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Education in Mexico is going through demanding times. Rather than discussing a nationwide project for what would be desirable in the formation of new generations of students, public opinion and attention are focused on the ongoing conflict of the teachers who belong to the CNTE and reject the Educational Reform enacted at the beginning of the current presidential term. This situation has gone beyond the realm of education, exposing a social conflict that highlights the inability of the federal government to negotiate and reach agreements to modify a project imposed on the nation.

The conflict between the federal government and the CNTE teachers has lasted more than three years, since the Educational Reform was passed, and under the current situation there does not seem to be the collective will to find a solution. Amidst the confrontation there prevails a harsh official discourse, the government's refusal to establish a dialog aimed at making changes in the terms of the reform, and an overt defiance of the government's authority by the teachers, which has found an expression in frequent marches and demonstrations held in many states of the country.

In these circumstances, it would be advisable to inquire into the damage caused by the conflict to education, especially concerning the discussion and directions towards a better formation of young people in Mexico. The failed attempts of damage control by the government, riddled with a systematic use of symbolic and physical intimidation, have resulted in an erosion of its role as coordinator between its agencies and society in order to make important decisions. In other words, the conflict has led to an erosion of the State's credibility to generate a nationwide educational platform agreed upon by all actors.

During the current presidential term, the work of the Ministry of Education has limited itself to maintaining the pact signed between President Peña Nieto and the leaders of political parties barely one day after the beginning of his mandate, which showed the way in which education would be conducted in Mexico. The agreement reached by a few signatories defined contents, a platform for legitimacy, and measures to uphold the reform.

Peña Nieto opted for setting up first of all the legal framework to submit teachers to the requirements for evaluation and salary raises based on the results of such an evaluation. The most serious issue with this action was that it came about supported only by the state apparatus. Neither the teachers nor Mexican society had any participation in this reform. This closed off mechanisms of social trust based on communication between teachers and the population, leading to a greater difficulty to obtain social legitimacy and generate a nationwide educational project.

The distant position of the government towards Mexican society may be interpreted as a manifestation of the government's notion of being the best informed to impose a project never agreed upon, as a privileged political class that seems to believe itself above public dialog and criticism. Such a position destroys the bridges of trust and credibility that any government must create between itself and society.

In this context, academic work emerges as a form of political expression, an activity that allows us to expose the great weaknesses and deficiencies in the educational system, and how Mexico's federal government's position does not contribute to solving them.

The scientific documentation of the facts that show the painful reality of a society that struggles between insecurity, poverty and inequality becomes now an instrument for reflection that may be helpful for a collective formation through a critical stance that constructs its objects around education.

José Antonio Ramírez Díaz
Co-editor

(Trad. Moisés Silva)