

Chapter 49

The teaching of the civil-military dictatorship in Maranhão: the story of Maria Aragão in comics

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ABSTRACT

This research addresses the history of the Civil-Military Dictatorship in Maranhão, through the trajectory of the activist Maria Aragão, given the scarcity of regional histories in textbooks. The work aims to develop comics based on the history of Maria

Aragão in her political life in the dictatorial context, which will be the product of the research that will have the title: Civil-military dictatorship in Maranhão: Maria Aragão and her fight. This didactic proposal is part of the dissertation project of the Graduate Program in Basic Education Teaching Management at the Federal University of Maranhão.

Keywords: Civil-military dictatorship, history teaching, Maria Aragon.

1 INTRODUCTION

The present work intends to discuss the strategies for teaching history in Maranhão, in particular the dictatorial context which has relevance for all Maranhão society about its memory and history. Based on this understanding, the historian and/or teacher needs to have a broader view of social demands. Historians and teachers need to be sensitive to social issues to bring themes closer to students' realities.

History, whose knowledge seeks to provide answers to society regarding the needs of location in time, that is, to provide subjects with an understanding of the human temporal experience, allowing the understanding of themselves [...] the historian is not above times, insect. He is also infected by the demands of his contemporaneity and responds to them [...] (BITENCOURT; GALVES, 2014, p.12)

It is essential to discuss the role of women in politics through the trajectory of physician Maria Aragão, who is an example of breaking paradigms, being one of the few political leaders from Maranhão from poor backgrounds who overcame prejudice, sexism, and censorship.

We start from the assumption that knowledge about the insertion of the dictatorship in Brazil, its influences, and the participation of personalities from Maranhão approximate and make the events within this scenario even more real, therefore, the history of Maranhão needs to have an essential presence in schools. However, the fragmentation of teaching materials or their absence is still a reality. The military dictatorship theme in Maranhão uses the trajectory of the activist Maria José Carmo Aragão, highlighting the history of Maranhão in all its nuances during the period of the military regime.

The scarcity of material referring to the Military Dictatorship in Maranhão and regarding the political leader Maria Aragão is noticeable in the literature, especially in Basic Education, so the research directly collaborates with historical knowledge, in a way, "forgotten", to motivate students to know their history, taking them out of apathy about their identity. Precisely because of the forgetfulness and ignorance of a large portion of the Maranhão people, there is an undeniable importance in highlighting the representation of this personality and the Dictatorship in the State, to elucidate facts that occurred in Maranhão during this context.

The proposal of the study regarding the teaching of the Civil Dictatorship¹- military in Maranhão through the story of Maria Aragão is related to the dissertation project of the master's degree in basic education PPGEEB of the Federal University of Maranhão, the final product of the work will be established in an essay of a comic book which will feature the political trajectory of Maria Aragão, his prisons during the dictatorship and tribute to a political leader with the well-known Maria Aragão square.

Due to the lack of content and gaps in the dictatorial context in Maranhão, which separate the students from their history and, consequently, from their regional memory, comics can be materials to help build knowledge. They are important in the teaching/learning process of the subject in question, as they are instruments that can facilitate understanding and bring new approaches that until then textbooks do not present, given the few notes regarding regional history, new ones are necessary. forms or methods of teaching.

Finally, the work aims to discuss new possibilities in the teaching of history, more specifically regarding the Civil-Military Dictatorship in Maranhão, having as a proposal the HQ as didactics for History teachers in basic education.

Gaps in history teaching: All knowledge is important!

For the sociologist Michel Apple, knowledge is in constant dispute, therefore, teaching provides hierarchy and inequalities in content, reaffirming that all knowledge is important, because if the starting point is equality, all must be valued, remembered, and placed under discussion. Given this, it is appropriate to talk about memory and forgetting about local history. A great erasure that plagues subordinate history, the less favored or the ideologies opposed to the current policy, are censored in curricula, textbooks, and classes.

To silence stories and/or memories is to curb education from its socializing and democratic role, therefore, the reflection on what, why, and how to teach is valid for effective constructions of knowledge that correspond to the aforementioned function. About such silences, Michael Pollak points out that: "it is

¹ The term "civil-military" was presented by historiography as a more precise way to define the 1964 coup and the regime that followed it. Unlike a mere action by the Armed Forces, this adjective aims to remind that part of the civilians also supported the coup and participated in the conduction of the political process between April 1964 and 1985, when most of the historiography locates the end of that dictatorship. (MELO, 2012, p. 1)

as if this extreme suffering demanded anchoring in a very general memory, that of humanity, a memory that has neither a spokesperson nor an adequate framework.” (POLLAK, 1989).

In the case of historical memories and textbooks, Almeida and Miranda (2012) expose; for example, that ideas about what history is with sixth-grade students are in the foreground, but when it comes to memory there is a greater distance, that is, local and subjective memory in textbooks. In this sense, the author highlights a problem in the concept of history, as it becomes absolute and concrete without spaces for discussions, participation of individuals, and their realities. The union of history with memory raises awareness about the narratives, that is, their realities become intrinsic to the topics discussed in the classroom. The teaching of memory in history classes moves students and promotes learning. The instruction of the content is no longer just notes of events and becomes participatory through the reality that surrounds the school, family, city, neighborhood, monuments, etc.

The concern with the contents of textbooks needs to be constant. Memory and History cannot fall into "oblivion", or better said, be censored by policies that cause inequalities between what is official history (of the heroes) and the history of the minority (of the worker, serf, peasant, etc.). The attempt to be impartial in the search for what to teach is to be aware of the fragility of many years of concepts of absolute truth, the lack of problematization of events, titles with pejorative meaning, and national myths established in literature until today. It is important to move away from beliefs, whatever they may be so that research and teaching are closer to reality (HOBBSAWN, 2013). Stories are sustained so that the ideas are inserted and reach the point of concreteness, thus turning the invention into a historical fact, possessing legitimacy and overlapping other sources, memories, and knowledge.

Civil-military dictatorship in Maranhão:

In the dictatorial context, there were different stages of censorship, which were based on moral standards. The AI5, of December 13, 1968, marked the first moment, even if other institutional acts preceded it, the then-known Coup within the Coup² it had the role of legitimizing the most vigorous period, as it provided the regime with more intense conditions of repression of the opposition or anyone who interfered with the rules established by the government. General Arthur da Costa e Silva signs the clearest expression of dictatorship, AI5, precisely to use government power arbitrarily.

Consisting of 12 articles that established an exceptional regime even more violent than the one in force, the act conferred exceptional powers on the Executive and practically eliminated all individual and institutional freedoms that still existed in the country. (DOMINGUES, PINHEIRO; LIMA, 2007, p.1).

² AI-5 meant, for many, a "coup within the coup", a hardening of the regime that established special laws for the exercise of power outside the framework of the rule of law. ARAUJO; DA SILVA; SAINTS. Military Dictatorship and Democracy in Brazil: History, Image, and Testimony. 1st ed. Rio de Janeiro: Ponteio, 2013.

The pursuit of social control instigated governments to act gradually harshly, and on the other hand, it gave rise to numerous forms of demonstrations in defense of rights erased during the dictatorship in the country. The measures, in addition to seeking repressive action in the country, also obtained proposals to leverage the economy since the insertion of capitalism. Censorship and repression were evident throughout Brazil at that time, and the state of Maranhão was not exempt from the consequences that the coup brought to the national scene.

In Maranhão, censorship and repression had been a reality before and during the Civil-Military Dictatorship, social movements, students and those inclined to the Brazilian Communist Party were the targets of repression, in addition to the Catholic Church with progressive priests and rural workers who fought against invasions in their crops. These and other groups were considered threats to the government, so they were repressed, to weaken these sectors (COSTA, 2004).

Many political leaders were persecuted and arrested mainly with the creation of Institutional Acts, AI-1, for example, revoked political rights, and prohibited the operation of several newspapers (COSTA, 2004). The newspapers denounced abuses against workers, having a leftist aspect, such as the "Tribuna do Povo", which Maria Aragão had a direct connection with, being the director of the newspaper. The militant of the Communist Party of Brazil used a strong method of propagating her ideals in the party's weekly newspaper, which was established from 1942 to 1962 (MOREIRA NETO, 2015)

It was no different in the State, repression, censorship, arrests, and persecution were daily, and activists from opposing parties no longer had freedom. Maria José Aragão, a doctor and political leader, suffered numerous reprisals. She was arrested several times, with measures that were intended to make her submissive, as repression was the most powerful weapon of the military. The legitimization of the dictatorship occurs throughout Brazil and, consequently, in the state of Maranhão. Together with the civil-military coup, retaliation by the rebels takes place, materializing with the arrests.

Writer Costa (2006) uses the term "witch hunt" to refer to this context of repression and imprisonment of communist leaders or even anyone who was a member of the party. In addition to Maria Aragão, other important names from Maranhão were "revoked", such for example, Bandeira Tribuzi. The poet was arrested for leading the Communist Party in São Luís in 1964, as people who militated under the banner of the left were considered subversive.

The media were the focus of censorship. Criticism of the authoritarian government was constant in the periodicals. Even before the military coup, newspapers, for example, already emphasized the possibilities of what was to come. It was the case of *Jornal Pequeno*, which clearly expressed their political positions before and during the dictatorship. In the article *Agoniza o Regime da Liberdade*, *Jornal Pequeno* describes the threat to Brazil under the power of the right. Because of this, Ribamar Bogéa (owner of the newspaper) was summoned to the 24th battalion to explain himself about the aforementioned matter and the notes repudiating the dictatorship in his editorials, needing to give in to the regime and thus not expose opinions contrary to the current power (ARAÚJO NETO, 2015).

Clandestine became a continuous practice for left-wing politics, militants remained in the opposition clandestinely and "secret" organizations were part of the walk of activists in Brazil. The authors Araújo, Silva, and Santos (2013, p. 25) emphasize that going underground for the militants would be a kind of escape in favor of "survival".

Maria Aragão: prisons in the dictatorial context

The anti-communist campaign throughout Brazil was severe, persecutions were eminent, the prison itself was not enough, and interrogations, threats, and impositions were frequent in prison. It was no different with the communist leader since in the barracks she was subjected to an interrogation, mainly about the political party. In the first attempt at the inquiry, the doctor refused to answer about the PCB (Brazilian Communist Party), thus fearlessly confronting the Army officer. Her first arrest lasted until June 1964. (MOREIRA NETO, 2015, p.202).

Defended in court by Henrique de La Rocque³, Maria Aragão, had her process archived again, thus being absorbed. The first time she was detained, the doctor does not report physical torture, but coercive measures without justification. At that moment repression was established with the subtraction of their freedom. The majority pretended to intimidate her, causing the work in the party not to continue. On the other hand, there is constant resistance on the part of the communist leader, with the refusal to make some statements.

In November 1964 she was detained again, probably remaining until January, it is important to emphasize that no crime justified her arrest, it makes it clear that "The IPM - Military Police Inquiry, was very badly done, there was nothing, there was no I had no crime that I was accused of" (MOREIRA, 2015, p. 204)

In a more ferocious moment of the dictatorship, there was a harsher, "hard-line" prison. Maria Aragão went through torture, including being blindfolded, and receiving an electric shock; going through questions, denials, repeated flogging, slaps, and shoves. The communist points out an arduous treatment in that 1973 prison in Fortaleza: "That interrogation was very hard, it was very hard.

At that moment, the interrogation and torture were interrupted, because, after so many shocks, Maria Aragão's health was compromised. However, she remained blindfolded and with the pressure at 23 by 13, considered very high, even so, she remained incommunicado, trapped and without obtaining information about where she was. (MOREIRA NETO, 2015, p. 244-245).

³ [...] He was a lawyer, Federal Deputy, Senator of the Republic, Minister, head of the family, and friend, standing out in the universe of other eminent Brazilian public men. (SOUZA, 2013, p. 15).

2 DIDACTIC PROPOSAL FOR TEACHING HISTORY: comics and the civil-military dictatorship in Maranhão

Given the trajectory of political activist Maria Aragão as leader of the PCB in Maranhão and her history of struggle during the dictatorship, it is noticeable that Maranhão was the scene of repression and resistance. Based on this reality, it is extremely important to insert this history into primary schools. For this object to be achieved, we propose the elaboration of a comic book with the aforementioned theme.

2.1 COMICS AND THE TEACHING OF HISTORY

Since the beginning of humanity, man has already expressed himself through art and recorded his history, perpetuating the memory of his days. Today, cave drawings, that is, rock art, are a source for historians to research and teachers to teach about culture, advances, and ways of life. With human development, those who were hunters and gatherers, that is, nomads gradually became sedentary. With these processes of change, they understood that in addition to the designs and codes; later letters would be necessary for communication and commercial exchanges. After a long development of humanity, writing has become essential in societies, graphic representation continues to be a form of expression and communication for men, therefore, image and writing, when together, enable a better understanding of the message or information. that the drawing loads. (RAMA; VERGUEIRO, 2014).

The advances in didactic materials are noticeable in images, cartoons, etc., but some themes are not worked on in the books, and some specific and regional issues are left out, which is why it is necessary to use other teaching methodologies. teaching, which can also provide images and texts for better learning.

In addition to books, comics are also an option within the perspective that images and texts together make a difference in classes. Comics in history classes can be used to contextualize events, and historical facts and also motivate students to research extensive content that they once had no interest in, such as the interwar period, World War II, Nazism, and Fascism. In addition to including cross-cutting themes⁴ in history classes, such as local history and personalities that do not have evidence in teaching materials.

When talking about the history of Maranhão in textbooks, gaps, and fragmentations are evident. In this sense, graphic works in History teaching aim to reach new themes and approaches regarding local memory, culture, politics, and society. As an example, in Maranhão, one can remember the HQ Balaiada - A Guerra do Maranhão, launched in 2009 with a script by Iramir Araújo. The story portrays the reasons that provoked the revolt, and the outbreak of war, and addresses politics and society in the years 1838 to 1841. The comics feature the work of artists Beto Nicácio and Ronilson Freire, who elaborated on the drawings in the book.

⁴ In Brazil, the expression "training itinerary" has traditionally been used in the field of professional education, about the way professional training systems are organized or, even, the ways of accessing professions. However, in Law nº 13.415/17, the expression was used about academic training itineraries, which assumes the deepening in one or more curricular areas, and also, to professional technical training itineraries. (BRASIL, 2017, p.468)

With this perspective and understanding that the didactic materials discuss the Civil-Military Dictatorship in the São Paulo and Rio de Janeiro axes, one can perceive the bias of the need to teach the dictatorial context from the trajectory of the political activist Maria José Aragão, promoting the knowledge of the personality that is beyond the square, the history and local memory with an instigating teaching methodology, also made possible by the comics.

With a view to new possibilities for teaching history content, the proposal consists of producing a magazine in comics that will have the title "Civil-Military Dictatorship in Maranhão: Maria Aragão and her struggle", which will have a story divided into three parts, and in the first one, we will approach his political life with the Tribuna do Povo newspaper and his clandestine meetings in times of repression, that is, his activism. Secondly, we will describe the censorship, arrests, and repressions suffered and, finally, the HQ will feature the tribute dedicated to the doctor, that is, Praça Maria Aragão. The material will be made available to the Centro de Ensino Maria José Aragão (it is a state school located at Rua 205, Unit 205, in the Cidade Operária neighborhood) which is the field of exploratory research. A posteriori, the comics can be handled by teachers and students, helping to teach history about the Civil-Military Dictatorship, to contextualize it with the events, from the trajectory of Maria Aragão and the repressive elements adopted by the military and his supporters in the state of Maranhão.

3 FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

It is important to admit the weaknesses of teaching local history so that new approaches, methodologies, and didactics can be conceived and produced. The civil-military dictatorship is presented in textbooks only in the São Paulo and Rio de Janeiro axes, for a more democratic education it is necessary to discuss regional history and memory, to enable a history closer to the reality of Maranhão students. Among many current discourses, we perceive the distancing of these realities, for this reason, historians/teachers need to be attentive to the demands of society.

Given such impasses in content, silences, and lack of knowledge about local memory in teaching materials, the production of comics in history teaching is extremely important, as it contributes as a new methodology or didactics for working on cross-cutting themes. The proposal to tell the trajectory of the activist Maria Aragão in the middle of the dictatorship scenario with the help of comics provides a different perspective of teaching the civil-military dictatorship in Maranhão.

With the completion of the research and its final product, we will be able to contribute to teaching Maranhão in the school environment and the deepening of the history of the political leader Maria Aragão as a Maranhão personality who had participated in this scenario.

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