, such as politics, unionism, and class struggle, thus demonstrating a prejudiced and sexist view of society.

Another highlight in Tefé was “cooperativism,” which sought to encourage the population to develop collective work, the so-called “*ajuris*,” a type of action that took place mainly in plowing the land, planting, harvesting crops, and building community houses and schools. In order for these activities to be effective, the *MEB* team provided guidance via face-to-face courses, with a workload of approximately 40 hours, although this was offered via radio, when possible. The objectives that guided the discussions were: to reflect about cooperativism and its importance, to foster a cooperative spirit in the population and to raise awareness of the advantages of working in cooperation for the development of the community. According to Grzybowski (1987, p. 72),

Cooperatives, as economic organizations, act as a link between peasant production (and other forms of production in the countryside) and agro-industrial, commercial and financial capital. They are, therefore, agents of integration of peasant sectors associated with them, contributing decisively to the greater socialization of their production [...]. Cooperatives, [...] due to the particularity of their constitution, are also forms of political-corporate organization and participation of their members. This depends on the region in which they operate, their size and their importance in controlling production and marketing.

From this type of training, the *MEB* team sought to assist groups that intended to work with cooperativism and, to do so, highlighted the advantages of developing actions from this perspective, that is, there was preparation and encouragement for “[...] the community to take on not only the activities, but also the important decisions about what to do” (Kadt, 2007, p. 243). This course sought to raise awareness among the population about the power and strength of the collective, and the importance of unity to solve problems. Throughout the classes, the aim was to reflect on class consciousness, knowledge of the rights and duties of workers, highlighting issues related to the process established between the oppressor and the oppressed, based on the theoretical teachings of Paulo Freire.

In this way, it seems that the *MEB*, by encouraging the development of cooperative actions, created tactics (Certeau, 2017) to circumvent or combat the practices of businesspeople and landowners, who were accustomed to creating their own rules and, in doing so, establishing an oppressive relation between them and the working class. The *MEB* in Tefé sought to raise awareness among riverside populations so that they could develop their work collectively and become more autonomous. It also taught methods and techniques for building houses and especially the process of preparing the land, planting vegetables, fruits and greens. It also provided guidance on the use of machinery to prepare the soil, choosing the best seeds for planting and using pesticides to combat pests (MEB Tefé, 1972). According to Fávero (2006, p. 224):

When the emphasis was on radio schools, it moved from awareness of problems, through criticism of situations of injustice and exploitation, to action for change through organized groups (radio schools, unions, cooperatives, mothers' clubs, leisure groups, etc.). With the emphasis on direct contact, the process goes from action to awareness: the community meets, discovers its leaders, and unites around them to address and resolve its immediate problems, becoming aware through concrete action and reflection about it. What mattered, however, was not action for the sake of action, but rather the organization of the community for action. The *MEB* believed that by taking on concrete tasks, groups would get to the root causes of problems and organize themselves for broader and deeper action to transform socio-economic structures.

In this way, radio became part of the daily lives of the riverside population of Tefé, through radio schools. As a means of oral transmission, it was gradually incorporated into the communities, which enabled the functioning of the school and the feeling of belonging to the educational project proposed by the Catholic Church. By establishing a set of proposals regarding education, health, leisure, and religion, the *MEB* changed the customs and traditions of the riverside populations. The local team used a strategy (Certeau, 2017) to cover diverse topics so that the radio programs would not become repetitive, and to this end, they used interviews, testimonies, letters, music, documentaries and experiences from other regions. To facilitate access, in 1974 the *MEB* ordered around 1,601 radios so that the systems could pass them on to the communities at cost price. Of this total, 417 were distributed to the systems in Amazonas, with the majority going to the Tefé system, with 247 devices (MEB, 1974).

The familiarity that people living in rural areas had with oral transmission facilitated communication between the local *MEB* team and the population. In order to achieve this goal, the Movement used different forms of oral communication to attract them: children's, religious, musical, sports, news programs, among others. Thus, the population saw in radio schools the possibility of seeking new learning, not only in reading, writing and arithmetic, but also in practical issues related to their daily lives. Based on this, *Rádio Educação Rural* and *MEB Tefé* formatted a daily program to serve workers, after a busy day of work, who were motivated to meet for systematic and unsystematic⁷ studies, with a pedagogical perspective that prioritized discussions about problem situations and changes that could occur in the communities.

When taking a general look at the *MEB*'s activities, both via radio and in person, it is clear that the financial support from the Federal Government gradually diminished, creating insecurity among local teams, who saw the issue as being much more linked to political maneuvers than educational ones. Throughout the *MEB*'s history, many financial crises were faced, and in Tefé, the worst crises occurred from 1964 to 1965, from 1968 to 1970 and from 1975 to 1980. The crises reduced the number of members on the Tefé team from 12 to six, and the radio programming schedule was also reduced in 1980, from three hours to one and a half hours (MEB Tefé, 1990).

⁷ The “systematic” study was similar to the regular school format, with the study of Portuguese, Mathematics, Religion, Science, Morality and Civics. The “unsystematic” study involved courses or training related to health, nutrition, home education, hygiene, childcare, health education, trade unionism and cooperatives.

From 1975 onwards, the activities of the MEB were once again compromised by a lack of resources. In 1980, the situation worsened and the bishops sought to reverse the resource problem through meetings, gatherings, publications of news articles and hearings with the President of the Republic (at the time, João Figueiredo), which were partially resolved. However, the pace of work was compromised by the limited funds and the delay in receiving them. The outlook, in this regard, was not good and there were two possible solutions: reducing basic expenses or the decision of local presidents to close down activities in their systems/departments. The option accepted by the president of the *MEB* in Tefé was to continue the activities and reduce costs, mainly in the personnel sector. The decision to end the activities was only made in 2003.

Final considerations

Based on the analyses, we can see that Dom Joaquim de Lange, bishop of the Prelacy of Tefé and local president of the MEB, sought to closely follow the political, educational and religious debates and decisions that were in vogue at local, national and international levels. He actively participated in important events, such as the Second Vatican Council (1962-1965), *II Conferência Geral do Episcopado Latino-Americano in Medellín* (1968), *Encontro dos Bispos da Amazônia em Santarém/PA* (1972) and *III Conferência Geral do Episcopado Latino-Americano in Puebla, Mexico* (1979). These participations directly influenced the actions of the *Movimento de Educação de Base* in Tefé.

Thus, represented by Dom Joaquim, the Catholic Church was, for most of the time, present and active in the municipality of Tefé, intervening in the lives of the riverside populations, composed mainly of indigenous and *caboclo* people, who faced abandonment by the public authorities and isolation among the municipalities of Amazonas, due to the difficult access, which was only possible by boat or canoe, along the Tefé, Solimões and Amazonas rivers.

It is necessary to think of the *MEB* as a network, since it was part of a larger project, in which there were many interests at stake. Although Dom Joaquim demonstrated sympathy for the progressive wing and spent time throughout the 1960s and 1970s in various political, social and religious events, as well as dialoguing with the different segments that led numerous clashes, it seems that the bishop of Tefé sought to avoid direct involvement in such conflicts. On this board, where the power game was always on the agenda, it is possible to see a bishop who was articulate and attentive to the interventions of the State and who devised tactics so that the *MEB* in Tefé could survive the military regime.

As the military regime progressed, the *MEB* lost strength and several systems were extinguished, mainly in the Northeast and Central-West regions, with the others being resized in terms of their objectives and methodologies. In Tefé, it suffered more financial impact and avoided political conflicts. The riverside communities where the Movement operated lived without public policies and, therefore, there was a strong presence of the Catholic Church, leading the people to recognize it, many times, as an arm of the State.

Like every educational proposal, the *MEB* had its limits and its possibilities, but we must recognize that there were significant gains, both for the needy population and for the Church. The population assisted by the *MEB* Tefé was forgotten by the public authorities and the Catholic Church, by being at the forefront of its organization, gained prestige, visibility and financial resources from government and non-governmental organizations. Thus, it was possible to envision the *MEB* in Tefé from two perspectives: the first, a Movement that appropriated tactics to circumvent the determinations of the State and the second, when it used strategies to involve the different subjects of the riverside communities.

Therefore, the *MEB* in Tefé developed in a scenario of political struggle and, despite its limitations, sought to act in different ways to serve the needy population. In its early years, it sought to consider the sociocultural reality of the students and, through basic education, sought to transform the social structure of the riverside communities, making them aware of the importance of their participation as active citizens in society. The population did not have access to education, basic sanitation, quality housing or formal employment. In general, employment was only for subsistence, and therefore there is no denying the importance of the work carried out by this Movement.

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