

# Pierre Monbeig, Aroldo de Azevedo and Maria Conceição Vicente de Carvalho Proposed the Geography Curriculum of the Secondary School (1935)

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**Abstract:** This set of themes approaches the curriculum on 1930 secondary school geography teaching. It is highlighted henceforth the influence of Pierre Monbeig, Aroldo de Azevedo and Maria Conceição Vicente de Carvalho who elaborated a project on a program for the geography teaching at the time. It is a documentation and bibliographical research in development through localization and analysis of documentary sources, among them the text "The secondary school education on geography", published in the year of 1935, in the magazine Geography. It is highlighted herewith the context in which the proposal was produced, as well as the authors contribution to the organization of the geography curriculum for secondary school. The proposed geography curriculum considered the assumptions of the New School, valuing the psychological and methodological aspects of learning. This model of curriculum, in turn, was articulated with the model of teacher education in geography at the Faculty of Philosophy, Sciences and Letters (FPSL) at the University of São Paulo (USP) and was discussed at Brazilian Geographers Association (BGA). From the 1930s on, Brazil is submitted to a specific economic logic, giving priority to an implantation of the urban-industrial logic. After the revolution of 1930, changes occurred in relation to educational needs. Getúlio Vargas regime created the Ministry of Education and Public Health, whose first minister was Francisco Campos, who — among others measures — created the FPSL, where secondary school teachers were trained. The pedagogical training was given at the Education Institute at USP where they taught subjects such as General Didactics, Special Didactics, Educational Psychology, School Administration, Biological Fundamentals of Education and Sociological Foundations of Education. Therefore, the student acquired a scientific background in the area of activity and then obtained a pedagogical training. The formation of the secondary school teacher in charge of the Education Institute was to take place in the scheme known as three plus one. This course inaugurated a tradition in the formation of geography teachers which in turn brought changes to the curriculum of geography at Brazilian school. From a didactic exposition and among the tutorials were the incentives to topographical map readings, geographic excursions, inclusion of social and economic aspects on geographic themes.

**Key words:** geography teaching, geography curriculum, didactics of geography

## 1. Introduction

Aiming to understand the history aspects of teacher's formation on geography in Brazil, a regular project is under development with FAPESP "Methodological guidelines for geography teachers of secondary school at São Paulo Schools (1934-1960)". The research presented herewith is the result of the

activities developed as a member of his executing team, while Scientific Initiation scholar.

In the field of geography teaching we selected the theme related to the geography curriculum for the secondary school proposed by the first professors of Geography [and History] of the Faculty of Philosophy, Sciences and Letters of the University of São Paulo, from 1934.

The 1930s educational ideals in the twentieth century went through a revolutionary moment with the end of the first republic, where power was under the

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rule of the milk colonels in Minas Gerais and the coffee barons in São Paulo. Submitted to a development and intense urbanization logic, the cities began to house and receive an intense flow of people, surpassing the number of one million inhabitants.

Concurring with urban logic, labor relations also expanded, since the 1930s saw the need for investment in education and the creation of schools. Getúlio Vargas regime created the Ministry of Education and Public Health, the first manager was Francisco Campos who enacted some laws such as the decree n.19.851 (11/4/1931), which instituted the university regime.

From this decree higher education should be taught at the university with the creation of a Faculty of Education Sciences and Letters where the main function would be the training of secondary education teachers. But the Faculty of Education Sciences and Letters idealized by Francisco Campos did not come to be established. The institution that would have the function of preparing teachers for secondary education in Brazil was called Faculdade de Filosofia Ciências e Letras. With these measures and education he tried to follow the new logic of the urban-industrial city, with traces of modernity [1].

Still in the 1930 decade, there was another watershed on education. It was the publication of a so-called “Manifesto of the pioneers of education”, which occurred in 1932, coordinated by Fernando de Azevedo. It was a document stating that all the problems the country was facing, none of them should have primacy but the one on education, fomenting in the society the support for the expansion of the Brazilian educational system, so, the teacher training was put in evidence.

The Faculty of Philosophy, Sciences and Letters of the University of São Paulo (FPSL/USP) was founded in 1934, among the emerging courses it is highlighted the one of Geography and History, in the modalities Bachelor and Bachelor's Degree. Candidates for Bachelor's Degree course should attend the pedagogical training at the Institute of Education,

since the Instituto Caetano de Campos had been transformed in an Education Institute by the State Decree no. 5,884/33, offering from then pedagogical training to secondary teaching candidates. In 1938 the Education Institute was incorporated to USP, and in 1938 transformed into FPSL pedagogy section, later on transformed into Department of Education. The Education Institute and its “School of teacher training” contributed to emerging of the first generations of specialized teachers, in the state of São Paulo, been among them those of Geography [and History] [1].

Secondary school teachers training involved studies related to the psychological problems of learning in the adolescence phase and knowledge related to the school curriculum. The theoretical reference of the course was articulated to the Didactics of the New School.

At that time, the geography teaching started receiving influence from this pedagogical tendency, represented especially by Delgado de Carvalho thinking. Until then, professor and director of D. Pedro II College pioneered the dissemination of new-schooling precepts for the teaching of geography, and published in 1925, one of the most important works of the time, the Geographic Teaching Methodology, a teaching manual in which he proposed a more precise and logical distribution of the teaching content and methodologies more appropriate to students' interests [2].

Delgado de Carvalho's greatest concern was directed towards the paths that would lead the student to reach secondary teaching, since for him the studies should not end in primary education [3].

## **2. Teachers Training and the Contribution of Pierre Monbeig, Aroldo de Azevedo and Maria Conceição Vicente de Carvalho**

The teachers training course at USP in the 1930s experienced the mood of the New School, either through the bibliographical references contained in the bibliographies of the pedagogical disciplines or in the

intellectual production of teachers - as Pierre Monbeig — and then in the production and performance professional of ex-students — as Aroldo de Azevedo and Maria Conceição Vicente de Carvalho.

The undergraduates of the course stood out in the state scenario especially with the Association of Brazilian Geographers (ABG), an institution that at that time was also consulted on the problems related to the teaching of Geography, given therefore, their opinion about its curriculum.

Pierre Monbeig was born in 1908 and had a degree in History and Geography completed at the University of Paris in 1927. In 1935 he received the invitation to take the chair of Professor of Physical and Human Geography at the University of São Paulo. In 1937 he held the position of president of the ABG, which extended until 1946. Monbeig brought the French influence as the matrix of the geographic thought of the time, encompassed the thinking of authors such as Vidal de la blache, Albert Demangeon etc. Having experience as a high secondary school teacher in his country he was responsible for bringing in to USP course the questions related to the Methodology of teaching geography. He was not responsible for the subject of methodology on specific subjects, but gave the first lecture on the theme and so he did whenever he was asked about it.

Aroldo de Azevedo who was born on March 3, 1910. He was one of the leading Brazilian geographers mainly in what concerns the systematization and teaching of geography. After completing his law course at the Federal University of Rio de Janeiro, he chose geography, joining USP then. He graduated in Geography and History in 1939. During his academic life he held accountable for publishing more than 120 texts among articles and books, many of them related to the teaching of geography in Brazil.

Maria Conceição Vicente de Carvalho was born in Santos, State of São Paulo, in 1906. In 1927, she graduated in Industrial Chemistry from the School of

Engineering at the Mackenzie Institute. In 1934, she enrolled herself in the first USP/FPSL section of Geography and History group, acquiring her degree in 1938. She defended her doctoral thesis titled "Santos and the human geography coastline". Thus, on November 23, 1944 she became the first female geographer to receive a PhD in geography.

These three professors had their professional activity also linked to geography teaching and contributed to the organization and constitution of what is now understood as a Geography Curriculum. They acted during the time of transformations allied to the ideology of patriotic nationalism, and especially the importance education was gaining before the intentions of the State, that was organizing the educational system.

It was crystal clear that the geography teaching needed changes. Its system had become ineffective and full of dissatisfaction, whether methodological, systematic and even didactic. In an attempt to break with the positivist current at the time and to adapt to the new social reality, a question arises as to how the Geography Curriculum could be constituted. Thus, the members of the ABG — among them Maria da Conceição Vicente de Carvalho, Aroldo de Azevedo and Pierre Monbeig — were consulted on the possibility of systematizing a proposal of a curriculum for the secondary education of geography.

In response to the query they wrote the text "The Secondary Geography Education", published in 1935, in the magazine Geography. Starting from the assumption that geography was going through a moment of great changes, both in the national context and worldwide. The authors believed that their teaching would replace a purely nomenclature-based system in behalf of a scientific understanding of subject. It is assumed that it is better to know very few things than badly all of them. Secondary education, according to the authors, should be an education on general culture and not of specialties. They therefore emphasized that the role of teachers should be to assist

in the formation of personalities rather than recruiting geographers. Thus, it would be important to know the students, their social representations and the knowledge they brought.

According to Monbeig, Azevedo and Carvalho (1935) [4], while they were members of the Associação de Geógrafos Brasileiros (AGB) they endeavor to contribute to the reformation of secondary education. They indicated in their proposal what contents and what forms to apply the geographic contents, in each one of the series of the secondary school.

### 3. The Proposal of Pierre Monbeig, Aroldo de Azevedo and Maria Conceição Vicente de Carvalho for Geography Teaching

While the research is in progress, some partial results are here presented. Analyzing the text “Secondary teaching of Geography” (1935), regarding the choice of teaching contents, it was noticed that the authors indicated that the first grade of secondary education teachers should be considered that the students were still very young, therefore it would be difficult for them to understand abstractions when presenting the concepts, therefore it was feasible the teacher expounded the lesson based on the local dynamics of space in which the student is inserted.

Teachers were instructed not to restrict the students to memorise nomenclatures for the second grade, such as rivers, states, etc. The nomenclatures should be conducted so that the student located themselves during the explanation of some phenomenon.

Nevertheless, for third grade, considering that student reached a certain maturity to absorb certain contents, the teacher should seek to escape from useless subjects and to instigate discussions addressing subjects of his country from the economic and political point of view.

In the fourth grade, there should be more focus on the subjects already discussed, as well as expanding

the possibilities, preparing students for college entrance exams.

And finally, the graduating fifth-grader, a few months from college entrance exams, could become a trained citizen in search for improvement.

Thus, according to the authors’ proposal, the objective of teaching geography to secondary school would be to convey, with serenity, what are the economic issues and their political relations going on in their country and the whole world. It is still a question, in the present case, to providing a general culture and training for citizenship.

In the tables below, are shown the teaching contents proposed for geography teaching for the secondary school of 1930.

#### First grade

<b>Elements of cosmography, physical geography biology and human:</b>
Universe. Solar system. Earth. Moon, Lines and circles of the terrestrial sphere. Longitude and latitude. Days and nights. Seasons. Guidance.
The Earth Structure. Relief. Costal area. Oceans e seas. Rivers lakes. Atmosphere: the climate and the grand climatic zones.
Vegetables Distribution and animals over the earth.
Earth population. Races. Religions. Level of civilisation.

#### Second grade

<b>Continents general geography:</b>
Continents Studies (America, Europe, Ásia, África, Oceania).
Geografic site. Relief. Costal area. Hidrografy. Climate. Natural richness.
Populations. Political divisions. Main urban centers. Economic resources. Within each continent, the main countries will be studied in greater detail: United States, Canada, Argentina, France, Germany, Central European countries, Italy, Iberia, USSR, Japan, China, India, Egypt, South Africa, Australia and New Zealand.

#### Third grade

<b>Brazil general geography:</b>
Geographic locale. Terrestrial boundary lines. Relief. Costal area. Hidrography. Clamates. Natural reasources.
Population. Territory formation and border issues. Government. Agricultural products. Cattle breeding. Extraction industries. Routes and means of communication and transport. Trade.
Regional geography, focusing on the physical features, historical evolution and economic and social problems of each of the following regions: North Brazil, North East Brazil, East Brazil, South Brazil and Central Brazil.

#### Fourth grade

<b>Physical, biological and human cosmography and geography:</b>
Geography: history, concept and division.
Solar system. Earth. Geographical coordinates. Earth Movements. Mechanism of the seasons.
Earth crust: origin and composition. Geological ages. The forms of relief; tectonics and erosion. Oceans and seas. The sea water. Movements of the sea. Underwater relief. Rivers. Lakes. Atmosphere: temperature and pressure. Meteors. Climates.
Human Geography: concept and object. Races. Languages and religions. Man and the environment: life gender and degrees of civilization. Dwellings. Urban centers. Population centers: borders and movements of humanity. The State and its forms. Political-economic objectives of the States. Political furniture of the powers. Contemporary international politics. Food crops. Industrial plants. Breeding of animals. Hunting and fishing. Mineral explorations. Use of natural forces. Routes and means of communication and transport. PRACTICAL PART: Reading of topographic charts. Reading of weather charts. Explanation of statistics and graphs. Excursions.

#### Fifth grade

<b>Main countries geography:</b>
Special study of each of the following powers, particularly physical and political features, highlighting in each of them the social or economic problems that characterized the most the international life.
British Empire (British Isles, Canada, South African Union, India, Australia and New Zealand), France and colonies (North Africa and Indo-China), Belgium and Holland, Switzerland, Germany, Central European countries, Italy, Portugal, USSR, Japan, China, the United States, Argentina, and Brazil before the main powers.

## 4. Final Considerations

Seeking to know the program plan for geography teaching, presented in the text “Secondary education on Geography” (1935), it was clear that the authors had assumed that secondary teaching of geography should not be a specialty subject rather than of a general culture. They indicated hence, while a methodological posture, that teachers avoid abstractions when presenting the concepts to students, so it would be feasible to be learned as a subject related to the students’ daily lives. Yet, it was preferable, that they did not be attached only to memorizing names, which does not

mean disregard for names of rivers, cities, states, etc., but to the reality of places of study should be articulated.

Maps readings should be intentionally used not as an artistic work but as a representation of facts, in order that students were allowed to associate the representation of the map with the real life. The so-called “geographic readings” in which the teacher distances himself from routine activities were also proposed for methodological and didactic purposes, and in order to obtain the attention of the students to make perceptions of the contents of geography through, for example, travels, novels, etc. Practical exercises were not discarded either, as well as other disciplines which use laboratories; geography should also carry out dynamic activities, such as the reading of topographical charts, so getting acquainted with the topography, statistics, meteorology etc.

As noted, this way of understanding geography teaching as proposed by Pierre Monbeig, Aroldo de Azevedo, Maria Conceição Vicente de Carvalho for the teaching of geography in high school in the 1930s, within the New School logical — broadcasted by USP and its Education Institute — became a tradition and influenced the curriculum of the school of São Paulo at the time.

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