

TEACHER TRAINING IN MINAS GERAIS: TEACHING ETHICS IN THE
PRECEPTS OF THE REVISTA DE ENSINO IN THE SCENARIO OF 1925–1940

*FORMAÇÃO DOCENTE EM MINAS GERAIS: A ÉTICA DOCENTE NOS PRECEITOS
DA REVISTA DE ENSINO NO CENÁRIO DE 1925–1940*

*LA FORMACIÓN DOCENTE EN MINAS GERAIS: LA ÉTICA DOCENTE EN LOS
PRECEPTOS DE LA REVISTA DE ENSINO EN EL ESCENARIO DE 1925-1940*



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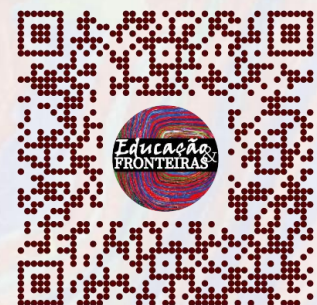


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ABSTRACT: This study addresses the Revista de Ensino de Minas Gerais as a teacher training strategy from 1925 to 1940. The study aims to analyze the professional ethics of teachers and the role of female teachers in the publication. The analysis seeks to understand the discourses' tone toward the teaching profession. The sources used included pedagogical-prescriptive texts, opinion articles, chronicles, and other genres, examined to identify the guiding principles for teacher education and the vision of teaching and the female teacher. The historical and dialectical theoretical-conceptual framework allowed for articulating state and national contexts with the principles for teacher education in the Revista de Ensino. The texts reveal the presence of religious elements in the guidelines for teaching and the teaching profession, indicating the existence of an underlying "religious ethics" in primary education in Minas Gerais, where the role of the teacher was equated with the priesthood.

KEYWORDS: Teacher education. Catholic ethics in teacher education. History of mining education.

RESUMO: Este estudo aborda a Revista de Ensino de Minas Gerais como uma estratégia de formação docente no período de 1925 a 1940. O objetivo do estudo é analisar a ética profissional docente e o papel da professora na publicação. A análise visa compreender o tom dos discursos direcionados ao corpo docente. As fontes utilizadas incluíram textos de cunho pedagógico-prescritivo, artigos de opinião, crônicas e outros gêneros, examinados para identificar os princípios orientadores da formação e da visão do magistério e da professora. O referencial histórico e teórico-conceitual dialético permitiu articular os contextos estaduais e nacionais com os princípios para a formação docente presentes na Revista de Ensino. Os textos revelam a presença de elementos religiosos nas orientações para o magistério e o corpo docente, indicando a existência de uma "ética religiosa" subjacente ao ensino primário em Minas Gerais, onde o papel de professor/professora era equiparado a um sacerdócio.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE: Formação de professores. Ética Católica na formação docente. História da educação mineira.

RESUMEN: La formación docente en Minas Gerais entre 1925 y 1940 estuvo abierta a estrategias diferentes al curso Normal. Estos textos transmitieron elementos de construcción y proyección de una imagen social del director principal en un nuevo orientación para la enseñanza Normal. Las fuentes incluyeron textos de contenido pedagógico- preceptivo, como artículo de opinión y otros. La imagen de la maestra esbozada por la revista señala que la mujer es más apta para enseñar porque Dios así lo quiso y por qué sus "limitaciones" intelectuales. La revista naturalizó la condición de la mujer como madre y maestro. Los textos insinúan una carga de elementos religiosos en ellos las prescripciones para la enseñanza y pueden leerse como evidencia de ética Los religiosos católicos como transferencia de la enseñanza primaria en Minas Gerais: la enseñanza era el sacerdocio.

PALABRAS CLAVE: Formación docente. Ética católica en la formación docente. Historia de la educación minera.

Introduction

The teacher training in Minas Gerais between 1925 and 1940 was studied by Biccás, who analyzed the *Revista do Ensino* published in Minas Gerais in three periods (beginning in 1890, 1925-1940, and 1946-1971) until its discontinuation in 1971 after 239 editions. This magazine was created to assist in the training of primary school teachers. Biccás' historical-critical studies (2005) acknowledge these characteristics of the magazine's features and highlight its role in promoting the government of Minas Gerais as a major supporter of public education and disseminating ideas about teacher education. In other words, the magazine aimed to convey propaganda and disseminate pseudo-pedagogy.

Based on Biccás' findings, this work aims to reflect on the influence of the *Revista de Ensino* as a teacher training strategy from 1925 to 1940. The question arises: what professional ethics permeated the authors' intentions of the published articles? Exploring this question required analyzing the texts that prescribed conduct, attitudes, and duties to the readers. It is essential to understand the texts intended for female teachers, as they represent our historical sources and should be examined from a dialectical theoretical-conceptual framework to connect contrasting elements, such as the local and national context. These sources and this approach help us understand the contradictions between the principles advocated by authors and editors and teacher training. It is worth noting how the teacher figure, as an instruction agent, was represented in the implementation plans of government guidelines.

The understanding expressed in this text is based on consensuses established by historical studies on teacher training in Brazil. Examples of these consensuses include the developments in the training process, such as the creation and reform of schools for the Normal course, that is, the expansion of the number of vacancies for teacher training; reforms in instruction that emphasized the training of educators as a regulated subject; and investment in specific periodicals aimed at prescribing appropriate behaviors and actions for teachers in Minas Gerais.

The training of teaching professionals

Many problems hindered the creation and dissemination of a Normal School model, that is, attempts to establish a teacher training program to constitute a teaching staff for Primary Education. This issue was already a concern even before establishing institutions to train primary school educators (TANURI, 2000). The selection of teachers was a concern preceding normal teacher training initiatives and occurred simultaneously with the provision of vacancies. A keyword helps us understand this simultaneity: scarcity. Sometimes, the scarcity was of school buildings to accommodate a normal training school; other times, it was of students in sufficient numbers to sustain a course. Essentially, the problem lay in the gap left by the monarchy's failure to prioritize population literacy; when this concern became urgent and legally required, almost everything was lacking to materialize the project of mass education. In the case of the teaching staff, the problem was structural: there were few schools in few cities (usually capitals), and the Church maintained them, that is, fees were charged for studies, which excluded many people from the possibility of obtaining the necessary training to occupy positions in the primary schools to be created.

The November 6, 1772 decree regulated education in Brazil, establishing exams for the teachers of the School of First Letters of the Portuguese kingdom. As mentioned by Tanuri (2000, p. 62, our translation), the Law of Primary Schools of 1827 (October 15) was intended to create "[...] schools of first letters in all the cities, towns, and most populous places of the Empire." Articles 7 and 12 stated that when there was an intention to create chairs, it would be necessary to carry out a public examination before the presidents of the council, who would then inform the government to take the necessary steps in appointing the selected individuals.

The law that established the selection exams was discussed in the Chamber. Some parliamentarians believed that women should be exempted from the exam. Furthermore, the law imposed a burden on the teachers in the provincial capitals, as they had to bear the costs of training, according to the mutual method, due to people's lack of interest in pursuing a teaching career (SAVIANI, 2009, p. 144). Therefore, the requirement for teacher preparation was established even before the creation of training courses, although the pedagogical basis of education is not mentioned.

In 1834, the Additional Act transferred the responsibility for public instruction to the provinces, which resulted in the fragmentation of related actions and sparked a debate on decentralization, including teacher training. As mentioned by Azevedo (1996, p. 556, our

translation), elementary education developed in a drawn-out manner "[...] throughout the 19th century, disorganized, anarchic, constantly disintegrated." In the provinces, says Saviani (2009, p. 144, our translation), there was a tendency to "[...] adopt, for teacher training, the path that had been followed in European countries: the creation of Normal Schools."

In 1835, the province of Rio de Janeiro established the first Normal School in Brazil, located in Niterói. In 1836, it was Bahia's turn to create its Normal School, followed by Mato Grosso in 1842. In 1846, the province of São Paulo founded its Normal School, while Piauí established theirs in 1864 and Rio Grande do Sul in 1869. This movement of creating normal schools was consolidated, with provinces in the South, such as Paraná, and in the North, such as Sergipe, establishing their normal schools in the same year of 1870. Another example of this process occurred with the normal schools of Espírito Santo and Rio Grande do Norte, created in 1873, with only one year of difference. The Normal School of Paraíba was created in 1879, followed by Santa Catarina in 1880. Goiás established its Normal School in 1884, Ceará in 1885, and Maranhão in 1890.

These schools had periods of closure and reopening with some intermittence. For this reason, they were criticized by people like Couto Ferraz, who considered them expensive, with low qualitative efficiency and little quantitative expression (there were few schools and few graduating classes). Couto Ferraz, while in charge of the province of Rio de Janeiro, closed the school in Niterói in 1849. At the same time, he prescribed the existence of the adjunct professor (provided for in the 1854 regulation when he held the minister position). This professor would act as an assistant to the regular teacher, and they were expected to improve in subjects and practices. This experience was an attempt to train more teachers without depending on the Normal School. However, training based solely on observation and assisting practice was not successful, resulting in the continued opening of normal schools, and 1859 the Niterói school was reopened.

It is essential to consider that the model for organizing and operating Normal schools resulted from the public education reform in São Paulo in 1890. The reform text establishes: "[...] without well-prepared teachers, practically instructed in modern pedagogical processes and with scientific knowledge suitable for the needs of current life, education cannot be regenerative and effective" (SÃO PAULO, 1890, n.p., our translation). But such teachers "[...] can only come from Normal schools organized in conditions to prepare them" (REIS FILHO, 1995, p. 44, our translation). Thus, the schools were marked by "[...] the insufficiency of their study programs and the lack of practical preparation of their students" (SÃO PAULO, 1890).

Indeed, reforms were urgent. In São Paulo, the reform focused on the existing curriculum and the teaching practice at the Normal School in the capital city. The reform determined the creation of a model school that would be attached to the Normal School, representing the most significant innovation of the reform. The costs of installation and centralization of teacher preparation and exercise practice emphasized the need to ensure pedagogical-didactic preparation and curricular organization for effective training. The effects of this reform were felt in other cities in the interior of São Paulo and in capitals and cities in the interior of other states. This happened because their educators would travel to the town of São Paulo, where they would come into contact with the training, teaching practice, and teachers from São Paulo.

If it is accurate to state that these developments led to the establishment of the Normal school standard that would later be adopted in other regions, ten years after the proclamation of the Republic, the reforms were concluded. The focus remained on mastering knowledge to transmit it. The renewal indeed occurred through the association of teaching and research in education institutes, such as the one in Rio de Janeiro, in the Federal District, established by Anísio Teixeira in 1932 and directed by Lourenço Filho, and the one in São Paulo, inaugurated in 1933 by Fernando de Azevedo. The creation of both institutes was based on the ideology of the new school as a source of inspiration.

In Minas Gerais, according to Araujo's account (2008, p. 323) of the conditions of normal schools in the 19th century, there were eight of them by the end of the Empire. The Normal School of Ouro Preto was established in 1840, followed by the one in Diamantina, based around 1869 and 1870. Additionally, normal schools were founded in Campanha, Montes Claros, Paracatu, Sabará, São João Del Rei, and Uberaba, dating back to the early 1880s.

Statistically, in 1888, there were 576 students in these normal schools (presumably out of over 337,000 students), but the attendance rate was only slightly over 7%, or 24,700 students, even though the number of enrolled students was 39,775.

Changes in the landscape would occur with the reforms of the Normal School in the 20th century. The Secretary of the Interior, Francisco Campos, devoted "efforts to the preparation of the teaching profession," emphasizing the importance of the Normal School as a place for training future teachers and the "Course of Improvement at the Model Normal School on June 14, 1928" as a place to prepare "teachers already in service." The culmination of this movement occurred in 1929 when, as Souza (2001, p. 30, our translation) mentioned, the School

of Improvement was inaugurated. Not by chance, Campos used the press, especially the *Revista do Ensino*, to disseminate the reform and communicate the planned changes to prepare teachers for the desired transformations, particularly regarding their training.

Revista do Ensino as a Teacher Training Strategy

As a publication of pedagogical content aimed at readers involved in public education, such as principals, inspectors, and teachers, *Revista do Ensino* played an essential role in teacher training for primary schools in Minas Gerais, as suggested by Biccás (2008, p. 27). According to the author, the magazine aimed to be a training strategy between 1925 and 1940. As a periodical produced by the directorate of public education, the magazine reflected a combination of concern and action regarding teacher training, being seen as a training strategy.

Intending to have teachers incorporate recommendations, models, and practices, the promoters and editors of *Revista do Ensino* expected teachers to read it effectively. To achieve this, there was an encouragement to read through so-called contests, assuming the participation of the teaching staff. It was expected that teachers would report the "experiences and pedagogical practices" they adopted according to the "new pedagogical references" disseminated in the magazine. In this regard, the section "Our contests" was created, active from 1929 to 1930, in which the names of the winners were published "[...] in official newspapers and the commercial press." As a prize, they received "books by acclaimed authors," which served the editors' purposes of prescribing "good reading" for teachers (BICCAS, 2005, p. 164, our translation).

From 1928 to 1930, *Revista do Ensino* sought to "[...] coordinate a movement of changes in the pedagogical culture of the teaching profession." This effort was reflected in the creation of sections such as "Our Contests," "The Voice of Practice," "Official Acts," "Decroly pedagogical center section," "Modern School," "From Here and There," and others. From 1932 to 1940, these sections were consolidated, even though they changed focus and name. Additionally, the magazine began publishing translated texts (BICCAS, 2005) that addressed topics that established it as "[...] a kind of toolbox, based on pedagogy as the art of teaching." Texts with titles like "How the teacher should be to practice the art of teaching" prescribed content successfully. For this reason, the magazine played a central role in defining examples of teacher conduct, models of pedagogical action, and other suggestions and applications. (REVISTA DO ENSINO, 1926, n. 12, our translation).

The prescription of the texts focused primarily on the behavior of teachers and how they taught and organized their work. Just as in life outside of school, the propagation of a way of being that should be adopted, incorporated, and replicated impacted school activities. As Biccás (2005, p. 159, our translation) states, "Through the selection, frequency, and objectives of the topics addressed and published, it can be said that the editors of the magazine, inspired by modern pedagogy, were committed to the formation and instrumentalization of teachers, teaching them how to teach." The magazine's editions explored conceptions of children, teachers, schools, and methods for almost two years.

They also presented "pedagogical guidelines" focused on working with "language, arithmetic, social studies (geography and history), among others." The work included suggestions for "lesson models" and valuable materials to be used in the classroom, such as texts that stimulate imagination and metalinguistic reflection, such as fables, poems, and stories, as well as activities that develop sensitivity and creativity, such as music and drawing. Lesson planning and methodological procedures were also addressed (BICCAS, 2005).

We believe that, especially in the period from 1925 to 1930, it becomes evident that *Revista do Ensino* proposed a model of teaching and teacher conduct by offering suggestions for "models of pedagogical action" and "activities for the application of new methods" and by proposing "[...] models and lesson plans developed by experienced teachers who worked in schools in Minas Gerais" (BICCAS, 2008, p. 163, our translation). It becomes clear that there were attempts to discipline teacher training and pedagogical conduct, including gestures and attitudes. In this context, another significant text is "My Duties," which addresses the teacher's duties. It is a list of seventy items encompassing various aspects of the school instruction universe. The duties can be grouped according to the following examples.

- The school: whether it is "well-equipped," whether it has a "museum," whether it has a "children's library."
- Classroom: whether there is "good taste in arrangement and decoration" and whether the class is organized "perfectly [...] the classroom."
- Teaching in the classroom: class as a "center of activity" where "everyone works," the use of "centers of interest," coherent "simultaneous teaching" for each student, employing "intuitive methods" and "ideo-visual or global methods," paying attention to "teaching the national language," "illustrating lessons" on the blackboard.

- School and family: promoting "collaboration" between these institutions, teaching measures to combat alcoholism and smoking, emphasizing hygiene in the "place of honor," "my class," and understanding the "school and extracurricular life" of the students.
- Formation reading: "Scout Manual," "regulations," and "primary education programs," "stories and poems" for language classes, visits to the "library," subscribing to a "pedagogical magazine."
- Writing: taking care of the "school's handwriting," whether it is "composing my book, *O Menino?*"
- Pedagogical activities: "school excursions," "school celebrations and parties," "school exhibition, honoring the house," "a retrospective exhibition of students' work."
- Conduct in the classroom: maintaining "a modern school where there are no physical punishments," harmonizing "the freedom of the students with the teacher's authority," using "appropriate means to maintain discipline," separating "energy from violence" and reconciling "energy with politeness."
- Knowledge and teaching abilities: drawing (having to "accurately and correctly draw the map of Brazil"), being didactic ("making history lessons interesting"), having civic musical proficiency ("singing the national anthem," performing "flag salute"), having physical conditioning (performing "gymnastic exercises with precision and energy"), having theoretical and methodological knowledge ("knowing active schooling through the Decroly method"), theoretical-pedagogical knowledge ("psychologizing education"), and evaluation skills ("knowledge related to tests").
- Personal knowledge and abilities: being ready to "provide first aid to an injured person and dress a wound"; being capable of "creating a garden or a vegetable garden"; being able to do "sewing" and "other work"; "easily preparing a small meal."
- Self-criticism: being attentive to the "hygiene" and "education" of one's voice; not "talking too much"; being "liberal and tolerant, discreet and judicious"; to "economic life," among other points (COSTA, 1928, p. 8-9, our translation).

In the original text, the assertive tone of the above list of duties was presented as a question, suggesting that teachers should question themselves. With this rhetorical device, the author avoided sounding prescriptive, remaining at the level of suggestion. For example, the verb "*should*" was avoided when addressing diverse and complex issues such as alcoholism and smoking. Reflecting on such issues would be impractical for married teachers and mothers

amidst the routine divided between home and school. Additionally, the amount of reading and writing seemed incompatible with the time available to deal with many pedagogical and didactic aspects. Finally, the suggestion to reflect on the condition of being liberal seemed poorly suited to the reality of women and mothers, considering the conservative and patriarchal logic of the family and the influence of the husband.

Other texts encouraged self-reflection, constantly challenging the reader through the publication of content that reiterated distinct but interconnected themes. At a certain point, those who wrote for the magazine also addressed the object of the teacher's reflection. In this sense, the editorial guidance of the magazine, aimed at helping to shape teachers, and the internal coherence of the content questioned Costa's alleged impartiality as a prescriber. The use of questions did not exempt him from criticism.

The argument is based on textual excerpts such as the following, which discusses self-examination:

The teacher must be eternally *dissatisfied with oneself*. The study, meditation, the virtue of not hesitating to retreat whenever one feels deviated from the true path [...] [with] the refinement of moral attributes, patience, the unwavering *faith of an evangelized* (PAZ, 1932, p. 58; emphasis added, our translation).

Furthermore, in the following passage, the idea that the teacher should pay attention to their voice, as it is a central instrument in pedagogical work, is reinforced:

It is common for a teacher to have a well-modulated voice outside of school and change it when facing the children. Their voice is loud, strident, harsh, or whining during working hours. In all circumstances, the teacher who speaks calmly and without excessive noise possesses a quality that greatly contributes to controlling the students (*REVISTA DO ENSINO*, 1926, p. 92, our translation).

The reflection proposed on teaching work also applies to classroom management according to teaching methods. Let's see what is mentioned:

If teachers spent more time *organizing their classes*, they would develop better habits to make their work more well-executed and efficient. Often, the method of presenting the subject is poorly outlined, and the introduction of the school period is a hysterical harangue followed by physical and mental fatigue on the part of the students. Frequently, disorder continues during the designated study time, and with few exceptions, no one derives particular benefit from it (*REVISTA DO ENSINO*, 1926, p. 93, our translation).

It is important to observe the idea to advise present in the texts. The self-reflection suggested by the questions led to individual subjective reflection, meaning that the speculations and eventual answers would have different approaches from teacher to teacher. However, reiterating precepts in the texts would be a complementary action, which may or may not converge with the points teachers would arrive at through reflection. While the teacher reserved for themselves the conclusions arising from their reviews prompted by their inquiries, the writers used the concept of teaching practice to substantiate their propositions.

In addition to being a tool for teacher training, *Revista do Ensino* also served to assert and propagate the vision of the government of Minas Gerais regarding public education, aligned with the reforms of Francisco Campos, whose "[...] discourse had a liberal and modernizing tone" (OLIVEIRA; CARVALHO, 2014, p. 149, our translation). However, in practice, there was a traditional view of the teacher, with a certain social image and identity attributed to the teaching profession in primary education, and it was expected that women would perform this role. Articles like "A nova orientação do ensino normal" (The new orientation of normal education) by João Massena exemplify this argument. Let's see how he justifies why women should carry out primary education:

Therefore, Providence entrusted to women the gratifying and, at the same time, burdensome task of guiding childhood. And for these reasons, when I come across a young and spirited male teacher teaching the first letters, I have the impression of encountering an absurdity. Due to the natural limitations of her intelligence, the absolute predominance of her heart over her brain, and the innate feelings of motherhood in her divine organization, a woman is the ideal teacher for tender little children. Repeating these old words, I want to show that I still think as I did back then (MASSENA, 1929, p. 7, our translation).

The author was aware that in his thoughts, he perpetuated an old conception of a teacher, expressed by "old words," contradicting his text titled "new orientation" for normal education. Thus, he affirmed what he saw, namely, his vision and what he upheld as the reason for women to be involved in teaching instead of men. It is no coincidence that he considered the presence of male teachers in the classroom teaching the first letters absurd. His defense is based on the association between being a mother and being a teacher, and he saw intellectual limitations in women, who would be susceptible to prioritizing emotion over reason due to "natural" conditions resulting from "divine providence." For the author, being a mother was as natural as

being a teacher for women. It seems to us that having "feelings of motherhood" is related to the teaching of young children. We can observe attempts here to idealize teaching as an activity inherent to women. The problem is that by considering it innate to the teaching profession, teaching is not recognized as a profession since being a mother is not considered work.

The idea of relating teaching to motherhood due to biological condition and the attributes of a woman's affection was also addressed by a chronicler, Aymoré Dutra, who added the conception that women would have more aptitude for teaching. He recounted an encounter with an educator who was over 62 years old and had been a teacher for over forty years but did not marry or have children, that is, she was not a mother in the strict sense of the word. However, these attributes were insufficient to prevent the chronicler from establishing an association between the teacher and the maternal figure. Let's see:

She sublimated the innate thirst for love and affection that the human heart feels, loving the children and living to teach them. For forty years, her benevolent hands caressed thousands of little heads. And Ms. Ephigenia, who went through life as a spinster and childless, isolated among sad hills, was a mother many thousand times... when I left Ms. Ephigenia, I carried within my heart such a radiant and wholesome joy that illuminated and animated all the melancholy of the landscapes I crossed (DUTRA, 1930, p. 52–56, our translation).

The view of a teacher as a mother is reinforced in the chronicle. The text exemplifies the different views of Minas Gerais society regarding the figure of the teacher. Let's see how the chronicler portrayed the religious teacher: "When I heard about Ms. Ephigenia, I naturally made the inductions that one can make when hearing about a sixty-two-year-old teacher, a spinster, and tucked away in the depths of our land" (DUTRA, 1930, p. 52–56, our translation). The disadvantages women face in Minas Gerais society—being unmarried, not being a mother, and living alone—caught the chronicler's attention. The merits of a teacher with four decades of professional experience were sidelined, perhaps even in third place. It is such an ingrained view of a teacher that its assumptions seem "natural" to him; in other words, it would be considered logical to imagine a woman as someone who deviated from the "natural" condition assigned to women: marriage and motherhood. Supposedly, women frustrated in these aspects would be filled with "hatred" and "resentment against other women who were fulfilling their womanly destiny in life, enlightened by motherhood or lulled by the morning hymns of love" (DUTRA, 1930, p. 52–56, our translation). The chronicler even mentioned the lady's clothes to complete his imagined profile:

A black skirt with a waistband, a bent crucifix from temple to temple, and a small braided knot strategically arranged on the head. As strong elements of ridicule, the glasses and the matinee—this kind of surplice that certain matrons are fond of, giving them the ecclesiastical appearance of an old priest in a procession. Especially when they wear black skirts. [...] Ms. Ephigenia's habits must have been dreadful [...] two hundred daily visits to the church (DUTRA, 1930, p. 52–56, our translation).

Indeed, the text gives the impression that the character in the chronicle was quite conservative, with a serious and austere personality, as indicated by her black clothing, bonnet, braided hair, and glasses. She seemed to be a woman who perhaps excessively frequented the church. In other words, the text seems to convey the image of a devout woman with a religious devotion that could be considered chosen by "Providence" (MASSENA, 1929, p. 7). That is why a certain religious ethic was associated with teaching and teacher training in Minas Gerais through the *Revista do Ensino*.

Decalogue and prayer as an ethical guide for teacher training

If ethics is considered essential for the full realization of teaching as a profession and field of education, then the teacher's professional ethics must encompass moral values, justice, empathy, norms of conduct, and behavior, among other aspects. In this perspective, the *Revista do Ensino* adopted the strategy of publishing texts that reveal conceptions of the teacher and the teaching profession under a religious logic, as evidenced by the explored genres of texts and the vocabulary used.

That is why we mention here the idea of instilling a religious ethic in the training of the teaching staff in Minas Gerais. An example of this can be found in the text entitled "Decalogue of the Teacher."

I shall love the child above all else and more than myself. II I shall humiliate them, neither with words nor with deeds. III I shall be attentive, offering them the assistance of my love and faith. IV I shall honor my profession, and through study, I shall identify with it. V I shall not harbor resentment so as not to become a criminal at heart. VI I shall respect the child's personality, allowing them to be a child as they should. VII With the hope of a sower, I shall make my school the seedbed of my Nation. VIII I shall cherish the truth and, through my example, instill this virtue in the hearts of my disciples. IX The child's interest, life, and happiness shall be my ideal, joy, and reason for existence. X, I shall never be a mercenary and pontificate in the school like an altar—because teaching is a priesthood (REBÊLO, 1934, p. 2, our translation).

As is known, the Decalogue references Judaism's ethical and worship principles, which directly relate to religious creeds. In the case of the Decalogue of the Teacher, each "commandment" contains words, phrases, and sentences that form a progression from the idea of faith to the concept of priesthood, encompassing the relationship between student and disciple, the teacher as a pontiff, and the school as an altar (an object associated with the church and religious practice).

The authorship of the Decalogue text itself reinforces the dissemination and instillation of religious ethics in the teaching staff in Minas Gerais. After all, it was elaborated on and written by a school group director, Mario Rebêlo. He adopted the conception of teaching as a priesthood and perhaps desired the same for the teaching staff under his responsibility. Interestingly, it is in the context of the male teacher (the author) and not the female teacher that the target audience of the Decalogue is situated. This is evident in the use of first-person singular verbs, such as "I shall love," "I shall be," "I shall honor," and the use of the masculine adjective "attentive."

Still, within the context of progression, we move from the Decalogue to the prayer: the text entitled "Prayer of the Teacher," where the intention to instill religious ethics in the training of educators in Minas Gerais is evident, although the target audience of the prayer is female teachers. The connection between teaching and religion is insinuated in the first sentence: "Lord! You who taught, forgive me for teaching and for bearing the name of teacher, which you had on Earth" (REVISTA DO ENSINO, 1926, p. 33, our translation). If God was a teacher and earth was where He taught, now the movement would be from the earth towards the heavens, establishing a link between teaching work and the divine. We will observe another significant passage that illustrates this understanding:

Grant me to be more of a mother than the mothers so that I can love and defend, like the mothers, what is not the flesh of my flesh. Grant me the ability to make one of my disciples my perfect verse [...]. Make your Gospel possible in the current times because I have not renounced the daily and hourly battle for your teaching (REVISTA DO ENSINO, 1926, p. 33, our translation).

The idea expressed by Massena (1929, p. 7) that divine providence entrusted motherhood to women resonates in the text of the prayer. The invocation of the "supreme teacher" implies asking that the teacher, who addresses the Lord, may act as a mother towards her "disciples" to love and protect her children unconditionally. Furthermore, the invocation

also suggests seeking the teacher's teachings as a guide for teaching work by asking for the "Gospel" to be granted to support what the Lord teaches.

Like the Decalogue, the "Prayer of the Teacher" was a collaborative work, but not by a school director or a Brazilian. The Prayer is a Spanish translation by the Chilean educator Gabriela Mistral (*Revista do Ensino*, 1926, p. 33). The fact that the author is a woman perhaps justifies the emphasis on the relationship between teaching and women, but it is clear that it reinforces teaching with a religious connotation due to the association with the divine, with God.

Religious ethics also manifest in texts that prescribe the duties of teachers and what is expected of the teaching profession. The following passage is relevant in this regard:

To be a teacher is to profess the *religion of Duty*, always to look forward and upward [...] to live in *constant vigilance*, noting in the diary of experience the subtleties, the mysteries unveiled in the depths of children's hearts; in short, to make one's own life a sequence of dignifying acts, a perpetual offering of the energy of will, a *code of the highest ethics*. Just as it is not allowed for a *priest* to strip himself of his *sacred character* upon crossing the *thresholds of the temple* after having celebrated the *divine service*, so it is not given for a teacher to divest himself of his attributes [...] The silhouette of responsibility accompanies the teacher, before the world, before his conscience, before God. Ladies and Gentlemen, in your mission, a *divine element* is difficult to mold into *the clay* from which we are *all formed* (PAZ, 1932, p. 59; emphasis added).

In the association between teaching and religious devotion, it becomes evident that Duty stands out as the guiding principle of teaching, a duty whose fulfillment is observed by God. It is in this context that we can understand the tenth commandment of the "Teacher's Decalogue": the school is equated with a "church," and teaching is considered a priesthood (TOLEDO, 1934, p. 75).

Final considerations

The understanding of teacher education in Minas Gerais can benefit from the study conducted by Biccás, which provided an intriguing perspective to understand how the state government approached teacher training. Specifically, it examined the focus on specific issues, such as implementing an editorial project that positioned reading the journal as a professional development means. However, some areas of study require further exploration, considering the comprehensive nature of the author's research. It is the responsibility of the researcher to

balance the different aspects, as we aim to do in this study. In this logic, endorsing the author's postulates, such as the idea that *Revista do Ensino* aimed to communicate with the teaching staff directly, considering the case of a devout teacher, was a way to understand a facet of the intended readership of the publication. In other words, if the magazine conveyed "conceptions" about being a teacher and the teaching mission in schools, the relationships of the devout teacher with the students relate to the relationships between the school and the church: teaching is equated to the priesthood, the teacher is considered a pontiff, and the student is seen as a disciple. Thus, a religious tone becomes evident in the ethics of teacher education through *Revista do Ensino* in Minas Gerais. Being a teacher meant uniting teaching practice with the Catholic faith, the divine, and providence - in a word, with God.

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