

# The “working” and “apostolic” teacher: Contributions to the history of the teaching profession in a colonial context during the First Republic (1910-1926)

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## ABSTRACT:

The text addresses the issue of teacher training in a colonial context, underlining the ambiguity of the republican discourse which, in a lay educational setting, defended the sacralisation of the teaching profession in the colonies. A relatively unexplored subject in the history of Portuguese education, it is defended that the republican initiatives put into action in the organization of primary education in Mozambique, when comparing discourse to actual accomplishments, did not give rise to considerably different results to those that had been gained since the fall of the Monarchy. Nevertheless, the republican governors made profound alterations to the professional statute of colonial primary teachers, particularly in ensuring their equivalence to the metropolitan teachers as well as in terms of the importance attributed to the teachers involved in the crusade for the civilization of the natives. Furthermore, there are clear lines of continuity between the discourse on teacher training during the First Republic and the beginning of the Estado Novo, particularly in the definition of a curriculum adapted to their (teachers) overseas role

## KEYWORDS:

History of colonial education, Comparative education, teacher training, Lusophony.

Madeira, Ana Isabel (2010). The “working” and “apostolic” teacher: Contributions to the history of the teaching profession in a colonial context during the First Republic (1910-1926). *Sísifo. Educational Sciences Journal*, 11, pp. 65-74

Retrieved [month, year] from <http://sisifo.fpce.ul.pt>

## THE REPUBLICAN SCHOOL AND STATE EDUCATION IN MOZAMBIQUE

On October 8th 1910, the Governor General of Mozambique, Freire de Andrade, announced that a Republic had been proclaimed in Lourenço Marques; on the 9th, the Governor Alberto Celestino Pinto Basto, as representative of the national sovereignty, solemnly proclaimed the Portuguese Republic. While, in the metropolis, national regeneration involved the substitution of the constitutional Monarchy for a lay Republic which, implicitly, meant destruction of the power of the Church in all areas of social life. In Mozambique, colonial regeneration, patriotic nationalism and the colonial project were profoundly connected to the nationalizing role expected of the Portuguese missions. Acceptance of the *Lei de Separação* [Separation Law] of 1911, which entered into force in Mozambique from 1913 onwards, was not consensual, giving rise to contradictory reactions among the local governmental elite (Madeira, 2007, pp. 378-387). Indeed, the *Lei de Separação* jeopardised the proclamation of the republican crusade for the nationalisation and education of the native people.

Finally, Solipa Norte regarded such a maze of contradictory positions as a serious warning directed at his actions when he was nominated Inspector of Primary Education in the province in 1919. The inspector had been the leading figure of the *Sociedade de Instrução e Beneficência 1º de Janeiro*, an institution that had opened the first private

primary school in the city of Lourenço Marques in 1898, which was frequented by the male and female children and adolescents of Freemasonry members (Neves, 2001). However, when he was nominated inspector, Norte realised that 10 years after the establishment of the Republic, very little had been done as far as education was concerned. This, inevitably, contributed to the moderation of his discourse and to his focus on the “indispensable and urgent” task of “developing primary education in the province”: to organise the services and records of the State Education Department; to register the pupils, private and public schools: to create primary schools, inspect the running of the already existing ones; to impress a different meaning on the educational programmes; to improve teacher training, etc. He ordered the release of a report, the year immediately following the start of his mandate, which brought to light a number of conceptions regarding the reorganisation of colonial education, and which was one of the rare documents on republican pedagogical ideology in Mozambique up to the late 1930s.<sup>1</sup>

It is worth recalling that the period between the 1911 and 1919 Reforms, the latter referring to the date of the inspection report, marked an era of severe political upheaval and financial instability, which was worsened by the participation of Portugal in the final years of the Great War (1916-1918), experienced most intensely in Mozambique, given its close proximity to the German colony, Tanganyika. While, on the one hand, entering the war on the side of the allies guaranteed the participation of Portugal in peace

negotiations and a diplomatic affirmation of the new regime, on the other the financial difficulties weakened the structures of the State, putting the act of running it into a more vulnerable position<sup>2</sup>. Hence, the outcome of the situation called for the foundation of “grounds for the huge task of nationalisation and progress”, whereby it was necessary to define a suitable strategy for the particular conditions of the province. It is, therefore, understandable, that having reached this stage, a new awareness of the gap created by republican exaggeration in terms of religious persecution in the province emerged, with heavy consequences for the nationalisation and civilisation of the people processes. Such contributed to justifying reinforcement in State investment with a view to compensating the educational supply it had, in effect, helped dismantle. The return to the pedagogy “education for work”, in defence of an excellent civic and professionalising education, of a practical nature and suited to local realities, thus, took on a new *élan* in the colonial educational discourse. This awareness was behind the shift of the republican combat propaganda towards a lay education, of the discourse adopted at the beginning of the decade to another centred on the transformation of school programme content and, particularly, the importance of the teacher in the crusade for the civilisation of the native. The emphasis given to moral and civic education from that point on was to be invested in the construction of a strong identification with the Homeland and the Republic, with its symbols and heroes, while also seeking to keep the threatening sovereignty flame alight: “The *School*” needed to use its programmes to enhance the “majestic figure of the Portuguese Homeland, haloed by the Sun of freedom and the founding and honest flame of democracy and the Republic” (Norte, 1920, p. 73).

It should be noted that the combination of primary education and civic and moral education clearly pointed to a strategic investment in fully exploiting adherence, on the part of the Africans, to ritual demonstrations. It is a fact that this was not a strategy exclusively followed in Mozambique, as the importance of civic cults within the Portuguese private school was widely known. What seems to be worth stressing, in line with what Joaquim Pintassilgo designated as “republican civic religiosity”, was how, also in Mozambique, symbolic representation was

used to construct a “new” collective identity based on the cult of the Homeland (Pintassilgo, 1998). Indeed, during the post-War period, it became the touchstone of the colonial philosophy and pedagogy up to 1926.

Up to the end of the First Republic, the other pillar of the colonial educational policy was the creation of an organised system according to the laws in force, and the image of the *School* concept in the metropolis. Initial attempts in this direction began with the re-organisation of the state education services in the colony, still under the government of Álvaro Xavier de Castro, followed by a policy to standardise all the laws in force in the continent with those of the province, both in terms of curriculum and in the organisational field — the running of schools regime, provision of primary education teaching posts, management, administration and inspection of educational services, etc. This option, which went against the tendency of the liberal governments in defence of an education system “adapted” to the colonial population and circumstances, did not coincide with the de-centralising tendency through which the Republic set out to concede greater autonomy to the local governors, at least from an administrative and financial perspective. This policy effectively reached its peak during the high-commissioners regime. Indeed, the “standardisation” and “harmonisation” of state education instigated by the government of Álvaro de Castro (October 1915/May 1918), continued throughout the two governments of Manuel Moreira da Fonseca (interim Governor between April 1919/March 1921 and September 1923/November 1924), that of the High Commissioners Brito Camacho (March 1921/September 1923) and Hugo de Azevedo Coutinho (who was led the colony between November 1924 and May 1926), consolidated in the *Estado Novo*, with Governor General Ricardo Pereira Cabral (November 1926/April 1938).

## THE “WORKING” AND “APOSTOLIC” TEACHER

It is known that the Republican regime established a commitment with the teachers so as to alter their professional statute and social image (Adão, 1984;

Fernandes, 1994; Nóvoa, 1987, 1988). In Mozambique, with the involvement of the State Education Inspector, this combat had considerable repercussions conveyed through an effective improvement of the conditions of the teaching profession. Norte considered the teachers to have a central role in the civilization and nationalisation of the native population, which led to their being classified as both a “work” and “apostolic” force. “There is only one thing to say to the teachers”, wrote the inspector: “(...) your lives should be a clear reflection of all the possible and imaginable virtues. *Teach, but educate— educate above all*” (Norte, 1920, 74).

In fact, the Republican intervention brought about a significant alteration for the primary school teachers in the colony, whose working conditions, benefits and income differed hugely from those of the teachers in the metropolis. The requalification process began by equalising the wages of the state school teachers (1250\$00 per annum), with those of the municipal schools and service, giving them equal benefits, rights and duties<sup>3</sup>. The government of the province went on to attribute them first class transport subsidies, giving them what was attributed to the religious missionaries<sup>4</sup>. The services rendered by the teachers became the object of qualification<sup>5</sup>, which was an important classification for the exchange of posts among schools<sup>6</sup> and for the provision of teaching posts in the colony; calls for tender gave priority to teachers of both sexes, from or resident in Mozambique, and to those who had accumulated more years of service in the colony<sup>7</sup>; expectant teachers were given the same benefits as their metropolitan counterparts, being able to take leave of absence for two months, before and after childbirth, with no bearing on the income and subsidies to which they were entitled<sup>8</sup>, etc.

These orders were very much the result of the influence of Solipa Norte whose mandate made it possible to establish a set of control devices created to inspect and regulate the teaching activity of the primary school teachers in the province. As a member of the teaching class himself, Norte was particularly sensitive to question of professional statute, as he was also to the quality of education, insisting on the central role of the primary teacher in the transformation of education in the state schools of the province. The inspector was particularly critical of

the type of school and teaching methods used in the schools of the colony, considering that such deficiencies were directly related to the lack of qualifications held by primary school teachers. Therefore, the programmes were “impracticable, owing to a lack of full possession of the object of education by over 80% of the educational agents in the province”, since the schools were “full of interim teachers” (Norte, 1920, pp. 11 e 17). This fact was not only put forward by the inspector, after his impeachment, Brito Camacho confirmed that the lack of qualified teachers in the province had forced the government to resort to using interim teachers, with no legal qualification, to fill the posts of a number of schools in the Lourenço Marques district<sup>9</sup>. If this occurred in the capital of the province, it is not difficult to imagine what the situation was like outside the most urbanized region of the colony.

#### THE REPUBLICAN PROJECT FOR THE CONSTRUCTION OF TEACHER TRAINING COLONIAL EDUCATION

It was, undoubtedly, concern regarding the quality of teacher service in the schools of the interior that led Solipa Norte to draw up the first project for the creation of a school geared towards primary teaching qualifications<sup>10</sup>. In this proposal, the inspector defended that primary education teacher training ought to be provided in the colony and not the metropolis, an opinion that many governors and ecclesiasts had already expressed as of the late 19th century, and which was only fully accomplished during the *Estado Novo*. It was in this establishment that Solipa Norte set out to train the “teacher-worker-farmer-nurse”, with a view to calling pupils from the interior to the school, who had “profound knowledge of the most backward environments and psychology and language of its people”, only to return them, later on, to their origins, as part of a force of “working teachers”, with the responsibility of working with the bodies and minds of a valuable breed”. Only thus would it be possible to provide the province with an important instrument of progress, (...) to organise the practical school, the healthy school, the school of the future, the methodically ordered school from its establishment to the

accomplishment of its programmes” (Norte, 1920, p. 17). It was mainly this philosophy that sustained the constitution of qualification schools for native teachers promoted by the Governor General, José Cabral, some years later.

However, his investment in the qualification and inspection of the teaching service was not limited to projects and standard discourse. By means of a circular letter sent to all the primary schools, Solipa Norte tried to instil in teachers a patriotic conscience, holding them to responsibility for the trust the State bestowed upon them<sup>11</sup>. The circular letter was accompanied by a service order, through which the Primary Education Inspectorate “obliged” all pupil exams to be verified in *all* areas of the respective programmes (not only in *reading, writing* and *accounts*), but also in design, handwriting, manual work, music, choir singing, personal hygiene and physical education, and the handwriting, design and manual work tests were to be sent with the other written tests to the Inspection Department. If it had not been for these reactions to the service order, little would have been known about the poor running of the schools in the province. Indeed, the inspector was able to confirm, with his own eyes, during the inspections he carried out:

in some of my school visits, some twenty minutes into school opening hours, I encountered pupils throwing stones in the street, others climbing trees, and the teachers engaged in general chit chat; and on day 30, on the occasion of a health visit, we found classrooms with no teachers or pupils. (...) When one set out to look for the teachers, in their own schools, after being duly warned, they were nowhere to be found (Norte, 1920, pp. 9-10).

## CURRICULUM HARMONIZATION

The primary state reforms during the Republic were essentially based on an attempt to *standardise* and *harmonise* the colonial school through the orders in force in the metropolis. The reforms of the teaching programmes were also covered by the same concept. The 1911 primary education reform was probably followed in Mozambique, but there are practically no references to its application. As

for the 1919 reform, which was very much in line with the afore-mentioned one, it was published in the province in 1920, by the interim Governor, Manuel Moreira da Fonseca<sup>12</sup>. The great novelty of this reform was, as is known, the extension of obligatory schooling, which went from three to five years (between the ages of 7 and 12 years), becoming known as “general primary education”. Everything seems to indicate that some of the orders included in the 1911 reform were only introduced in Mozambique in 1920, since adoption of the co-educational regime obliged the creation of new schools, with new designations, and the merging of some already existing ones<sup>13</sup>. However, in the application of Decree-law no. 6137, of 29 September 1919, compulsory schooling was undefined in the colony of Mozambique, with just a reference to the fact that it would begin at the age of 7 years and end with a primary school diploma, so that the “children could present their enrolment in state or private schools and be made to frequent them regularly”<sup>14</sup>. This indefiniteness, along with a lack of state primary schools and the distance to be travelled in order to attend the schools in the main localities did not contribute to making high attendance rates very likely. Once again, the inspection report is what outlined the backdrop for compulsory schooling, based on the number of pupils presented for the 1st and 2nd level exams from the schools in the province in 1919<sup>15</sup>.

At this time, it is known that there were only 24 state schools (State, municipal and services), 71 missionary schools and 8 private (Norte, 1920, p. 66). It should be noted that in these schools, 70% of the teaching staff was made up of Portuguese and foreign Catholic missionaries, and only a third by legally qualified national teachers (Norte, 1920, p. 13). In total, 260 pupils from throughout the province had presented themselves for the exam (202 from Lourenço Marques; 32 from Inhambane; 10 from Quelimane; 8 from Tete; 5 from Gaza and 3 from Mozambique). Out of these, only 178 passed. Less than two hundred pupils, in the vast majority made up of white or mixed race citizens, for an estimated population of 1.5 million Europeans and 5.5 million natives in 1921<sup>16</sup>.



## SCHOOL MANUALS

Although there was an extremely low percentage of pupils proposed for exam entry, on the other hand, there were high pass rates in the primary education exams. This means that the teachers only risked entering the pupils for exam when they were considered to be duly prepared and in a position to guarantee, as had been stipulated for qualification effects, a good service sheet<sup>17</sup>. However, this was not the only explanation for the percentage of proposed pupils or for the pupils having passed the primary education exams. Out of the parochial or service schools, primarily attended by native pupils, few or no teachers dared to enter pupils for the 1<sup>st</sup> or 2<sup>nd</sup> level exam. Many of the teachers regarded the teaching programmes and manuals “extremely demanding” and unadjusted to the reality of Province schools. In fact, the adoption of teaching manuals in Mozambique was still dependent on the Monarchy decree-law of 12-6-1907 (B. O. no. 32, 1907), of the government of Freire de Andrade, stipulating the use of the compendiums used in the primary and teacher training schools of the metropolis. Despite the fact that the 1911 primary education reform had stipulated new manuals, only in 1920, by means of Order no. 1527, the interim Governor General, Manuel Moreira da Fonseca, made the teaching manuals approved by Decree-law no. 6203, of 7 November, 1919, enter into force in the *general primary education* schools.

As for reading books, the *Cartilha Maternal* by João de Deus was adopted for the 1st class, and for the 2nd, 3rd and 4th classes the *Livro de Leitura* by João da Câmara, M. de Azevedo and Raul Brandão. For the other subjects, the list of adopted books included:

History — Chagas Franco; Agriculture — Mota Prego; Civic Education and Natural Sciences — A. A. Barros de Almeida; Design — J. V. Freitas and Antunes Amor; Arithmetic, Metric System and Geometry — Ulisses Machado; Grammar — Ulisses Machado, Albino Pereira Magno and Relvas; Chorography — Almeida de Eça; Problem exercise books — Ulisses Machado; handwriting exercise books — *Escrita direita*, Lopes do Amaral and the Maps of Portugal — Nunes Júnior; On the Colonies — Ligorne; on Zoology and Agriculture — Published by

Figueirinhas; and on History — by Chagas Franco (Norte, 1920, p. 68).

Two brief observations regarding this list should be noted, involving the imprecision of some references, the adoption of a combination of books that had been used since the Monarchy and which were recommended for primary education as a result of the 1911 and 1919 reforms. In fact, on the basis of curriculum content that was used in the metropolis, without any connection to the cultural and social reality of the colony, one may understand the reluctance to enter pupils who had rarely had access to such material for the exam. As far as Solipa Norte was concerned, this maladjustment added to pedagogical difficulties and made learning a difficult task on a short term basis (Norte, 1920, p. 9). Therefore, in terms of curriculum, and in spite of the fact that republican propaganda tried to construct a new idea, calling upon a number of national-colonial facts, symbols and heroes, the contents of the metropolitan school manuals had little to do with the lives of the Africans or even the offspring of the colonialists and mixed race populations who attended the schools in Mozambique. In this field, the only strategies that set out to link the history of the colony and the experiences of the pupils to school learning operated preferentially through extra-school activities (through festivities and commemorations) and less through the content taught in the classroom. Overall, the primary school had a number of difficulties, that were not solely related to pedagogical issues or dependent on the quality of the teaching service, but to socio-cultural reasons and to a very unique primary education school culture in Mozambique. The running conditions of the schools, the buildings, lack of hygiene and salubrity in some establishments were at the root of decades of negligence and the inability to find a public teaching policy strictly in opposition to the most generous intentions of the republican political and pedagogical discourse regarding the new *civic church of the people*.

## FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

We are led to conclude that the republican institution in Mozambique did not bring a considerable

change to the public education investment plan during the period of the Monarchy, as far as the accomplishment of educational and pedagogical discourses are concerned. If we consider that the reduction of state primary education schools was partly left to the *coeducation* regime and to the contraction of public education in one, single establishment, the same pattern verified during the period of the Monarchy would have been maintained. Effectively, what one may verify is that between 1909 and 1919, only a further ten “official” primary education establishments were opened, establishing continuity of the increasing growth rate that had been observed over a few decades during the reign of the Monarchy. If we consider that this movement accompanied the cancellation of subsidies to private schools, religious missions, and through its considerable decrease, at least up to the post-War period, we are left with a more feasible vision of the breach in the supply of “national” schooling between 1910 and 1999.

Or else, let us take a look. The first phase of the Republic, between 1910 and 1919, was characterized by an attempt to make education lay, resulting in a decrease in the number of primary education schools that were run by the clergy (secular priests and missionaries on Portuguese Catholic missions), as directly by the State (official schools, those of the municipalities and services)<sup>18</sup>. The comparison of teaching staff (headmasters and teachers) in 1908 and 1916<sup>19</sup> shows that in 1908, with the exception of the male district School and the *Escola 1º de Janeiro*, in Lourenço Marques, and the School for natives in Ibo (Niassa), all the others were taught by priests, nuns or missionaries on Portuguese Catholic missions. In 1916, the situation was totally different, if not the opposite to that of 1908: education in the service schools and the lack of legally qualified teachers was undertaken by native teachers. out of the 86 “official” state education schools, only 20 were run by priests subsidized by the clergy.

The preparation of these native teachers had been carried out in Portuguese and foreign missionary schools, but their function had not been regulated nor was it recognised by the State. Meanwhile, the missionary teachers, who continued to guarantee the teacher service of the “state” schools, did so at the expense of gratifications that the local authorities deemed adequate for the services rendered,

therefore, not abiding by the law, until their activity was formally regularised by the Missionary Statute in 1941. The situation was chaotic and the result of this policy, in terms of primary education supply was quite profound: not only was there a drop in the number of schools, but also the composition of the teaching staff changed dramatically and, without a doubt, this transformation had an impact on the quality of education, reflected in the number of pupils presented for exam and in the percentage of passes up to the next level. If we add to this image a decrease by around one half of the number of schools run by the Portuguese Catholic missionary staff, the portrait of the state supply of education was completed with the post-War financial and political crisis. .

On the other hand, as we were able to find in another piece of work (Madeira, 2008), the creation of civilising lay missions was unable to compensate for the decrease in Catholic missionary schools, finally becoming an investment that, from the perspective of educating the native, was not up to the expected standard. The number of state schools actually decreased in relation to 1915, in spite of a slow recovery of the number of schools run by the missions, which went from 34 (in 1915) to 46 (in 1919). In the meantime the 1920s to 30 marked an evolutionary tendency which was consolidated in the 40s and 50s: the progressive disinvestment in state education directly run by the State and the handing over of initial primary education was, above all, fundamental to the Portuguese Catholic church (both to the priests nominated by the clergy, and the national missions).

Effectively, for better and worse, the date of 1926 marked a decisive period in the colonial history of education in Mozambique. In terms of local government, Order no. 312, of the High Commissioner Hugo de Azevedo Coutinho (1924-26), on formally creating the school for the Qualification of Native Teachers and the District School of Arts and Crafts, gave rise, at the end of the First Republic, to an educational policy focused on native education in the Colony. It was, however, Order No. 238, passed by the Governor General, José Ricardo Pereira Cabral (1926-1938), which approved the organisation of native education in the Colony of Mozambique, which definitively entered a phase of educating the mass

population. Order no. 1044 of 18 January 1930, completed the design and organisation of native education, regulating *teacher training* education. Its purpose was to prepare teachers to teach basic primary education, in both official and private schools, including those under national and foreign missions.

For all effects, the strategy was quite clear. A type of education was defined, that was well characterized for Africans, an education free of the literary burden of programmes geared towards the “civilized” population, deserving of an appropriate introduction related to African practices, agriculture

and domestic service as a kind of primary education for one’s own use. The investment was globally restrictive, since the standardization of education, both in terms of the programmes as well as the diplomas granted, symbolized the progressive unity of the principles related to the national education plan, a circumstance that excluded the black majority of the population. It is worth mentioning that the segmentation of education into two channels, one literary, the other practical and profession-oriented, was prepared during the Republic to be accomplished in the educational policy of the *Estado Novo*<sup>20</sup>.



## ENDNOTES

1. The position of Primary Education Inspector was annulled by Decree law no. 23, B.O. no. 18, of 1921, a year after the publication of the report by S. Norte. The Inspection activity was only taken up again in 1928 (Diploma no. 80, B.O. no. 29, of 1928).
2. See considerations on the fragility of statistical records up to the mid 1940s and the identification of the sources used for this study (Madeira, 2007, pp. 373-377).
3. Order no. 1194, 31 May 1919.
4. Order no. 1222, 14 June 1919.
5. Order no. 1401, 17 January 1920.
6. Order no. 1689, 30 October 1920.
7. Order no. 23, 14 May 1921.
8. Order no. 1669, 9 October 1920.
9. Order no. 23, 14 May 1921.
10. In January 1921, the extinction of the Primary Education Inspectorate led to the removal of the teacher and the project being forgotten (Norte, 1920).
11. AHM. Fundo Administração Civil Instrução e Cultos, Ch. 15 [26/10/1920 — Circular letter no. 389, from the Department of the Primary Education Council and the Primary Education Inspectorate of the Province of Mozambique.
12. Order no. 1527, 5 June 1920.
13. Art. 11, Order no. 1527, 5 June 1920.
14. Art.º 3, Portaria n.º 1527, de 5 de Junho de 1920.
15. See Madeira (2007), particularly Annexes XXXIII to XXXVII.
16. *Boletim Económico e Estatístico* [Economic and Statistical Bulletin] no.6, Special Series (1929:15).
17. Order no. 1401 of 17 January 1920.
18. See Madeira (2007, pp. 528-577).
19. See Madeira (2007), Annexes XXIII and XXXIX.
20. In 1924, the inspector of State Education, Mário Teixeira Malheiros, unequivocally defended this option. See *Boletim Económico e Estatístico*, no. 5, Especial Series (1928: 88).

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Translated by Tania Lopes da Silva

