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The student connections of Social Work at the Catholic University of Valparaíso with the working classes (1967-1973)

Vínculos del estudiantado de Trabajo Social de la Universidad Católica de Valparaíso con las clases populares (1967-1973)

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How to cite

Abstract

The article reports on the relationship of the Social Work students of the UCV with the popular classes of Valparaíso during the Latin American Reconceptualization Movement. The premise proposes that in the period studied (1967-1973), a process of approximation of the students of Social Work of the UCV with the popular classes took place due to the intensification of the country's socio-poli-

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tical contradictions, outside the university. The objective of the article is to characterise the relationship between UCV's TS students and the popular classes, for which two types of sources were considered: students' theses and an interview with Vicente Faleiros, professor of the School during the period studied. Two periods are identified (1967-1969 and 1970-1973), analysed from three dimensions that account for the elements that condition the relationship, namely: *the political conformation of the student body, its theoretical-methodological positions, and practical-interventive relationships.* The results show that, during the first period, the student body was interested in the answers to the problems of the popular classes, motivating the search for new references to understand reality; important are the *developmentalist* and *marginality theories,* which are coherent with the observed tendency towards a more tutelary role oriented towards greater participation and integration of the popular classes within society. During the second period, the student body was politicised in more radical terms and, from horizontality, sought to develop perspectives of collaboration and co-construction; theoretically influenced by *classical Marxism and dependency theory,* the student body oriented its reflection and action depending on the interests of the popular classes, intensifying the relationship with respect to the first stage. We conclude with a discussion about the study's scope, limits, and projections.

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Resumen

El artículo da cuenta de los vínculos del estudiantado de Trabajo Social (TS) de la Universidad Católica de Valparaíso (UCV) con las clases populares de Valparaíso en el contexto del Movimiento de Reconceptualización latinoamericana. La premisa propone que en el período estudiado (1967-1973) tiene lugar un proceso de aproximación del estudiantado de Trabajo Social de la UCV con las clases populares, el cual se fue intensificando acorde al proceso de agudización de las contradicciones del contexto sociopolítico del país, afuera de la Universidad. El objetivo del artículo es caracterizar el vínculo del estudiantado de Trabajo Social de la UCV con las clases populares, para lo cual se consideraron dos tipos de fuentes: tesis de estudiantes y una entrevista con Vicente Faleiros, profesor de dicha Escuela en el período estudiado. Se identifican dos períodos (1967-1969 y 1970-1973) analizados a partir de 3 dimensiones que dan cuenta de los elementos que condicionan el vínculo, a saber: la conformación política del estudiantado, sus posturas teórico-metodológicas y los vínculos práctico-interventivos. Los resultados muestran que durante el primer período se observa a un estudiantado in-

teresado en las respuestas a las problemáticas de las clases populares, motivando la búsqueda de nuevas referencias para comprender la realidad; importantes son las *teorías desarrollistas* y de la *marginalidad,* las que son coherentes con la tendencia observada hacia un rol más tutelar, orientado hacia una mayor participación e integración de las clases populares dentro de la sociedad. Durante el segundo período, se identifica un estudiantado politizado en términos más radicales y que desde la horizontalidad buscó desarrollar perspectivas de colaboración y co-construcción; teóricamente influenciado por el *marxismo clásico* y la *teoría de la dependencia,* el estudiantado orientó su reflexión y acción en función de los intereses de las clases populares, intensificando el vínculo respecto de la primera etapa. Finalmente, se identifican ciertos matices y contradicciones dentro de este proceso.

Introduction

The following article focuses on the relationship between Chilean Social Work and the popular classes in a certain period of our history (1967-1973), based on a very specific experience: the School of Social Work at the UCV and the link between its students and the popular movement of the time, circumscribed within the context of what in the historiography of the profession is known as the Reconceptualization Movement. In this sense, we will begin by explaining the theoretical keys from which we will approach the object.

Firstly, the article positions itself from a particular approach: the historical-critical perspective of Social Work (SW) from which – anchored in the critique of political economy and dialectics in Marx – the discipline is understood as a product, while contributing to the reproduction of the social relations of production, in the context of class antagonism, characteristic of the capitalist social order (Iamamoto, 1995). From this point of view, the history of the discipline cannot be understood in a purely endogenous manner, but rather the understanding of its social meaning must be articulated with a reading of the socio-historical determinants that peculiars the ethical-political horizons and the scope of professional reflection and practice (Iamamoto, 1995).

Secondly, understanding that there are different ways of studying professional history, this article is particularly interested in – and, therefore, is a key point of entry into – the discipline's relationship with the popular sectors. It is therefore in dialogue with what is known as the 'New Social History', from which to view change and resistance with a focus on the movement of popular subjects within history (Salazar and Pinto, 1999).

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A third key approach, from Benjamin, invites us to *brush history against the grain* (Benjamin, 2008), understanding that it is never a neutral or innocent exercise in terms of the present. The historiographical exercise that we will present below aims, in this sense, to account for a will and its context: to bring the voices of the vanquished into the present (Benjamin, 2008), to account for their unfulfilled expectations and to unsettle/problematise us, as heirs of a history.

From these keys, our proposal aims to characterise the link between the TS student body of the UCV and the popular classes in the period from 1967 to 1973. The premise that guides the paper argues that *the process of rapprochement between the TS-UCV student body and the popular classes gradually but persistently intensified as the contradictions of the socio-political context that permeated the School and the university spaces became more acute*. In this sense, and coherent with the historical-critical perspective adopted as the theoretical approach from which the study was conducted, the sources consulted allow us to observe that a critical perspective was maturing in the disciplinary discussion – within the student body – which became more radical as the class conflicts also became more radical.

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As for the analysis of the period under study, it is carried out considering two stages: 1967 to 1969 and 1970 to 1973. In 1967, the University Reform burst onto the scene with force, an issue that is central to understanding the experience of the Valparaíso School (Arancibia, 2017; Faleiros, 2017), which is also consistent with the review of student theses in which the adoption of qualitatively new elements from that year onwards is strongly shown. The second stage begins in 1970, with the triumph of the Popular Unity and the accelerated process of change that this entails, which shows a clear correlate in the adoption of new perspectives in the reflection observed in the theses reviewed. The process, evidently, came to a close in 1973.

The methodology consists of a content analysis based on a review of historiographical sources[2], specifically 20 theses written by students for the title of Social Worker/Assistant between 1967 and 1973[3], out of a total of 96 theses written during the period[4]. This exploratory analysis offers, in this first instance, a descriptive review that aims to provide a research basis for developing new and deeper research questions on this topic. The criteria for inclusion/exclusion in the selection of the corpus have to do with theses that deal with the links between Social Service/Social Work and the popular sectors, as well as the conceptions that the students in training had about themselves and about this link. As a complement to the analysis, an interview conducted in September 2023 with

[2] For an understanding of the weight of this type of source, see Aróstegui (1995).
[3] See the full list at the end of the article under Theses reviewed.
[4] The initial review covered theses from 1964 onwards. It is in 1967 that the emergence of terminology and concepts that reflect new theoretical-political and methodological orientations can be seen most clearly.

Vicente de Paula Faleiros, professor at the School of Social Work at the UCV between 1970 and 1973, was included, which provides elements for understanding the context and the reflections of the student body in that period.

On the basis of the work carried out and the periodisation proposed above, three dimensions can be identified from which it is possible to read and characterise the link between the student body and the popular classes in this period: (a) Political shaping of the university student body in its proposed links and understanding of itself; (b) Theoretical-methodological positions and professional role; (c) Practical-interceptive links.

In terms of structure, the first section of the article provides a brief contextualisation of the most important elements in which the object of study of this article is framed; in the second section, we will present the main findings of the study. We end with conclusions about the scope, limits and possible projections of the results of the study.

Brief contextualisation of historical and disciplinary constraints

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The context in which the object of study is situated has been studied by different research and from different perspectives, both in Chile (Arancibia, 2017; Cáceres, 2015; Castañeda and Salamé, 2022; González, 2010; Illanes, 2008; Morales, 2015; Orellana 2017; Panez and Orellana 2016; Ruz 2016; Vidal, 2016), as well as in the Latin American context (Alayón 2005; Da Costa, 2017; Eiras et al, 2022; Iamamoto and Dos Santos, 2020; Iamamoto et al, 2021). In this sense, and starting from a global perspective, the Cold War and its Latin American manifestations (Cuban Revolution/ Alliance for Progress) are undoubtedly elements that will permeate in multiple ways the social struggles in Chile in those years, This was the scenario where the proposals of the Second Vatican Council and Liberation Theology came into play, as well as the alleged 'middle ways' between capitalism and socialism – expressed by the *Revolution in Freedom* of the Frei Montalva government and the *Chilean Way to Socialism*, later with the Popular Unity.

However, and in line with the second key point mentioned above, our focus will be on the rise, prominence, organisational capacity and achievements of the Chilean popular movement of that period, since – as we shall see in the analysis – it is this phenomenon that most strongly pushes for changes that will be experienced in the SC experience of the UCV, both at university level, in general, and at the level of the Social Service/ Social Work, in particular. In this sense, there are two points that we are interested in highlighting.

Firstly, the relevance of actors orbiting in subaltern organisations and social movements that disputed politics at the time and their relevance at the national level. There is a vast historiographical literature that highlights the staging of unprecedented forms of struggle and conquest of the popular movement (Gaudichaud, 2016; Garcés, 27-29 March 2003; Thieleman, 2018; Cury, 2018; Schlotterbeck, 2018). In this sense, it seems important to us to highlight – following Peter Winn's thesis (2013) – the relevance of social movements and class-based organisations, as groups that take an active role in the realisation of the societal project that, already with Allende, embodies the Unidad Popular. The author identifies a Revolution from above – characterised by institutionally, state administration and reformist processes and a temporality ad hoc to the bureaucratic processes of the state – and a Revolution from below, which is positioned as a response both to the *Revolution from above* and also to the failure of Frei's *Revolution in Freedom* (Winn, 2013). It is, therefore, about the protagonist of the movement and the popular classes even beyond their institutional expressions.

The above, and this is the second point, will be of fundamental importance to understand the relationship between this popular movement[5] and the Social Work student body of a UCV that has been, since 1967, in the midst of a University Reform process and whose trajectories create the conditions so that, in 1969, the Schools of Family Education and Social Service (SS) were merged. This is how the School of Social Work and its modernised "school project" was born (Arancibia, 2017)[6]. It is in this context that we place the research findings presented below.

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Scenario from which the Social Work Collective emerges

The old world is dying.
The new one is slow to appear.
And in that chiaroscuro the monsters emerge.
- Antonio Gramsci

The analysis of the results and findings presented below is based on the consideration of two stages that allow us to characterise the links proposed by the TS-UCV student body and the popular classes. Thus, a first moment is identified, from 1967 to 1969, in which a germ of change can be seen, subject to contractions and diffuse limits, but which does not leave aside a nuance with intentions of transformation. In a second moment, which we locate between 1970 and 1973, the previous germ takes shape and, being rapidly disseminated, it is possible to recognise its intensification with respect to the interests

[5] Local expressions of this in Valparaíso can be found in Arancibia and Cáceres (2021).
[6] This explains why in some cases we speak of ESS-UCV and in others of ETS-UCV (Social Service and Social Work respectively).

and approaches that the student body proposes with respect to the popular classes, carrying out the transformative and re-orienting objectives from the discipline.

At the same time, the analysis is based on three identified dimensions, which allow us to observe the factors that influenced the link between the student body and the popular classes, both in the first period and in the second:

a. Firstly, it analyses the student body and the political positioning it is acquiring with regard to its own education as university students and, from there, the role it should play in society in general and with the popular classes in particular.

b. Subsequently, the various theoretical-methodological positions of the students with regard to Social Service/Social Work and the role they should play in society and with the working classes are analysed.

c Finally, some experiences – mediated by processes of practice and social intervention – that the student body had with the popular classes are described.

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First period (1967-1969): *The dying old world.* Social Service students and their links with the working classes

(a) From restlessness to identity: the shaping of student discourse

The theses published in this period show particularities that make it possible to situate the UCV in terms of its objectives, perspectives and spaces, considering the emerging context of University Reform. On the other hand, the writings allow us to identify common conceptions of the role, aspirations and interests of the SS student at UCV.

Understandings of the type: "I was interested in the human problem and I wanted to do something for the dispossessed, (...) to reach man directly" (Urquiza, 1967, p.4) are common among the theses, allowing us to see clues from the students about their motivation. Regarding the latter, Urquiza (1967) speaks of a *willingness to devote oneself to a higher cause,* while Cárdenas and Leiva (1969) call it the *mystique of service,* both understanding that it is "social values that predominate over other motives of choice" (Urquiza, 1967, p.3).

This provision is addressed by the students to families and disadvantaged groups, understanding that these would be "suffering the effects of maladjustment to a changing society" (Cárdenas and Leiva, 1969, p.2), observing this maladjustment as a *problem* that needed to be *addressed*. These readings reflect clues about the student stance towards the socio-political changes of the context, demanding an *attentive and concerned* student attitude towards the orientation of their role (Cárdenas and Leiva, 1969, p.13).

With regard to the university, a contradiction tends to be perceived that emanates from the student body and is related to the university environment, which, after the Reform, promised to embrace the transforming bases in student spaces, committing them to the environment. This was a tension in which the student body recognised a "lack of pronouncement" on the part of the university (Cárdenas and Leiva, 1969, p.13), which provoked *disquiet and dissatisfaction,* which led to the idea of *mobilisation* (Urquiza, 1967).

Following a questionnaire given to the students, it was possible to recognise that the young people revealed a *passive frustration* (Muller and Varela, 1969). A feeling of remoteness was manifested by the students, about which Centeno (1973) indicated:

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> *There is no sense of belonging to a particular social class, that is to say, he is distanced from the plane of reality, and this does not allow him to grasp it in that double dimension of student-social being (p.43-44).*

In this aspect, dissatisfaction is based on a critique that emerges from student discontent due to, it is pointed out, a lack of knowledge of the environment and the ability to relate to it. Thus, from the transverse criticism within the SS, the theses begin to offer new proposals about the role that the university should take and the type of student it should educate, arguing that it should "try to fulfil the basic objectives of the Reform, no longer at the university but at the national level" (Centeno, 1973, p.43-44).

These student discourses around the university claimed that if it became permeable to the Reform, modifying its guidelines and training, the youth would finally "be oriented to assume the responsibility to contribute effectively to the nation" (Muller and Varela, 1969, p.89) which had to do with a *social awakening* in young people through the promotion of values such as dignity, common good and solidarity: "the attitude of neutrality (...) must be replaced by a committed action in favour of *the neglected sectors"* (Álvarez et al., 1969, p.59).

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By 1969, the theses already showed a clearer idea of the TS-UCV student figure. From there, they questioned their spaces, making the demands of the Reform their own. Thus, it is possible to see theses that recognised the student body as a *group* that was "more critical, defined and radicalized than the teachers" (Álvarez et al., 1969, p.59) and that, therefore, they should "... drive the movement for the re-orientation of the profession" (Álvarez et al., 1969).

(b) New orientations for engaging with social issues. Professional theories and roles

In this environment, the hegemonic frameworks of analysis were mainly the *Marginality Theory and the developmentalist principle*. Emphasis is placed on technical-methodological ruptures necessary to better contribute to the development of the individual and the economic development of the country (Carrazola et al., 1969; Vera, 1969). The economic development perspective, at times, contradicts the emancipatory perspectives of Reconceptualisation, from which the (still) Social Service is understood as "an agent of professional change whose function is committed to the process of liberation of the people" (Vera, 1969, p.112).

It was proposed that the new professional/agent should have as subject/object the group of people *disadvantaged* by social reality, understood from a marginality that had to be attacked from its causes. In this line, one of the professional roles for the popular classes was to contribute to create "critical conscience about their reality and to allow them to be incorporated into processes of change" (Álvarez et al., 1969, p.31). At times, the professional role towards the popular classes exceeds a merely professional commitment and acquires nuances that combine with the life itself of the social worker, being a "vital attitude that is projected with this commitment" (Álvarez et al., 1969, p.31).

Tensions are observed in relation to professional roles, where the figure of a "professional leader" is identified, which are combined with certain tutelary tendencies and messianic overtones of a professional whose mission is to "guide processes", in the horizon of forming consciences and directing groups in terms of what the professional understands as their wellbeing.

This is identified, for example, in the experience of the Savings Cooperative through the Group Social Service Method (Vera, 1969), or in the work with an organisation of the Aurora de Chile population, through the community organisation and development

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method (Ruiz, 1969), where, according to the thesis, the Social Work professional must assume the role of a leader who raises awareness, educates and directs processes.

In this scheme, it is the professional, from a position of creating awareness, who constantly evaluates the actions of the collective and grants opportunities to a group that tends to be understood as *passive* in terms of its capacity to organise and create awareness for itself. With the aim of the above that their actions lead to an adaptation of the subject or the collective to Chilean society:

> *Giving an individual the opportunity to have a share in the consequence of his social welfare will make him become a citizen conscious of his social significance. The individual understands that his co-operation is possible and that it is necessary (Ruiz, 1969, p.36).*

Thus, there are also tensions between d*evelopmentalist and emancipatory perspectives* of Reconceptualisation, which raise disputes and questions. "Can a Latin American social service tend to integrate groups into the social system, if existing social structures are considered to be impeding the normal and full development of the human being?" (Carrazola et al., 1969, p.77).

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The questions, in this sense, were not only about theoretical aspects of the discipline, but about the discipline itself, being understood, at times, as a discipline that arose as a product of economic liberalism and with a tendency towards individualism, ineffective in tackling problems in an isolated and individual manner and without its own methodological proposal (Álvarez et al., 1969, p.29). This leads to what is criticised as a position of neutrality towards the collective subject on whom it must orient its action:

> *The social worker has always been the person who has softened relations between employer and worker, has been the conciliatory link and has thus been in favor of those who have maintained and maintain these marginalized sectors of society and has delayed the process of change necessary to overcome this reality (Álvarez et al., 1969, p.30).*

(c) The student body approaches the working classes from new orientations

With regard to the *practical-interceptive dimension* of the link between the Social Service students and the working classes, it is worth mentioning that the main problem

identified by the students was the lack of participation of the marginalised sectors, considered to be one of the causes of their disintegration and an obstacle to organisation (Soto, 1969). In this context, it was up to the student body to encourage the integration of the popular classes into society, promoting their participation in various organisations, so that they could participate in the social and cultural changes that the country was undergoing (Soto, 1969).

These efforts on the part of the student body can be seen in the case of Bustos (1969), who studies a self-construction project of Corporación de Servicios Habitacionales – CORHABIT, indicating that in this system:

> *(...) the participation of sectors that were marginalized is obtained, thus achieving their integration in the general development, first as individuals and, later, as a group within the community. (p.75)*

In terms of the integration of marginalised sectors into society, not only is their participation in organisations considered, but also their inclusion through institutional channels. Bustos (1969) describes the efforts of social workers in the Valparaíso and Aconcagua area in the formation of CORHABIT groups, "fighting tenaciously for their inclusion in the Institution's programming" (p.31).

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However, this lack of participation and passivity that did not allow them to organise themselves was considered to be strongly influenced by the poor living conditions of the working classes. Soto (1969) points out:

> *(...) the lack of participation is influenced by the large number of family problems and, in addition, by the lack of knowledge about the real work and meaning of these bodies, which makes them appear very passive, even when they have latent aspirations. (p.102)*

Thus, the theses analyses indicate a student concern for what they considered to be the passivity of the popular sectors in the face of their marginalised situation and their inability to act without the help of someone from outside. This is how they seek to encourage the organisation and participation of these sectors, within a political context in which they seek to build a new democracy of a social nature, whose efforts result in a "process of expanded democratization" (Illanes, 2009, p.65) and which in the subsequent period results in a diversification and strengthening of popular movements (Garcés, 2004).

Second period (1970-1973): The new world was slow to appear. Radicalism and nuances in its links with the new world

(a) Self-understandings: recognition and unification of student power for the school project.

In this second period, and by virtue of the common nuances that emerge among the theses, we can characterise the student body from a transformative discourse incorporating concepts such as *collective action, community, welfare and liberation* (Lorenzo and Del Pilar, 1972; Centeno, 1973).

In the notions about the new role of the university in the formation of the re-oriented student body (Centeno, 1973), according to the students Astorga, Guzmán, Figueroa, Nicloux, Milagros and Villaroel (1970), the Reform is no longer understood as an ongoing project that contradicts the spaces, but rather, by 1970, it is considered to be incorporated into the guidelines of the *new university and within the new concept of student welfare* (Centeno 1973). The TS student body recognised itself as living in a reformed UCV.

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Thus, Centeno (1973) focuses on the change that *democratisation* meant for the university structure, understanding that from the concerns raised by the student body in the previous stage, it was possible to redefine the university and the TS student community as a "Working Community, through which (...) it contributes to forming Critical Consciousness and the Will to Change, necessary for the development of society" (Centeno, 1973, p.32-33), abandoning the palliative and the apolitical.

During 1970, Allende's presidential speeches emphasised the dimension of education and the role of the student in the change, and it was the students of TS who took up this call to empower themselves and build *student power,* based on elements such as *democratisation, pluralism* (Centeno, 1973), the opening of the university to marginal sectors, integration, that is, "social solidarity and identification with the historical project of the new society" (Lorenzo and Del Pilar, 1972, p.19). Regarding this second period, the theses suggest that student intensification is related to the motivation for "the approach, by various means, of the fruits of university work to all sectors of the population" (Centeno, 1973, p.33).

In the same year, the School received the arrival of Brazilian academics, among them sociologists and social workers who brought in their repertoire the training from Marxist theoretical frameworks and educational ideals from Paulo Freire (Arancibia 2017). According to the interviewee Vicente de Paula Faleiros, with the arrival of *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (Paulo Freire, 2000) and foreign intellectuals, it was possible:

> *from horizontality, looking for common projects (...) this is why Paulo Freire influenced us a lot in this horizontality of wisdom, knowledge and ideas, considering that we know some things, they know others (Vicente de Paula Faleiros, personal communication. 13 September 2023).*

According to Faleiros, it was the mobilised, militant students who were the protagonists in this period. This is because, as he explains, the students – mostly militants of the MIR, MAPU and PS (Muñoz and Durán, 2019) – had "their own spaces of political formation that were brought to the university and, therefore, incorporated into the spaces of Social Work" (Vicente de Paula Faleiros, personal communication. 13 September 2023), carrying out a *critical politicisation* (Lorenzo and Del Pilar, 1972).

The School begins to educate in a different way and with new theoretical frameworks, aiming directly at the formation of a critical student, promoting Social Education through action and critical reflection of reality, added to a real awareness of a social individual invited to participate actively and directly in the process that the country is going through (Lorenzo and Del Pilar, 1972).

It was understood, then, that the TS-UCV student community tends to deepen a *line of collective action* (Centeno, 1973), since at this stage a "sense of belonging and solidarity with the class to which they belong is openly recognised and students are motivated to participate in the process of changing it" (Centeno, 1973, p.48), making it possible to characterise the new place of the student body as one that is avowedly committed, critical, democratised and politicised (Lorenzo and Del Pilar, 1972; Faleiros 2023).

In the context of a government that legitimises system change and transformation through mobilisation, ST students recognised that they "must work actively in grassroots organizations to bring out the consciousness of the people in order to become the managers of their own history" (Franco et al., 1973, p.69).

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(b) Essays on a revolutionary theory-practice of the student body towards the working classes

In this second period, all the elements presented in the previous section are radicalised, among others, by the integration of classical *Marxist theory, dependency theory* and Paulo Freire's *critical pedagogy*[7].   In relation to the Reconceptualization Movement, an integration of the aforementioned theoretical perspectives is identified through a *questioning vocation* of the discipline, even if no explicit mention is made of the Movement.

However, there are certain reflections that can be framed in a similar discursive line, in that they reflect on ideological aspects of the discipline that need to be transformed in order to move towards the creation of an *emancipatory Social Work:* "we opt for a change, starting from the orientation of our work. No more: professionalism, accommodation, maintenance or conformism" (Casanga et al., 1970, p.10).

In this second stage, the theses analysed propose their own analyses: reflections on social and economic reality based on Marxist and dependency theory, an integration of these theories with the interests of Social Work and methodologies such as participant observation and quantitative analyses of surveys (Cárdenas and Leiva, 1969; Delgado et al., 1971).

Social Work, in this period, is explicitly understood within the framework of capitalism, and in the theses there is an interest in nipping in the bud what is identified as one of its functional foundations to the system: *welfare* and, in general, the methods that only address the individual as isolated from society, reducing professional action to the integration of the individual and their groups to the dynamics of capitalist society, without necessarily questioning it (Casanga et al., 1970). Thus, the discipline begins to be understood from its historical dimension and from the contradictions of social reality:

> *The professional action of Social Work must be conceived as a theoretical and systematic construction that will emerge from the analysis of the global context and more specifically from the concrete and real contradictions that the historical moment presents (Delgado et al., 1971, p.130).*

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[7] Although Paulo Freire arrived in Chile in 1964 and published Pedagogy of the Oppressed in 1968, he only appeared clearly in the theses from 1970 onwards.

In view of the above, it is identified that the action of Social Work must be oriented, as a proposal for the transformation of capitalist society, towards the protagonists: the *proletariat* and the *popular classes:*

> *The dependent national reality and its contradictions demand a global, radical and rapid change. This is why the field of action of social work is in the groups that have the leading role in the liberation process (Delgado et al., 1971, p.130).*

In these theoretical approaches, it is possible to observe processes of intensification in relation to the period 1967-69, as far as the link between the student body and the popular classes is concerned.

Thus, for example, in an experience in the National Petroleum Company (Empresa Nacional del Petróleo-ENAP- Concón), the students identify an absence of class consciousness that demands, therefore, the centrality of a work of conscientisation of the workers. In relation to the latter, nuances are identified in relation to the tutelary messianism of the first stage (1967-69) – characterised by the conscientisation of a social subject, assumed as passive, with the aim of its integration into society – insofar as this is evidenced in a discourse where the profession contributes to the creation of a revolutionary class consciousness in terms of social liberation, in what we can identify as a revolutionary messianism: "Its work must be oriented towards the praxis of liberation, which is not done by the individual, nor for him, but with him in the concrete conditions of his reality" (Delgado et al., 1971, p.130).

However, just as there are shades of revolutionary messianism, there are also other ways of approaching popular subjects, observing, for example, that from the influence of Paulo Freire, there is a tendency towards an understanding of the other as equal, autonomous and with the capacity for action. From here, and from what is identified as cultural action, Social Work is linked to the popular classes through critical education in which there is the need for a "training of man to make him participate freely and creatively in the process of transformation of the structures in force through a scientific, active, dialogical and critical method" (Casanga et al., 1970, p. 6).

c) The student body knocks on the door of the working classes

In this second period, the theses still show a constant concern for what they call a lack of participation of the popular classes. In the face of this, one of the explanations has

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to do with a reading that emphasises the historical trajectory of domination of the excluded sectors, domination that is material, but also ideological, expressing itself in *passivity*. Concha and Flores (1972) explain this:

> *The ideology of the ruling class has been a fundamental impediment to mass popular mobilization in the search for solutions to common problems, because it has led people to a relative passivity. (p.5)*

This is also reported by Franco et al. (1973), who analyse the new health programmes in the population area during the Unidad Popular government. In this experience, the lack of participation of the inhabitants was due, on the one hand, to the fact that they were not aware of the role they had to play in the new health programmes and, also, to practical problems, such as the lack of housing or sewage systems. In other words, limitations that have to do with awareness of their role and, of course, material limitations.

Faced with this situation, the students consider that the action of the Social Worker should be reoriented in order to "contribute through Social Education, understood as a dialectic relationship between the Social Worker and the inhabitant on the basis of vindictive issues" (Franco et al., 1973, p.69). The task: to work with existing organisations, to collaborate in the creation of new ones, in the search for greater democratisation and integration of the popular classes in the field of health through active and real participation in decision-making (Franco et al., 1973).

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The importance of organisation and participation in terms of their real and immediate interests as exercises of *popular power* is indicated, which for the student body meant "the hegemony of the working class on a mainly economic, political, social, ideological, etc. basis" (Concha and Flores, 1972, p. 23). In this way, "consciousness-raising" becomes a primary objective for the student body, as it allows for the strengthening of popular organizations, through a joint reflection "that leads to a liberating and humanizing consciousness-raising" (Urzua, 1971, p.35). That is to say, in some theses, the attempt appears no longer to guide the popular classes to their liberation, but that they themselves advance in that direction, giving the students of Social Work the role of reflecting and collaborating, together with the organisations, in the realisation of their class interests.

In this challenge, a distinctive – and crucial – element of the ETS-UCV experience was the close link between the student body and the everyday life of the popular sectors.

This is attested to by Mora and Trujillo (1971), who, based on their practice with a peasant settlement in the Province of Aconcagua, reflect:

> *We believe that the farmer is only known to the extent that a continuous and close relationship is established in the different moments of daily life. This is the main reason why we encourage the stay of three days in our place of practice, being able to spend eight hours a day working and the rest with the families (p.2).*

This is also indicated by Faleiros, for whom "having tea with the population was very different from talking about the population, participating in the anguish of the population... it is not analysing the population, it was sharing" (Vicente de Paula Faleiros, personal communication. 13 September 2023).

Conclusions

By way of conclusion, we will return to the premise that guides the present text: *the process of rapprochement between the TS-UCV student body and the popular classes intensified gradually but persistently as the contradictions of the socio-political context that permeated the School and the university spaces became more acute*. In what elements can we observe this process of intensification between one stage (1967-1969) and the other (1970-1973)?

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To answer the above, the first thing we must point out is that we understand the intensification and radicalisation of the link between the student body and the popular classes as a process and that, therefore, the characteristics that are consolidated in a second stage are the result of a process of maturation that comes from previous stages. For the same reason, the analysis does not seek to establish dates, as ephemeris, but as milestones that mark certain trends.

In this sense, and in relation to the first of the dimensions addressed – (a) Political shaping of the university student body in its proposal of links and understanding of itself – it is possible to note the shift from a denial – out of non-conformity – of the role of the student body to a search to contribute to the construction of a new society. In the first period (1967-1969), the theses reviewed put forward key concepts such as "dissatisfaction" with what is considered to be a UCV "disconnected" from social reality, in general, and from the popular classes, in particular, cementing the critique (denying,

by the way) of the supposed "disciplinary neutrality" contained in university action. From there, in a second moment, the theses show a politicised and conscientious *Social Work* student body that recognises that it is capable of observing, from perspectives that are more connected and closer to Chilean reality, elements that were previously diffuse. And, in this impulse, they assume the possibility and responsibility of being part of the "social awakening", of the ongoing process of transformation of Chilean society, which is placed as an "urgency" explained by the commitment to the popular classes, from a critique of welfare and the logic of service, and the search for a collective action founded on the horizontality of knowledge that aims to capture what the popular classes have to say.

Regarding dimension (b) Theoretical-methodological positions and professional role, if in the first stage the need to incorporate Social Work within the Social Sciences is mentioned, in this second stage the incorporation becomes concrete. In this sense, the main changes and intensifications can be summarised in two aspects.

The first of these, which has to do with conceptual references, shows that the use, in a first stage, of theories leading to the integration of the "disadvantaged" in the social structure gives way, in a second stage, to theories aimed at the transformation of that social structure (capitalism). In this sense, the gradual but consistent shift from theories of marginality and developmentalism to classical Marxism and dependency obviously has an impact on the way in which the professional role is conceived.

In this second aspect, it is possible to note trends. Thus, in a first stage, tendencies towards *mentoring* the *disadvantaged* are identified, with the professional even assuming the role of a leader who guides processes. From here, certain *messianic overtones* can be observed in some theses, which can be understood as a need to be part of an *accelerated* transformation process. In a second stage, the link with the popular classes – who begin to be explicitly the object of Social Work – has as its horizon the liberation from what is identified as *capitalism*. What role does Social Work play here? In this respect, the theses show different accents, one of them being the rotation of the *tutelary messianism* of the first stage (that which liberates) towards a *revolutionary messianism,* whose function is to politically conscientise the subjects with whom it is linked. The above shows different appropriations of the influence of Paulo Freire and his proposal – also present in the theses – to understand the other as an equal, autonomous and capable of action, who should be accompanied, with the professional assuming an active role in awareness-raising (critical educator) and training aimed at a co-constructed liberation.

Finally, in the (c) practical-interceptive link, we can see reflected the debates about the ethical-political horizons and theoretical positions of the previous dimensions. In this sense, the transitions – which form part of an organic whole – can be observed in four elements. First, there is a shift from assisting the popular classes in their integration into the social institutional/structural framework to working for the popular classes according to their interests, from which to organise themselves in order to subsequently advance their liberation. In this process, secondly, in line with Freire mentioned above, horizontality in the link is advocated as a north to be followed, seeking the exchange of knowledge. Thirdly, participation is a critical and central element, both in the first and in the second stage; thus, while in the first stage it appears in some theses as a response to the "passivity" of the popular sectors, in the second stage – and very much in line with the historical situation – it takes on a leading role in the framework of Popular Power, which is installed on a new scale from 1970 onwards.

What do the findings and the premise we have discussed in this article tell us?

There are elements that, from the study, we can affirm with propriety and others that can be suggested by the results of the study, but which – from our point of view – would require further research efforts.

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With regard to the former, it seems to us that it is indeed possible to affirm the existence of a process of intensification and radicalisation – political, theoretical and interventional – of the link between the Social Work students at the UCV and the popular classes. The challenge is clearly indicated in the review of the sources analysed here, as we have seen above. The process of sharpening class contradictions in Chilean society is reflected in the reflections, debates and social interventions of the discipline in the experience studied here.

It is important to stress the contradictory – never monolithic – nature of the process, in which different theoretical and political positions coexisted. That is to say, in one period there were not only *developmentalist-welfareist* expressions, to mention one example, nor in the following one only *critical-revolutionary ones*. These schemes do not necessarily account for the tensions in which, in some cases, different positions co-existed in search of qualitatively new forms. What is clear is that the debates tended, as the country's political process became more radical, more and more towards the unambiguous declaration of a disciplinary commitment to the interests of the popular classes. This does not mean that there was clarity about how to do it: the co-existence of certain *messianisms* at a time when, inspired by Paulo Freire, there was a search for more horizontal models of relations with the popular classes is evidence of this.

Another aspect to highlight has to do with the degree of involvement in multiple dimensions of the student body with the social struggles of the period. In this sense, the theses reviewed (and also the interview with Faleiros) show that the relationship, which was political, theoretical and interventional, also reached a closeness in *everyday life,* from where spaces were opened up to try – sometimes succeeding, sometimes failing – new forms of linking with the popular classes.

It is precisely with regard to these spaces (whose richness is not necessarily captured in its entirety by an academic work) that we consider that there are other aspects that deserve to be looked at again and, most probably, other sources (oral, for example) should be explored. In this sense, although theses can have an important value for historiographical analysis, they have limitations: they do not account for aspects external to the academic-university process. It would be unfair and erroneous to propose a notion of the student body and its links with the popular classes exclusively on the basis of our analysis of theses. These theses do not necessarily include aspects that seem relevant to us, such as, for example, political militancy – mainly in MAPU and MIR (Faleiros, 2023) – and the participation of the student body in joint organisations with other social actors, in which the student-professional role acquires different characteristics, going beyond the student-professional role of Social Work. In other words, these are elements that are relevant as part of the *historical conjunctures* that Iamamoto (1995) points out and that *peculiars* the characteristics of the discipline in certain periods.

Finally, it is important to return to the dialectical understanding of the discipline, pointing out that the links between the students of Social Work at the UCV and the popular classes of Valparaíso are not part of a historiographical anecdote or a process isolated from the socio-political context of the country. On the other side of this thesis, the links made by the student collective, particularly the intensification of these links with the popular classes, are deeply rooted in the socio-historical determinants of social reality, its actors and movements, and these same elements are directly or indirectly affected by the discipline and the theoretical-practical links that were proposed to the popular classes.

It is for this reason that, understanding historical memory as a political, positioned element, it becomes indispensable to turn to it for the interpretation and understanding of the socio-political processes that have taken place in our country, being able to read and enrich the political debates from multiple historical perspectives.

The link between generations that Benjamin (2008) speaks of, which involves protecting and keeping this memory alive, opens up the possibility of cementing and projecting, through the social imaginaries of past eras, certain objectives related to the construction of a professional and collective identity. We consider this exercise of observation, dialogue and questioning to be relevant not only as a historiographical exercise, but also as a contribution to an acute and questioning reading of our disciplinary present.

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