

**THE INTEGRAL FORMATION OF THE HUMAN: A PERSPECTIVE ACCORDING
TO KERSCHENSTEINER**

***A FORMAÇÃO INTEGRAL DO SER HUMANO: UMA PERSPECTIVA SEGUNDO
KERSCHENSTEINER***

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KERSCHENSTEINER***



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ABSTRACT: Georg Kerschensteiner advocated creating labor schools and educational reform to establish an active and practical education system. To analyze these general concepts, this article follows a chronological path of Kerschensteiner's formation and explores the influences he received from Johann Pestalozzi, John Dewey, and Eduard Spranger, which are essential to understanding Kerschensteiner's thought. Thus, albeit briefly, it demonstrates the inferential reception of his writings in Brazil by Fernando de Azevedo and, in a case study, by the educational reform that took place in Pelotas – RS, in 1924. Through such analysis, it is possible to understand the reasons behind Kerschensteiner's advocacy for practical education and its necessity for forming well-rounded individuals capable of producing and living in society.

KEYWORDS: Kerschensteiner. Work school. Formation. Praxis. Active education.

RESUMO: *Georg Kerschensteiner defendeu a criação de Escolas do Trabalho e da reforma educacional para o estabelecimento de uma educação ativa e prática. Visando analisar estes conceitos gerais, este artigo recorre a um caminho cronológico da formação de Kerschensteiner e explora as influências que recebeu de Johann Pestalozzi, John Dewey e Eduard Spranger, essenciais para compreender o pensamento kerschensteineriano. Deste modo, ainda que sucintamente, mostra a recepção inferencial de seus escritos no Brasil por Fernando de Azevedo e, em forma de estudo de caso, pela reforma educacional ocorrida em Pelotas – RS, em 1924. Diante de tal análise, é possível compreender os motivos da defesa kerschensteineriana da educação prática e sua necessidade para a formação de indivíduos integrais, capazes de produzir e conviver em sociedade.*

PALAVRAS-CHAVE: *Kerschensteiner. Escola do trabalho. Formação. Práxis. Educação ativa.*

RESUMEN: *Georg Kerschensteiner defendió la creación de Escuelas del Trabajo y la reforma educativa para establecer una educación activa y práctica. Con el objetivo de analizar estos conceptos generales, este artículo sigue un camino cronológico de la formación de Kerschensteiner y explora las influencias que recibió de Johann Pestalozzi, John Dewey y Eduard Spranger, esenciales para comprender el pensamiento de Kerschensteiner. De esta manera, aunque de manera sucinta, muestra la recepción inferencial de sus escritos en Brasil por parte de Fernando de Azevedo y, a modo de estudio de caso, por la reforma educativa que tuvo lugar en Pelotas – RS, en 1924. Ante tal análisis, es posible comprender las razones de la defensa que hace Kerschensteiner de la educación práctica y su necesidad de la formación de individuos integrales, capaces de producir y vivir en sociedad.*

PALABRAS CLAVE: *Kerschensteiner. Escuela del trabajo. Formación. Práctica. Educación activa.*

Introduction

Although old, The debate between practical education and formalistic and theoretical education is not outdated and remains relevant today. Therefore, we present some of the concepts and ideas of Georg Kerschensteiner, aiming to demonstrate that, according to Kerschensteiner himself, for social living, it is necessary to receive, in school, an education focused on praxis, that is, practical education. This is because we are individuals who are both producers and consumers.

To justify the Kerschensteinerian theory, we follow a chronological path of his academic and intellectual development, briefly addressing the influences he received from Pestalozzi, Dewey, and Spranger. In broad terms, we also attempt to show how this thought, through inference, can be linked to the works of Fernando de Azevedo and, in a case study, to the educational reform that took place in Pelotas – RS in 1924.

It is worth noting that our goal is not to consider formalistic education as something exclusive—somewhat like Kerschensteiner does—but, above all, to emphasize the relevance that this author gave to the practical development of each human being, considering each individual as oriented towards work and production within society, that is, holistic formation as the capacity for future production.

Georg Kerschensteiner was a philosopher of education, educator, pioneer, and direct advocate of popular education. According to his theory, a school is necessary where children and young people can exercise intellectuality from a practical perspective and only from it. For Kerschensteiner, manual work in school demonstrates the circumspect and tangential truth of professional work in daily life; the truth is concrete work and does not provide room for error. Thus, for him, work is not after intellectual formation but should exclusively be the certainty that such formation brings. "In order to promote a spirit of responsibility through self-sufficient activity" (RÖHRS, 2010, p. 23, our translation).

According to Röhrs (2010, p. 28, our translation), Kerschensteiner is somewhat skeptical about general knowledge as an end in itself because "the ideal individual can only derive from the useful individual." This means that general knowledge must be a mechanism for shaping personality and the individual in the community, but only reaches this parameter within the context of professional activity. If so, for Kerschensteiner, there would be a guarantee of maturity for the subjects of education, namely, students—children and young people.

However, to avoid fundamental philosophical discrepancies in other education theories in which teaching should be the formation of the complete and civil man with all [metaphysical and physical] knowledge, Kerschensteiner proposes an extension of the educational period in specific vocational training schools; although it does not commit to a fixed study period.

Kerschensteiner develops this educational path to ensure professional maturity for the development of a working society and community that "constantly promotes the values of active fellowship and affection for others, as well as the subordination of interests to the common good" (RÖHRS, 2010, p. 28, our translation). In his theory, all of this would be more important than knowledge for knowledge's sake, namely, theoretical knowledge in itself. In dissecting his propositions, we also have that such education is a mechanism to teach the duties of the citizen rather than his rights, as it is based on daily practice and exercise. Therefore, the school would function as a microcosm of the State, an organism that lives independently but belongs to a whole.

Kerschensteiner's Background

Georg Kerschensteiner (1854-1932) is a product of the post-German idealism generation, marked by the unification of the German Empire, which became a constitutional monarchy with strong industrialization. Nationalist ideals and the Franco-Prussian War characterized this period. Simultaneously, it experienced a high cultural level, being contemporary with figures such as Marx, Weber, and Hegel. He also witnessed the end of the German Empire after World War I, leading to the establishment of the Weimar Republic, which combined social democracy and liberalism. However, shortly after that, the New York Stock Exchange collapsed, causing the downfall of economic liberalism and the rise of socialism and Nazism.

Kerschensteiner received formal education from a young age and, throughout his life, engaged in all levels of teaching activities. Initially, he was a master's student in elementary school, and after studying mathematics and physics, he became a teacher at the *Gymnasium* (selective secondary school). After serving as a teacher, he became the director of public schools in Munich between 1895 and 1919. During this time, he authored some works that earned him recognition, if not worldwide fame, at least acknowledgment among the great educators of the turn of the 19th to the 20th century.

In this period, he was also appointed a member of the Political Parliament of Munich, allowing him direct involvement in political debates. In 1919, due to the acknowledgment of the development of improvement schools (*Fortbildungsschule*) following the idea of the work school (*Arbeitsschule*), he became a professor of Pedagogy at the University of Munich (RÖHRS, 2010).

Kerschensteiner pioneered German popular education, especially regarding its principles of vocational training, manual labor teaching, and the role of education in civic awareness, which reflected the historical process of the time. He was directly influenced by the educational philosophy of Johann Heinrich Pestalozzi and, from the neo-Kantians, by the sociological view of John Dewey and the cultural-historical perspective of Eduard Spranger. In addition, he opposed all his writings to the intellectualism and encyclopedism of Johann Friedrich Herbart, whom Kerschensteiner preferred to call "formalism" (RÖHRS, 2010).

Regarding the neo-Kantians, while he was the director of public schools in Munich, Kerschensteiner was invited as a speaker for a series of conferences in the United States for the Promotion of Industrial Education, where he quickly met John Dewey. In 1910, with the expressed idea of meeting Dewey, he went to the Academic Center of Columbia University in New York (RÖHRS, 2010, p. 17). From then on, the two began exchanging correspondence in a theory exchange, but Dewey's overly sociological view attracted Kerschensteiner to his critique that would emerge years later.

In addition to Dewey, he maintained a friendship with Eduard Spranger, marked by extensive correspondences of a humorous tone and tenderness towards the social field and the relationships between people. As Röhrs (2010, p. 15, our translation) tells us:

On one occasion, Georg Kerschensteiner's nephew, Nico Wallner, approached him with the perhaps premature proposal to organize a *Festschrift* (commemorative publication) in honor of Eduard Spranger's fiftieth anniversary. Correspondence between the latter and Kerschensteiner was recorded, a notable example of what we mentioned [about Kerschensteiner's humorous character]. Faced with a humorous description of Wallner's intentions, Kerschensteiner wrote: "I don't know what you'll think of all this, but I don't mind saying that I'm totally against this novelty. In the past, one had to turn 70 to receive such a tribute; later, the limit dropped to 60, and nowadays, it's enough to be 50. I think it's nonsense, and you know that this has nothing to do with my admiration and affection for you. We all hope you reach your 60s and 70s in full health for the greater glory of our beloved homeland. And what are we supposed to do then? Organize two more *Festschriften*, heaven help us!".

Without paying attention to the fact that most educators are not recognized for their sense of humor, Kerschensteiner still had a concrete acknowledgment of his versatility in crossing the fields of aesthetics, education, politics, and philosophy, being "an unusual example of how different experiences of everyday life can come together to form an organic unity" (RÖHRS, 2010, p. 17, our translation). His teaching was based on experiences, practices, and civic education.

Pestalozzi's Educational Philosophy

Two aspects of Johann Pestalozzi's pedagogy become fundamental for Kerschensteiner. Firstly, as José Maria Quintana Cabanas, in his preliminary study and translation of Pestalozzi's text "*Letters on Early Education*," comments, "Every philosophy carries with it a pedagogy, and conversely, every pedagogy presupposes a philosophy. I have sometimes said that Pestalozzi's pedagogy corresponds to Kant's philosophical system" (SOËTARD, 2010, p. 89, our translation).

Indeed, it is not a faithful reflection in all aspects of Kant's philosophy, but it especially resembles the moral aspect of it. The statement "I perfect myself when I make of what I must do what I want" is reminiscent of Kantian principles of duty, in which Kant (2013) states, "act as if the maxim of your action were to become through your will a universal law of nature." This means that the duty to do something would ensure that everyone should do it equally, also touching on the idea that education, when made our own will, ensures the improvement of man and society. Pestalozzi also assimilates the education of the human being as an individual whose only way to be human is through education. This point about duty and morality marks Kerschensteiner's ideals and accompanies him throughout his work.

The second Pestalozzian conception that influenced the Germans is also his most characteristic: his didactics and his instruction system. It can be summarized as the doctrine of "intuition" of objects based on number, form, and language. According to this doctrine, the child's learning process would be reduced to simpler, almost mechanized elements and, due to this, practically leading to satisfactory conclusions. This theory of "infallible praxis," that is, proven to have optimistic conclusions about the general theory of teaching, would be able to, with adjustments, form an integral human being, shaping "the heart, the head, and the hand" (SOËTARD, 2010, p. 90–91, our translation). In addition to coinciding in attributing to

education the role of shaping the character and personality of individuals, assuming the fundamental role of feelings and the presence of the mother before psychoanalysts.

These ideas guide Kerschensteiner, who understands them as civic education. Opting for education through duties, in which training for work and the professional field, or perhaps "the teaching of practical activities in the workplace, parallel to their theoretical consolidation in the school environment" (RÖHRS, 2010, p. 27, our translation), would take place previously relegated to formalism.

Thus, it would be an equivalent synthesis of the teaching of Sunday schools that acted, preferably, according to Herbart's formalism model and specialized training in concrete work. It is worth noting that this differed from the system of *écoles professionnelles d'apprentissage* that existed in France, as these aimed exclusively at professional school training.

His objective culminates in the second point of influence he received from Pestalozzi: the formation of the integral man. For Kerschensteiner, forming the complete man means preparing him for social life through concrete work to stimulate his behavior.

The appropriate social framework for the pedagogical application of these ideas is the working group, which is the most suitable for instilling and practicing the basic norms of collective life and the main civic virtues. It is this combination of genuine work ethics and civic responsibility, with the corresponding reciprocal influence between the individual and the community, seeking greater moral maturity, that justifies Kerschensteiner's persistence that the ultimate goal of the educational process is the establishment of a state based on culture and the rule of law (RÖHRS, 2010, p. 27, our translation).

At this point, the desire for completeness that yearns for social completeness is observed, considering that he is subliminally advocating for reciprocity and equivalence between moral acts within society, equating the individual and the collective. It also highlights the German influence of the time and its nationalist aspirations in the face of the recently unified German Empire in 1871. All of this guides us to what Spranger wrote to Kerschensteiner "[...] after your speech in Zurich, I believe you are the true heir of Pestalozzi" (RÖHRS, 2010, p. 20, our translation).

John Dewey's Sociological Perspective

Kerschensteiner quickly met John Dewey while attending a course in the United States, while being a member of Parliament and director of public schools in Munich. Shortly after that, he traveled again to the United States to exchange information with Dewey at the Academic Center of Columbia University in New York.

Both exchanged knowledge for a while, a fact that marked every aspect of Kerschensteiner's understanding of the foundations of the school, placing the school within society, that is, influencing how the German understood the role played by the institution, not the criterion of its method, but especially the social function of the school. According to the Deweyan conception, education turns toward the democratic development of society, and it has this explicit obligation.

In other words, "what nutrition and reproduction are to physiological life, education is to social life" (DEWEY, 1959, p. 11, our translation) and thus, the school becomes the foundation for the transmission of knowledge necessary for the perpetuity of society as such.

Without this constant *transmission* of values between the adult and child generations, social groups would quickly return to the absolute conditions of primitivism. [...] Society presupposes a shared awareness of this end, intelligent participation in collective activity, and common understanding (TEIXEIRA; WESTBROOK, 2010, p. 40, our translation).

Therefore, what attracted Kerschensteiner was Dewey's understanding of the school as the perpetuation of Society. However, beyond that, Kerschensteiner also agreed with Dewey in the simultaneous teaching for all and the need for explicitly having an education with a democratic political bias for the continuity of this kind of Society.

Furthermore, "schools, in turn, are also intentionally organized means for the express purpose of influencing morally and mentally their members" (TEIXEIRA; WESTBROOK, 2010, p. 46, our translation). Thus, Dewey still outlines three practical characteristics of the school that influenced Kerschensteiner's work: the understanding of the environment as simplified, purified, and socially integrated. Both authors agree that faced with the complexity of numerous arts, sciences, and institutions, schools must simplify their environment by reducing current knowledge to what is essential for future social life.

The desire to perpetuate social life stems from wanting to perpetuate what is good within Society, primarily the democratic aspect in Dewey's view, eliminating recognizably harmful concepts to provide a happier moral life for future generations. Finally, the school

serves as an environment for social integration to harmonize the unequal factors of individuals in Society, instigating tolerance and camaraderie among influences that, in genesis, are antagonistic – such as social conditions, religion, cultural habits, political parties, and others.

Based on this foundation, Kerschensteiner analyzes the German industrial Society for social perpetuation, in which meditation and contemplation are leisure moments, and the most fundamental and essential is practical work. "Kerschensteiner insists that the ideal individual can only derive from the useful individual" (RÖHRS, 2010, p. 27, our translation). It culminates, therefore, that only through practical knowledge for social influence does theoretical and ideal knowledge reach its true meaning, returning to Pestalozzi's conception, in which it is the instrument for personality formation and, consequently, the individual in the social community. Thus, Kerschensteiner's understanding of Pestalozzi and Dewey complements his theory, the total development of which cannot be isolated from the German Society of his time and Spranger's cultural influence.

Eduard Spranger's Cultural-Historical Perspective

Spranger's theoretical foundation is that the cultural world, as a carrier of meaning, provides young people with categories of understanding and orientation. This means that the young person appears as an individual being in his culture or, otherwise, appears restricted within the culture in which he is inserted. He can develop knowledge about what surrounds him culturally (RÖHRS, 2010).

Thus, Spranger claimed that the principle of education was like concentric circles starting from the family, profession, religion, and nation, assuming all these concepts as essential to the notion of education. In summary, one can exemplify Dewey's theoretical model, which states that education should teach according to political and democratic molds. For Spranger, this would result from the fact that, at Dewey's time, the movement to build a democracy was very relevant to national development. The same happens with Kerschensteiner, who saw in the recent projects of German industrialization the need for a school that prepared for this reality (RÖHRS, 2010).

From this point of view, Kerschensteiner's pedagogical perspective is not merely a reflection of the needs of the German state; however, the reverse is true. For Kerschensteiner, the only way to educate human beings comprehensively was through concrete work that ensured the true reality of things. The opposite is also true: through theoretical education, one only learns to argue, and this can be refuted or at least counter-argued (RÖHRS, 2010).

In summary, Kerschensteiner met Spranger at the University of Munich, and they corresponded for a long period, during which Spranger recognized the satirical value of Kerschensteiner's humor. Throughout this correspondence, Spranger's most influential point on the other was the question of culture and the individual's history, as it is through this that one acquires knowledge of the world (RÖHRS, 2010). Education starts from the particular.

Education starts from the simple. Therefore, according to Dewey's ideas, the school must simplify the contents to offer an education that everyone can culturally understand and assimilate, as Spranger emphasizes, culminating in Pestalozzi's aspirations to develop as human beings or, in other words, to develop their personalities and characters to integrate into society.

Kerschensteiner's School of Work

After briefly laying the groundwork for the three major influences Kerschensteiner experienced, we can synthesize his theory. Only after Kerschensteiner himself studied and delved into the works of Pestalozzi, Spranger, and Dewey was he able to systematize his thinking and his theory of the philosophy of education in his book "*Teoria da Formação*" (*Theorie der Bildung*), dated 1926. First and foremost, Kerschensteiner believed that the philosophical system of Johann Herbart's pedagogy, which he satirically referred to as formalism, should be combated.

Herbart remained faithful to the rigor of his master Fichte, belonging to German idealism, and consequently developed an education philosophy based on argumentative deductions that, according to Kerschensteiner, did not correspond to the school reality. Herbart theorized a school of psychology based on experience, metaphysics, and mathematics, but his attempt to establish a practical philosophy was unsuccessful (KERSCHENSTEINER, 1927). After all, his educational or pedagogical instruction was based on the moment when

the man for whom instruction will have endowed with 'multiple interests' will be able to easily do everything that he 'wants' to do 'after mature reflection.' His moral ideal will appear to him more clearly, and to achieve it, he can give in to his desire to learn more and the strength of his character (HILGENHEGER, 2010, p. 14, our translation).

Kerschensteiner asserted in his criticism that,

If we want to free ourselves from the *misery* of scientific natural education and the self-deception in which we live, we must not deviate a fraction from this fundamental principle. Only a radical distancing from the encyclopedism that still dominates our education, from the epidemic of the overall view that all schools suffer from, will allow the transformation of scientific natural education into a valuable educational factor (KERSCHENSTEINER, 1927, p. 172-173, our translation).

It is relevant to highlight that Kerschensteiner addressed issues similar to those of Dewey and was influenced by the way Dewey developed his theory. However, it is imperative to emphasize that Kerschensteiner's theory differs significantly from Dewey's. In this sense, when he distanced himself from and criticized Herbart's formalism along with Dewey for the development of active education, he chose to emphasize different aspects than the American, such as civic education and professional education. His goal was to reform German schools practically, meaning to be a productive element of society, and some methodological and didactic reforms had to be linked to the performance of schoolwork. In this sense, he was even considered a progressive educator.

Before continuing to explain Kerschensteiner's theory explicitly, it is interesting to analyze the educator's question. For Kerschensteiner, the educator shapes the student from a sculptor to a sculptor, and therefore, the educator should possess a vocation, assuming the profession as a call of faith (RÖHRS, 2010).

This vocation would be the ability to make a personality diagnosis. He referred to it as the soul of the educator, being the aspiration of redemption, not for all of humanity, but "yes, [for] this or that man, isolated and concrete," and the author continues, "this position does not tend towards the general and is already given in its indubitable values but towards the special and the relationship of the special to the general" (KERSCHENSTEINER, 1934, p. 59–61, our translation). Moreover, it is up to the educator to redeem each individual subjectively, and this can only be done when one can diagnose personality, culminating in future social relations, that is, in the civic aspect whose social role the school plays. All of this is verified, in Kerschensteiner's words, when he states:

It is a most special object that must be shaped, a human soul that is being formed—meaning—that is changing, being the subject of constant evolution; the observation and understanding of a total psychic phenomenon that continuously presents new facets in its concrete particularity, and the incessantly modified relationship of this special manifestation with the

typical ideal of forming a specific student. Here lies the subtlest personality of the educator, a peculiarity that can never exist in perfect and total form in a man; I want to call it the capacity for *personality diagnosis*.

[...]

Interest in the future human, the mentioned tendency to maintain contact with youth, excellent sensitivity, pedagogical tact—all these gathered peculiarities do not pretend to guarantee to fulfill the last condition, although, through them, it is extraordinarily facilitated (KERSCHENSTEINER, 1927, p. 59-61, our translation).

The educator needs an innate gift of observation, intuition, and acuteness for the complete formation of individuals. Regarding this formation, we return to the civic and professional aspects. Theoretical knowledge is only valid as a formative value linked to practical and manual teaching. Kerschensteiner advocated for popular education methods and sought to educate the masses suffering from the phenomenon of industrialization. For Kerschensteiner, the school should be the workshop of the mind, advocating that the school of books should be the school of activity, with workshops, kitchens, gardens, stables, and fishing parks, among others (KERSCHENSTEINER, 1912, p. 106 apud RÖHRS, 2010, p. 21). His goal was an organic combination of theory and practice, that is, a return to the defense of the formation of the complete human.

In summary, this innovative perspective represented a reformulation of the school's foundations, aiming to adopt a criterion that made it simultaneously professional, focused on work, propaedeutic, and civic. Thus, the school as the mind workshop would be the professional sphere that the educator's role would combine with the civic status. However, for this success, the formation required effort and pedagogical involvement from the young. An effort for teaching, to learn to relate, and from this

The essence of sympathy and the emotional foundation of every pedagogical act is involvement. Involvement means living in another. Therefore, it is not possible to achieve the realization of values in others without having achieved them beforehand in ourselves, and, in return, when we want to carry out the realization in ourselves, it will not be necessary to call others to pedagogical activity (KERSCHENSTEINER, 1927, p. 16-18, our translation).

Teaching demands a practical approach to exploring the concrete realities of the world to contribute to the formation of the character and personality of an individual integrated into society. For this formation, effort is required to learn, work in gardens and fishing grounds, and acquire theoretical knowledge simultaneously. For full development, it was necessary, along with effort, to have involvement, such as social otherness or pedagogical tact, that

teachers should already possess beforehand (KERSCHENSTEINER, 1927). That is a derivation—from effort to involvement—of a catalog of civic duties—effort for professional scope for future social adequacy—social virtues—self-involvement and empathic otherness, an idiosyncratic factor in Kerschensteiner.

Reception of Kerschensteiner in Brazil

Kerschensteiner was sparsely studied in the basic curricula of Brazilian education and even less in teaching degree programs. Despite his limited influence in the Brazilian context, Cecília Meireles penned a lengthy lament upon the death of the German educator, bestowing upon him a prestige that was not fully recognized in Brazil until today. She writes:

Yesterday, here, Professor Georg Kerschensteiner passed away [...]. In these few lines goes an immense loss for the modern world, which day by day is making clearer its concept and desire for a better life through the indispensable work of new education. Among researchers of pedagogical possibilities, Kerschensteiner always stood out for a particular sensitivity of heart, an evangelical sense of the educational work, and an idealistic aspiration to make every teacher a personality entirely integrated into their destiny, certain of their responsibility [...]. [...] In Kerschensteiner's work, there is a strong sweetness of inspiration that was like a dream afterthought and poetry afterward. His books carried a sap of wisdom, fervent and alive, which, like sap, kept lifting the reader higher and higher to a more ardent restlessness of human purpose and a clearer vision of the need and relevance of action. [...]. Others [educators], upon dying, left a void of disappointed admiration, the anguish of lost collaboration, the bitterness of interrupted work. Kerschensteiner leaves all that and leaves more. *His work was primarily a work of love* [...] (MEIRELES, 1932, our translation).

This epic portrayal of Kerschensteiner as a laudatory testimony refers to what we have tried to address so far—his figure that surpasses the bookish and encyclopedic knowledge of Herbart, his Pestalozzian aspirations based on the contexts of post-Kantians Spranger and Dewey. However, Brazilian scholars did not share this view of Meireles and remained confined to a few events. Among these, the educational reform in Pelotas in Rio Grande do Sul and the Brazilian educator Fernando de Azevedo are worth mentioning among these.

According to Cardoso and Peres (2012, p. 55–59), in 1926, the Brazilian Association of Education, founded in 1924, gathered in Pelotas and received a proposal for the creation of the Pelotense Association of Education, which would serve as a local ABE. Its project was to introduce the ideals of the New School movement in Brazil through educational reforms.

In the same year, the Pelotense Association was established and structured at levels of councils and committees; however, what was relevant was the establishment of a set of

procedures that initiated the school reform, ensuring the collection of municipal statistical data, maintenance of the School Museum and Library, development of teaching materials, cooperation with physical education initiatives (good nutrition, personal hygiene, promoting mandatory health exams for school entry, exercises, and gymnastics), moral education (censorship of films for certain ages, recommendation of books and genres for children, prohibition of children in gaming houses and prostitution), and civic education (adopting scouting—marking practical activities such as camping, fishing, horticulture—and promoting incentives for national celebrations), rescuing abandoned children for their education, and encouraging popular education by companies, industry, and commerce in general, as well as medical-hospital and dental assistance and inspection.

This movement that brought the ideals of the New School, specifically the moral and civic initiative, such as the interest in active development encouraged by the economic aspect of society and health assistance in schools, is a mark of the Kerschensteinerian heritage. It could even be argued that these objectives appeared in Brazil for the first time in Pelotas, and their projects based on the New School movement derived from the entire philosophical discussion of meta pedagogy, but their actions were almost exclusively in line with the projects and writings of Kerschensteiner.

Kerschensteiner's perspective somewhat intersects with the theory of Fernando de Azevedo when, in 1933, he founded the School of Sociology and Politics. This school, which is still active in the center of São Paulo, aimed to form a second-tier elite, a labor elite. This movement may have originated in Kerschensteiner's theory. After all, according to Penna (2010, p. 46–47, our translation), Azevedo's conception of this school he founded seems, if not identical, at least extremely plausible with the School of Labor:

Its aim was to enable, through an egalitarian and unique school based on common work, the entry of contingents of workers and technicians, endowed with serious professional preparation, into the Brazilian industrial world. The impact of the growing process of industrialization in the world, in capitalist or socialist countries, and within Brazil, although still in its initial phase, was considerable and evidently influenced his thinking specifically about the educational process.

In Azevedo's conception, education is not just a provider of knowledge. Its purpose is eminently social in the sense of preparing for life, in which work plays an important role, but also because it contributes to forming the social sense of work: awareness of its importance.

Thus, Kerschensteiner proposed as a reform for German education an egalitarian and popular school, the organic conjunction of practice and theory, although its effectiveness

occurred in the field of school work—the school as a Pestalozzian development of personality and character for the social formation of the individual, and finally, the professionalizing aspect of education, in the way in which industries and companies should be concerned with the education of their contingents of workers for the proper exercise of their social function. Furthermore, both the theories of Kerschensteiner and Fernando de Azevedo are based on "adapting the school system to the new social conception based on the increasing development of sciences, industries, and the correlated expansion of the working classes" (PENNA, 2010, p. 47, our translation).

Final considerations

Kerschensteiner takes a stance originating from the context of Germany in the early 20th century, supplemented by the intellectual framework received from Pestalozzi, Dewey, and Spranger. Returning to the core, for him, the educator emerges in society much like a sculptor appears for art; their goal is to shape the character of citizens when they are still called students – children and adolescents. According to Kerschensteiner (RÖHRS, 2010), this occurs because the school is the conducive environment to elucidate the duties of the citizen as a universal moral, as learned from Pestalozzi. It is also in line with the idea that the didactic method should be grounded in teaching basic subjects before addressing more complex content. In other words, Kerschensteiner's civic education is an interpretation of Pestalozzi's aspirations, aiming for societal formation, not individual formation, characteristic of formalistic education.

It is worth remembering that when we talk about the future of society, we need to consider the politics of that particular society. For Kerschensteiner, by Dewey's teachings, it is the school's role, in forming the character of individuals, to instill political knowledge in students, primarily in a democratic manner. It emphasizes that the continuity or evolution of a society idiosyncratically depends on the continuity and evolution of education, reflecting decisions on what will be taught and how it will be done.

All in all, thinking first about the school as such, then the school in society, it is necessary to think about who these individuals learning are. Kerschensteiner assimilated the same conceptions as his German compatriot, claiming that every individual is primarily a product of the culture to which they belong, being, according to his time, a historical being, a product of their context (RÖHRS, 2010).

Still, in the 20th century, we saw the emergence of educational reforms in Brazil guided by the ideals of the New School. However, neither Fernando de Azevedo nor the Pelotense Association mention Kerschensteiner. Thus, only points of convergence in their thoughts allow us, even inferentially, to connect them to the same period and stream of thought.

Indeed, this similarity, combined with the emphasis on the need for schools of labor, or rather, the need for practical education, argues that for an individual to live in society, as it developed in the mid-20th century, it is necessary to educate them to produce, to act, to work. In his conception, an integral human being would blend human knowledge, capable of philosophizing, producing, and working, creating art, all while knowing their obligatory duties within society and, without ever disrespecting them, molding their character (RÖHRS, 2010).

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