



Rural education and regional development: educational proposals and activities of Sud Mennucci – 1920 to 1948

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ABSTRACT. The object of study is the rural education proposed by Sud Mennucci (1892 – 1948) for the state of São Paulo, from 1920 to 1948. The study examined the theme as an educational relationship whose objectives were to capture the social need of the time and to understand the social functions of rural teaching. The sources of the research were those written in books, conferences, newspaper articles and decrees issued by him, when he was Director General of Education. The methodology followed the thematic analysis based on the historical-critical theory through the singular/universal category, with thematic axes the didactic work, the ruralization of teaching and the small farming. Such proposal fulfilled only part of the planned social function, but contributed to innovation and the relative universalization of rural education.

Keywords: didactic work's organization; rural education; little tillage; educational relation.

O ensino rural e o desenvolvimento regional: propostas e atividades educacionais de Sud Mennucci – 1920 a 1948

RESUMO. O objeto de estudo é o ensino rural, proposto por Sud Mennucci (1892 – 1948) para o estado de São Paulo, de 1920 a 1948. O estudo examinou o tema, enquanto relação educativa, cujos objetivos foram captar as necessidades sociais da época e apreender as funções sociais do ensino rural. As fontes da pesquisa foram os escritos em livros, conferências, artigos de jornais e decretos por ele promulgados, quando foi Diretor-geral do Ensino. A metodologia seguiu a análise temática fundamentada na teoria histórico-crítica mediante a categoria singular/universal, tendo como eixos temáticos o trabalho didático, a ruralização do ensino e a pequena lavoura. Sua proposta cumpriu somente em parte a função social programada, contribuiu, entretanto, para a inovação e a universalização relativa do ensino rural.

Palavras-chave: organização do trabalho didático; ruralização do ensino; pequena lavoura; relação educativa.

La enseñanza rural y el desarrollo regional: propuestas y actividades educativas de Sud Mennucci - 1920 a 1948

RESUMEN. El objeto de estudio es la enseñanza rural propuesto por Sud Mennucci (1892 - 1948) para el estado de São Paulo, de 1920 a 1948. El estudio examinó el tema, mientras relación educativa, cuyos objetivos fueron captar las necesidades sociales de la época y de las funciones sociales de la enseñanza rural. Las fuentes de la investigación fueron los escritos en libros, conferencias, artículos de periódicos y decretos por el promulgados cuando fue Director General de la Enseñanza. La metodología siguió el análisis temático fundamentado en la teoría histórico-crítica mediante la categoría singular/universal, teniendo como ejes temáticos el trabajo didáctico, la ruralización de la enseñanza y la pequeña labranza. Su propuesta cumplió solamente en parte la función social programada, contribuyó, sin embargo, a la innovación y la universalización relativa de la enseñanza rural.

Palabras-clave: organización del trabajo didáctico; ruralización de la enseñanza; pequeña labranza; relación educativa.

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Introduction

The object of study is the rural education, proposed by Sud Mennucci (1892 - 1948) for the State of São Paulo. It was a proposal of education for the rural worker, with a view to fixing the man in the field through education. Historians of education called this movement of pedagogical ruralism and ruralization of education. In his writings, however, Sud Mennucci employed the term rural education, or simply ruralization, relating it to training for work and health practices. However, when referring to the rural area, the author uses the term countryside, which in this article should be understood as such.

The educator held the position of Director General of Education of the State of São Paulo three times. For the first time, between November 24, 1931 and May 24, 1932; for the second time, between August 5 and 24, 1933. In these two periods, although short, he was concerned with the education in São Paulo in general, and particularly with rural education. During this period, he created in the Department of Education the Technical Assistance of Rural Education and issued Decree 6,047 as of August 19, 1933, by which he installed the Normal Rural School of Piracicaba, transformed into rural the Butantan school group and the Arnaldo Barreto school group, from Tremembé. In 1943, he held for the third time the position of Director General of Education, remaining until 1945. He also elaborated the rural education reform, which served as the basis for the Consolidation of State Education Laws in 1947

He helped to found, in 1930, the Center of Teachers of the State of São Paulo, of which he assumed the position of director and editor of the *Revista do Professor*. He was director of the newspaper *O Estado de S. Paulo* in 1925, and in the following years he took over the board of the newspaper *O Tempo* and *Imprensa Oficial do Estado de São Paulo*. In 1943, he returned to direct the newspaper *O Estado de S. Paulo*, accumulating the role of Director General of Education, until 1945. He passed away in 1948.

In this study, the pedagogue's proposal is understood as an educational relationship that produced what Alves (2005, p. 10) considered “[...] a historical form of educator and a historical form of student”. The use of the term educator in its broadest sense, as it historically encompasses also the preceptors of Antiquity and the medieval masters, agrees with Alves (2005). The term teacher appears only in Modernity. In the writings of Sud Mennucci, the educational relationship was directed to ‘education for work’ and oriented so that, “[...] beyond teaching the formal subjects of urban schools [...]” it also developed programs “[...] on small-scale farming, small animal husbandry, and domestic industry” (Mennucci, 1944, p. 32). The historical form of the educational relationship was based on the social needs of the rural man. For the author, the rural man needed to create work habits and acquire “[...] knowledge that would make this work as productive as possible with the least effort. [...] The rural primary school (should teach) the intelligent use of its energies, conducted and disciplined in a rational spirit” (Mennucci, 1944, p. 27).

The reading of the works of Mennucci reveals the educator as the exponential figure of education, together with several pedagogues of the decades of 1920 to 1940 who promoted the education for the rural man. In the book *A ruralização* (1944), the author spoke about what he understood by rural education: the correspondence of education to the socioeconomic needs of the rural population and the teacher's preparation, an element of the farming that had “[...] enough knowledge of agriculture, technology and prophylaxis that corresponded to the social and economic needs of the population, valuing work on the field” (Mennucci, 1944, p. 33).

Two objectives outlined this study: to capture the social needs of the time in which Sud Mennucci formulated his educational proposal and to apprehend the social functions that the school education exerted in that social formation.

The proposal of a historical intervention in education of the State of São Paulo at a given time was investigated as a past that presented a controversial theme that is still current, since, until now, rural education strives to establish a coherent and efficient educational relationship. What was investigated marks the relevance of rural education, because it reconstituted education along the way of history and dialogued with a certain past, in order to inquire what of the past is present in the present. There was the understanding that there is a significant story to reveal.

The method

The rural education of Sud Mennucci was inquired, based on the knowledge of the laws that governed the society in the development of the countryside, from 1920 to 1948, since the rural education implemented by

Sud Mennucci arose from an absolute social need of his time. The historical form of organization was examined, which was only possible after identifying the laws governing the production of society. The production of goods was an essential condition for the investigation of rural education. In this sense, capturing the historical form of the educational relationship was only possible after knowing the laws that produced and reproduced the social relations of the time.

Social relations are understood as those that concretely take place in the capitalist society and this, by producing and reproducing the material life, dissociates the capital from the work force. Ruralization - understood by Sud Mennucci as the social and economic urgencies of rural people - and rural education were captured as social functions required by the countryside, adjusted by him and recorded in books, conferences, newspapers and decrees.

The author's writings were subjected to content analysis, specifically to the thematic analysis. The systematization of the data was made through themes extracted from the works, and the analysis, by means of the singular/particular/universal category revealed by Marx (1980a, p. 402), when he explained "[...] the relationship between the manufacturing division of labor and the social division of labor, which is the general basis of all commodity production".

He considered the category in three moments: the great branches of social production in its totality, as "[...] division of labor in general [...]"; the separation of production into species and subspecies from agriculture or industry, such as "[...] division of labor in particular [...]"; and the division of labor effected within a workshop, as "[...] division of labor in detail" (Marx 1980a, 402). The singular, the particular, and the universal form a unit of analysis.

In this article, the objective was to capture the social needs of rural people and to understand the social role that rural education, proposed by Mennucci, played as an instrument for overcoming social inequalities in the countryside - the singular of the category. The particular expressed the backward agriculture and the farmers with no perspective to get resources and compete. The 'general basis of all commodity production' was the more developed and modernized production of coffee plantations at that time - the universal of the category of analysis.

Rural education and teaching methods

To establish the educational relationship, considered in this study as a new form of teacher and a new form of student, Sud Mennucci presupposed the diagnosis of the social needs of the rural population of his time. When he formulated it, he conceived a type of rural teacher who interacted with the students of the countryside, because he found that the teacher did not adapt to what was expected of him: "Everything is lacking for him: his age is lacking, his preparation, the ability to adapt, the *savoir faire*, the enthusiasm, the faith, and especially that quality that only the experience of life grants" (Mennucci, 2006, p. 55). In his conception, the school model of the city did not apply to the rural school:

[...] in the elaboration of laws, in the constitution of our social discipline, it is always the city that takes the best. The entire organization of our public services or collective utility is made and processed in default of the rural zone and as if it did not exist. And our reformers are so strongly imbued with this fundamental concept of the polis that they do not even notice it (Mennucci, 2006, p. 40).

The method of education instituted by Sud Mennucci in the primary education of the State of São Paulo, for the city and the countryside, was a mixed and active method, and was opposed by intellectuals from New Pedagogy, who also received the denominations of Active School and Progressive School.

The educator stated: "Our school apparatus is an Active School type. We confess that it was the Analytical method for reading teaching that operated miracle. It is that this method came out entirely from the experiences of Decroly" (Mennucci, 1929b, p.2). Decroly was one of the precursors of Active School in which he praised the possibility of the student conducting his own learning. According to Lourenço Filho (2002, p. 283), Decroly "[...] does not abandon the foundations of education by intuition [...]" a truth that extends to Kerschensteiner, Claparède and Ferrière. Mennucci (1929a) states that the New Schools of these four pedagogues inspired his Active Teaching Method.

Mennucci (1929a) criticized the excessive freedom present in the proposals of Dewey and Montessori, asserting that Active School meant active education, new processes created according to Brazilian singularities and not a mere reproduction of foreign models, as he understood to be the version of the New School in Brazil, defended by Anísio Teixeira, Lourenço Filho and Fernando de Azevedo.

For Mennucci (1929b, p. 2), the best of the Third Education Conference was the recognition that São Paulo continued to “[...] be the forefront of the national pedagogical movement, both in quantity and quality of work”. In this Conference, his lack of enthusiasm for Active School was questioned. He replied, affirming the dynamicity of his method and clarifying that in the city of São Paulo neither the Active Method nor the traditional one was applied; there is “[...] a mixed type [...]” which merges the two systems (Mennucci, 1929b, p. 2).

In order to expose the method of teaching of Sud Mennucci – ‘work of the São Paulo professors’, as defined by him -, he used articles published in the newspaper *O Estado de São Paulo* from October 1929 to January 1930.

In one of the articles, he made sure that there were several types of Active School, but they lacked “[...] attempts of experiments to solve the riddle of the infantile soul. In these attempts are still individual intelligence, wit and penetration the main tools of teacher guidance” (Mennucci, 1929c, p. 3). He distrusted the excessive ‘freedom of the student’ advocated by New Pedagogy. He cited Flayol, director of the Normal Course in Paris, who wrote in *La methode Montessori en action*:

In these schools, the student’s freedom is complete, absolute. [Students] Do what they want to do without time and no task marked. They give up studying when they want; they return when they please. There is only one compulsory exercise for the self-mastery teaching: it is the lesson of silence. At the order of the principal, or of a prominent student, the children stand in their places, in the dark if possible, or with their hands over their eyes. The most complete silence reigns [...] In the midst of this self-communion, the director [...] calls, in a low voice, a colleague, who gets up without sound and goes as quietly as possible to the side from which the voice came (Flayol apud Mennucci, 1929a, p. 3).

To the distrust manifested to the New School, he added the argument: “Everything leads to separation and splitting. Soon New School for the most skilled; a classic school for the common people [...]”, because “[...] the common people do not need to deduce and analyze beyond a certain limit” (Mennucci, 1929a, p. 3). He criticized the individual freedom, defended by Renewed School, attributing it to the authoritarian political system:

It should be noted that all new Italian schools have as their motto individual freedom, which is due to a condition of broad justice. However, Mussolini supported them with the Gentile Reform, who declared himself to be an adversary and even denied the so-called conquests of man in 1780 (Mennucci, 1929a, p. 3).

In arguing with Mussolini’s support for the Renewed School of Italy, he could add that in Brazil, New Pedagogy also flourished in the decades of the Vargas dictatorship. If he had added this information, he could not produce a correct analysis, because he himself, in the three times he was Director General of Education in the State of São Paulo, fulfilled his task at the time of the Vargas dictatorship, under the federal intervention of the governors Manoel Rabello, Pedro Manoel de Toledo, Daltro Filho and Fernando de Souza Costa.

He included the New Pedagogy in “[...] the old and brazen mania of taking models from abroad and following norms from other lands!” (Mennucci, 1946, p. 72). He distinguished it from his proposal and considered its analytical method for teaching the reading completely from “[...] the experiences of Decroly and Mme. Degrand, revealing the real progress of the acquisition of children’s knowledge” (Mennucci, 1929b, p. 2). He added that the teachers of São Paulo created “[...] this new type of school, of a dynamic, collective character [...]”, whose characteristic is to be an Active Method (Mennucci, 1929b, p. 2). The new type of school referred to the mixture between the Intuitive Method of the traditional school and the active method of the European renovators.

He praised Ferraz de Campos who used this methodology to teach Arithmetics; João de Toledo, for the teaching of Homeland History Firmino de Proença, for Geography; Cimbélino de Freitas, for the methodology of Drawing; and João Gomes Junior, for the Music; himself, for the vernacular language. Thus, “[...] we will have finished with the articles of importation to carry out a work that is the result of our own experience” (Mennucci, 1929b, p. 2).

In the educational history of Brazil and São Paulo, the transition from the Intuitive to the Escolanovista Method presented several tendencies in the first decades of 1900, all coming from Europe and the United States. In a research carried out in the western state of Santa Catarina, Hoff (2012) found the permanence of these transition methods in the 1940s, in the hegemonic period of the New School.

In the article *Escola Paulista I*, Sud Mennucci declared himself to be a “Partisan of Active School, mixed, but never having committed myself to the acceptance of a certain type of those that exist in the world” (Mennucci, 1929c, p.3). He affirmed that he created “[...] a Brazilian school [...]” to not imitate “[...] schools of other countries [...]”, confirming the active character of his method: “When Active School means active education, employment of new processes, according to our psyche and our specific singularities, the result of our training and our experience, I agree and clap” (Mennucci, 1929c, p. 3).

In the article *Escola Paulista II*, Sud Mennucci wrote, criticizing the New School, whose teaching is not directed at the human brain, “[...] which is the center of so-called intellectual activities. [...] There is only transmission of knowledge when knowledge is integrated into the student’s consciousness and becomes part of his/her sensitive heritage” (Mennucci, 1929d, p. 3).

In *Escola Paulista III*, he stated: “The intelligent work that the professorship of São Paulo has accomplished in the last fifteen years can be summarized in half a dozen lines: it took the analytical-synthetic method in its vulgarization phase, adapted it to its schools, sued it in its way” (Mennucci, 1929, p. 6). He summed up here what he had previously written: no foreign imitation in his method.

In the article of November 14, 1929, he wrote that the analytical method did not come from the United States, but was adopted “[...] ostensibly by Decroly, who gave him the scientific basis in 1907” (Mennucci, 1929, p. 3). He gave Decroly reason, because scientifically “[...] words only come later; the syllables after the words; the letters after the syllables” (Mennucci, 1929f, p. 3). Another pedagogue also influenced his educational proposal: “Kerschensteiner [...] was also enchanted by the analytical method, as Dr. Oscar Thompson did here. For Kerschensteiner, the method is based on the image of words” (Mennucci, 1929f, p. 3). The starting point consists of phrases of five to six words taken from the practical activity of the school. He explained: “Well, what did the teachers of São Paulo do with this method? They adapted it to the needs of São Paulo. Here is the work of intelligence” (Mennucci, 1929f, p. 3).

Renato Jardim (1867-1951), in an article published in the newspaper *O Estado de S. Paulo* (1929, p. 3), hastened to show that there was no relationship between the intellectualist school of São Paulo and the Renewed School. Sud Mennucci (1929, p. 4) replied: “This method is the same that is in use in Belgium with Decroly, in Switzerland with Claparède and Ferrière, in Germany with Kerschensteiner, which proves that São Paulo is on the right track, since 1906 and, generally speaking, since 1911”.

In the last newspaper article, *A escola paulista (conclusão)*, dated January 1, 1930, he again refuted the criticism of Jardim, who attributed to the teaching of Sud Mennucci the responsibility for the thesis of the ‘nationalization of the Active School’. He argued: “It was not me, but it does not matter at all because the expression is perfectly defensible” (Mennucci, 1930, p. 2). Mennucci (1930) clarifies that nationalization did not mean a reduction of universal principles to national character, but meant “[...] careful study to see how these principles should be applied and adapted to our specific singularities” (Mennucci, 1930, p. 2). The educator exemplifies: “The Active School in Europe is given in five, six, seven hours a day; in Minas Gerais, three hours a day. This is to nationalize the New School: to fit the European system into so many local conditions” (Mennucci, 1930, p. 2).

To the question of São Paulo not having a Renewed School when it already existed in some Brazilian states, he responded using the speech of Dr. Moreira de Souza, Director General of Education of Ceará:

The work of education in São Paulo is solidified. [...] the most advanced in the south. [...] Thankfully, I was asked if the education reforms in the Federal District and Minas Gerais do not exceed what exists in São Paulo. Reforms yes; what actually exists, no (Mennucci, 1930, p.2)

On November 12, 1929, in the newspaper *O Estado de São Paulo*, Mennucci mentioned the story told by Dewey: in 1900, Dewey went in search of chairs and desks in the warehouses and stores, adapted to the needs of the children. One shopkeeper said, “They want something so the children can work and all these furnitures is for them to listen”. And Dewey concludes: “This summarizes the history of traditional education” (Mennucci, 1929d, p. 3).

He also criticized “[...] the pedagogical reformers [who] even after forty years of the Republic [...]” could not understand “[...] the sharpness of that joke of Jules Embree: for a student of the countryside it is far more important to know the perfect way of milking a cow than the complete list of the kings of England” (Mennucci, 1944, p. 25). With comparisons he continued:

Certainly, a boy of the countryside is much more interested in learning how to properly make a graft than in decorating the inexpressive list of hereditary captaincies and their grantees, more or less devoured by the Indians. And it is much more useful for a girl in the countryside to learn to organize the daily and rational menus for the diet of the family than to lose herself in the description of the battles against Lopez (Mennucci, 1944, pp. 25-26).

These comparisons refer to the goals proposed by Mennucci (1944, p. 25): “[...] formal, continuous, book, literary classes with lessons without the least interest for the child mentality”. For him, “[...] the rural school cannot continue to be what it has been until today: a city school forcibly grafted into the countryside” (Mennucci, 1944, p. 27). He therefore proposed that the school “[...] needs to be an educational apparatus organized according to the production [...] of the environment it serves”. He expanded the idea: “It is impossible, therefore, to separate education from production” (Mennucci 1944, p. 28).

The teaching tools

Sud Mennucci, in his Geography teaching, emphasized the didactic tool: “The immediate intention of teaching is to make the learner to read a map. [...] The map plays the same role as the reading book or the musical sheet and is an abbreviated symbol of a concrete reality. [...] The geographical chart is the objective reality in brief” (Mennucci, 1936, p. 7), revealing the part of the Intuitive Method that he incorporated into his teaching.

It is, he wrote, “[...] a didactic game to take students from the notion of living and lived reality to their transposition to a geographical chart” (Mennucci, 1936, p. 8). This transposition comprises three phases: “The real and intuitive notion of things”, which can be achieved with “school excursions”. Here is the explanation: “After obtaining this perception for the student’s intellectual property, [...] it is necessary that the notion passes from consciousness to unconsciousness, through a phase of elaboration and this is achieved with the modeling, which will constitute the second phase”. The child gives “[...] life and form to what he/she has seen”. The teacher will establish “[...] the fundamental notion of scale and proportion [...]” because the student, in operating his/her world, does not operate in the same size as he/she observed it (Mennucci, 1936, p. 8).

After obtaining the notion of scale, “[...] the student will naturally pass from reading the relief map, he/she him/herself made to the geographical chart, which represents, with other signs, the work of clay” (Mennucci, 1936, p. 9). The teacher should show courses of rivers, crossing mountains and water slopes, to understand the reliefs. In this way, the secret of teaching is that the student has “[...] the clear sensation, when contemplating the geographical chart, that he/she looks at it from the top of a very high peak”. If you cannot get this perfect sensation from your pupils, “[...] all your teaching falls into the book and memorization” (Mennucci, 1936, p. 11).

This article studied the organization of didactic work based on the teaching of Geography, the teaching of reading and the use of textbooks evaluated by Sud Mennucci in the book *Rodapés* (1927). We understand it, not centered on the teacher, nor on the student, but on the supremacy of didactic resources, as presented by Alves (2005) and others. Alves inferred: “In the case of the modern school, unquestionable supremacy is exercised by the didactic book, which subordinates all others to its designs and functions” (Alves, 2005, p. 4). Sud Mennucci (1936) considered the didactic resource as fundamental in teaching, when using manuals, maps, books, notes of trips and excursions. He presented the “[...] textbooks to follow the development of the school subjects in the classes [...]”. He warned that there are pedagogical means that condemn the lessons of the book, which, in his view, is “[...] immature and counterproductive [...]”. He argued: “When the textbooks have been eliminated, the teachers begin to dictate points or give apostilles, which is the same, and they do it clandestinely, although they follow the method of systematic elaboration of the letters by the students, which fixes the knowledge”. Thus, he revealed that “[...] the textbook is indispensable, especially for children of primary education” (Mennucci, 1936, p. 11). The educator concluded that the map has the same role as the book: “This is achieved by the daily practice of mapping by the pupils, in class and at home” (Mennucci, 1936, p. 12).

In *Rodapés* (1927), Sud Mennucci analyzed under the didactic aspect of the teaching several books as *Urupês*, by Monteiro Lobato; *Sombras que vivem*, by João de Toledo; *Manhã*, by Graco Silveira; *Saudade*, by Thales Andrade; *Fruta do Mato*, by Afrânio Peixoto, and many others.

The instruments of work were imposed in his rural education. In the scope of school education, the map, the didactic manual, the visits to the fields, the use of the radio and the agricultural practices were didactic resources, used by Sud Mennucci, in the school activities. The educator provided varied didactic resources to

the primary schools of the countryside, “[...] perfectly in line with the rural environment in which they are located, according to their activities” (Mennucci, 1944, p. 51) and consonant with the planning, methodology and contents, which, according to Cardoso (2013), are also teaching resources to reveal the educational practice: “Not only the didactic materials, but also curricular planning, the methodology used, worked contents, the statutes, and finally the resources that mediate educational practice” (Cardoso, 2013, p. 205).

The educational relationship

Each epoch concretely produces the educational relationship peculiar to it. That is, it produces a historical form of educator and a historical form of student; it also produces the didactic resources and the physical space that they have, which are seen as necessary conditions for their accomplishment (Alves, 2005, p.11).

The new educational relationship, proposed by Sud Mennucci, allowed the exercise of social functions of the rural school that are explained in the correspondence of the education to the socioeconomic needs of the rural population and the preparation of the teacher for a school apparatus organized according to the environment it serves. One of the functions of rural education of Sud Mennucci was equivalent to what the discourses of educators and politicians intended: the powers of education to promote social and economic development. With them, the educator believed that school education, aided by policies implemented for the rural sector, would be able to trap man to the ground. He understood the ‘miseries of the countryside’ and observed that the city had everything and received everything from the rulers, while the small farming was abandoned to its fate. He made a correct diagnosis of the situation in the countryside, but his thinking did not address the general trends of production, because the movement of capital was subordinating rural and urban workers to wage labor, and it would be difficult to maintain them in activities on their properties.

It was noticed that, at the beginning of the reading of the writings of Sud Mennucci, rural education opened the range of the educational relationship, instituting a form of relationship involving the whole rural community: teachers, administrators, technical-administrative teams, youth, family, community and rural school. It was the ruralization he wanted. In order to fix the man in the field and to form active individuals, adequate to the characteristics of the ideology of agricultural Brazil, he endeavored to change the nature of the school and give it a new educational relationship, oriented to the formation of small rural landowners, through the social function of creating a man who remained in the countryside with his dignity and value.

Thus, the Normal Rural School was set up in the hope of “[...] forming a knowledgeable agricultural professional, who is at the same time a nurse, a master who enters the field with the unshakable conviction that he needs to be an incentive for progress” (Mennucci, 2006, p. 92).

The target audience of education, the social needs of the countryside and the reorganization of work

When the investigator is in favor of deciphering and conferring documents, he/she is in the process of knowing. He/she establishes a situation in which the social facts revealed in documents begin to dialogue with the scientific abstraction; in such a case, it is the truth they are talking about. He/she discovers, as well, that the facts, revealed by documents, are richer than they seem or appear to us, so in examining rural education the idea that it arose from certain and specifically historical activities of the men; soon, came attached to the rural reality of the interior of São Paulo. In the proposition of Sud Mennucci (2006), the real seemed to him unfair and exploitative and, exactly for this reason, it generated strong commitments assumed in favor of the rural people. His great value was to communicate with social reality, to evaluate and then incriminate the usual, stating that the school had forgotten the contact with reality.

In the investigation, it was first discovered that one of the functions of rural education was the preparation of students and members of society for their use in farming, exhausted and redistributed in 1905 by the São Paulo government to rural workers. In the same way, the small farming was kept in the midst of the latifundia, because the agriculture of São Paulo needed “[...] arms for the crop work [...]”, that is, “[...] arms for the coffee plantations [...]” (Monbeig, 1952, p. 137), during harvest periods. The government received the immigrants and founded small properties between 1905 and 1907:

This colonization effort was still considered as a function of the needs of the farmers and not only intended to make smallholders live through their own products. [...] The aim was to prepare planters' manpower reserves for harvest time. The colonies would be 'nurseries' of workers who would fix the immigrants in the vicinity of the farms (Monbeig, 1952, p. 143, emphasis added).

Monbeig revealed what was not circulated in the official documents: "The attempt to colonize was integrated into the plantation system" (Monbeig, 1952, p. 143).

New colonies were founded in 1910 and 1911, all in the areas of Campinas and Mogiana. Made possible by the governmental actions, others were added that occurred with the division of the old farms no longer used for coffee plantations. On the pioneer fronts, towards the west of the state, Monbeig (1952) came across small properties in coffee and cotton cultivation and found that,

[...] in 1939, farms with more than 1,000 alqueires [1 alqueire = 5,44 acres] covered 68% of the area of Barretos, 77% of Andradina and 70% of Venceslau. Meanwhile, in Olímpia, Araçatuba and Presidente Prudente, the farms were concentrated in areas of 100 to 1,000 alqueires, of which small farms had 39.3%, 39.1% and 40%, respectively.

The author also observed the existence of properties with up to 25 alqueires [...] occupying 11.7% of the area in Olímpia; 17% in Araçatuba; 22.3% in Presidente Prudente; 29% in Mirassol; 46% in Tupã (Monbeig, 1952, p. 193).

Another feature in the pioneer front: small coffee crops, surrounded by varied plantations of corn, beans, peanuts between the rows and in the tilled land: "The small coffee plantation of the pioneer front does not know monoculture" (Monbeig, 1952, p. 247). Cotton cultivation increased in the 1940s "[...] to the care of small farmers, landowners with an average area of 5 to 7 alqueires in most municipalities" (Monbeig 1952, p. 257).

The small farm was erected as the place where rural education activities were limited. Sud Mennucci collected data on the abandonment of the countryside and turned them into overcoming goals. On the basis of the facts observed, he tuned in the whines of "[...] lack of arms in the coffee field [...]", "[...] the absence of civilization [...]" among rural workers of the State of São Paulo and the "[...] poverty of the rural population [...]" in the 1920s, 1930s, and 1940s, picking up the bound and dehydrated bundles of bad cultivation conditions. He accused "[...] the lack of educational preparation of the rural man [...]" and also "the lack of agronomic preparation, despite the existing agricultural methods" (Mennucci, 1944, p. 31s).

His thinking showed reality in contradiction: it clearly revealed the low cost of production and the workforce on the one hand, and the oligopolistic coffee groups that dominated the great crop, on the other. Therefore, he proposed to process the "[...] reorganization of labor [...]" in small farm, in order to align Brazil with "[...] the interference of international economic phenomena [...]". To this situation, he counterposed an attempt to solve it by means of a new educational relationship, "[...] consequence and reflection of the organization of the work of society" (Mennucci, 2006, pp. 124-138), that "[...] scientifically organized [...]" rural work. The strong argument was in the statistics that presented: "Of the 44 million current inhabitants that Brazil owns, 11 million only reside in the cities, when 33 million spread through their fields" (Mennucci, 1944, p. 17).

The primary and professional education apparatus, however, was in the cities: "While the cities that will at best have a quarter of the general population receive four fifths of the existing educational services, the rural area, which has the other three quarters of the population, is only entitled to a fifth of this" (Mennucci, 1944, p. 20).

The abandonment of the countryside and the rural worker and the redefinition of agricultural work were also described by Ianni (2004, p. 2): "Immigration of Europeans is intensified. [...] Suddenly, everyone is challenged to redefine the work ethics. It is developed a vast and complicated socio-cultural, psychosocial and ideological process destined to confer dignity to the work and to the worker".

The capital applied in the countryside and social functions of rural schools

Scientific findings have given rise to the conviction that

Everyone should enjoy the achievements of human knowledge and capacity. All men are entitled to the comfort that science, in its practical applications, provides. All people should be able to afford the luxury of wearing silk socks and cashmere clothes, going to the movies, using the telephone, using the airplane (Mennucci, 2006, p. 11).

Sud Mennucci proposed the “[...] reorganization of work [...]”, but “[...] the school had forgotten the contact with reality [...]” because “[...] the work had almost completely lost its intrinsic educational value” (Mennucci, 2006, p. 23). He pointed out the cause of the poverty of small farming: “The entire economic edifice of our past, by the combination of two factors, the vast territorial extension and the small population density, was based on the latifundium. And the latifundium rested for centuries on the back of the black people” (Mennucci, 2006, p. 42).

He was sure that the transfer of the capital of the country to the Goiano Plateau - under discussion in 1930 - would not do any good; it would be just another city where “[...] industries grow and proliferate [...]” and where the “[...] movement of our historical republicans organize the city school” (Mennucci, 2006, p. 60). And stresses:

The entire economic structure of Brazil is fundamentally agricultural. Its wealth is expressed commercially by means of products that are obtained in the fields: coffee, sugarcane, corn, beans, rice, cotton, mate, cocoa, rubber, cultivated tobacco, fruit, in a total that is not far from 90% of the global production (Mennucci, 2006, p. 87).

It is then up to the policy to make rural workers “[...] small landowners and farmers, an undertaking which would not belong only to the Union, the States and Municipalities, but also to individuals, associations and corporations” (Mennucci, 2006, p. 113). The plan would be “[...] to stimulate land tenure, offering widening and opportunities for the disintegration of latifundia” (Mennucci, 2006, p. 125).

The social contradictions of the countryside have resulted in low-quality political attendance, including school public services. Cardoso (2013, p. 179) wrote the following about the beginning of the twentieth century:

In the central regions of medium and large cities, school groups stood out. In the cities of the countryside and in the populous neighborhoods, the reunited schools became an intermediary step between isolated schools and school groups. But the school of the interior, the periphery, and the countryside, which concentrated the majority of the population, remained to be the isolated school, whose number more or less in 1910 was higher than that of school groups.

The school census, done by Sampaio Dória in 1920, showed that only 31.6% of children aged 7 to 12 attended school in the State of São Paulo. According to Dória, illiteracy should be attacked and, in 1920, “[...] carried out the reform regulated by Law 1,750 of December 8 of the same year and by Decree 3,356 of May 31, 1921” (Cardoso, 2013, p. 189). This reform was the effort to give primary education to everyone: “The isolated schools - until then classified in urban, district and rural with the duration of the course of 4, 3 and 2 years, respectively - started to have a course with the unique duration of two years” (Cardoso, 2013, p. 190).

The educator of São Paulo was certain that “[...] the exodus from the countryside was ultimately related to the difficulty of obtaining land tenure” (Mennucci, 2006, p. 73). He mentioned the consequence: “The Brazilian man, without having an industrial organization that can decently represent an authentic decoy of his activities, began to flee from the countryside” (Mennucci, 2006, p. 72). The government should be inclined to promote small farms: “If public administrations were inclined and applauded and insinuated, within a much shorter period than imagined, the number of smallholders would be raised to ants’ nest. The examples are not lacking” (Mennucci, 2006, p. 72). After acquired the quality of production, the farmer would have greater education assistance and a confidence in his future. The educator, however, adhered to a customary conscience: “A jail is closed for every school that opens” (Mennucci, 2006, p. 45).

In *A crise brasileira de educação* (Mennucci, 2006), the author proposed the elimination of latifundia and the defense of small property, which would provoke the permanence of rural man in the countryside and make a quality rural education.

His interventions in education and rural education were adjusted to the reading he documented of concrete facts, whose focus can be summarized in the educational and agronomic unpreparedness of rural man; in the fact that three quarters of the population lives in the rural region and every government administration is geared towards the city and understands nothing of the new problems of the countryside; and the need to process the reorganization of rural work, scientifically organize the work and create the quality worker. He made the reading of these aspects that characterized the social needs and that generated his teaching proposal. He pointed out very well the exploratory reality of the rural worker, his difficulties, the contempt he suffers from the city and its unpreparedness. Based on the social needs, he developed the concept of rural man and tried to prepare him, giving the school the social function of forming and providing with the school education that would enable him to overcome the problems of small farming.

In speaking of the competition of capitalist production and the necessity of the organization of labor, the author is consistent with the process of the Brazilian bourgeois revolution, summarized by Ianni (1986, p. 9): “The bourgeoisie has become the national social class. It was imposed as a ruling class” (Ianni, 1986, p. 9). Initially, it had “[...] an agrarian basis, but it was combined with predominant interests in the commerce and banking sector” (Ianni, 1986, p. 9). Then, “[...] it initiates industrial enterprises or associates with capital invested in industry. It links its business with those of the foreign bourgeoisie, whose capital is more massive and whose technology is more advanced” (Ianni, 1986, p. 9).

Sud Mennucci understood that the rural reality was under the dominion of capital and that the farmers’ capital contribution was decisive for the expansion of coffee. The railroads carried the technical progress: pulp forming machines, artificial dryers, mechanical steam sorters and drying terrariums; mainly the product for ships. Financial capital commanded farmers’ plantations. The banks - *Brasilianische Bank für Deutschland*, *Norddeutsche Bank um Hamburg*, *Schroder*, *National City Bank de Nova York*, *Casa Todor Wille et Cie* and *Casa Rotschild* - made loans. Lands were annexed by them in times of crisis. “*Casa Wille* had vast lands in High Araraquara, at the end of World War II” (Ianni, 1986, p. 99). Ianni explained the banks’ interference with industries and other productive activities and analyzed the issue, stating that “[...] even in the city, democratic freedoms tend to be achieved for the bourgeoisie and middle-class sectors; they do not extend to the workers. In the countryside, they rarely get there” (Ianni, 1986, p. 14).

Sud Mennucci indicated the problems of the countryside and wanted to solve them based on schools and education. He collected from the countryside, in an adjusted way, the social needs of the workers of the small farms, without, however, being able to connect this singularity to the general movement of production. In recording labor, financial capital, railways and new technologies, - the great merit of the educator - Sud Mennucci worked hard to enforce the new functions of rural education, with few results, because governments were guided by modernization of the great farming, supported by banks, technology and industrialization.

He tuned his mind to what was happening in the countryside, such as the rural exodus, the ‘educational and agronomic unpreparedness’, the abandonment of the small farmer, and especially the impossibility of ‘access to land tenure. He presented his educational work, criticizing the causes rooted in the field, little faced by the rulers, such as health, education and poverty in the countryside. He worked on real data pertaining to the countryside and to the city, but did not understand them in their entirety and did not approach them produced by the movement of capital, remaining on the surface, in the normal consciousness: “Capital configurations gradually approximate in the way they appear on the surface of society, [...] in the normal consciousness of the agents of production” (Marx, 1980b, p. 30).

The lack of training, school education, agricultural techniques and access to land tenure - correct reading, but on the surface, only the appearance - were elaborated by Sud Mennucci as a mark that affected the peasant, a being considered inferior to the urban, a mark that Ianni considers a

[...] stigma [that] does not only affect those who belong to ‘other’ ethnic groups, since it also affects the woman, the worker, the peasant, the followers of other religions, the communist. It is a psychosocial and cultural elaboration with which the ‘mark is transfigured into ‘stigma’, expressed in some sign, emblem, stereotype, with which it marks, demarcates, describes, qualifies, disqualifies, delimits or subordinates ‘other’, individual or collective (Ianni, 2004, p.220, emphasis added).

In the investigation, guided by the documents and by the theoretical category of work, it was noticed that the stigmatization of the rural worker came from the concrete production and land rearrangements that affected him and liberated him to sell his only force, the labor force. Changes in the productive structure (coffee, cotton, livestock) determined changes in the land structure with the concentration of rural properties, according to the interests of capital. This was the cause of the abandonment of rural man, not neglect of rural education, subordinated to politics and economics, whose historical purpose was to subject the rural labor force to capital.

Sud Mennucci, in his works, made a survey of rural reality and, capturing the unworthy conditions of the small farmer, proposed rural education as salvation, ensuring that ‘within ten years’ everything would be solved. This was his commitment of a lifetime. He did not question, however, and could not do so without a consistent theory of the social, as labor was being subjugated to capital. His ideas correctly came from reality, from the misery of the rural worker, but both - the ideas and the reality from which they came -

diverged a lot, effectively being the reverse of the essentials to investigate, which is summarized in analyzing the transformation of the rural and urban worker into workforce.

History has proven that at that time small farming continued to struggle, and the small farm worker eventually ceded his labor force to large capital-financed enterprises.

Final considerations

The educational relationship of Sud Mennucci had its reason for being, but it was also coherent to consider it as a consequence and reflection of the organization of the work of the society it served. In three times that he was in charge of the General Directorate of Education, he decreed policies for rural education and attributed to it the function of generating economic, political and social development for the rural men who should remain in the countryside. Its target audience was the children of the small rural landowner with their small farms who, with training and education, would have dignity, valorization and efficiency in small farming. He captured the social needs of his time and attempted to solve agrarian problems through education.

Rural education, analyzed under the laws that governed capitalist society, was not able to keep man in the countryside, despite the commitment of its pedagogical function, because it proved to be a vulnerable mechanism in the face of the movement of capital. The educational relationship, created for rural education, did not fulfill its planned social function, but added points in the commitment of the relative universalization of education, based on the innovative activities of the teachers, coming from the rural region, trained as nurses, sanitarians, diet planners, agricultural technicians, attributes of the new educational relationship.

The position of the article made it clear that Sud Mennucci would not be able to hold the man in the countryside, qualifying him for work, through school teaching. Nor could he see it without a consistent social theory that would clearly indicate how the rural worker was being transformed into a labor force. Sud Mennucci's ideas, including those of rural education, came right from reality, from the poverty of the rural worker, but both - the ideas and the reality from which they came - remained on the surface.

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NOTA

Autores do artigo *O ensino rural e o desenvolvimento regional: propostas e atividades educacionais de Sud Mennucci – 1920 a 1948*, Maria Angélica Cardoso e Sandino Hoff declaram-se responsáveis pela concepção, análise e interpretação dos dados, bem como pela redação e revisão crítica do conteúdo do manuscrito e ainda, pela aprovação da versão final a ser publicada, tornando público a responsabilidade pelo conteúdo aqui exposto.