

THE MAGAZINE *INFÂNCIA EXCEPCIONAL* (1933-1979): changes and continuities in the discourse on Special Education

A revista *Infância Excepcional* (1933-1979):
mudanças e permanências no discurso sobre a Educação Especial

La revista *Infância Excepcional* (1933-1979):
cambios y permanencias en el discurso sobre la Educación Especial

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Abstract: This article analyzes the speeches produced by the Sociedade Pestalozzi de Minas Gerais about the financing of Special Education, exceptional students and their families. Such speeches were published between 1933 and 1979 through the magazine *Infância Excepcional: Estudo, Educação e Assistência ao Excepcional*. To this end, a qualitative analysis was carried out on the twelve magazines in the collection, as well as other primary documents, such as Helena Antipoff's letters and notebooks. The analysis was conducted based on the categorization of documents and their contextualization to the period researched, with a theoretical-methodological approach to historical relativism which considers the influence of the historical and social environment on the selection and interpretation of facts.

Keywords: history of special education; Helena Antipoff; family in special education; Pestalozzi Society of Minas Gerais.

Resumo: Este artigo analisa os discursos produzidos pela Sociedade Pestalozzi de Minas Gerais sobre o financiamento do ensino especial, os estudantes 'excepcionais' e as suas famílias. Tais discursos foram publicados entre os anos de 1933 e 1979 por meio da revista *Infância Excepcional: Estudo, Educação e Assistência ao Excepcional*. Para tanto, foi realizada análise qualitativa das doze revistas da coleção, bem como dos outros documentos primários, como cartas e cadernos de anotação de Helena Antipoff. A análise foi desenvolvida a partir da categorização dos documentos e de sua contextualização ao período pesquisado, com uma abordagem teórico-metodológica do relativismo histórico que considera a influência do ambiente histórico e social na seleção e interpretação dos fatos.

Palavras-chave: história da educação especial; Helena Antipoff; família na educação especial; Sociedade Pestalozzi de Minas Gerais.

Resumen: Este artículo analiza los discursos producidos por la Sociedade Pestalozzi de Minas Gerais sobre el financiamiento de la educación especial, los estudiantes excepcionales y sus familias. Dichos discursos fueron publicados entre 1933 y 1979 a través de la revista *Infância Excepcional: Estudos, Educação e Assistência ao Excepcional*. Para ello se realizó un análisis cualitativo de las doce revistas de la colección, así como de otros documentos primarios, como las cartas y cuadernos de notas de Helena Antipoff. El análisis se desarrolló a partir de la categorización de los documentos y su contextualización al período investigado, con enfoque teórico-metodológico del relativismo histórico que considera la influencia del entorno histórico y social en la selección e interpretación de los hechos.

Palabras clave: historia de la educación especial; Helena Antipoff; familia en educación especial; Sociedad Pestalozzi de Minas Gerais.

INTRODUCTION

The history of special education in Brazil is marked by the influence of private philanthropic institutions that, in partnership with the government, began to develop actions in favor of the education of people with disabilities. In Minas Gerais, the Pestalozzi Society of Minas Gerais (SPMG) stands out, founded in 1932 by Helena Antipoff, together with a group of collaborators. During this period, the Brazilian educational scenario was undergoing a moment of transformation, marked by the Educational Reform led by Francisco Campos¹. Concomitantly with this, the Manifesto of the Pioneers was published, inspired by the principles of the New School, which sought to expand public education, as well as to review traditional forms of teaching in schools. This movement brought together psychological knowledge and pedagogy to understand the child as a developing being and propose new teaching methodologies.

In Minas Gerais, the influence of the New School movement and the search for renewal and modernization of education led the government to promote an exchange between professionals from Minas Gerais and abroad. Thus, the Minas Gerais government sent a group of teachers to study abroad and invited foreign researchers and professors from various fields of knowledge to help disseminate and implement these ideals in Minas Gerais schools. Among the visitors were Théodore Simon and Léon Walter, who lectured on psychological tests and teaching methods in Belo Horizonte (Cirino & Viana, 1984). The changes promoted included both new rules for primary education and investment in teacher training. Such training was developed through courses and various publications, such as the *Revista do Ensino*², which disseminated new methodologies and concepts in the educational field in the state. In this context, Helena Antipoff, an educator and assistant psychologist to Édouard Claparède at the Jean-Jacques Rousseau Institute in Geneva, Switzerland, was hired by the government of Minas Gerais to work at the Belo Horizonte School of Improvement and assist in the implementation of the state's education reform. The government established the School of Improvement to train teachers in line with modern educational ideals, equipping them with scientific knowledge and the ability to administer intelligence tests to support the standardization of school classes. The

¹ Francisco Campos was the Secretary of Internal Affairs in Minas Gerais (1926-1930) and Minister of Education (1930-1932) (Oliveira & Carvalho, 2012; Fausto, 1995).

²“ According to Biccás (2008), the *Revista do Ensino* was originally created in 1892 and had a short circulation period, as only three issues were published, and was then deactivated. In 1925, during the government of Fernando Mello Vianna, the *Revista do Ensino* was reactivated and remained in circulation until the first half of 1940, having been interrupted again due to the Second World War. In 1946, it returned to circulation until the first half of 1971, during the government of Rondon Pacheco, when it was definitively extinguished” (Guimarães, 2013, p. 92).

Experimental Psychology Laboratory was also created, linked to the School of Improvement, with three purposes: research, teaching and application (Campos, 2010).

SPMG was a civil association that brought together a diverse professional group and began its activities by providing support to schools, families, teachers and students. The work included educational, psychological, medical and social assistance services. The institution was anchored in science and philanthropy, and the dissemination of its work and results was essential for the continuity of its actions. As a private institution with a philanthropic mission, a significant portion of its financial resources was derived from donations from both public and private sectors. Therefore, it was necessary to publicize its actions and results in order to attract financial resources and maintain its activities.

At the same time, as an institution based on scientific foundations, the exchange of knowledge and the dissemination of its actions were essential for updating and producing knowledge. Thus, SPMG publications were used strategically, in its own words, as a means of promoting 'cultural exchange' to support the actions carried out by the institution and attract "[...] friends and collaborators and scholars of the subject" (Sociedade Pestalozzi de Minas Gerais [SPMG], 1963, p. 3). Thus, SPMG dedicated part of its efforts to the valorization and production of various publications, such as: special editions of the *Bulletin of the State Secretariat of Education and Public Health of Minas Gerais* (in 1933 and 1934), in partnership with the government; the newspaper *O Rosário* (started in 1940), which became *O Coqueiro*, reporting on Fazenda do Rosário³; the *Semiannual Bulletin of the Pestalozzi Society of Minas Gerais - Exceptional Childhood*⁴, (published in 1963), which recorded and disseminated the activities, research and studies developed in favor of exceptional childhood; the *Manual do teste MM (minhas mãos)*, published in 1970, conceived and developed by Helena Antipoff to assess personality characteristics; translations, such as that of the book by Alice Descouedres entitled *The Education of the Abnormal* (1936); annals of organized events, among other works.

The time frame of this research covers almost half a century of history and allowed us to analyze changes and continuities in the SPMG discourse regarding the nomenclature and concept of 'exceptional' childhood, in addition to the speeches produced to disseminate the institution's work and gain supporters, as well as the construction of narratives related to the families of 'exceptional' students.

To qualify this analysis, it is clear that the debate about the conceptual definitions of what is considered a disability or 'exceptionality' has undergone

³ Fazenda do Rosário was an educational complex opened in the municipality of Ibirité, in Minas Gerais, by SPMG in 1940, which provided support to both special education students and young people from rural areas.

⁴ Despite its name, the *Semiannual Bulletin on Exceptional Childhood* published in 1963 is not part of the collection of the magazine *Infância Excepcional: Estudo, Educação e Assistência ao Excepcional*, published between 1933 and 1979, the focus of this article.

changes over time. The nomenclatures used to define the public Special Education have also changed, following changes in current concepts, marked by advances in knowledge about the condition of disability. Thus, many students considered to be in special education during the publication of the magazine are not necessarily considered to be in Special Education today. In this sense, this article will maintain the expressions and concepts used in the original documents, preserving the meaning and historical definition.

Therefore, the 12 issues of the collection were analyzed by cross-referencing them with other primary sources, such as: personal writings in diaries, diaries and notebooks by Helena Antipoff; correspondence exchanged among Helena Antipoff, the magazine's editor, and collaborators and members of SPMG; letters received from readers of the magazine; and regulations from the period. The historical documents analyzed were collected at the Helena Antipoff Memorial, in the municipality of Ibirité, in Minas Gerais; in the collection of the Helena Antipoff Documentation and Research Center (CDPHA), in the Helena Antipoff room located in the central library of the Federal University of Minas Gerais (UFMG) and in the special collection of the Alaíde Lisboa library of the UFMG School of Education.

Based on the initial analysis, some categories were listed as guiding threads for the research: the definition of the Special Education target audience; the role of the family in the education of exceptional children; and the financing of Special Education actions. These categories were defined based on the frequency with which the themes appeared in the texts and the discursive changes perceived throughout the publications in relation to these topics. After categorizing and separating all the listed texts, contextualized analyses were performed according to the period of publication. Contextualized reading avoids the mistake of making interpretations based solely on current paradigms.

The analysis of the sources was developed based on the categorization of the documents and their contextualization within the period under study, with a theoretical-methodological approach of historical relativism that considers the influence of the historical and social environment on the selection and interpretation of facts. The encounter between present and past is the basis of historiographical work, which inevitably promotes a dialogue between historian and sources:

The reciprocal process of interaction between the historian and his facts, which I have called the dialogue between present and past, is a dialogue not between abstract and isolated individuals, but between the society of today and the society of yesterday. History, in Burckhardt's words, "is the sum total of what one epoch finds worthy of note in another." The past is intelligible to us only in the light of the present; we can fully understand the present only in the light of the past (Carr, 1978, p. 49, emphasis added).

Thus, the historian cannot narrate a historical fact as it happened, but based on the selection of several sources, he can select events that, from his perspective, deserve to be recorded in history. These sources, historical documents that support the historian's work, are not neutral, nor do they speak for themselves. They answer the questions asked by the historian, who makes his selection based on his interests and perspective.

Borrowing once again from Talcott Parsons' phrase, history is "a selective system" not only of cognitive orientations, but also of causal ones, regarding reality. Just as the historian selects from the infinite ocean of facts those that are important for their purpose, so too do they extract from the multiplicity of cause-and-effect sequences, those, and only those, that are historically important; the pattern of historical importance is their ability to fit them into their pattern of rational explanation and interpretation. (Carr, 1978, pp. 88–89, emphasis added).

The historian's raw material is historical facts, but these facts do not speak for themselves either. They are filtered by the historian and (re)inserted into a context. The historian's role would therefore be to understand the thinking behind the historical fact, but great care must be taken so that the interpretation does not override it.

When conducting bibliographical research on the production of studies on the history of Special Education in Brazil, Santos and Mendes (2016) concluded that there were few studies in this area. The researchers cited the works of Jannuzzi (1985) and Mazzotta (1996) as classic references in the area, but they highlighted the lack of diversity of historical sources used in most publications. For them, the excessive use of official sources, produced by the Government, guided a historical writing limited to one version of the historical processes, keeping many experiences and perspectives silent. In view of this, Santos and Mendes (2016) exposed the need to diversify documentary sources so that the history of Special Education can be understood from another perspective. The nature of the historical document analyzed in this article presents the discussions that circulated among professionals in the field of Special Education, based on debates that go beyond the best-known versions about this area, therefore revealing aspects that are still little explored about the constitution of this field.

THE “INFÂNCIA EXCEPCIONAL” MAGAZINE: STUDY, EDUCATION AND ASSISTANCE TO THE EXCEPTIONAL

The publication of the magazine *Infância Excepcional: Estudo, Educação e Assistência ao Excepcional* fits into the sphere of printed written culture, which is characterized by being a set of knowledge and practices disseminated through various textual genres. Among them, some can be considered as educational, because they aim, as in the case of periodicals, to inform and educate (Assis & Sávio, 2016). Because they are educational genres, periodicals constitute a diverse source of educational research of a historiographical nature. Assis and Sávio (2016) point out that, in the middle of the 20th century, psychological knowledge was disseminated by the official press aimed at educators for the dissemination and consolidation of the new educational proposals that would be implemented. The focus was to convince professionals to appropriate the new essential theoretical models for the implementation of the proposed educational reforms (Assis & Sávio, 2016). In this context, the idea of homogenizing school classes gains strength, based on the division of students considering the results of intelligence tests.

The practice of organizing school classes by dividing students according to their test results was intended to help plan lessons according to the students' level of development (Borges, 2014). However, this methodology revealed the difficulties teachers had in dealing with children with low performance and below-average results on intelligence tests. With the aim of welcoming these children, who deviated from the expected norm, called at the time 'abnormal', Helena Antipoff founded SPMG (Borges, 2014). The institution's headquarters temporarily operated in the Psychology Laboratory of the Escola de Aperfeiçoamento, beginning a long partnership with the Government. At the national level, the education of 'abnormal' children was conducted through specific and isolated actions and, only at the end of the 1950s, some public initiatives, in the form of nationwide funding campaigns, began to emerge.

In keeping with the ideals of the SPMG, the institution maintained in its collection of publications a collection of magazines from 1933 to 1979. This collection was initially published in a fragmented manner, with no intention of forming a collection. In 1966, the institution brought together various publications and announced the creation of a collection called: *Exceptional Childhood: Study, Education and Assistance to the Exceptional*. This organization provided a long period of intermittent publication, with twelve magazines being published in total. Only magazines from issues 8 to 12, published after the organization of the collection, had the official name, their own visual identity and a cohesive editorial board. The choice of which SPMG publications from before 1966 would make up the new collection indicates the institution's interest in preserving and formalizing some debates to the detriment of others. The composition of the collection was described on the back cover of issue number 8:

REASON FOR NO. 8 – Numbers 1, 2, and 3 correspond to numbers 12, 16, and 20 of the Publications of the Secretariat of Education and Public Health of Minas Gerais, with the title “Exceptional Childhood”, in the years 1933, 1934, and 1937. Numbers 4, 5, and 6 published under the title “Assistance to the Exceptional” as Supplements to the “Mensagem Rural”, an organ of the Instituto Superior de Educação Rural (ISER) of Fazenda do Rosário, in the years 1962 to 1965. No. 7, published with the title “Boletim Pestalozzi” – Supplement No. 7 of the “Mensagem Rural”, 2nd semester of 1965 (SPMG, 1966, back cover, author’s emphasis).

Even in the face of fragmentation and the existence of other textual genres throughout its composition, such as bulletins and newspaper supplements, it was decided to respect the name given to the publication by its own editorial staff: *nossa revista* (our magazine). Table 1 presents the origin of each issue, as explained on the back cover of issue number 8, in 1966:

Table 1 Composition of the Collection of the magazine *Infância Excepcional: Estudo, Educação e Assistência ao Excepcional*

Exceptional Childhood Bulletin:	Original Publication	Year of Publication
1	Number 12: Bulletin of the Secretariat of Education and Public Health of Minas Gerais.	1933
2	Number 16: Bulletin of the Secretariat of Education and Public Health of Minas Gerais.	1934
3	Number 20: Bulletin of the Secretariat of Education and Public Health of Minas Gerais.	1937
4	1st Supplement of the Mensageiro Rural. 2nd Supplement of the Mensageiro Rural.	1962 1963
5	3rd Supplement of the Mensageiro Rural. 4th Supplement of the Mensageiro Rural.	1963 1964
6	5th Supplement of the Mensageiro Rural. 6th Supplement of the Mensageiro Rural (No. 34 of year IX).	1964 1965
7	Pestalozzi Bulletin – Supplement No. 7 of the Mensageiro Rural.	1965
8	Infância Excepcional: Estudo, Educação e Assistência ao Excepcional.	1966
9	Infância Excepcional: Estudo, Educação e Assistência ao Excepcional.	1966
10	Infância Excepcional: Estudo, Educação e Assistência ao Excepcional.	1966
11	Infância Excepcional: Estudo, Educação e Assistência ao Excepcional.	1968
12	Infância Excepcional: Estudo, Educação e Assistência ao Excepcional.	1979

Source: Elaborated by the author.

The magazine *Infância Excepcional: Estudo, Educação e Assistência ao Excepcional* (Exceptional Childhood: Study, Education and Assistance to the Exceptional) dealt with special education and its convergence with several areas: educational, political, ethical, methodological, scientific, social and welfare. Throughout the period of its publication, the authors and some of the editors remained the same, but the way in which the magazine disseminated and proposed the education of 'exceptional' children was modified, following the debates circulating at each time.

The decision about what would be published in the magazine was not always a consensus within the institution. In 1968, Iolanda Barbosa, director of the Pestalozzi Institute of Belo Horizonte (IPBH)⁵, sent a letter to Helena Antipoff requesting that the psychological tests conducted at the Experimental Psychology Laboratory, linked to the Belo Horizonte School of Improvement, not be published. According to the author, the materials were for the exclusive use of psychology professionals and the techniques and assessments should not be disclosed to the public. The letter includes an apology for a possible argument between the two, revealing tension and disagreement on the subject.

The objective of the collection was in line with the purpose of the SPMG, which advocated in its 1932 statute that the protection of 'abnormal' children was the focus of the institution and one of the means to do so would be through the "[...] publication of original or translated works on subjects related to abnormalities, with the aim of scientific or pedagogical dissemination and eugenic propaganda⁶" (SPMG, 1933, p. 12). Over time, eugenic propaganda ceased to be published in magazines and the concept of 'abnormal' children opened space for other nomenclatures, maintaining scientific and pedagogical dissemination as the main themes.

The visual identity and format of the magazine *Infância Excepcional: Estudo, Educação e Assistência ao Excepcional* has varied over the years. Some of its characteristics include the following: in some editions, the editorial is explicitly included; the index of the magazine can be found either at the beginning or at the end of the publication; none of the publications in the collection contain advertisements⁷; in some magazines, there is information about the opening hours and location of the SPMG secretariat and the institution's social assistance shifts, since it was aimed at both professionals in the area and family members of 'exceptional' children. The

⁵ The IPBH was founded in 1935, by Decree No. 11,908, with the purpose of providing educational services in the areas of education, treatment, research and social assistance. For more information about the IPBH, see Borges (2014).

⁶ The term 'eugenics' was coined in 1883 to define the theory of social control through the genetic selection of human beings. For a deeper look at the subject, see Stepan (2005).

⁷ In other publications of *O Mensageiro Rural*, there were some advertising campaigns, but, in the supplements that make up the collection of the magazine *Infância Excepcional: Estudo, Educação e Assistência ao Excepcional* there is no advertising.

magazine circulated in several cities in Minas Gerais and went beyond the state's borders, and letters were found from readers in several cities requesting information about the services provided by SPMG, both to students and professionals seeking training courses offered to teachers.

It was identified, in a notebook from 1966 used by Helena Antipoff, that issue number 7 was financed by funds from the National Campaign for the Qualification and Rehabilitation of Mentally Disabled People (CADEME)⁸ and by the income raised during Children's Week, an event promoted by SPMG. The magazines were distributed through exchanges with other publications and the sale of copies. Some magazines were printed at the Official Press of the State of Minas Gerais, via a partnership with the government, but from issue number 4 onwards there is no information on the regularity of the printing press used.

In order to explain the importance of publications and the circulation of knowledge for the institution, in 1965, the SPMG asked the representative of the Alliance for Progress⁹, through a letter signed by Helena Antipoff and João Franzen de Lima¹⁰, to install the Pestalozzi Printing House at Fazenda do Rosário. According to the document, with this installation, the association's purpose was to disseminate works on pedagogy and sciences related to the 'exceptional' and the rural population; teach a job to the young people of Fazenda do Rosário; offer occupational activities to the 'exceptional' da Fazenda do Rosário; print materials for courses offered by SPMG; profit from the sale of publications and allocate the income to SPMG activities. In the same year, issue number 7 of the magazine published an article on the need to set up its own printing press and the organization of Editora Pestalozzi with the aim of:

To disseminate ideas, knowledge and information regarding exceptional people and their education, as well as preventive and therapeutic measures, if not for the elimination, at least for the reduction of mental illness and other psychological disorders that concern families, society and public authorities. To value assistance to the exceptionally gifted and study the methods of their complex education (SPMG, 1965, p. 13).

⁸ CADEME had “[...] the purpose of promoting throughout the national territory, the education, training, rehabilitation and educational assistance of retarded children and other mentally disabled people of any age or sex [...]” (Decree No. 48,961, 1960, art. 3).

⁹ “[...] a North American foreign aid program aimed at Latin America, launched at the beginning of the Kennedy administration and implemented in subsequent years. The American president proposed a ten-year aid and cooperation plan, with the stated objective of fostering economic, social and political development [...]” (Ribeiro, 2006, p. 17).

¹⁰ João Franzen de Lima held several positions (from professor to president) at the Pestalozzi Society of Minas Gerais, in addition to having been, after the death of Helena Antipoff, the editor of the Magazine *Infância Excepcional: Estudo, Educação e Assistência ao Excepcional*.

In addition to the educational and professional purpose for the young people of Fazenda do Rosário and the income collected from sales, the purpose of installing the printing press was to disseminate ideas, knowledge and information about the work developed in favor of the 'exceptional'. No information was found about the materiality of this printing press. The publications of the magazine *Infância Excepcional: Estudo, Educação e Assistência ao Excepcional* were also not published in the supposed Pestalozzi Press, and the partnership with the Official State Press continued, in addition to other SPMG publications were printed by this place.

The search for the installation of its own printing press demonstrates the need for SPMG to be autonomous in relation to its graphic production, but above all, it reveals the importance that the institution gave to the circulation and dissemination of knowledge produced by SPMG. In notes from Helena Antipoff's private notebook from 1966, the financial plan for the sales and free distribution of books, newspapers, manuals and periodicals produced by the institution were found.

FROM THE PHASES OF THE MAGAZINE

Based on the analysis of the collection, it is possible to divide it into five phases, according to the characteristics of each publication group. From one phase to another, we find differences such as: visual identity; recurring themes; theoretical lens regarding the education of the *exceptional*; and ideas disseminated. These changes dialogue with the long period of publication of the magazines and with the changes that the field of Special Education itself has undergone over time. Table 2 presents the division of these phases:

Table 2 Phases of the Exceptional Childhood Magazine Collection: *Study, Education and Assistance to the Exceptional*

Phase	Number	Year of Publication	Origin
1	1, 2 and 3	1933 to 1937	Published in the Bulletin of the Department of Education and Public Health of Minas Gerais
2	4, 5 and 6	1962 to 1965	Published as Supplements to the O Mensageiro Rural
3	7	1965	Published under the title Pestalozzi Bulletin – Supplement No. 7 of the O Mensageiro Rural
4	8, 9, 10 and 11	1966 to 1968	<i>Infância Excepcional: Estudo, Educação e Assistência ao Excepcional</i> .
5	12	1979	Closing publication of the <i>Infância Excepcional: Estudo, Educação e Assistência ao Excepcional</i> .

Source: Barbosa (2019).

The magazine's phases were categorized according to the internal similarities of the publications. The first phase, consisting of the first three issues of the collection, is characterized by the beginning of the construction of the history of SPMG, its partnership with the Secretariat of Education and Public Health of Minas Gerais, the effects of Helena Antipoff's own professional relationship with the Public Authorities and the beginning of the debates about Special Education in Minas Gerais.

The second phase of the magazine *Infância Excepcional* is composed of numbers 4, 5 and 6. These three numbers were assembled from six issues from the 1960s. They are supplements found in the newspaper *O Mensageiro Rural*. *O Mensageiro Rural* was a monthly publication of Fazenda do Rosário that began in May 1953. According to issue number 30, from 1963, its purpose was “[...] to reach the most distant municipalities of our State, to help and encourage those who worked in rural areas, and, more especially, those dedicated to education” (SPMG, 1963, p. 1). It is important to note that the publication period of the magazine's second phase coincides with the debates about the school integration movement. According to Mendes:

Social movements for human rights, which intensified primarily in the 1960s, raised awareness and sensitized society about the harm caused by segregation and marginalization of individuals from minority groups, making the systematic segregation of any group or child an intolerable practice. This context provided a kind of moral basis for the proposal of school integration, under the irrefutable argument that all children with disabilities would have the inalienable right to participate in all programs and daily activities that were accessible to other children (Mendes, 2006, p. 388).

The argument that children with disabilities should participate in activities together with other children began to be disseminated in the publications of the second phase of the magazine. The article 'Resources for dealing with retarded children in rural areas' suggested activities “[...] in favor of greater acceptance of the retarded in the so-called normal community” (SPMG, 1962, p. 4) and that “[...] we therefore need to work to reduce this gap that exists between the supposedly normal and the retarded. And this will only be achieved by reducing the isolation in which the retarded child is reeducated” (SPMG, 1962, p. 4). In the following phases, the integration paradigm is even more notable.

The third phase of the collection is composed of the bulletin published under the title *Pestalozzi Bulletin – Supplement nº 7 of Mensageiro Rural*, in the second half of 1965. Since it is another supplement to *Mensageiro Rural*, we could allocate this publication to what we are defining as the second phase of the collection. However, issue number 7 has characteristics that are not similar to the other supplements, mainly regarding the printing format and visual identity. Among the publications in

the *Infância Excepcional* collection, issue number 7 is the first to inform who are the people responsible for the publication. The three names that stand out are Helena Antipoff as technical director, Fernando Costa¹¹ as secretary director and Yolanda Martins e Silva¹² as editor-in-chief.

The fourth phase of publication of the *Infância Excepcional* magazine is characterized by the definition of the collection. From 1966 onwards, SPMG continued publishing its magazines. To this end, they used the visual identity of the *Pestalozzi Bulletin – Supplement nº 7 of Mensageiro Rural* and from then on began a periodical publication. The first three issues of the magazines in this phase were published bimonthly. After a one-year hiatus, issue number 11 was launched. These four issues also have the following characteristics in common: the maintenance of those responsible for their publication; the constant publication of laws, decrees, ordinances and acts of the national and Minas Gerais executive powers that relate to the magazine's theme; considerations about social assistance for the 'exceptional'; pedagogical articles; the dissemination of courses offered by Fazenda do Rosário; and some scientific articles in the health area.

The fifth phase of the publication is characterized by the closing of the collection. Issue 12 announces the end of the publication of the magazine *Infância Excepcional* and the reason would be the lack of financial resources. As the closing of the magazine, issue 12 dedicated its 84 pages to the fiftieth anniversary of Helena Antipoff's arrival in Brazil. The last magazine was published after the death of Helena Antipoff and Yolanda Martins e Silva, in 1979.

The idea of childhood 'exceptionality' appears in all the magazines in the studied collection, but it has been defined differently over the years. Based on the analysis of our sources, we identified three reasons for the change in definitions. The first is the attempt to reduce the stigma against 'exceptional' children; the second is the attempt to define more precisely the target audience for Special Education; and the third reason is the attempt to include groups that did not receive special attention from the Government, but who were also not successful in the school structure.

FINANCING THE ACTIVITIES OF THE PESTALOZZI SOCIETY OF MINAS GERAIS

In the first phase, the magazines portrayed the debates of the time, publishing information and methodologies for classifying and standardizing school classes, presenting to society in the capital of Minas Gerais the importance and social benefit

¹¹ We were unable to obtain information about Fernando Costa.

¹² A psychologist from Pará, Yolanda Martins e Silva is described in the literature as Helena Antipoff's right-hand woman (Rafante, 2011). She was also the director of the *Instituto de Educação Emendativa da Fazenda do Rosário* (Drumond, 2015) and taught several courses offered by the institute.

of investing in the education of 'abnormal' children and the responsibility of families regarding the development of their children. At that time, the SPMG was being established and needed social, political and financial support to achieve its objectives. To this end, the publications were a mechanism to disseminate the institution's work in the face of the absence of the Government regarding the problem related to juvenile 'delinquency', abandoned children, treatment to prevent 'abnormality' and education of children outside the 'norm'.

By disseminating the social benefits of the work carried out by SPMG, the magazines made an appeal for sponsorship and contributions to maintain the institution. In issue number 1, this intention becomes clear when the vice-president of SPMG explains the justification for publishing the magazine: "Here are the reasons for this publication, which is, at the same time, a presentation of work carried out, and an appeal to the intelligence, heart and generosity of our people in favor of the mental and moral improvement of retarded children" (Negromonte, 1933, p. 7). In other words, the work of the newly created SPMG would be shown to its readers at the same time that they became aware and support the institution's actions. At first, the magazine's discourse was based on an appeal to the population's charity. Over the years, public policies for financing the education of the 'exceptional' were initiated, and starting from the second phase of the collection, the magazines began to publish suggestions for improving these policies. The partnership between the government and private institutions was either reinforced or implied in these suggestions.

Issue number 11 published objective proposals aimed at increasing the financial collection of funds for Special Education, for the construction of the infrastructure for institutions dedicated to this area, and for the legal guarantee of a fixed percentage of education funds that should be allocated to Special Education. The publication also called for concrete support from the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) to stimulate activities. In all proposals, it is understood that the actions developed from this funding would be carried out by private entities, since article 89 of the 1961 LDBEN regulated that "All private initiatives considered efficient by the state education councils, and related to the education of exceptional children, will receive special treatment from the public authorities through scholarships, loans and subsidies" (Law No. 4,024, 1961). Thus, the more funding guaranteed by the State, the more SPMG would guarantee the continuity of its actions. Despite the fact that SPMG benefited from the demands and funding proposals published in the magazine, this publicity linked the need for the State to take on the demand for the right to the education of the 'exceptional' child. Thus, the magazine gradually began to promote the idea of the right to education to the detriment of the idea of charity, accompanied by an effort to refine the conceptual definition of the target audience for Special Education.

SPECIAL EDUCATION STUDENTS

The publications from the first phase of the magazine referred to Special Education students in many ways but maintained the term 'abnormal' as a conceptual umbrella. This term is accompanied by a certain imprecision, but it dealt with aspects related to intelligence, behavior and physical and sensory issues that deviated from the expected norm for children:

Any being who, due to their hereditary condition or morbid accidents occurring in childhood, cannot, due to lack of intelligence or character disorders, adapt to life with the common resources provided only by the family or by public primary school, sufficient for most children of the same age, is considered abnormal (SPMG, 1933, p. 11).

From the definition given, we can see that the cause of the 'abnormality' would be an issue inherent to the child. The child would not be able to adapt to life like other children, with normal support, due to a lack of intelligence or a character disorder. The core of the problem would be within the child, due to a hereditary condition or accident. Therefore, the child should be the focus of the work. Although a concept was published to define what was considered 'abnormal', the understanding of this concept was not a settled point for professionals at the time. Another article in the same magazine presents how the classification of a child as 'abnormal' could be ephemeral:

Precisely defining what abnormalities are is not an easy task [...] because it depends on the aspect or meaning with which the problem is defined. Hence, the divergences in concept between authors, according to the criteria [...] followed by each one. (Teixeira, 1933, p. 26-27).

Thus, a student could be classified or not as a special education target according to the theoretical line adopted by the professional who assisted him/her. Therefore, the conceptual divergence could reach the point of producing mistaken diagnoses, due to irregular attendance at school; pedagogical difficulties of educators; malnutrition; various health problems; and multiple social problems (Santos, 1937).

The magazines also made a distinction between children considered 'abnormal' and children who were considered 'subnormal'. 'Subnormal' or 'pedagogically retarded' children were classified as such because they had difficulties or were behind in their pedagogical development compared to other children and were unable to take advantage of the collective and standardized education offered in schools. This

distinction was seen as necessary in the view of the SPMG so that, socially, there would be less stigma towards the child and, at the same time, to appease the hearts of their parents (SPMG, 1933).

Despite the current use of the term 'abnormal', the idea of the 'exceptionality' of childhood was present in all the magazines, including the name of the publications. Even in the first phase of the collection, the concept of 'exceptional childhood' was defined in issue number 3, from 1937. It stated:

[...] exceptional childhood; that is, a child who, by their own nature or by the conditions of the environment in which they were raised, due to endogenous causes or influences of the environment, finds themselves, compared to other children, without the necessary adjustment to grow up healthy, physically and morally, in the family, at school, in society (Antipoff, 1937, p. 8).

It is noted that the concept included comparison between children and, like the concept of 'abnormal', placed the responsibility for their conditions on the child. Initially, the change in the use of the nomenclature was an initiative of Helena Antipoff, who sought to reduce the pejorative view of 'exceptional' children.

The second phase of the collection consists of issues 4, 5 and 6, the result of the combination of five supplements, which dealt with the theme of 'exceptional childhood', published in the newspaper *Mensagem Rural*. This newspaper was a monthly publication of SPMG and started in 1953. Added to this phase, in addition to the Supplement of *Mensagem Rural*, is issue 34, from year IX of *Mensagem Rural* of 1965, which is considered the 6th Supplement.

In this phase of the collection, the concept of 'exceptional childhood' was revisited and, unlike the first phase, 'superiorly gifted children' were included in this classification. The word exceptional would no longer be linked only to what people lacked, to a deficit. The 'exceptional' would become all people who needed special consideration in society. Thus, the negative content attributed to the previous terms would be replaced by the idea of exceptionality, of something that is different, but not necessarily harmful or bad.

- 1 - The term "Exceptional" refers to mentally disabled, physically incapacitated, emotionally maladjusted individuals, as well as those who are superiorly gifted, in short, to all those who require special consideration at home, at school and in society.
- 2 - Such exceptions include the following groups:
 - a) mentally retarded to varying degrees,
 - b) those who are totally or partially impaired in terms of vision, hearing and language,

- c) individuals with neuropsychiatric disorders, emotional disturbances and behavioral deviations,
- d) those with obvious physical defects, especially in the motor system,
- e) those who are gifted from the point of view of character, artistic or scientific aptitudes (Lima et al., 1966, p. 67, author's emphasis).

Another change related to the conceptual definition is in relation to the causes of children's 'exceptionality'. In 1937, in issue number 3, the concept encompassed the comparison with other children and placed the responsibility for their conditions on them and the social environment in which they lived. In the second phase of the issue onwards, the concept did not suggest the causes of this condition.

It is important to note that the magazine was the spokesperson for a private philanthropic association composed of members of civil society and maintained relations with several governments. The dissemination of its ideas through the magazine influenced both society and, indirectly, the government. It was the circulation of ideas from a group of citizens who occupied a privileged position of listening to government officials and professionals in the field. The debate about the nomenclature and conceptualization of the Special Education audience was not directly carried out by the magazines, but the change in the use of the nomenclature and its conceptual explanation reinforced the importance of these changes. At the same time, policies and regulations began to use the concept of exceptionality, disseminated by the magazine.

FAMILIES AND SPECIAL EDUCATION

The analysis of the collection also revealed how the families of 'exceptional' children have been portrayed over the years. Initially, they were portrayed as a group that was detrimental to the education of students and that should be distanced from them by placing the children and young people in boarding schools. Often, children considered 'abnormal' because of the unexpected behavior found in schools, did not have any clear organic diagnoses. When there was no precise medical explanation for what these children presented, the extension of the diagnosis reached the families, who were often blamed for the 'inadequacy' of children. Magazines published articles explaining how bad family habits, whether due to overzealousness or negligence, made the environment harmful to the education of these children. Education carried out in boarding schools or semi-boarding schools was the proposal, initially disseminated in magazines, to solve these educational challenges in a profitable way.

The magazines in the first phase of the collection were published in the 1930s, a time when the world was in the midst of two world wars. During this period, eugenic

ideas were circulating and were well accepted by society and scientists. Racial improvement and social protection were accepted discourses and had a strong nationalist appeal. Brazil was going through the process of constructing a national identity and, to establish itself as a strong nation, it was understood that its population needed to be healthy and literate. Infant mortality rates were high, and the infrastructure of many homes was quite precarious. In addition, the sewage system and basic sanitation were not accessible to everyone. These issues were represented in some way in the three magazines published in the 1930s. However, they appear focused on the magazines' focus: education, study and care for 'exceptional' children. These themes are presented because they interfere with child development.

While the magazine aimed to disseminate ideas and research and promote exchanges with other entities in the field of education for the 'exceptional', it also sought to publicize work carried out by SPMG. In this sense, the objective of preventing 'abnormality' appears in the magazines as much as opinions about the educational improvement of the 'abnormal' child. In this context, removing children from the environment that supposedly harmed them was promoted as a fruitful educational methodology.

However, over the years, it became clear that the boarding school system created challenges for the institutions that took in the children, who were often abandoned by their families. Since the expected results were not achieved, they began to call on families to partner with them as supporting actors in the education of the 'exceptional' children. The publications asked parents to be alert to any unusual signs that their children showed and to accept their children's specific needs, no matter how difficult it might be. In 1934, in issue number 2, the vice-president of SPMG addressed the matter:

The sensitivity of parents, and especially the love of mothers, is easily hurt when they see their little child sent to a class for the subnormal. How much more intelligent and beneficial it would be to silence this blind love and collaborate with the school to lead the child to the desired end. For the child's knowledge, the collaboration of the parents is indispensable (Negromonte, 1934, p. 8).

Negromonte (1934) highlights the importance of children's education that parents understand their children's needs and collaborate so that the school can be successful in its work. For this partnership to be successful, education professionals should also carry out educational work with the family, teaching tools to continue the necessary stimuli for children in the home environment.

Magazines reported that paying attention to this situation would allow children to be educated in the ways that were appropriate for them. In the first half of the 20th century, the medical specialty of childcare was dedicated to guiding mothers on how

to properly educate their children. Since the family at that time was seen as both good and bad for children and, consequently, for society, medical and educational professionals were responsible for teaching parents how to educate their children. Thus, these professionals, disguised under the aegis of authority, as opposed to that of the mother, shaped by nature and her instincts, but without knowledge, dictated the rules for the care and education of children (Martins, 2008).

In order for this partnership to be established, the proposal put forward by the magazines was that education professionals should also carry out educational work with families, teaching techniques and strategies to continue to provide the necessary stimuli for children in their homes. In cases in which the student was in boarding school, the work with the family would be even more intense so that the children would have the necessary support when they returned home during school holidays or at the end of their schooling. In other words, the partnership status was established as long as the family followed the guidelines proposed by education and health professionals.

From the 1960s onwards, families began to be portrayed as protagonists in the quest for the right to education for these children. Publications encouraged the creation of associations, such as the Association of Parents and Friends of the Exceptional (APAE), led by families to lend greater authenticity to activities to include the issue on the government's agenda, so that the government could assume responsibility for the demands raised by society, represented by families. In 1963, issue number 5 published, in different articles, two findings that changed the way the family was portrayed to the magazine's readers. The first of these presents the following idea:

There is no need to be indignant about this attitude [the absence of public power in the face of the education of the exceptional]; it shows us once again that parents and private initiative must join forces to obtain certain results. In view of those, the State is obliged to become aware of the work done and then voluntarily comes to the rescue, touched by the “authenticity that only parents know how to give to these initiatives” (Rey, 1963, p. 3, emphasis added).

The excerpt presents the inclusion of families as a strategy for the Government to assume the responsibility in question. Civil society would initiate activities, privately, through the action of families, until then outside the government agenda, so that the State would later recognize and assume responsibility for the indicated demand.

The second observation contained is “[...] that it is the parents who must demand from the government better possibilities of treatment, education, guidance,

in short, more humane living conditions for their children” (Estrazulas, 1963, p. 3). Thus, the family should play the main role in the fight for the rights of their children.

The period in which the magazine began to spread the idea of the family as the protagonist in the search for education and assistance for the 'exceptional' child coincides with the time when the first APAEs were established in Brazil. At that time, the magazine was influenced by the work of the APAE movement and its discourse regarding the family became more positive, while at the same time motivated its readers to support the founding of new APAEs.

There was a close relationship between the work carried out by Helena Antipoff and the installation of the first APAE in Brazil, as published by the newspaper *Correio da Manhã* in 1954:

Upon arriving in our country about six months later, Mr. and Mrs. Bemis felt the lack of a parents' association with the same goals as the one to which they had dedicated so much of their efforts in the United States. And, once again, Mrs. Beatrice Bemis preferred to act rather than resign. The ground was well prepared by the founder of the Pestalozzi Society of Brazil, Mrs. Helena Antipoff, who began her activities here with the “Círculo das Mães”. From Beatrice's enthusiasm, Helena Antipoff's teachings, and the dedication of tireless Pestalozzians, APAE, the Association of Parents and Friends of Exceptional People, emerged (Jornal Correio da Manhã apud Drumond, 2015, p. 87, author's emphasis).

There was public recognition of a favorable situation for the establishment of associations to assist the 'exceptional' in the country. Helena Antipoff encouraged work in relation to the families of the exceptional, influenced the training of professionals in the area and was mainly responsible for fostering the debate about special education in Brazil. She, together with her working group, put the issue on the agenda among professionals in the area, political authorities and society through publications such as the magazine *Infância Excepcional: Estudo, Educação e Assistência ao Excepcional* (*Exceptional Childhood: Study, Education and Assistance to the Exceptional*).

FINAL REMARKS

Through the analysis of the magazines, it was possible to identify several phases through which SPMG went to consolidate its work. Initially, the issue of Special Education was placed on the agenda in social debates and the demand was publicly highlighted. Later, SPMG gained the support of local public authorities, and, over the

years, the issue was consolidated as something to be addressed and resolved by the Public Authorities. The SPMG, using the magazine *Infância Excepcional: Estudo, Educação e Assistência ao Excepcional*, worked to place the education of the 'exceptional' on the country's public agenda, following the context and educational organization of each era.

SPMG began its work by presenting to the society of the city of Belo Horizonte that there was a scenario that could no longer be ignored, highlighting the educational demand that existed in school groups. Firstly, when national public policies for the education of 'exceptional' were restricted to isolated actions, the magazine's content was concerned with pointing out the existing demand and seeking support from social and public authorities for financing and supporting their actions. At that time, the magazine's content corroborated this work by publishing international examples of this service; criticism of the absences and choices of the Public Power in providing care to children, especially the 'exceptional'; analysis and presentation of alternatives for providing care to 'exceptional childhood'; narratives of the work of SPMG; social awareness campaigns to support the entity's area of work; and request for financial support and presentation of the institution's finances.

At the same time, SPMG worked in its publications to disseminate the idea of general interest. In other words, the discourse promoted by SPMG, through the *Infância Excepcional* collection, contained the idea that the education of 'exceptional' children was part of the scope of situations that would benefit the whole society, in the short term and, mainly, in the long term, when these children became independent adults. Thus, the justification was constructed for the inclusion of the issue in the public agenda. Finally, the magazine *Infância Excepcional: Estudo, Educação e Assistência ao Excepcional* requalified the issue and pointed out that education, as a right of all, should go beyond the actions of the private sector in the case of 'exceptional' children and become part of government actions, being assumed by the Public Authorities, with financing, supervision and guidelines for activities in favor of the exceptional. In this context, the magazine encouraged and disseminated examples of forms of organization to serve the 'exceptional', by exposing the importance of gaining the support of authorities for the development of the work.

From this contribution, the education of the 'exceptional' entered the state and national public agenda. Thus, SPMG was able to get involved in the processes of writing policies for this purpose and participated in several study groups that supported their development. At the same time, the institution was involved in the processes of monitoring and demanding the effectiveness of the developed policies, by publishing in the magazine suggestions for improvements in the education of exceptional people; public resources available for this purpose; laws and decrees that dealt with the topic; and research that should be developed to support educational practice.

The institution's contribution can be seen from the analysis of the material, and it is possible to identify the importance and power of civil society organizations in developing a demand that had not yet been met by the government. The study of the magazines also revealed how SPMG built a long-term project and achieved results that perhaps exceeded initial expectations and demands. With the publication of the magazine, the institution began its work by pointing out the existence of educational services that were ignored at the time and built the need for them to be welcomed by civil society. Moreover, the institution collaborated to include the issue on the public agenda, as well as supporting and demanding that governments develop public policies aimed at the 'exceptional'. The magazine disseminated government actions for Special Education while encouraging other philanthropic institutions to be founded for this purpose. International demands, foreign demands, actions developed in other countries, and incentives provided by international institutes for the development of Special Education were also publicized. In this way, SPMG showed that meeting the demand was not exclusive to Brazil and gradually built the idea that the need to educate these children was part of the scope of human rights, going beyond the notion of charity.

Furthermore, the changes in the institution's positioning helped to better understand the various phases that education for people with disabilities had gone through in Brazil. From the segregation model to the inclusion model, Special Education in Brazil has been influenced and pressured internationally, but it has also developed based on the experiences, mistakes and successes promoted by groups that pioneered the Special Education agenda in the country. When SPMG decided to transform its individual publications into a collection named *Infância Excepcional: Estudo, Educação e Assistência ao Excepcional*, SPMG included publications with opinions and experiences that were no longer practiced, but the older magazines helped to organize the history of the institution and at the same time pointed to the search for improvement in the activities developed.

It is important to emphasize that the changes outlined in this article did not occur as a rigid break from the past, as if one publication denied the previous one. An example that can be highlighted is the change in the image that was disseminated about the families of people with disabilities, which was fluid, and the changes in the dissemination of their role in the education of the 'exceptional' child, which occurred gradually. The research presented in this article analyzed the magazines based on a reading key divided into three main points: family, target audience and financing. However, the collection presents other possibilities for research, analysis and reading, such as: delving deeper into the relationship between the involvement of international agencies, the development of special education and the current challenges in the debate in this area; analyzing the effect and consequences for the lives of people with disabilities in relation to the expectations of their educational process; the relationship between poverty and the classification of the target audience

for Special Education; the gains and losses related to the naming of disabilities and the establishment of a more precise diagnosis for children; the debate about the role of the State and the expectations of civil society in relation to it; and the current debate on the apparent consolidation of the right to education for people with disabilities.

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