

## ACTIVE SCHOOL IN BRAZIL IN THE WORK OF PSYCHOLOGIST AND EDUCATOR HELENA ANTIPOFF

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### ABSTRACT

Aspects of the circulation and appropriation of New Education ideas and proposals are presented through the work done by the Russian-Brazilian psychologist and educator Helena Antipoff in teacher training courses offered at the Fazenda do Rosário Educational Complex, in Ibitité, Minas Gerais, Brazil, from 1948 to 1974. Former students' testimonials were collected in diary notebooks filed at the Helena Antipoff Foundation, and interviews were conducted with former participants of the courses. It was found that the process of circulation and reception of scientific knowledge in education in this institution was based on New Education principles and on Active School methods, emphasizing the theory-practice relationship, decision making based on the observation of students and of the teaching situation, groupwork and self-government. This knowledge came from the experiences lived in Europe by the educator, and inspired the elaboration of original educational proposals adapted to the reality found in Brazil.

**Keywords:** New School; Helena Antipoff; Psychology.

## Escuela activa en Brasil en la obra de la psicóloga y educadora Helena Antipoff

### RESUMEN

Aspectos de la circulación y apropiación de ideas y propuestas del movimiento de la Escuela Nueva en Brasil se presentan a través del trabajo de la psicóloga y educadora ruso-brasileña Helena Antipoff en los cursos de capacitación para docentes en el Complejo Educativo Fazenda do Rosário, en Ibitité, Minas Gerais, Brasil, de 1948 a 1974. Se recogieron testimonios de antiguos alumnos en diarios archivados en la Fundación Helena Antipoff, y se realizaron entrevistas con participantes de los cursos. La recepción local de conocimientos científicos en educación se basó en principios de la Escuela Nueva y métodos de la Escuela Activa, enfatizando la relación teoría-práctica, la toma de decisiones basada en la observación de los estudiantes y de la situación de docencia, trabajo en grupo y autogobierno. Este conocimiento provino de las experiencias vividas en Europa por la educadora, e inspiró la elaboración de propuestas originales adaptadas a la realidad encontrada en Brasil.

**Palabras clave:** Escuela Nueva; Helena Antipoff; Psicología.

## Escola ativa no Brasil na obra da psicóloga e educadora Helena Antipoff

### RESUMO

Aspectos da circulação e apropriação de ideias e propostas escolanovistas no Brasil são apresentados, por meio do trabalho realizado pela psicóloga e educadora russo-brasileira Helena Antipoff nos cursos de formação para professores do Complexo Educacional da Fazenda do Rosário, em Ibitité, Minas Gerais, no período de 1948 a 1974. Foram coletados depoimentos de ex-alunas encontrados em cadernos de diários arquivados na Fundação Helena Antipoff, em Ibitité/MG, e realizadas entrevistas com ex-participantes dos cursos. Verificou-se que o processo de circulação e recepção de conhecimentos científicos em educação nessa instituição estava sustentado em princípios da Escola Nova e métodos da Escola Ativa, enfatizando a relação teoria-prática, a tomada de decisões com base na observação dos educandos e da situação de ensino, o trabalho em grupo e o *self-government*. Esses conhecimentos provinham de experiências vivenciadas na Europa pela educadora, e inspiraram a elaboração de propostas educativas originais e adaptadas à realidade encontrada no Brasil.

**Palavras-chave:** Escola Nova; Helena Antipoff; Psicologia.

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## INTRODUCTION

The New-School movement began to be developed in Europe and North America in the late nineteenth century as a reaction to the rigidity of traditional educational practices, bringing together educators interested in tailoring schools to student needs and promoting teacher education based on active methods and on scientific knowledge produced by the newly developed area of scientific pedagogy.<sup>1</sup> One of the nuclei in the spread of New Education ideals was the Jean Jacques Rousseau Institute (JJRI), founded in Geneva, Switzerland, in 1912, by Édouard Claparède (1877 - 1940) and a group of intellectuals and educators.

In Brazil, the New Education movement ideals were spread from 1924 onwards, with the creation of the Brazilian Education Association (BEA), whose members contributed to educational reforms in several Brazilian states. One of the relevant reforms took place in Minas Gerais, between 1927 and 1928, when foreign educators were invited to teach at the Belo Horizonte Teacher's College, one of the first of its kind in Brazil, designed to improve the training of school teachers already graduated in Normal schools. Their task was to spread new procedures in existing schools, aiming at the renovation and improvement of their performance in the education of children and teenagers. The teaching of Psychology and the direction of the School's Laboratory of Psychology were assigned to European educators. The Laboratory was set up in 1929 by the French physician and psychologist Théodore Simon (1863-1961) and continued with the work of Russian psychologists Léon Walther (1889-1963) and Helena Antipoff (1892-1974). Antipoff's work has become an important chapter in the reception of the New Education in Brazil, especially the work she has developed with her collaborators in the teacher education courses offered at the Rosario Farm Educational Complex in Ibirité, Minas Gerais, where were established the Sandoval Soares de Azevedo Rural Normal School, in 1948, and the Rural Higher Education Institute (RHEI), in 1955. Antipoff sought to adapt New Education ideals to the training of educators, and her work became an example of appropriating and developing these ideals.

The educational experiences carried out at Fazenda do Rosário (Rosario Farm) were recorded in diary notebooks by the students who attended the courses. The diaries were thought by Helena Antipoff as a

pedagogical tool for the construction of the memory of events, promoting the habit of observation and reflections on the work developed within the institution. They were written collectively, and every day a different student recorded the events of the day and read the text at dinner time to her colleagues, teachers, and the Farm leaders. The records described contents of the subjects learned during the courses and the scale of the activities performed by the students in relation to the cleaning of the building, care of the gardens and small animals, besides the description of the religious practices in which they participated (Jinzengi; Luz; Campos, 2016; Duarte, 2017).

The existence of these reports allowed their use as evidence for this case study of how some New Education proposals were appropriated in Brazil through the work done by Helena Antipoff and her collaborators in the courses offered at Fazenda do Rosário (Rosário Farm), from 1948 to 1974. For this purpose, testimonies of students written in the notebooks filed at the Helena Antipoff Center of Research and Documentation located at the Museum of the Helena Antipoff Foundation, in the city of Ibirité, Minas Gerais, were collected. Formal interviews were also conducted with participants of the courses, in order to reconstruct the history from oral testimonies of former students.

## METHOD

As sources, a sample of testimonies found in notebooks where diaries were written by students who participated in the courses from 1948 to 1974 was collected. The diary notebooks are archived at the Center for Research and Documentation Helena Antipoff located at the Helena Antipoff Foundation, in the city of Ibirité, Minas Gerais. We used as a criterion the selection of at least one diary notebook per year researched, in which testimonials could be found about the teaching of Psychology in the courses, which led to the selection of 41 diary notebooks. In addition to these diaries, a retrospective cohort study was conducted to collect oral testimonies from five former students in order to highlight the reflections of students' private experiences on the teaching of Psychology carried out in the courses. This choice followed the following selection criteria: deponents who attended the courses at the Rosario Farm between 1948 and 1974; who were students of Helena Antipoff and her collaborators when they taught the discipline of Psychology and who could demonstrate that they used the contents of Psychology learned in the improvement courses in their professional practice.

According to Gil (1991), the retrospective cohort study is based on past records with follow-up to the present, referring to a group of people who have some common feature. The approach used was the categorical

<sup>1</sup> The international current of educational thinking known in Brazil as the Escola Nova movement is generally referred to as the New Education movement in English-language literature and Éducation Nouvelle in French-speaking countries. In North America there is also the name Progressive Education movement, referring to the late 19th and early 20th century ideas and proposals for transformation of educational institutions advocated by American progressive educators (Haengelli-Jenni, 2015; Tyack, 1974; Lourenço Filho, 2002).

content analysis aiming to elucidate messages that allowed the identification of the topics discussed in Psychology classes in the courses. This analysis was used both in the diary notebooks and in the data obtained during the interviews, through the creation of categories that allowed the classification of topics related to the subject Psychology of the courses held at the Rural Educational Complex of the Rosario Farm. The categorical analysis of the content found in the data collection originated the following thematic categories: *Psychology in the planning of pedagogical actions for the rural environment; Psychology and the theoretical framework of the Geneva School; Appropriation of teaching psychology through teamwork and self-government and Psychology taught by foreign experts.*

### THE NEW EDUCATION MOVEMENT<sup>2</sup>

In the late decades of the nineteenth century, schooling was defined as a right and schools began to receive and educate large groups of children, while “respecting individual rights and ensuring fair access to educational goods” (Campos, 2012, p. 64). During this period, the so-called New Education movement emerged, criticizing the classical school for using methods in which teacher authority predominated (Parrat-Dayán & Tryphon, 1998).

The movement promoted the development of sciences that contributed to the understanding of the problems that arose in the classroom. Among these sciences, Psychology became a reference as a basis for the practice of an education that respected the freedom and individuality of the student and taught cooperation habits. The first institutions recognized as New Schools were founded between 1882 and 1900 in some European countries and acted as educational laboratories (Ferrière, 1925).

In 1899, Swiss educator Adolphe Ferrière (1879-1960) established the *Bureau International des Écoles Nouvelles* (BIEN) in Geneva in order to centralize and coordinate information on the movement taking place in Europe, recording the experiences of New Schools and connecting educators involved in these experiences (Haenggeli-Jenni, 2011). BIEN established scientific assistance relations between the various New Schools, centralized the documents involved in the New Education movement and highlighted the psychological experiments that would be carried out in future Pedagogy laboratories.

At the time of BIEN's founding, Ferrière visited experimental schools in Switzerland, France and England, observing innovations in educational practices and school organization. From these observations, he produced a list of thirty points with criteria for

<sup>2</sup> In Brazil, the New Education movement was called the New School movement.

distinguishing the New Schools, which was approved in 1921 at the *Ligue Internationale pour l'Éducation Nouvelle* (LIEN) Congress, held in Calais, France (Haenggeli-Jenni, 2011). LIEN contributed to the ideals and methods of teaching by strengthening cooperative relationships and bringing together the pioneers of New Education from all countries, as well as propagating the principles of New Education, empowering and familiarizing teachers interested in the ideas that were emerging about educational work. LIEN's activities contributed to the creation of the *Bureau International d'Éducation* (BIE), founded in Geneva in 1925, in conjunction with the *League of Nations and the Jean Jacques Rousseau Institute* (JJRI) (Ferrière, 1925, 1949).

The JJRI is considered an institution of great importance in the propagation of the ideas proposed by the New Education movement, for this reason, the next topic will be destined to discuss the contribution of the JJRI to the movement.

### THE JEAN JACQUES ROUSSEAU INSTITUTE AND ITS CONTRIBUTION TO THE NEW EDUCATION MOVEMENT

In the same period as Adolphe Ferrière, the physician and psychologist Edouard Claparède, in Switzerland, was conducting scientific investigations in child psychology. Around 1900, Claparède was called on to advise teachers on the upbringing of children considered abnormal and noted that the problems school children presented demonstrated that misconceptions in education affected personality development. For this reason, he believed in the need to modify educational methods to adapt them to the interests of children, enabling the teacher to improve his/her teaching practice, and to broaden his/her conceptions and perceptions of students.

Aiming at the progress of the Sciences of Education, especially Educational Psychology and Didactics, in 1912 Claparède founded the JJRI in Geneva to conduct research and to instruct educators according to the scientific approach to education, focusing on Psychology (Ruchat, 2008). The purpose of the JJRI “was to construct a new pedagogical model, based on knowledge of the child and respect for the stages of his/her development and individual differences” (Lourenço, 2001, p. 62). To this end, Claparède toured educational institutions looking for people interested in composing the JJRI students' team. Initially, Claparède went to the Sorbonne laboratory in Paris, directed by Théodore Simon (1873-1961), there he met Helena Antipoff and invited her to enroll in the JJRI (Ruchat, 2008).

At JJRI, practical teaching was sought, so the Didactics and History classes were taught as seminars, in which students prepared material that was discussed in general assemblies. In addition to these seminars,

the Institute organized lectures on Special Didactics, with foreign educators or psychologists. In Psychology classes, students participated in exercises in the Animal Psychology Laboratory, considering that the acquisition of habits or training of an animal would provide significant results for the educator to understand the ontogenetic development of the infant psyche (Claparède, 1912). From this teaching model, researchers and teachers publicized a school that focused on knowledge about the child. To this end, Claparède (1956) believed that it was necessary to carry out investigations on aspects of childhood and to enable educators to access the results of these investigations and the methods for carrying them out in the school environment.

Focusing on an experimental teaching of Psychology applied to Pedagogy and through Active Education, Edouard Claparède and Pierre Bovet (1878 - 1965) organized, in 1913 at the JJRI, a practical course on the proposals of Maria Montessori (1870 - 1952). At the end of this course, the Institute's teaching staff continued the experiment by opening an experimental school called *Maison des Petits* (Children's House) for the application and evaluation of the new educational proposals of the time (Perregaux, Rieben, & Magnin, 1996). Over time, the pedagogical orientation of the *Maison de Petits* began to emphasize the spontaneous action of the children, tending to free them from external controls and to leave them free to pursue their interests and impulses. In this way, teachers would provide situations that stimulate thinking and make learning possible through active methods.

Helena Antipoff's experience at the *Maison des Petits* guided her educational activities following the receipt of her diploma at the JJRI in October 1914. Thereafter, Antipoff left Geneva, and only returned in 1926 to take up the post of laboratory assistant at JJRI and teach Child Psychology classes at the School of Education Sciences of the University of Geneva (Lourenço, 2001).

The JJRI's contribution to the New Education movement centered on the proposal of Claparède's Functional Education, or Pierre Bovet's Active School, which aimed to promote children's autonomy through pedagogical methods that mobilized their interests and spontaneous activity (Campos, 2012). Based on Functional Psychology, JJRI teachers and researchers directed attention to the knowledge of childhood, through a functional understanding of Education.

The research carried out at JJRI and its ideals was spread to several countries. In the case of this article, we will discuss how these ideals were disseminated in Brazil, specifically in Minas Gerais. For this reason, in the next topic, we will describe the adaptations of the JJRI New Education proposals in this state, initially, at the Teacher Training School of Belo Horizonte.

## THE JJRI NEW EDUCATION PROPOSALS' ADAPTATIONS IN BRAZIL - THE TEACHER TRAINING SCHOOL OF BELO HORIZONTE

The New Education movement became known in Brazil from the work of the educators of the main instance of the education renewal movement of the time, the Brazilian Education Association (BEA), created in 1924, which sought the remodeling and creation of a national project for education.

In the first decades of the twentieth century, access to the literature produced by the New Education movement was disseminated in the country, aiming to fight for the application of knowledge of the human sciences in the organization of a school system that contributed to real life (Campos, 2012). From 1890, Psychology began to be taught in the formation of teachers at the Normal Schools, to act in primary schools, in order to understand the educational phenomena.

Laboratories of Psychology linked to Normal Schools contributed to the development and application of tests aimed at identifying levels of mental development and organization of homogeneous classes by intellectual level in public schools. In this movement, in 1928, was installed in Belo Horizonte the Teacher's College, to train "students who would assume the effective transformation of elementary schools into the primary school network" (Campos, 2003, p. 210). The installation of this College was carried out as a consequence of the enforcement of the Primary School and Normal Reform of Minas Gerais, 1927, designed by Francisco Luís da Silva Campos (1891 - 1968), and which was based on the JJRI model (Ruchat, 2008).

In the Teacher's College were promoted several courses, to which were called foreign researchers of Psychology, who brought to Brazil new techniques and pedagogical conceptions. Francisco Campos found in the proposals of the European Active School the inspiration to elaborate the Regulation and the Program of Primary education. Therefore, in 1928, his brother Alberto Alvares (1905 - 1933), was sent to Europe, to invite people who would assist the government in the process of education reform (Lourenço, 2001). He "visited the main centers of study and dissemination of New Education experiences in Europe, and established communication with the University of Paris and with the Jean-Jacques Rousseau Institute in Geneva" (Campos, 1992, p. 34). Because of these contacts, a Psychology Laboratory was installed at the Teacher's College, inaugurated by Théodore Simon, followed by Leon Walther. With the end of his contract with the Minas Gerais government, Leon Walther returned to Switzerland and was replaced by Helena Antipoff, who arrived in Belo Horizonte and took over the Psychology Laboratory from August 1929 until 1944.

The Laboratory aimed to “meet the demand of educational authorities, with the purpose of measuring the intellectual capacity of children to organize homogeneous classes in schools” (Campos, 1996, p. 35). Antipoff initially believed that the class homogenization model would help to facilitate teachers’ work. In her view, special classes would happen only at a time, and then students could return to regular classes, but this did not happen (Campos, 1996). Over time, public schools have become increasingly selective, so Antipoff promoted, with the help of a group of educators, doctors and intellectuals, the foundation of the Pestalozzi Society of Minas Gerais in 1932, in Belo Horizonte, and soon after, in 1939, the Rural Educational Complex of Rosario Farm in Ibité, to attend children refused by formal education, as well as to educate rural teachers.

The work done by Helena Antipoff and her collaborators at these institutions demonstrates the circulation of the JJRI New Education proposals that took place in Minas Gerais. Thus, the next topic is intended to present how this circulation of New Education ideals were applied in the courses that trained teachers to work in the rural environment at the Rural Educational Complex of Rosario Farm.

#### **THE CIRCULATION OF JJRI NEW-SCHOOL PROPOSALS AT THE ROSARIO FARM - THE WORK DONE BY HELENA ANTIPOFF AND HER COLLABORATORS IN THE RURAL TEACHER TRAINING COURSES**

This topic is intended to present evidence to indicate how New Education proposals circulated incourses related to the area of Psychology at the Rural Educational Complex of Rosario Farm, designed to educate rural teachers. The following categories of analysis were constructed based on the collected materials: *Psychology in the pedagogical actions planning for the rural environment; Psychology and the theoretical framework of the Geneva school; Appropriation of teaching psychology through teamwork and self-government and psychology taught by foreign experts.*

##### **Psychology in the pedagogical actions planning for the rural environment**

Helena Antipoff and her collaborators initiated, from 1948 onwards, the courses for the teachers’ education in the Rural Educational Complex of Rosario Farm, based on New Education models. The intention was that the courses had a dynamic experimental character, arousing students’ interests both intellectually and practically. A testimonial found in the “RHEI Diaries - 05/21/56 to 06/15/56” exemplifies how the teaching was done in the courses, encouraging students to solve the problems they would find in the schools where they would act as teachers.

Psychology helps humans solve their problems. To allow the adult man to live more fit and happy, the most effective way will be the knowledge of himself. The school can help by getting the student to know himself/herself better, in order to better orient himself/herself in life. Our task will be to bring the science of the knowledge of weakness, better self-knowledge, to educate more freely, with more inner peace and harmony. (N. C. Oliveira, June 15, 1956).

It emphasized the need to solve the problems of the countryside through theoretical classes, but mainly the practice for a better comprehension and understanding for the student. Antipoff considered that solving the problems of the countryside was paramount and required “a theoretical learning, in classes with teachers, but practice through service must prevail because it is more fertile in teaching and better controlled by its results” (Antipoff, 1992a, p. 73).

The methodology of the courses was based on the natural experimentation and observation method of the Russian psychologist Alexandre Lazurski (1874 - 1917), which made it possible to study the personality and behavior of the individual in his/her usual environment without transferring him/her to artificial conditions. The objective in using this methodology was the organization of an educational environment that allowed the flourishing of democracy, prevailing respect for the freedom and autonomy of learners. In this sense, the teaching would allow teachers to know the conduct of students in and out of the classroom, through careful observations, before proposing interventions in the school. In the statement written in the diary notebook of the “5th Training Course for Rural Teachers” it is possible to find a comment that demonstrates how the question of teacher observation was addressed:

Mrs. Helena Antipoff explained to us to be very careful in our observations and to meditate on our unconscious way of observation. I really enjoyed it, because it is great to exercise our observation, showing us that we should only talk about what we are absolutely sure about. (C. C. Silveira, May 8, 1950).

Antipoff (1992b) considered that teachers were not good observers and this fact could cause inaccuracies that would conceal the reality of situations. The discussion about the importance of observing students’ behavior served as a guide for the practical work that provided students with the observation of children to know and understand them. It was possible to verify this fact in the testimony found in the “Normal School Diary - January 1951”:

We went to Mrs. Lúcia’s class, whose objective was to observe the abnormal children, using a chart

organized by Mrs. Helena Antipoff, to measure mental development of each student (C. A. S., January 19, 1951).

It is important to notice that the terms “abnormal” and “exceptional” children, at the time, were interpreted to include children and adolescents who deviated upwards or downwards their group’s norm in relation to one or more mental, physical, or social characteristics. The way the terms were used indicate that those children presented special problems with respect to their education, development, and adjustment to the social environment (Lima, 1968).

In addition to the methodology proposed by Lazurski, there was also an appropriation of Genevan Active Education methodology through teaching that sought autonomy, spontaneous activity, self-government and the realization of active methods. The principle of Active School is that activity is prompted by a need. Thus, an act must be directed to the accomplishment of the ends capable of satisfying the need that gives rise to it, because “it is the necessity that mobilizes individuals... it is the spring of activity” (Claparède, 1954, p. 156). The statement written in the “4th Book of the Second Course of ISER - Rosario Farm, June 26, 1956” (Instituto Superior de Educação Rural, 1956a) demonstrates this fact:

Mrs. Helena ... spoke of the laws of conduct ... Each one gave a practical example by attaching theory to practice. I analyzed, after class, the interest of my colleague Daisy ... Since the day dawned Daisy insisted and invited the class to the wedding that is taking place today at Pestalozzi. She organized the list to buy the gift and it is agreed that in the afternoon, there is no class to do, because of the preparation for the wedding, she explained it will be an antisocial cause not to attend ... See ... a deep interest, but the need that rules it, I couldn’t figure it out. She claims that it is a social necessity not only for the people of Ibirité but also for those of Pestalozzi. ... I checked the fundamental laws of conduct to see which one fit Daisy’s interest and I could not classify it ... the savory, sweet, guarana, palms, dances, etc. Is there only the social interest? In addition, a good menu, does not it interest us, does it? ... Help me to analyze this interest, because your conduct may perhaps be integrated with Claparède’s with the determination of the law of interest in marriage. (E. Cristiano, July 3, 1956).

This statement demonstrates that the knowledge learned should be used to mobilize actions in decision-making, helping to identify and understand everyday situations. In this way, knowledge would help the



**Figure 1** Helena Antipoff talks to a group of students, Rural Higher Education Institute, Rosario Farm, Ibirité, Minas Gerais, circa 1968. Source: Collection of the Helena Antipoff Documentation and Research Center.

teacher to think of proposals that would make learning possible, through active methods that would help students in their particular experiences and in the specific requirements of each case.

### PSYCHOLOGY AND THE THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK OF THE GENEVA SCHOOL

The knowledge baggage Antipoff brought to Brazil directed her educational proposals in the courses, because her performance was based on the theoretical framework of the Geneva school and the JJRI researchers. This fact is confirmed by the testimony found in the "ISER Diary – Rosario Farm (Higher Institute of Rural Education Advisor Course)" (Instituto Superior de Educação Rural, 1961), in which the student mentions one of the books used for teaching in the courses:

I went back ... to my room where there was a pile of books ... found one with data about Claparède. I decided to read ... I found it interesting to report what I read. Claparède, one of the greatest figures of the New School, created the "Jean Jacques Rousseau Institute", with the collaboration of Pierre Bovet, D. Helena Antipoff, Piaget and others. From Claparède is the phrase: "One only learns to do by doing with necessity." Activity is born of a need; an act that is not directly linked to a need is an unnatural thing; and it is this unnatural thing that the traditional school demands of its students; do ... that do not correspond to any need (A. Ribeiro, August 25, 1961).

During the interviews, a former student who attended the first rural normal courses at Sandoval de Azevedo School in 1949 also mentions the influence of Claparède's theory on the teaching of psychology, especially the book "Experimental Pedagogy and Psychology of the Child"<sup>3</sup>, as shown below:

The basic text for us, which I still have to this day, is Experimental Pedagogy and Psychology of the Child. This one we studied all. The chapter 4, the evolution of interests, we read, because she wanted us to interpret what the child wanted and she [Helena Antipoff] would say, go read Claparède and we had to read. She did not teach, but she required the reading of the book. The statistical part where Claparède explains the work curve. The things we learned, that was a book, a text from Psychology (Z. C. Guenther, July 08, 2016).

From these statements, one can think that Helena

<sup>3</sup> This book "originated from the need to respond to the wishes of the teachers, the students of the Educational Psychology Seminar that Claparède ran in 1904, the students of the JJRI, and countless people who were constantly asking for clarification on the multiple aspects of childhood." (Antipoff, 1956, p. 16).

Antipoff maintained a connection with the place where she graduated and where she lived some of her first professional experiences, because, in Brazil, the author used scientific productions of the intellectuals who participated at the JJRI, with the purpose of applying and disseminating their ideas through her work.

### APPROPRIATION OF TEACHING PSYCHOLOGY THROUGH TEAMWORK AND SELF-GOVERNMENT

The courses emphasized principles of freedom, activity and interest, favoring the methodology of teamwork and self-government, characteristic of the Active School. Jean Piaget (1896-1980) carried out the spread of this method during the period from 1929 to 1967, when he became head of the *Bureau International d'Éducation* (BIE). Using the *self-government* method, Helena Antipoff and her collaborators hoped that the students would create a network of solidarity and feel responsible for maintaining the group's social bond. Thus, the development of reciprocal understanding and the capacity for discussion, were expected, taking into account the other's point of view and the pros and cons of differing opinions. Fact that could be achieved as demonstrated by a statement in the journal book of "ISER - Rosario Farm Diary from the 1965":

Our teacher always lets us work in groups. So, while enriching our experiences through discussing with other colleagues, we are kind of mentally hygienic ... My group, after a collective study found several values and importance in groupwork, such as ... 1) Teaches to listen and wait for your turn to speak; 2) Develops the spirit of inquiry; 3) Helps the child to be educated to live in society; 4) Enrich student experiences; 5) Develops written and oral language, ... 6) Increases sense of responsibility. (R. P. Santos, May 15, 1965).

Group discussion was also a subject addressed during the interviews conducted with the former students who studied at the Rural Educational Complex of Rosario Farm. They mention about the schedule of study in group in which they participated at night, as well as how this moment allowed the sharing of knowledge among the students who had more ease in the subjects, according to the following reports:

We formed groups to discuss, because usually the teacher asked us to do a group work. For me it was a great knowledge baggage the issue of discussion. In addition, you were not just inside the classroom watching classes; you had your study schedule at night. At this time, you would sit with your colleague and discuss what was seen during the day. (F. F. Silva, April 18, 2016).

The methods of teamwork and *self-government* were intended to enable the establishment of a free and democratic environment, resulting in a spirit of

community and responsible freedom. The courses were aimed at conducting participatory activities that valued the group's experiences and the possibilities of each other's contribution, considering that through collaboration between peers, the future teacher would learn to cooperate as a member of society. One student stressed in the interview that coexistence and teamwork were important for her formation, as she was able to develop an expertise through a culture of cooperation in which decisions were shared, to reach a decision that contemplated what would be most effective for the group.

[To resolve the conflicts within the group] we had to live that and she [Helena Antipoff] just asked, "What was the matter, how did you come to solve it, how is it being now? Have you lost the fight for the argument? How do you feel today?". This was how this class happened, for us to understand what goes on within the social organization. The group would settle it, People took a lot of time to solve, because there was a lot of discussion, a lot of fighting. She [Helena Antipoff] really wanted to see how these conflicts were going to happen and how they were going to be solved, because we had to solve them, no one was going to help. After all, whatever came out would be the most useful for us. (Z. C. Guenther, July 8, 2016).

Groupwork allowed the experience of collective life, putting into action the experience of the exercise of democracy and group self-government. The discussions provided the opportunity for learning debate, cooperation, peaceful conflict resolution, consensus building, and educating a sense of individual and group responsibility. About group experiences, a former student stated that teamwork was more efficient in performing the tasks that should be performed by them.

We had group experiences ... We gathered and this emphasis on the group she [Helena Antipoff] gave, was in the real group, living. Some bigger, some smaller. We always had to call people to form the group on a task already done. It worked. This we had there, as students and as teachers. (Z. C. Guenther, July 8, 2016).

From the testimonies, it is possible to see that the method of debate and teamwork were extremely important in the education of future rural teachers, considering that the discussions were "a way to reach a clear, well-argued and socialized thought, indispensable for the future educator" (Antipoff, 1992c, p. 287).

#### **PSYCHOLOGY TAUGHT BY FOREIGN EXPERTS**

Another feature of teaching in those courses was the work done by foreign specialists, who promoted the dialogue between Psychology and Education, invited by

Helena Antipoff to teach classes. Through the choice and contribution of experts, one can see some trends in Psychology that underpinned and sustained teachers' education occurring at the Rosario Farm, demonstrating the circulation of knowledge that this training received during that period, through classes that discussed subjects related to Experimental Psychology, Exceptional Education and Social Psychology. One of the foreigners was the Swiss professor André Rey (1906-1965), assistant at the Experimental Psychology Laboratory of the Faculty of Sciences and at the JJRI. He was a professor of Applied Psychology at the Institute of Educational Sciences at the University of Geneva in 1948, where he directed the consulting and professional guidance services and associate professor at the Faculty of Sciences. He also worked at the Faculty of Medicine as head of the Clinical Psychology Laboratory, designed by Claparède in the Neurology services of the Cantonal Hospital in Geneva (Inhelder, 1966). In the Experimental Psychology course taught by this professor in 1956, the focus was on principles of Experimental Psychology through the observation of learning laws that could be statistically proven. André Rey emphasized learning through practical experience, a hallmark of the Geneva Active School. During the interview, a former student mentions how André Rey approached the subject to be taught in his classes:

He divided the subject into General and Comparative Psychology of Learning, which would be the general laws, comparison between individuals, and comparison among species. Human Genetic Psychology, Human Mental Growth, and Differential Learning Psychology. Different interests and capacities. Psychopathology of Learning, and applications of Learning Psychology in school techniques for teacher and student study and professional selection. Precisely the ability to learn productively is what he was aiming for. (I. G. Scarpelli, personal communication, January 26, 2017).

Following the line of knowledge of the courses taught by André Rey, the Dutch Reiner Johannes Antonius Rozestraten (1924 - 2008), also known as Friar Ricardo, continued teaching Experimental Psychology and the study of learning and behavior during the time he taught Psychology at the Rosario Farm. Rozestraten arrived in Brazil in 1950 to work at the Santo Antonio School, Belo Horizonte, and in 1956 he was one of the students who attended the Experimental Psychology course taught by André Rey. In a statement in the notebook of the "Diary of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Intensive Complementary Course for Supervisors and Advisor Adjunct Teachers in Rural Areas", from 1957, it was possible to find a comment about the class given by Rozestraten:

In the Animal Psychology class, taught ... by Friar



Ricardo, the study of learning began, which is the method by what behavior adapts to circumstances. The brain ... increases in temperature when it works a lot due to the combustion of the substances ... necessary for the production of energy. ... The behavior of the individual can be measured through the psychotechnical method; the *lie detector* also measures emotional state, respiration, and pulse rate, so that the variations of an individual can be verified and as he reveals an act, he has performed. The teacher pointed out six results of psychotechnical research and began the study of reflexes. (C., June 21, 1957).

Another foreign expert mentioned in the testimonies was the Portuguese Maria Irene Leite da Costa (1911-1996) who taught, in 1957, in the Intensive Course of Educational Psychology, classes related to the Education of the Exceptional. Like André Rey and Antipoff herself, Maria Irene studied in Geneva, having contact with Edouard Claparède and conducting medical-pedagogical consultations at the Institute of Educational Sciences of the University of Geneva. During her training in Child Psychology and Pedagogy, she had contact with Jean Piaget, who encouraged her to improve psychometric assessment and interest in the areas of Psychology and Education. The contents taught by this teacher aimed at having the students to understand the role of the teacher facing the education of exceptional children, identifying their problems to better direct their pedagogical practice. In the "Diary of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Intensive Complementary Course for Adjunct Supervisors and Counselors Teaching in Rural Areas - May / 1957", it was possible to find the description of the classes given by Leite da Costa:

A conference given by Mrs. Maria Irene Leite da Costa ... The theme was the causes of child retardation. She told us about a child with crippled hands, in a village, and a teacher taught her to write with her foot, thus winning her 4 years of primary school. One teacher wanted to know if it is unpleasant not to receive an abnormal student among normal children, to whom she replied that we should receive this child and make the others understand the need to welcome this unhappy one warmly. She classified the children according to the degree of abnormality. ... Told us that the teacher's role ... is to teach and educate these children by helping them, as far as possible, by keeping them close to us and not diverting them from our path. (L. M. Moura, June 18, 1957).

The French psychologist Pierre Weil (1924 - 2008) was also one of the foreign experts who contributed to the education of the teachers and who had his training at the Faculty of Psychology and Educational Sciences at the JJRI of the University of Geneva. This teacher's classes discussed human relations at school, as well as

the teacher's leadership role in the school environment through autocratic, democratic and liberal attitudes, according to a statement contained in the 1958 "ISER Diary of Counselors" (Instituto Superior de Educação Rural, 1958):

Professor Pierre Weil's class. ... The teacher will be leader according to the relations established between him, the student and the community. Three attitudes can be taken towards students: 1 - let the student do as he or she wants; 2 - order: autocratic attitude; 3 - make the student draw the conclusions and acquire new attitudes. This is the quality of leadership. In a group run by the first, there is confusion. In the second, one creates passivity, inhibition, revolt, anguish. In the third type of leadership there is a sense of responsibility that is created in each student, a relaxed environment (not laxness), absence of fear, desire to know and change of attitude. (M. F. Costa, November 10, 1958).

Through the material collected in diary notebooks and interviews with former students, it was possible to detect and demonstrate the process of circulation and reception of knowledge, supported by New Education principles and Active School methods, which took place in the courses for the education of rural teachers in the Rural Educational Complex of the Rosario Farm.

## FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

From the collected data it was possible to verify that the work done in the courses taught at the Rosario Farm allows to understand the process of circulation and reception of scientific knowledge occurred in Minas Gerais, based on New Education principles and on Active School methods. Circulation and reception based on the experiences in Europe served as inspiration for Antipoff and her collaborators to provide an originality in the activities and teaching of the courses, introducing modifications, due to a different reality in Brazil from that experienced in Europe. In this bias, the term circulation is thought as an active posture of the subjects who, upon receiving knowledge, transform it, adapting it to their different situations and realities, especially in places where cultural contrasts and differences are significant.

Referring to the circulation of knowledge and scientific practices of Psychology, Pickren (2012) mentions that in the history of scientific Psychology there is a predominance of European and North-American models during the twentieth century, which will be modified with the advent of the globalization process, within which Psychology will be marked by the different countries and cultures through which it passes. The author emphasizes the active posture of human beings in the process of receiving knowledge

and transforming it, in order to adapt it to their different realities. This process was observed in the teaching done at Rosario Farm, through a theoretical perspective of the Geneva school and in the relationship of both Antipoff and the collaborators who worked in the courses, with the knowledge produced in JJRI. Pickren (2012) also mentions the model of “Center - periphery”, to refer to the circulation of information and psychological knowledge considered scientific coming specifically from the larger centers, and then reaching the peripheries. The author points out a tendency that seeks the understanding of local histories, which can be called various forms of Psychologies that were constituted and built on the outskirts from the knowledge coming from the major centers, enabling a better understanding of scientific and cultural transformation and awareness to the new possibilities of knowledge that are created in the cultural contact zones.

This “center - periphery” model can be related to the case of this article at the time when Antipoff and her collaborators were teaching Psychology in the courses, based on the knowledge coming from the Jean Jacques Rousseau Institute in Geneva. The “center” could be considered these theories coming from Europe and the “periphery” would be Brazil, specifically Minas Gerais, where knowledge was being shared in the Rural Educational Complex of RosarioFarm. However, from the cultural context in which the courses were inserted, appropriations and modifications were taking place, enabling an innovative way of teaching in the formation of teachers. Thus, the New School and the Active School of Geneva served as inspiration for the accomplishment of teaching in the education of rural teachers in the courses of the Rosario Farm, being modified according to the Brazilian reality and allowing the realization of what Pickren (2012) calls knowledge indigenization, that is, to the making of local or native knowledge. In the specific case of the courses, this indigenization was related to the knowledge taught about Psychology, based on the New and Active School of Geneva, but which took into consideration the rural environment in which teacher training was inserted.

From the data found and described, several research possibilities can be developed. One of them would be to check what was the impact of knowledge provided by each of the foreign specialists who taught classes in the Rural Educational Complex courses of the Rosario Farm, in the Psychology that was being built and consolidated in Minas Gerais.

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