

## **The School of Physical Education and the field of teacher training in the state of Rio Grande do Sul: the origins of specialized training (1869-1929)**

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**Abstract:** The ESEF's foundation is inserted in a social process, in which Rio Grande do Sul's society was mobilized to reach the purposes that, even before corresponding to their social particularities, remitted to the consolidation of a new Brazil – a country that was emerging as a republican political organization. Thus, in our thinking, any attempt to distinguish the ESEF as the first teaching institution to graduate teachers in higher education in the state necessarily encompasses the knowledge of the efforts for the systematization of this training practice, which anteceded its arrival to the field. Therefore, the central aim of the study was to comprehend how the training of Physical Education teachers occurred in the period prior to institutionalization of the ESEF. To this end, recognition and validity of new versions about our study object, and the utilization of sources that announce diverse provenances and natures are elements that compose a particular form of history appropriation, which we seek to approach here: Cultural History. In this spectrum, our investigations on the subject led us to punctuate two significant moments that have crossed the field in these initial moments: the absence of specialized training and, as from the year of 1929, the organization of the so-called “Intensive Physical Education Courses”.

**Keywords:** History, Physical Education, Teacher Training.

### **1 INTRODUCTION**

The investment that is made to go through a historical and cultural perspective of an analysis reflects much more than a merely academic choice, but, in a broader sense, positions that are assumed by the researcher with regards to their daily life. In other – perhaps unscientific – words, what we intend to remark here is the fact that *life* and *the art of studying life through History* are configured in a particular vision of the world, in which personal esteem cannot remain immune to radiations of a particular theoretical referential. The generating direction of this process of influence is, however, difficult to identify, since, after all, a coin always has two sides. But that certainly is not what

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matters most to us. When we delve into the research in the History of Sport and Physical Education, what we incessantly seek is the commitment of the researching self to the object of the analysis in question, in both contours given by the modes and ways of bringing ourselves closer to it.

In this sense, the act of *giving oneself* that is required from the researcher is subject to the encounter of knowledge that is unexpected, not determined, and not limited by the force of time or the legitimating power that emanates from a particular source. The recognition and validity of new versions about a certain object, as well as the use of sources announcing diverse origins and natures are elements that constitute a particular form of appropriation of history, which we try to approach here: the New Cultural History. Thus, in addition to the knowledge of the consolidated historical truths, the *unexpected* becomes therefore an object of desire of the surveys included in this tradition.

In our understanding, any attempt to understand the ESEF as the first teaching institution to train teachers in higher education in the state necessarily encompasses the knowledge of efforts to systematize this training practice, prior to its arrival in the field. Certain as we are that its emergence in 1940 keeps relations of proximity and detachment with the ways of thinking about specialized training prior to it, we find in Calvino (2004) the expression that helps us to justify this idea of historical continuity which we advocate here:

[...] isolating a wave from the one that immediately follows it and that sometimes seems to overwhelm it or add to it and even drag it is very difficult, as well as separating it from the wave that precedes it and that seems to push it toward the shore, when it does not even give the impression of turning against it as if it wanted to enclose it [...] In short, we cannot observe a wave without taking into account the complex issues contributing to forming it and those that give rise to it (CALVINO, 2004, p. 7-8).

Thus, borrowing the words of Calvino, our object of analysis in this study highlights the understanding of the wave that precedes the arrival of the ESEF in the field of teacher training in the state of Rio Grande do Sul. Otherwise, our efforts are concentrated here on understanding that wave, which, being formed upon creation of the ESEF, appears to “push it toward the shore” and that, therefore, makes its analysis very significant and inseparable from an understanding of the School intended to be wider.

Regarding our contribution to this special issue of *Revista Movimento*, compiling projects that emphasize 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the School of Physical Education

(*Escola de Educação Física – ESEF*) of the Federal University of Rio Grande do Sul (UFRGS), our main concern was to compile historical evidence about the training of teachers to work in Physical Education in the period before the founding of the ESEF. We consider that the initial moments of consolidation of the field created conditions so that in 1940 the first degree course in physical education in the state of Rio Grande do Sul started working. In this sense, the objective of the study was to understand the ESEF as part of a social process in which Rio Grande do Sul's society was mobilized to reach purposes that, even before addressing its social particularities, referred to the consolidation of a new Brazil, which then emerged as a republican political organization.

For this purpose, we researched a wide range of historical sources: the approach of the Annual Reports and Messages sent to Brazilian public agencies, state newspapers, laws, acts, decrees, and specialized journals, among others. Such sources underwent document analysis, and their information is presented on the topics that follow.

Among so many other possibilities for organization, the knowledge gained around this issue obey the following structural arrangement in this text: **Physical Education in the Construction of Public Instruction in Rio Grande do Sul**; and **The Creation of Intensive Physical Education Courses in Porto Alegre**.

## **2 PHYSICAL EDUCATION IN THE CONSTRUCTION OF PUBLIC INSTRUCTION IN RIO GRANDE DO SUL**

Although the elusive feeling of pointing out the origins of historical facts persists, we pitched ourselves here to (transient) challenge of stating that the first attempts to systematize Physical Education teacher training in Rio Grande do Sul took place based on the creation of the first Normal School of Primary Education in the state capital. This school, then attached to the Liceu Don Alfonso, was established in 1869, with the objective of providing better professional training for primary school teachers of Rio Grande do Sul. There are signs, however, that Gymnastics was inserted in the school curriculum only in 1877, i.e. eight years later.

According to Piccoli (1994, p. 20), the first professor of Gymnastics in that School was Edmundo Muniz de Bittencourt. Far from operating in a linear form of historiography, in which we would erroneously be generalizing a particular situation,

we cannot consider it a coincidence that just as the picture of the Physical Education teachers in Brazil was drawn, Bittencourt was a military man, who answered by rank of captain of the 13<sup>th</sup> Infantry Battalion of the Army. It is interesting to emphasize that Bittencourt had a similar teaching function at the Military School in Rio de Janeiro, until the year of 1882, when, unlike other teachers, he received the title of “master of gymnastics”.

So, gradually detached from the imperial dictates and its world view, the Federative Republic of Brazil emerged in 1889, driven by a political ideology that clamored for social change of all kinds. Immersed in a deeply troubled context marked by insecurities and by the terror of war, the new regime announced dreams and ideals of a country that intended to be at everyone’s reach to fight for the social emancipation of Brazilian citizens. Thus, it was necessary to rearrange the existing social structures, adopting in their bases a unifying discourse for the public good: to the new Brazil, “conserve while improving” (CASTILHOS, 1895, p. 12).

In this context, where the Brazilian society was, in a comprehensive way, mobilized by the republican revolutionary atmosphere of conservative modernization, the historical elements allow us to note that the situation established from the late nineteenth to early twentieth century point to a movement of transformation: the abandonment of the old order and the subsequent formation of another. Thus, in this scenario of reconstruction, public education, or in other words, education taking place in schools, received significant space among the guiding concerns of the new regime<sup>1</sup>.

Included in the list of the key elements for the consolidation of the new project, the public school appeared, thus, as one of the social institutions that urged for key reformulations in its structure, means, and purposes. Thus, announcing a strongly positivist inspiration<sup>2</sup>, the republican documents advocated an idea of education as a process of adaptation of individuals in the social means. Following this ideal, such a process should be controlled, to some extent, by the state’s aggregating action:

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<sup>1</sup> Primary and secondary education was regulated by means of the education reform conducted by Benjamin Constant in late 1890. Each school should have, in addition to classrooms, a library and a museum, a gymnasium for physical exercise, and a wooden porch for the gymnastic exercises. According to Piccoli (1994), in tribute to the Brazilian educational reformer, Escola Benjamin Constant de Instrução Elementar e Profissional was founded. The school, inaugurated on May 3, 1907 was directed by the School of Engineering and was aimed at children of workers and poor children in Porto Alegre.

<sup>2</sup> For better comprehension of the positivist thinking about Education, read “Education and Sociology”, a work written by Emile Durkheim, published in 1932 (posthumous work).

Public education, still subject, except for some minor modifications, to provincial regulation, requires an almost radical reorganization, which puts it in conditions to be more effectively administered and disseminated. The studies show a regulation project that, may come into effect by early next year (CASTILHOS, 1895, p. 15).

The project to which the then President of Rio Grande do Sul, Julio Prates de Castilhos, referred to went into effect in form of a decree (Decree 89), on the date of February 2, 1897. Since its announcement, this project already included, two years prior, the promise of equaling Rio Grande do Sul's public instruction to the other branches of state service, with respect to the quality of organization. Apparently, on grounds of insufficient budget<sup>3</sup>, there was a strong contrast between the expansions and developments that took place in other departments of public administration, and those outlined by the field of education.

The Reform had thus a wide nature to be restructured. It was characterized, among other attributes, by ensuring stability, the ongoing, secure surveillance, the unity of direction – so absent in the schools of the court –, secularism, freedom, and free education, in addition to the division into elementary and complementary. In a particular way, the Reform claimed the responsibility “for the professional and moral competence of teachers and all those who perform management and inspection functions” (CASTILHOS, 1897, p. 16). One of the first actions to be performed was the construction of appropriate buildings for the education of children, guided in turn by the “hygienic and pedagogical” precepts (CASTILHOS, 1896, p. 13).

As regards the inclusion of the field of Physical Education in Rio Grande do Sul in the official teaching legislation, the Reform of 1897 stands out in its pioneering spirit. Its legal dictates announced that, from that moment, both teaching in district schools and teaching in complementary schools would be characterized by the insertion of the gymnastics in their curricula. However, as far as our historical sources state, the legal mandatoriness of the subject in the teacher training curricula was not strong enough an element to ensure a real presence in the school curricula, let alone the quality of education that was offered.

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<sup>3</sup> According to the historical sources researched (CASTILHOS, 1896, p. 14), much of the budget for public works projects, especially those related to education, comes from the Federal Lottery income. In 1896, for instance, sources indicated the amount of 107:520 \$ 000 to mobilize the construction of school buildings adapted to school districts. Starting with such buildings in the capital of the state, the project included adjustment of the facilities to the operation of the three levels of primary education.

So, when it comes to Physical Education teacher training in the state of Rio Grande do Sul, in the first three decades of the twentieth century, some needs could be evidenced. The initial framework for teachers that was outlined here reflected the more general framework of the country, where the lack of qualified teachers figured as one of the main problems faced by the field, which intended to legitimize itself. In this context, Mazo (2005, p. 148) affirms that the situation in question was worsening as the importance attributed to the benefits of Physical Education and sports grew with the need for “specialized technician assistance”. Thus, there were no Physical Education teachers in sufficient numbers to serve the schools and the new demands coming from the sports associations.

### **3 THE CREATION OF INTENSIVE PHYSICAL EDUCATION COURSES IN PORTO ALEGRE**

Let us prepare the active primary school [...] without forgetting, however, that the best method for teaching is the teacher who improves every day. Like teacher, like school (SPIDER, 1929, p. 7).

The year of 1929 started and brought the announcement of new directions in the field of Physical Education teacher training in the state of Rio Grande do Sul. Authorized to operate by the state government, under the watchful direction of the State Inspector of Physical Education. Professor Frederico Guilherme Gaelzer, the Intensive Physical Education Course was created in the state capital, marking the initial efforts to establish a specific training for teaching in this field.

Still one decade far from what would years later be known as the first higher training course in the state, the School of Physical Education, our reading about this initial systemization lead us to understand it from a double trial of its arrangements: still fragile and sensitive to edify the structural bases for a specific field; already strong and accredited enough to push forward such bases. In other words, although the Intensive Physical Education Course appears to have resulted in a relative range in face of educational demands that clamored for skilled labor, its creation, besides other aspects, can be considered the first steps toward differentiation and specification of a new professional identity: the regular teacher specializing in Physical Education.

If Normal School was a space occupied almost exclusively by women, the same was true in the Intensive Physical Education Courses. Too often the literature reviewed

dealt exclusively with female teachers, in their duties or privileges, and the images brought by the newspapers of the era recurrently depicted inspector Gaelzer flanked by a newly graduated group of women at that course. Thus, enrollment was allowed only for candidates graduated at normal and complementary schools or in similar establishments, in the age group between 19 and 30 years (OS MODERNOS METODOS DE ENSINO, 1929).

With a view to occupy a space that came to be important in the school environment, young teachers were then socialized to “modern ways” to develop and teach Physical Education. The adjective “modern” began to follow the term “Physical Education” recurrently in the literature and documentation of the time, expressing a clear intention to obtain a *new* identity both for practices and ways of practicing and for the means and ends of what the *new* Physical Education was intended to be. The state of Rio Grande do Sul stood at that moment in time with the national aspirations of building a modernized individuality based on the modern pedagogy that was drawn in school. Thus, among many other educational elements that competed for that purpose, the implementation of Physical Education in primary schools at the beginning of the twentieth century and, subsequently, its mandatoriness in regular teaching can be understood as one of the main directions of this great achievement<sup>4</sup>, which took place in the state.

It is interesting to point out that, in these early stages, Physical Education in Brazil was influenced by European – German, Swedish and French – gymnastic trends or “methods” based, in turn, on biological principles. These models, according to Piccoli (2005, p. 503), were inserted into a broader movement, of political, cultural, and scientific nature, called the European Gymnastics Movement. Among these schools, the German school played a major role in the Rio Grande do Sul scenario in the early twentieth century, among other reasons, due to the educational influence of German immigrant Georg Black and his teachings of German gymnastics in the gymnastics associations and state schools<sup>5</sup>.

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<sup>4</sup> At the national level, the Federal Constitution of 1937 determined, in its article 131, that physical education, civic education and crafts would be mandatory in all primary, secondary and normal schools. The requirement for Physical Education in the state of Rio Grande do Sul from primary to normal school was determined by Decree-Law 8063 of 10/10/1945, in Article 100: “Physical education, civic education and crafts shall be mandatory in all primary, secondary, and normal schools” (RIO GRANDE DO SUL, 1990, p. 139).

<sup>5</sup> On the topic, read MAZO, J. Z.; LYRA, V. B. **Georg Black**: nos rastros da trajetória do “pai da educação física e dos esportes no Rio Grande do Sul”.

It is precisely in this context of heterogeneous cultural influences acting on the physical culture being developed in Brazil, that, in 1921, Decree 14.784 was issued, which mandated the replacement of the German Method with the French Method and, concomitantly, the adoption of the latter, as the “official method” to be incorporated in the country, while its own “National Method” was not created<sup>6</sup>. This action counted on the earnest participation of intellectuals involved with the ideology of national revival through educational reform, upon defending that the “old” method, considered to be the result of the materialist reductionism that encompassed the then status of school physical practice, was part of the concept of an “old” Physical Education<sup>7</sup>.

The consensus that was established in the state concerning the need for development of a unified pedagogical work, was, therefore, driven by the ideal of building a “national spirit” characterized, by values such as identity, industriousness, religiosity, rationality, and sanity, among others, as pointed out by Vieira (2004). In this context of *civilizing* change in behavior, which crossed the country between 1920 and 1930, school Physical Education appeared in the national educational scene as a privileged educational space for the legitimacy of this new process. In this step, if the project of national reconstruction should go through the overhaul of school curricula, adapting them to new aspirations and educational purposes, the need to train specialized teachers, socialized to modern techniques and teaching methods has emerged as a fundamental and complementary element to the successes of the process.

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<sup>6</sup> Victor Andrade de Melo (1996, p. 42) states, in his study, that one of the expectations that surrounded the establishment of the National School of Physical Education and Sports, in the year of 1939, was the creation, consolidation and dissemination, to other schools of physical education in the country, of the “national method”. In his conclusions – mainly discussed based on the use of oral sources – there is the proximity of the then existing educational structure in this school, with that which supported the logic of the School of Physical Education in the Army. Thus, the “innovative” creation of a standard school, intended for training teachers in civil environments, is presented by the author in the continuity and lasting strength of militaristic ideals, concerned both with the teaching activity and, in a broader sense, with the maintenance of its interests in the field. Melo also points out that the School of Physical Education of the Army, an institution founded in the year 1933, based its actions on the educational parameters dictated by the French school, in Joinville-Le-Pont.

<sup>7</sup> Albethey supporters of the adoption of the Swedish Method as the official method in Brazil, Rui Barbosa (1882) and Fernando de Azevedo (1960) actively participated in the construction of a thought contrary to the ideals and goals brought to the Brazilian Physical Education by the then current German method. For a *New Education*, Azevedo advocated a *New Physical Education* which, like Barbosa, condemned to erroneous fatalism the extreme purposes of exercise of the body, sustained from damage to intellectual and moral attributes. Being a passive point in the thinking of both, the exaggeration of the exercise with the muscles had themselves as their *raison d'être*, had no contribution to any use to the transition moment in which the Brazilian society was or with the requirements of building new social individuals. After all, according to Azevedo, in the new project of society, based on exchanges, one should seek, in the relations of market competition, an education through effort, through fatigue as a means of education and not to remove virtue from morals or from valuing selfish feelings, which are harmful to “social enhancement” (LYRA, 2009).

It became thus imperative to think about the training of specialized teachers. Physical Education represented an extremely important element for achieving other national goals, so that a disqualified and jarring teaching of modern methods would be admitted as a conductor of the educational process: thus, a new field of Physical Education in Brazil was opened. To the same extent, Bombassaro and Vaz (2008) also indicate that that shared sense of creating an identity for the Brazilian people, who once cheered and warmed the country's educational policy, was reflected, among others, in the curricula of teacher training courses, which intended to understand a reference model in tune with modern times.

At the dawn of the New Brazil, it was imperative to forge a "new" man and no element seemed to run so strongly to this principle as education. Therefore, since *Physical Education*, the *physical part of education*, would be in charge of being a space to provide support to "[...] forge 'strong', 'healthy' individuals who are indispensable for the implementation country's development process" (CASTELLANI FILHO, 1991, p. 39) and their teachers, the "mission" to be the picture and the director of this great achievement.

Thus, this great importance that the Physical Education *subject* began to take on the national scene rayed, also, to the picture of the Physical Education *teacher*. Not coincidentally, newspapers at the time that published stories about the creation of the Intensive Course in the state capital announced the content of such significance in its articles. On the list of favorable influences to the development of children in modern education, the most highly valued was directed to what was understood as the teacher's moral and professional values:

The teacher of physical education should, therefore, in addition to a noticeable technical baggage, have certain qualities: leadership, high morale, enthusiasm, superior ideas, physical health, etc. Thus, not only can they guide physical education, based on knowledge of children's nature and individual needs, but also they will be a constant a high moral standard in class – a living and suggestive example (OS MODERNOS METHODOS DE ENSINO, 1929, p. 22).

Complementing the idea of moral responsibility that fell to the Physical Education teachers, the course in question would involve the participation of school head teachers regarding the nomination of their representatives. Each head teacher should elect three of their aides, "equipped with the skills that are needed" (OS MODERNOS METHODOS DE ENSINO, 1929, p. 23), to participate in the training offered.

Remembering the convenience of this choice, the news still conveyed the idea that such qualities were not met by all persons and were not acquired “in handling books or at school” (OS MODERNOS METODOS DE ENSINO, 1929, p. 23).

In what lies before us, there was a latent concern in allowing education of the body to be articulated to the education of minds and mentalities. Reiterating the parameters announced by modern education, schools should defend the idea of a comprehensive education, in which the pedagogical goals and efforts would fall on the balance of attention given to body, mind, and spirit. In this sense, more than a mere executor of good mechanical actions restricted only to the physical dimension, Physical Education teachers should present qualities of moral and ethical order so that, from their practice, they might be able to overcome the barriers of a merely bodily education.

Among other sources, such prerogative can be found in the analysis of advertisements that schools launched about themselves, on the pages of educational journals of the time. Albeit they differ in some structural guidelines, as in the case of denominational education schools, the idea of a comprehensive education, concerned with the various dimensions to be enhanced in children and young people, emerged from some concepts related to the theme. The following extract gives an example of the attention given to education of the physical aspect, in the arrangement of an educational proposal that was intended to be comprehensive and, therefore, modern:

Ginasio Cruzeiro do Sul: Established in 1912, under federal inspection since 1932. Boarding School for boys – mixed semi-boarding school – Intellectual, **physical**, moral and civic education – excellent faculty. Drama – Scouting – school of military instruction – great laboratory, comfortable facilities, **stadium under construction** (GINÁSIO CRUZEIRO DO SUL, 1939, p. 147, our highlights).

The Intensive Physical Education Course program, in communion with these educational principles, intended to unify the “practices of gymnastics directed by elements of the teaching profession in Rio Grande do Sul” (EDUCAÇÃO PHYSICA, 1929, s/p). Lasting at least two months, focusing on summer holidays, the program was understood based on the articulation of theoretical and practical knowledge, which, among the former, included “lessons in anatomy and physiology” and, among the latter, the execution of various games and swimming” (EDUCAÇÃO PHYSICA, 1929, s/p). The classes, taught by the head office of Inspector of Physical Education on the exercise

floor that the State had on the premises of Colégio Estadual Paula Soares, were guided by the following curriculum:

**1** - Organization and administration of Physical Education; **2** - Scientific bases of the Callisthene series organization; **3** - Theory and practice of gymnastic games and all sports; **4** - Practice of direction and control of games; **5** - Theory and practice of paces (common, corrective, accuracy, etc.); **6** - Theory and practice of and rhythmic exercises and gymnastic dance; **7** - Theoretical didactics and practice of Physical Education; **8** - Pedagogical anthropometry and first aid; **9** - Relation of Physical Education with other branches of education (educational opportunities as to discipline, sociability, cooperation, and sports fraternity); **10** - Study of material conditions of locations designated to Physical Education classes (OS MODERNOS METHODOS DE ENSINO, 1929, our highlights).

We also note that, since the first edition of the course, in 1929, this had been the target of a high demand for teachers in the state. Seduced, at the same time, by the new education proposals and the new horizons that opened in the labor market, teachers who applied for new expertise should first appear at the General Directorate of Public Instruction to then be forwarded to that course (EDUCAÇÃO PHYSICA ,1929, s/p).

It is interesting to point out that such candidates, in seeking enrollment in intensive course, were subject to rigorous health inspection conducted by school medical inspectors (EDUCAÇÃO PHYSICA, 1929, s/p). It is even more interesting to analyze the fact that carrying full health is not only a purely administrative prerequisite, but also an essential condition for the possibility of accessing the training course concerned. Thus, our reading leads us to think that the idea of the great example that Physical Education teachers should be for their future students here seems to find its complement: mind, spirit, and *physical body*, in effective balance of its functions, should radiate a pedagogical picture of health.

Otherwise, we can think about the fact that the physical body represented, for the modern Brazilian school, to a broad extend and, in Rio Grande do Sul, in a particular way, the possibility of such advocated comprehensive education. If, as we saw earlier, the space devoted to the school practices of Physical Education in the state of Rio Grande do Sul in the early twentieth century, when it did exist, was as a curricular element of the second or third order, the situation began to take on new contours following a few concrete actions, especially carried out after the creation of the intensive course of 1929. So, the concern for education of the body of future students was primarily and necessarily related to a concern for the education of the teachers themselves. This, in turn, would act upon selected bodies, which would be able to

represent and sustain a new identity that they intended to give Physical Education in the state.

Bourdieu (1998, p. 98-99), in turn, upon studying recurring elements of perceived social rituals, understood as *rites of institution*, revealed that the main effect caused by the rite is exactly what is, most of the time, completely unnoticed: “the rite consecrates the difference. It institutes it [...] and to institute is to consecrate, i.e. to sanction and sanctify a state of affairs, an established order.” Thus, in the wake of the author mentioned, we believe that the investiture of the difference exerted by such an “almost magical” process that strives to assign properties of a social nature as though they were natural properties of nature, shows its other face by requiring/creating/ratifying a particular identity intended for the desired number of students selected to attend the Intensive Physical Education Course.

Under the watchful, interested eyes fostered by the various expectations that surrounded the creation of the course, the choice of the number of eligible students, as opposed to its complement, i.e. the set of all others, was, therefore, a key part of the legitimating and achievement project of a space in the field that the intensive course aimed to conquer. Thus, the number of students elected should *legitimate* and *be* the expression— in the forms, values, objectives, and purposes — of the identity that the Physical Education of Rio Grande do Sul attempted to build and provide itself with.

Heading in this direction, around this identity issue, we often noted, in the documents research, employment of the term “Physical Education” with other terms of an utilitarian aspect, such as “strengthening of the race”, “race improvement”, “body healthiness”. At this time of structural remodeling that Physical Education underwent in the State, such precepts were easily identified not only in the training of specialized teachers, but also in the activities that these professionals performed.

In addition to primary, secondary and normal schools, the work of the teacher specialized in Physical Education can be significantly noted in public spaces, exclusively created for the practice of physical and sports activities by the youth of Rio Grande do Sul, which were called *Praças de Desportos* (Sports Squares) or *Praças de Educação Física* (Physical Education Squares)<sup>8</sup>. Followed by a series of other similar constructions, scattered over various regions of the state, the first of these squares created in Rio

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<sup>8</sup> Some documents researched also include the name “Praça de Sports”. About the subject, read: CUNHA, M.L.O. As práticas corporais e esportivas nas praças e parques públicos da cidade de Porto Alegre (1920-1940). Master’s Degree dissertation defended in 2009, in the Graduate Studies Program in Human Movement Science at the UFRGS.

Grande do Sul dates back to 1926 and was located in the capital, namely, General Osorio Square, better known as “Alto da Bronze”. Reportedly, the municipality of Bagé also stood out in the state scenario, in this new enterprise of education (UMA BRILHANTE DEMONSTRAÇÃO DE EDUCAÇÃO PHYSICA, 1925).

It is worth noting that, within these squares, the so-called “Recess Gardens”, were also built, which were intended, in particular, for the public care of minors, within the age range of three to six years. Because such Gardens were considered a supplement to schools, they were strategically located close to schools or in their neighborhood. As an example, we mention the case of construction of the Recess Garden 1, which is located at Praça General Osorio, across was opposite Collegio Fernando Gomes, and only four blocks from the old Normal School, “Gymnasio Anchieta”, “Collegio del Rosario” and “Collegio Elementar” (EDUCAÇÃO PHYSICA, 1929, s/p).

Such spaces were equipped with toys, fields and swimming pools where, upon working out constantly and in a playful manner, children would fortify the muscles and prepare a “strong, healthy youth, able to confront the vicissitudes of modern life” (A EDUCAÇÃO PHYSICA NO RIO GRANDE DO SUL, 1937, p. 59). It is important to emphasize that both educational initiatives were brought to Rio Grande do Sul through the work of Professor Guilherme Gaelzer, who, after visits and studies in foreign countries in America and Europe, brought to the state the modern knowledge that was acquired concerning the direction of the *new, scientific, and effective* Physical Education.

On the list of activity areas to which the teachers from the intensive course were allocated, their presence was successful also in civic events known as “Race Weeks”. Guided by the same objectives that motivated the creation of parks and pleasure gardens, the Race Week constituted a civic festival, also created by the state government, in 1933, in which the greatness and power of the “Brazilian race” came afloat through demonstrations and physical developments carried out by studies and by the concentrated practice of physical exercises during the day that made up the stipulated period. The “racial improvement, the shaping of a perfect ethnic type, with good complexion and liveliness” (A EDUCAÇÃO PHYSICA NO RIO GRANDE DO SUL, 1937, p. 59), were part of the event’s main objectives<sup>9</sup>.

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<sup>9</sup> Revista do Globo often displayed, on its pages, pictures of professor Gaelzer and his students at the homeland week, reinforcing the idea of the abovementioned movement for racial perfection.

As is shown, the state government of Rio Grande do Sul set itself ahead in the national scenario, in the incorporation of the illuminist ideals of free body movement so defended by the New Pedagogy that was installed in the country. Thus, it is possible to affirm that the 1930s were significant for Physical Education in Brazil. With the undeniable value of their participation in the shaping of a strong nation, governments, regardless of their forms, were forced to look with affection and legislate carefully for this sector of Brazilian education.

Thus, the head of government from Rio Grande could not remain indifferent to the national movement that was emerging for the development of Physical Education. In this sense, we build the argument justifying the creation of the State Department of Physical Education (DEEF):

Considering the youth's physical conditions, the federal constitution sets out, in Article 131, that physical education is mandatory in all primary, secondary and normal schools in Brazil and, in Article 132, that the state shall protect and assist the associations aimed at the training and its projection of the future of individuals and the nation for that purpose, considering the creation of a technical body is required for the purpose of directing, guiding, and controlling the practice of physical education not only in gymnastics institutes and sports associations in the state, and considering the imperative need to train technical staff in physical education and sports to provide the necessary instruction without serious drawbacks arising from lack of expertise (FRANCO; SILVA; SCHIDROWITZ, 1940, p. 637).

In the agitation of the air of transformation that crossed the moment, thus, this is how DEEF was created, subordinate to the Ministry of Education with the assignment of directing, guiding, and controlling the practice of physical education in schools, both official and private, gymnastics institutes and sports associations in the state. It was the last year of the 1930s, and the waves that preceded this period surged by announcing new times for Physical Education in Rio Grande do Sul.

Thus, we can affirm that the strategies lifted by the state government to improve the situation of lags initially described also began in 1929 when, under the government of then President<sup>10</sup> of Rio Grande do Sul Getúlio Vargas (1928-1930), the "Physical Education Course" was created in the state capital. We cannot, however, precisely know the actual number of reissues of that course or the exact year of graduation of its last training class. The sources researched tell us is that, by the year 1937, that course had

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<sup>10</sup> Title corresponds to the governors of the Brazilian states in the period of the Old Republic.

trained 288 teachers who propagated “teachings across the state, contributing to the improvement of health of the people” (A EDUCAÇÃO PHYSICA NO RIO GRANDE DO SUL, 1937, p. 59).

#### **4 FINAL CONSIDERATIONS**

The elements that we presented here regarding the initial constitution of the field of Physical Education teacher training in the state of Rio Grande do Sul during the period of the First Republic are part of a broader and more detailed characterization that would later include other aspects that we could not address here due to the formal organization of this article. However, based on the above, we believe that we can now build a notion about the trajectory of professional training in Rio Grande do Sul lands, and, in the same trend, we expect that such notions – still unknown to many – may fuel new research and academic questionings.

Thus, the study of these initial training courses, seen here in a very brief form, is being undertaken with greater care and delay in the research conducted by the Center for Studies in History and Memory of Sports and Physical Education (NEHME), linked to the School of Physical Education, at this university. To bring our professional past to the knowledge of the academic public is to recognize the circularity of the process that trains us every day, and that determines much, whether by position or by opposition, of the future that constantly invites us to contemplate and transform what we can be.

#### **A Escola Superior de Educação Física e o campo da formação de professores do estado sul-rio-grandense: as origens da formação especializada (1869-1929)**

**Resumo:** A fundação da ESEF esta inserida em um processo social, no qual a sociedade sul-rio-grandense foi mobilizada para o alcance de finalidades que, antes mesmo de corresponderem a suas particularidades sociais, remetiam-se à consolidação de um novo Brasil, país que então emergia enquanto organização política republicana. Assim, em nosso entendimento, qualquer tentativa de distinguir a ESEF enquanto primeira instituição de ensino a formar professores em nível superior no Estado, passa, necessariamente, pelo conhecimento dos esforços de sistematização desta prática formativa, que antecederam a sua chegada ao campo. De tal modo, o objetivo central do estudo foi o de compreender como ocorreu a formação de professores de Educação Física no período anterior a institucionalização da ESEF. Para tanto, o reconhecimento e a validade de novas versões sobre nosso objeto de estudo, bem como a utilização de fontes que anunciem procedências e naturezas diversas são elementos que compõe uma forma particular de apropriação da história, da qual procuramos aqui nos aproximar: a História Cultural. Nesse espectro, nossas investigações acerca do tema nos levaram a

pontuar dois momentos significativos que atravessaram o campo nesses momentos iniciais: a ausência de formação especializada e, a partir do ano de 1929, a organização dos chamados “Cursos Intensivos de Educação Física”.

**Keywords:** History, Physical Education, Teachers' formation.

### **La Escuela de Educación Física y el campo de la formación docente en el estado de Río Grande del Sur: los orígenes de la formación especializada (1869-1929)**

**Resumen:** La fundación de la ESEF está insertada en un proceso social, en lo cual la sociedad de Río Grande del Sur fue movilizadora para el alcance de finalidades que, antes mismo de corresponder a sus particularidades sociales, se remitieron a la consolidación de un nuevo Brasil, país que, entonces, emergía como una organización política republicana. Así, en nuestro entendimiento, cualquier tentativa de distinguir la ESEF como primera institución de enseñanza a formar profesores en nivel superior en el estado, pasa, necesariamente, por el conocimiento de los esfuerzos de sistematización de esta práctica formativa, que precedieron a su llegada al campo. De tal modo, el objetivo central del estudio fue comprender como ocurrió la formación de profesores de Educación Física en el periodo anterior a la institucionalización de la ESEF. Para tanto, el reconocimiento y la validez de nuevas versiones acerca de nuestro objeto de estudio, bien como la utilización de fuentes que anuncien procedencias y naturalezas diversas son elementos que componen una forma particular de apropiación de la historia, de la cual procuramos aquí nos acercar: la Historia Cultural. En este espectro, nuestras investigaciones acerca del tema nos llevaron a puntuar dos momentos significativos que atravesaron el campo en estos momentos iniciales: la ausencia de formación especializada y, a partir del año 1929, la organización de los llamados “Cursos Intensivos de Educación Física”.

**Palabras-clave:** Historia, educación física, formación de profesores.

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