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THINKING ABOUT SCHOOL MEAL OFFERS IN BRAZIL AND PORTUGAL FROM FRENCH HYGIENISM IN THE EARLY 20TH CENTURY

Pensando a oferta de refeições escolares no Brasil e em Portugal
a partir do higienismo francês no início do século XX

Pensando en las ofertas de comidas escolares en Brasil y Portugal
desde el higienismo francés de principios del siglo XX

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Resumo: Parte-se da perspectiva de que a alimentação escolar é inerente à própria cultura escolar. Desta forma, o objetivo deste artigo é perceber o despertar da necessidade da oferta das refeições em ambiente escolar no Brasil e em Portugal a partir da influência do higienismo francês no despontar do século XX. Essa percepção tem base nos discursos sobre a oferta de refeições pelas cantinas escolares francesas nos Congressos de Higiene Escolar e Pedagogia Fisiológica ocorridos em Paris nos anos de 1903, 1905 e 1910. Assim, a presença de cientistas brasileiros e portugueses nos eventos em questão sugere que eles poderiam ter sido influenciados a compreenderem as conclusões dos higienistas franceses como modelos de cantinas escolares que pudessem ser internacionalizados.

Palavras-chave: alimentação escolar; Congressos de Higiene Escolar e Pedagogia Fisiológica; Brasil e Portugal.

Abstract: It starts from the perspective that school feeding is inherent to the school culture itself. In this way, the objective of this article is to understand the awakening of the need to offer meals in a school environment in Brazil and Portugal from the influence of French hygienism in the dawn of the twentieth century. This perception is based on the speeches on the provision of meals by French school canteens at the School Hygiene and Physiological Pedagogy Congresses that took place in Paris in the years 1903, 1905 and 1910. Thus, the presence of Brazilian and Portuguese scientists in the events in question suggests that they could have been influenced to understand the conclusions of French hygienists as models of school canteens that could be internationalized.

Keywords: school meals; School Hygiene Congresses and Physiological Pedagogy; Brazil and Portugal.

Resumen: Se parte de la perspectiva de que la alimentación escolar es inherente a la propia cultura escolar. Así, el objetivo de este artículo es comprender el despertar de la necesidad de ofrecer comidas en un ambiente escolar en Brasil y Portugal desde la influencia de lo higienismo francés en los albores del siglo XX. Esta percepción se basa en los discursos sobre la provisión de comidas por las cantinas escolares francesa en los Congresos de Higiene Escolar y Pedagogía Fisiológica que tuvieron lugar en París en los años 1903, 1905 y 1910. Así, la presencia de científicos brasileños y portugueses en los eventos en cuestión sugiere que podrían haber sido influenciados para entender las conclusiones de los higienistas franceses como modelos de las cantinas escolares que podrían internacionalizarse.

Palabras clave: comidas escolares; Congresos de Higiene Escolar y Pedagogía Fisiológica; Brasil y Portugal.

INTRODUCTION

In the last quarter of the 19th century, in Western countries, the beginning of the provision of meals in the school environment was characterized by sparse and charitable initiatives that were replicated as the school structure itself was also formed, marking a concomitant trajectory. When placing the observation lens on the school institution, one understands the excessive complexity of historical analyzes since the context of its trajectory is marked by frantic events at a world level, as well as by a plurality of documents with different views on the facts.

It seems to be inseparable the understanding between the lines that guide the outline of how the school is perceived and its own culture with the “[...] ways of thinking and acting widely spread within our societies, ways that do not conceive the acquisition of knowledge and skills if not through formal schooling processes” (Julia, 2001, p. 11). In this same reasoning, school meals is the result of a society context that understood the school as a favorable space for the provision of adequate food for children, which at the time was essentially for “children in need”¹.

School culture is understood as “[...] a set of norms that define knowledge to teach and behaviors to inculcate, and a set of practices that allow the transmission of this knowledge and the incorporation of these behaviors” (Julia, 2001, p. 9). Thus, then, it is argued that school meals² belongs to the process of school culture as it is an integral part of school practices (Vidal, 2006). For this reason, school meals as a school practice enables the teaching-learning process and, thus, is part of the education history³.

It is considered that the education study is fundamental for “[...] understanding the cultural formation of a society [...]” in the same way that knowledge of the historical context of facts and events is “[...] essential for understanding the meaning of human praxis and, within it, of educational intervention” (Falcon, 2006, p. 333). From this perspective, one of the considerations that is necessary is that the provision of meals in the environment school had taken place in Brazil, France and Portugal, *pari passu* with the spread of mandatory schooling.

¹ This term is used by Adenis (1898) in the document *Les cantines scolaires du XIIe arrondissement* to describe the children who belonged to families who would have financial difficulties in paying for school meals.

² The term school meals is used to cover any meals served under the responsibility of the school. It is noteworthy that in Brazil it is socially known as school lunch, which is offered in the school cafeteria. In Portugal it has always been called a school meal and was served in the school canteen. In France it was called a school meal and was also served in the school canteen.

³ It is considered that school meals is one of the school practices that characterizes school culture, but despite this, in most Brazilian and Portuguese studies in the areas of history and history of education it is worked tangentially. Most studies on the subject are carried out in the areas of nutrition and pediatrics.

In light of this statement, the objective of this article is to realize the awakening of the need to offer meals in a school environment in Brazil and Portugal, based on the influence of French hygiene in the beginning of the 20th century. This perception is based on discourses about the provision of meals by French school canteens in the Congresses on School Hygiene and Physiological Pedagogy⁴ occurred in Paris in the years 1903, 1905 and 1910⁵. Thus, the presence of Brazilian and Portuguese scientists at the events in question suggests that they could have been influenced to understand the conclusions of French hygienists as models of school canteens that could be internationalized.

In this sense, starting from the perspective that school meals should be analyzed with a view to its insertion as inherent to the school culture itself, this article combines an analysis of theoretical references on the topic and, while historical sources, it privileges the use of reports from the three Congresses of School Hygiene in order to find the experiences of scientists in relation to school canteens, as well as Brazilian and Portuguese intellectuals who are registered in the documentation analyzed herein.

THE FRENCH RAYONNEMENT CULTUREL⁶

Regarding the French cultural influence, it is possible to affirm that it could be perceived in Brazil and Portugal for centuries and more strongly since the Enlightenment and the French Revolution. Portuguese intellectuals at the turn of the 20th century called this influence 'foreignerism', which went beyond the use of linguistic expressions and extended to the various aspects of society. François Chaubet (2016) draws attention to the intentional movement in France called *rayonnement culturel*, previously mentioned, which literally meant the French cultural irradiation to other countries in order to strengthen and build cultural bonds between them and France. The aim of this movement was to promote cultural influence with consequent political and economic agreements. *Rayonnement culturel* could be identified until the 1980s, according to Chaubet, when it then underwent changes arising from new conceptions of society.

⁴ Professor of Educational Sciences at the University of Lyon, Dr. Charles Chabot stated that the Physiological Pedagogy was the result of the joint efforts of hygienists to improve the school regime at the time by defining how the physiological condition of the child interferes with their intellectual education. For Chabot (1905, p. 383, our translation) “[...] physiology has the right to set limits and frameworks are imposed on intellectual education by the child’s health conditions”. “[...] la physiologie a le droit de fixer les limites et les cadres qu’imposent à l’éducation intellectuelle les conditions de la santé de l’enfant”.

⁵ All excerpts in French language were brought in this text *ipsis litteris* to the originals.

⁶ Translation: Irradiação Cultural.

According to researcher Hugo Suppo (2000, p. 312), France was “[...] the first country to propose teaching the French language as a strategy for colonialist domination⁷ from the creation, in 1883, of the French Alliance”. According to this reasoning, the development of Francophilia would promote the consumption of French cultural products, such as books, perfumes, theater, tourism, wines, and even ideas. It is precisely in this area that attention is drawn to the continuity of the influence of the French matrix in relation to the school, and, specifically, in relation to the provision of meals in the school environment.

In 1907, the Groupement des Universités et Grandes Écoles de France was created, founded by scientists at the Collège de France in Paris, with the aim of promoting French science and strengthening it vis-à-vis other countries. The ideology, which haunted not only Europe but also the United States, was in the sense that the domination of modern science would also mean greater political influence and greater industrial potential vis-à-vis other powers. Petitjean (1996, p. 91) points out two functions of this type of 'intellectual irradiation' organism. The first function was “[...] to organize scientific exchanges, to take advantage more quickly of the latest advances in science and its applications [...]”, a function that was assumed between the metropolises, as they held the more modern scientific knowledge. Another function was “[...] to weave networks of political allies from cultural and political influence, both as a means of economic penetration and to have support from these allies in the confrontations of the great powers”. The author points out the latter as being the function of intellectual cooperation between France and Brazil.

The interests in intellectual cooperation are clear in the letter of Paul Appell and Emile Levasseur, founders of the Groupement des Universités et Grandes Écoles de France pour les Relations avec l'Amérique Latine. The letter was published in *Revue Internationale de l'Enseignement* in 1908. In it, the authors appealed to scientists to embrace the institution's cause (called only *Groupement*) and help spread French influence around the world. “The radiance of our civilization is one of the most precious elements of French influence in the world. It is important to propagate our culture and defend it against its rivals” (Appell & Levasseur, 1908 apud Petitjean, 1996, p. 91).

The French government's organization of promoting the dissemination and continuity of cultural influence had taken on a public character from 1910 onwards, when the Bureau des écoles et des oeuvres françaises à l'étranger (Office of French Schools and Works Abroad) was created which was subordinate to the Ministère des Affaires Étrangères (Ministry of Foreign Affairs). This ministry was very important in this French historical period, as it would see its budget from 1913 to 1938 being multiplied by 26. French lycées, similar to the Lycée in Paris, were created in several

⁷ In the 19th century, when it was created, French was mandatory for admission to the Faculty of Medicine of Rio de Janeiro.

countries with the aim of propagating the French language and culture. In Rio de Janeiro it had been created in 1916 and in São Paulo in 1923 (Suppo, 2000). In Lisbon, the school had been installed in 1917.

After the First World War, “[...] France asks itself precisely about the reality of its intellectual and cultural influence in the world” (Lefèvre, 1993, p. 24). With a view to reversing this situation, the French government set up strategies so that French culture, together with consumption around it, continued to spread. In 1920, the *Maison de la Presse* (Press House) was created, with the collaboration of Parisian intelligentsia (such as journalists, researchers and other intellectuals) and had the objective of “[...] centralizing, analyzing and classifying the information collected by the diplomatic and military services, in order to provide elements of propaganda to the media” (Suppo, 2000, p. 313). Also created this year was the *Service des Oeuvres Françaises à l'Étranger* – SOFE (Service of French Works Abroad), which replaced the *Bureau des Oeuvres*. Intellectuals other than the diplomatic corps would circulate in these bodies, which would have the mission of collecting information that would be analyzed and used in the plans of cultural advertisements carried out abroad (Ferreira, 2005).

It should be noted that the reverse path will take place. Brazilian culture was also widespread in French society and several intellectuals who participated in the 'French missions' in Brazil wrote about Brazilian culture and contributed to its dissemination in Europe (Ferreira, 2005). Just like Portugal, which also had its culture taken to France.

SCHOOL HYGIENE CONGRESSES AND SCHOOL CANTEENS

At the end of the 19th century, infant feeding in France had become “[...] part of the school hygiene movement” (Marchand, 2014, p. 322), having as one of its pioneer thinkers the French hygienist physician Henry Méry⁸ (1862-1927)⁹, who was also one of the creators of the outdoor school (Marchand, 2014). Paul Le Gendre also played an important role¹⁰ and Louis Landouzy (1845-1917). In addition to the provision of meals, nutritional education for children was being designed as a means of disseminating knowledge about the rational use of food to the population in general.

⁸ French doctor who participated in the school hygiene movement. He founded an open-air school in Eure-et-Loire and organized the medical inspection of primary schools in Paris in the late 19th century. He published a treaty on hygiene with Chantemesse and Mosny. He became a member of the Society of Public Medicine and entered the Academy of Medicine in 1921.

⁹ The dates in parentheses throughout the text, in front of the names, signify the year of birth and death of the scientists. When data could be found.

¹⁰ Data on birth and death of the physician were not found.

It is possible to understand through the documents used that intellectuals involved in education and school doctors, influenced by their French colleagues, were building the need to offer meals to students while they were studying. During this period, school doctors in France organized the canteens of their schools under the auspices of rational nutrition and presented results on the observation of good nutrition on physical and cognitive development, disseminating these ideals to other countries.

It is known, however, that the growth and improvement of French school canteens happened gradually and especially during the interwar period when they were supported by scientific discoveries about human nutrition which were part of the discourse that circulated between countries, even though they were to live a period of recovery after the First World War.

In 1903, the First Congress on School Hygiene and Physiological Pedagogy took place in Paris, organized by the League of Doctors and Family for School Hygiene¹¹, of which the physician Paul Le Gendre was president. In the Congress report, published in 1904, there is mention of school canteens under the title 'Food' (*Nourriture*).

Considering that every children needs to receive food appropriate to their age;

That ignorant parents give their children too much food that they cannot assimilate;

That, in certain regions, children bring alcoholic beverages to nursery school;

That school canteen menus are not age-appropriate for nursery school children, that there is an excess of bacon and sausage, dehydrated and not pureed vegetables;

That even in many communes where canteens are organized, it is the primary school canteen that provides meals for the nursery school;

Congress expresses the wish that food and drink brought in by children be strictly controlled;

That food is cooked or reheated with care;

That milk, eggs and puree exclusively compose the menu for children in the first section (2 to 4 years old) of the nursery school;

¹¹ This organization was founded along the lines of the German namesake who participated in the aforementioned Congress.

May the greatest concern be given to supervision during meals (1^o Premier Congrès d'Hygiène Scolaire..., 1904, p. 82, our translation)¹².

The president of the Physicians and Family League for School Hygiene, Dr. Paul Le Gendre, defended at the congress, among other various considerations, that physicians should have “[...] close monitoring of food [...]”, especially during childhood (1^o Premier Congrès d'Hygiène Scolaire ..., 1904, p. 18). According to the propositions contained in the report on the *Congress*, it must be understood that the rationalization of food became one of the occupations of medical science and that the presence of the school doctor would be fundamental in the construction of the precepts of a school ideal at that time. According to Marchand (2014, p. 528), French doctors, from the first decade of the 1900s onwards, began to guide the steps of food at school, both regarding its offer – including the determination of menus – as well as the insertion of the theme in the teaching program of teacher training schools and in primary and secondary schools. This happened through the constant promotion of scientific events that discussed the topic and also through the increasing presence of these doctors in schools.

According to Kuhlmann Jr. (2005, p. 60), events like this one that dealt with the theme of education had been happening in great numbers since the 1870s. The author affirms that the congresses can be understood in the regard of the international search for the legitimization of “[...] models and criteria of integration in the concert of civilized nations”. In this regard, it is possible to see that the references to actions on school canteens defended in congresses on school hygiene may have served as a model for initiatives to offer meals to students in Brazil and Portugal.

Resulted from a historical context of certainty about the need for medical intervention in the school environment (Rocha, 2010), from June 11th to 13th, 1905, the II Congress of School Hygiene and Physiological Pedagogy took place in Paris. In the Congress report there is a list of non-French members of the League that organized the event, which included 18 nationalities, including a Brazilian and a Portuguese whose names were not mentioned (2^o Congrès d'Hygiène Scolaire..., 1906). School canteens continued to play a prominent role in the defense of scientists at the time, who spoke of

¹² “Considérant qu’il est de toute nécessité que les enfants reçoivent une nourriture appropriée à leur âge; Que les parents ignorants donnent trop souvent à leurs enfants une nourriture que ceux-ci ne peuvent s’assimiler; Que, dans certaines régions, les enfants apportent à l’école maternelle des boissons alcoolisées; Que les menus des cantines scolaires ne sont pas appropriés à l’âge des enfants des écoles maternelles, qu’il y entre trop de lard et de saucisses, de légumes secs non réduits en purée; Que même dans beaucoup de communes où la cantine est organisée, c’est la cantine de l’école primaire qui fournit les repas à l’école maternelle; Le Congrès émet le vœu que les aliments et les boissons apportés par les enfants soient étroitement contrôlés; Que ces aliments soient cuits ou réchauffés avec soin; Que le lait, les œufs, les purées composent presque exclusivement le menu des enfants de la première section (2 à 4 ans) de l’école maternelle; Que la plus grande sollicitude soit apportée à la surveillance pendant les repas”.

their positive experiences with the intervention of the school doctor in the functioning of canteens and in the choice of food appropriately for the time.

One can detach from the report the mentioned school doctor Henri Gourichon¹³ which explained his work in school hygiene in Paris in various aspects of his performance. As for the school canteens accompanied by Gourichon, he said that since 1881, meals “[...] subsidized by School Cash and the Municipal Council allow students to have half-day meals at school through a small contribution depending on the *arrondissement* or gratuitously if he/she is indigent” (Gourichon, 1906, p. 259, our translation)¹⁴

In a detailed analysis carried out by Heloísa Rocha (2010, p. 239) on the II Congress of French School Hygiene, the author states that “[...] the speeches of the French were characterized by concerns about expanding the legitimacy of their initiatives in the field of school hygiene”. The efforts of the doctors who created these scientific events to promote their speeches, both on French soil – trying to aggregate the cooperation of French parents in favor of their actions – and taking on an international echo, through the presence of foreign participants, which would help the entity and its scientific precepts to receive greater recognition (Rocha, 2010).

In this regard, another excerpt from Gourichon's lecture on the adequacy of menus in school canteens to children's bodies and to household food is highlighted. The doctor emphasizes that meals should be “[...] prepared with even more care because parents have a great tendency to give defective food due to ignorance or poverty” (Gourichon, 1906, p. 259, our translation)¹⁵. Food education in the practical regard was also addressed by Professor Augusta Moll-Weiss (1863-1946), Director of the School of Mothers in Paris, who spoke at the II Congress on the importance of “[...] that teaching really is become a scientific teaching that extends to both men and women” (Moll-Weiss, 1906, p. 57, our translation)¹⁶. The director believed that learning about food should not be reduced to teaching how to prepare food, but rather “[...] be concerned about its nutritional value, the ration necessary for each of us according to our temperament and their occupations”¹⁷. Other observations about rational eating were made by the scientist, as a result of her experiences in the school canteen of her school (Moll-Weiss, 1906, p. 57, our translation).

¹³ No data on the physician's birth and death were found.

¹⁴ “[...] subventionnées par les Caisses des écoles et le Conseil municipal, permettent à l'écolier de prendre le repas de midi à l'école, moyennant une faible rétribution suivant les arrondissements, ou gratuitement s'il est indigent”.

¹⁵ “[...] établi avec d'autant plus de soin que les parents n'ont que trop de tendance à donner une alimentation défectueuse par ignorance ou par pauvreté”.

¹⁶ “[...]l'enseignement devienne réellement un enseignement scientifique et qu'il s'entende à l'homme aussi bien qu'à la femme”.

¹⁷ “[...]qu'il se préoccupe de leur valeur nutritive, de la ration nécessaire à chacun d'entre nous selon son tempérament et ses occupations”.

The Second Congress report presents a range of issues about the perceptions of the school ideal for those physicians, educators, and some parents who gathered over the three-day event. Heloísa Rocha (2010, p. 242) emphasizes that the congress, in addition to allowing a scientific discussion on education, also indicated an arena of disputes over the interests of “[...] doctors (including school inspectors, doctors family and specialists); teachers and directors of educational establishments; as well as the families”. It is important, according to the author, to take into account that the context was an interweaving of “[...] issues related to the health and development of children that crossed with the various problems that accompanied the process of universalization primary school in France” (Rocha, 2010, p. 242).

According to Nóvoa (1987), the schooling process was established amidst the emergence of “[...] society's need to take care of children [...]”; of the “[...] progressive interiorization of a set of moral rules that will function as regulatory mechanisms of the relationships between men [...]”; of “[...] a new socio-economic order [...]” that brought a new relationship with reading and writing; and, the “[...] implementation of a 'disciplinary society' which results in the closure of children in spaces that are destined for them” (Nóvoa, 1987, p. 414-415, emphasis of the author added).

Rational nutrition was defended by the scientific community at the time. At a conference held at the Université de la Sorbonne on March 12, 1908 by Professor Louis Landouzy, in which he proposed the study “[...] a way to nourish ourselves well, understanding that the way to eat is taught by Physiology and not by Gastronomy” (Landouzy, 1908, p. 1, our translation)¹⁸.

The core of this thought can be seen in the work *Compendium of rational nutrition (Précis d'alimentation rationnelle)* published in 1911 by Dr. Louis Pascualt¹⁹, by the publishing house Bibliothèque Larousse, in Paris. The author made a proposition which he named the objective of the book he wrote. For him, people should learn in an understandable language how and why they should have a rational diet. The bases of this understanding were supported by three points:

1st What is necessary to eat (diet);

2nd How much is needed to eat (portion);

3rd How it is necessary to eat (distribution of meals, chewing [...])
(Pascualt, 1911, p. 5, our translation)²⁰.

¹⁸ “[...] la manière de nous bien nourrir, entendant que la manière de nous alimenter nous soit enseignée par la Physiologie et non par la Gastronomie”.

¹⁹ The dates of birth and death of Dr. Louis Pascal were not found.

²⁰ “1º Ce qu'il faut manger (régime); 2º Combien il faut manger (ration); 3º Comment il faut manger (distribution des repas, mastication [...])”.

In the book, the knowledge about nutrition that was in force at that time was presented in an easily accessible language and with simplified explanations. Despite not mentioning the school canteens, Pascault discussed the differences in eating habits among children and the care that those who prepared their meals should have.

The discussion of rational nutrition in school canteens had been systematically addressed at the III Congress of School Hygiene and Physiological Pedagogy, in 1910. The doctor and president of the event, Louis Landouzy, stated, at the opening of the event, that school canteens should provide a rational diet so that children have better health and learning benefits. At this congress, Landouzy was representing the French Ministry of Public Instruction.

According to Claire Marchand (2014, p. 308, our translation)²¹, the project to implement school canteens in France had the support of school doctors because they represented “[...] not only a means of applying rational data from the science of nutrition, but also of spreading these notions by example”.

Part of the Office of the International Committee of Organization of School Hygiene Congresses, as representatives of Portugal: the doctor Dr. Sebastião Cabral da Costa Sacadura (1872-1966) as general director of Public Instruction in Portugal and school doctor Pacheco de Miranda²² and the Lisbon surgeon, Dr. Curry Cabral (1844-1920) (3^o Congrès International d'Hygiène Scolaire, 1911, p. 11, p. 60). These scientists mentioned above also participated in the International Committee of the III Congress and, in addition to them, the doctors Mauperrin dos Santos (director of the Academic School of Lisbon); Mario Moutinho; Ferreira Coast; Almeida Dias; M. Valadares; Aleixo Guerra (the latter three as school health inspectors) also participated. António Ladislau Piçarra, who was a founding partner of the Liga de Educação Nacional de Portugal, was also a member of Portugal, having a great role in Portuguese education (Castelo, 2003).

Brazilian members were not part of the organization of the Congress, but Dr. Clemente Ferreira (1857-1947), corresponding member of the Société de Médecine de Paris and full member of the Société de Médecine Publique et de Génie Sanitaire de Paris, was a member of the Congress. Among other activities as an epidemiologist, the pediatrician held the position of health inspector in the city of São Paulo (Rosemberg, 2008) and was part of the creation of the Medical Inspection Service in schools in São Paulo (Rocha, 2015).

²¹ “[...] non seulement un moyen d’appliquer les données rationnelles de la science de la nutrition mais également de diffuser ces notions par l’exemple”.

²² The dates of birth and death of Dr. Pacheco de Miranda were not found.

Official delegates of the Brazilian government: Dr. Eugenio Guimaraes Rebello (1848-1922) and Dr. Manuel Curvello de Mendonça (1870-1914) (3rd Congrès International d'Hygiène Scolaire, 1911, p. 65) who were sent by the mayor of Rio de Janeiro, in 1910, Serzedello Corrêa (1858-1932), answering the invitation of the French organization of the III Congress of School Hygiene (Congresso de Hygiene Escolar, 1910, p. 1).

This last representative, Curvello de Mendonça, on his return from Europe wrote a note in his column in the Journal *O paiz* on September 1, 1910. He had just arrived from two congresses to which he was a delegate representing Brazil, one in Paris and the other in Brussels. The note was called 'Congresses' and explained the numerous and diverse amount of congresses that were taking place at that time, mainly in Europe. He was emphatic in describing how numerous scientific events were then and the doubt that lingered about the need for so many events.

Congresses of all kinds occupy and preoccupy the entire world, especially the great European world. While, in this same Paris, there is hardly a day when solemn sessions for the opening or closing of congresses of instruction, mutuality, transport, hygiene and popular education are not held, other similar meetings are held in Belgium, taking advantage of the competition of its present international exhibition, still others are inaugurated in the north of the same continent, such as the assistance and beneficence congress in Denmark, the peace in Sweden, not to mention the American and even Brazilian congresses, whose bad and faint echo reverberates in opinion and in columns of the world press.

[...] Now, governments manage by overloading their delegates to congresses here and there, by notifying them of new and successive tasks, some of which are incompatible with time and effort. So, congressmen become the delights of transport companies in this Europe equipped for maximum movement in its shipping lines and railways. [...]

In fact, there is no lack of people contesting its scientific and administrative usefulness for the countries they represent (Mendonça, 1910, p. 1).

Interestingly, this scientific frenzy was uttered by the physician Paul Le Gendre, in the report referring to the I Congress of Hygiene (in 1903), which would resemble Curvello de Mendonça's later complaint. Engaged in the importance of scientific discussion in favor of school hygiene, Le Gendre calls upon at the opening of the event: "Perhaps it was an audacious act to try to organize a new type of congress in our time that has seen so much birth. In the beginning, we had found objections rather

than encouragement” (1^o Premier Congrès d'Hygiène Scolaire..., 1904, for. 03, our translation)²³.

Although upset, Mendonça agreed with one of the subjects that had been discussed at the III Congress of School Hygiene. Curvello de Mendonça described that one of the concerns of the scientists present at the event would be aimed at reducing teaching programs in favor of more outdoor activities and regular physical education, in addition to preaching about the importance of proper food hygiene in childhood.

The congress recognized the need for the youth of schools of different grades, to make a healthier life, more favorable to their development and to their perfect health; a need that is all the more pressing as the individual problems due to defective hygiene, especially at the age of formation of the spirit and the body; [...]

In summary, the congress on school hygiene in Paris reflects a strength, a belief, a firm conviction that a new pedagogy should and can be made to solve all those problems: natural pedagogy, physiological pedagogy, which invigorates intellectual education by decreasing the time devoted to study and teaching. For this, the congress asked for the organ of one of its representatives: 'air at school! air in the lungs! air in the programs!' (Mendonça, 1910, p. 1, emphasis of the author added).

There were many pedagogical issues that were highlighted at the III Congress of School Hygiene, but this article specifically emphasizes the speeches about school canteens. Offering food in a school environment was a challenge that had been experienced by several countries and encouraged discussions about models that could bring better results. In his opening speech, Dr. Louis Landouzy declared his certainty in the action of school hygiene aimed at infant feeding and the importance of work on school canteens.

Hence the importance, which, in pedagogy, begins to take on the food of children and adolescents, an issue that until yesterday was left to empiricism and prejudice. Hence the interest in works produced abroad and in France on school canteens; hence the interest attributed to the care of teeth in schools; a question that, however small it may seem to superficial spirits, is directly related to the problem of rational eating. [...] This issue of domestic education is starting to fall in love with everyone. The reason is that

²³ “C’était peut-être un acte audacieux de tenter d’organiser une nouvelle sorte de congrès à notre époque qui en a déjà tant vu naître. Nous avons rencontré au début des objections plutôt que des encouragements”.

nutritional education, in addition to the hygienic moralities denounced by doctors, involves economic and social moralities, which are correlated with those²⁴ (Landouzy, 1911, p. 109, our translation).

It should be noted that after these congresses, the Medical Inspection Service was created in Brazil and in Portugal the School Health Inspection, both linked to the direction of public instruction (Rocha, 2015), which advocated, among other care with child health, influenced by the certainties of medical hygienist science, the care of the school cafeteria and lunch.

FINAL REMARKS

Even though the initiatives on Brazilian and Portuguese soil were, in the first decade of the nine hundred, far from being able to serve all students and adapting to the expected models, it can be said that this period marked two ways of looking at school meals. Firstly, as a way of guaranteeing school attendance (France, 1902; Cantina escolar, 1909; Os grupos e as caixas escolares, 1913) and, secondly, in order to allow consolidation of the association between good nutrition and good school learning by the scientific community.

It is noteworthy that the educational model coming from France was part of school culture both in Brazil and in Portugal in the historical period in question. This process, to a large extent, was made possible by the frequent circulation of Brazilian and Portuguese intellectuals in French scientific events. However, no matter how much elements that contribute to the construction of the school meals policy are recognized in the selected space-time frame, it still could not be understood as such.

Looking at the reports of the three Congresses on School Hygiene and Physiological Pedagogy that took place in Paris, it can be seen that school meals has become the target of medical concern and treated under its responsibility, both in France, Brazil and Portugal. These sources show us that investigations were advancing on the damage caused by poor nutrition to children's development and learning.

The field of studies aimed at the history of education and the practices of school culture cannot give up school meals. The clipping analyzed herein shows this. The

²⁴ “De là l’importance, qu’en pédagogie, commence à prendre l’alimentation des enfants et des adolescents, question, jusqu’à hier, livrée à l’empirisme et aux préjugés. De là l’intérêt des travaux produits à l’étranger et en France sur les cantines scolaires; de là l’intérêt qui s’attache aux soins des dents dans les écoles; question qui, pour mince qu’elle apparaisse aux esprits superficiels, se rattache directement au problème de l’alimentation rationnelle [...] Cette question de l’enseignement ménager commence à passionner tout le monde. La raison est que l’éducation alimentaire, en plus des moralités hygiéniques dénoncées par les médecins, comporte des moralités économiques et sociales, celles-ci étant corollaires de celles-là”.

analysis of the rich sources selected here shows the complexity of an important aspect of the school from the 20th century onwards, which was constituted as discussions that, circulated from France, began to be perceived by Portuguese-Brazilian intellectuals.

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