



The Salesians in the process of expansion of Secondary School and in the training of young people in Mato Grosso (1895-1951)¹

Os Salesianos no processo de expansão do Ensino Secundário e na formação dos jovens em Mato Grosso (1895-1951)

Los Salesianos en el proceso de expansión de la Enseñanza Secundaria y en la formación de los jóvenes en Mato Grosso (1895-1951)

Elizabeth Figueiredo de Sá
Federal University of Mato Grosso (Brazil)
<https://orcid.org/0000-0002-5861-7535>
<http://lattes.cnpq.br/1975779880933099>
elizabethfsa1@gmail.com

Alessandra Cristina Furtado
Federal University of Grande Dourados (Brazil)
<https://orcid.org/0000-0002-6084-2299>
<http://lattes.cnpq.br/0352539741899197>
alessandrafurtado@ufgd.edu.br

Abstract

This article analyzes the process of expansion of Salesian confessional secondary schools in Mato Grosso and its contribution to the civilizing formation of young people with greater purchasing power in that state, from 1895 to 1951. Initially, we consulted dissertations, theses, and scientific studies produced on the Salesian Order in Brazil and in the state of Mato Grosso. Afterwards, we turned to documentary sources, prioritizing scientific journals. The analysis is anchored in the contributions of Norbert Elias. The results showed that the educational performance of the Salesian Order was directed and expanded, mainly to the south of the state, where they offered secondary education for both sexes, in different schools, aiming at the civilizing formation of young people from families with greater purchasing power, preparing them as leaders to act in society, in the case of men, and as wives and mothers conscious of their duties to family and society, in the case of women.

Keywords: Salesian Order. Secondary school. Expansion. Youth training.

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Resumo

Este artigo analisa o processo de expansão das escolas secundárias confessionais salesianas em Mato Grosso e a sua contribuição na formação civilizadora dos jovens de maior poder aquisitivo desse estado, no período de 1895 a 1951. Inicialmente, consultamos dissertações, teses e obras produzidas sobre a Ordem Salesiana no Brasil e no estado de Mato Grosso. Após, voltamo-nos para as fontes documentais, priorizando os periódicos. A análise está ancorada nos aportes de Norbert Elias. Os resultados apontaram que a atuação educacional da Ordem Salesiana se direcionou e expandiu, principalmente, para o sul do estado, onde ofereciam o ensino secundário para ambos os sexos, em escolas distintas, visando a formação civilizatória dos jovens de famílias de maior poder aquisitivo, preparando-os como líderes para atuarem na sociedade, no caso dos rapazes, e de esposas e mães conscientes de seus deveres para com a família e sociedade, no caso das moças.

Palavras-chave: Ordem Salesiana. Ensino Secundário. Expansão. Formação de jovens.

Resumen

Este artículo analiza el proceso de expansión de las escuelas secundarias confesionales salesianas en Mato Grosso y su contribución en la formación civilizadora de los jóvenes con mayor poder adquisitivo de ese estado, en el periodo de 1895 a 1951. Inicialmente, consultamos disertaciones, tesis y obras producidas sobre la Orden Salesiana en Brasil y en el estado de Mato Grosso. Después, nos volcamos a las fuentes documentales, priorizando los periódicos. El análisis está anclado en los aportes de Norbert Elias. Los resultados apuntaron que la actuación educativa de la Orden Salesiana se direccionó y expandió, principalmente, hacia el sur del estado, donde se ofrecía educación secundaria para ambos sexos, en diferentes escuelas, con el objetivo de la formación civilizadora de los jóvenes de familias con mayor poder adquisitivo, preparándolos como líderes para actuar en la sociedad, en el caso de los muchachos, y de las esposas y madres conscientes de sus deberes para con la familia y la sociedad, en el caso de las muchachas.

Palabras clave: Orden Salesiana. Enseñanza secundaria. Expansión. Formación de jóvenes.

Introduction

The Salesians arrived in Brazil in the city of Niterói, province of Rio de Janeiro, in 1883, and in the province of São Paulo, in 1885, with the objective of instilling the Catholic faith in Brazilians and freeing them from what was considered ignorance and superstition (SILVA, 2009). In the educational area, the Salesians acted with the purpose of educating Brazilian society in the Roman Church principles and molds. Thus, they conceived education as an instrument for controlling the population and ensuring that future generations professed and defended the Christian faith. The presence of Salesian missionaries in Brazilian lands also favored the coming of the Daughters of Mary Help of Christians, the female wing of the Salesian Order, in 1892. In the communities where they were required to develop the educational work, these religious women worked as educators, catechists, and missionaries.

The Salesian missionaries and the Daughters of Mary Help of Christians inaugurated primary and secondary schools, which, according to Boto (2010, p. 37), worked as passports for the world of adults, that is, “[...] school strategies of education, training, and civilization institute ways to prepare childhood and adolescence for skills and knowledge that will be, by all means, required of them in adulthood.”

Salesian educational practices are based on the Preventive System of Don Bosco, which “[...] does not expressly contemplate a didactic method, a series of studies, such as the *Conduite des Écoles de La Salle* or the *Ratio Studiorum* of the Society of Jesus [...]” (CAVIGLIA, 1987, p. 29). As Scaramussa (2013) guarantees, although Don Bosco was not a theorist of education, his practice had a systematic character, outlined in his “Preventive System”, which provided the arrangement of the pedagogical mentality of his time in terms of educational practices based on three pillars: religion, reason, and *amorevolezza*. Regarding the three pillars, Fonseca (1999, p. 52) explains:

- reason is the first element of Don Bosco’s educational secret. If the educator uses Reason in dealing with the students, a mature, rational, and critical response is provoked in them.
- religion (transformative charity) – guides Reason and “Amorevolezza.” In the Preventive System of Don Bosco it is not a question of religion in the sense of religious or piety practices but of a religion that leads the young to the exact fulfillment of their duties, as a citizen and Christian.
- amorevolezza (love that one feels and manifests) – is the love of the educator for the student. Don Bosco uses literally “amorevolezza,” which is the love that is expressed in words, actions, and even in the eyes and face. (FONSECA, 1999, p. 52).

Regarding practices like this, Elias (1994) understands that:

It immediately becomes clear that this polite, extremely gentle, and relatively considerate way of correcting someone, especially when exercised by a superior, is a much stronger means of social control, much more effective at inculcating enduring habits than insult, mockery, or threat of physical violence. (ELIAS, 1994, p. 93).

In this sense, investing in the creation of schools under the Salesian orientation meant much more than teaching how to read, write, count: it implied civilizing. According to Boto (2010, p. 47), “Making a society civilized supposes systematically expanding the radius of rationality in the treatment. Manners are softened, subtleties are created for social exchange, a pattern of conduct of distinction is offered [...]” Thus, the Salesians educated and civilized with gentle and loving practices, to instill knowledge and values in childhood and youth, with a view to forming citizens suitable and useful to the Homeland that was in a wide modernization process.

This article analyzes the expansion of Salesian confessional secondary schools in Mato Grosso and the contribution of the civilizing formation of young people with greater purchasing power in that state. The period is justified by the creation of the first secondary school in Mato Grosso, in 1895, and extends until the issuance of Ordinance No. 614, of May 10, 1951, which changed the directions of the Secondary School in force in the period. The Organic Law of Secondary Education (1942), authored by Minister Gustavo Capanema, suffered criticism both for its inadequacy to the national moment and for its bookish tradition. In this scenario, such Law ended up being in force for a short period due to the issuance of Ordinance No. 614, of May 10, 1951, signed by Minister Simões Filho, who charged the congregation of Colégio Pedro II with simplifying and eliminating excesses of the programs of different secondary school subjects (OLIVEIRA; CARDOSO, 2010). It can be said that this reform in the secondary education curriculum is part of the debates and processes of expansion of this type of education in Brazil² (BRAGHINI, 2005; RIBEIRO JUNIOR; MARTINS, 2018).

Initially, we consulted dissertations and theses on secondary education in the state and works produced on the Salesian Order in Brazil and in the state of Mato Grosso. Afterwards, we turned to the documentary sources, prioritizing the journals consulted in the Digital Newspaper Library of the Brazilian National Library. The analyses had as theoretical reference the concept of civilizing processes by Norbert Elias (1994).

To approach the objective, we first dealt with the arrival of the Salesians and the Daughters of Mary Help of Christians in Mato Grosso, to understand the objectives that led them to act in this state. Subsequently, we approached the expansion of secondary schools under the direction of the Salesians, with a view to perceiving the places in which they settled and, consequently, the clientele they would prepare for adulthood and their performance in society.

The arrival of the Salesian Order in Mato Grosso

The stay of missionaries in Mato Grosso was stimulated by political interests, seeking, with catechetical action, to civilize Indigenous people since in the imagination of the rulers Indigenous people were barbarians and uncivilized, which would not allow progress. The state government tried, with the public administration, to get rid of the image of the land of barbarism: “[...] the notion of barbarism was linked to that of the wilderness, especially when

² For Braghini (2005), the discourses on secondary education in the 1950s reflected changes arising from other social spaces, such as the interrelationship between urban-industrial growth, the search of the middle class for social ascension with the secondary education as an access path, the pressures exerted on this education, and, ultimately, government policy. Thus, according to Ribeiro Júnior and Martins (2018, p. 6), this Curricular Reform from 1951 “[...] was interwoven in this social and dispute dynamic, since the reorganization of the secondary education system, with a view to the expanded service of the school public, occurred marked by the debate about the purposes of the school, tensions between the defenders of secular public schools; defenders of confessional schools and other private schools; and with all those involved mobilizing and seeking to influence the organization of the system and define elements that could subsidize the Law of Guidelines and Bases of Education that was already being processed in the period.”

the reference was the interior regions, inhabited by Indigenous societies characterized as entirely wild” (GALETTI, 2012, p. 57). Mato Grosso was believed to be a state dedicated to agricultural production, but the clashes with the Indigenous people caused discomfort not only for farmers and cultivators, but also for future investors in the region.

Anxious for the help of the Salesians, the governor of Mato Grosso, Manoel José Murinho, wrote a letter in 1891 addressed to Bishop Carlos D’Amour of Cuiabá, requesting the presence of religious people for the catechization of the Indigenous peoples.

In this scenario, Corumbá was the first city visited by the Salesian expedition to implement a missionary project. On this occasion, the religious people presented plans to found a school and a festive oratory³ (FRANCISCO, 2010). From Corumbá, the expedition proceeded towards Cuiabá, as the governor of the state of Mato Grosso requested, arriving on June 18, 1894, under the direction of Bishop Don Luis Lasagna.

Father Antônio Malan, one of the members of the expedition, was appointed by the bishop of Cuiabá to the role of vicar of the São Gonçalo parish, which was constituted as the first parish entrusted to the Salesians in Brazilian lands. Next to this parish, the religious people installed a Festive Oratory for boys and founded the “Liceu Salesiano de Artes e Ofícios”. In addition, they received the task of civilizing the Indigenous peoples, that is, they had as missionary task the catechization and the incorporation of Indigenous populations into the Brazilian nation. However, evidently the government of Mato Grosso sought help from the Salesians to pacify the Indigenous peoples in a civilizing process.

In April 1895 the Daughters of Mary Help of Christians arrived in Cuiabá to assist the Salesian priests in missionary actions with the Indigenous peoples and other activities. Thus, the Salesian missionaries and the Daughters of Mary Help of Christians took over the leadership of the Thereza Cristina Military Colony, in which, between 1895 and 1898, they made their first contact with Indigenous education, in an existing school. During this period, the Sisters collaborated with the Salesians, offering the teaching of home practices, sewing classes, and catechesis. According to Francisco (2010), the reports recording that the Indigenous women were already wearing clothes produced in the Colony – a production that started from the process of weaving the yarns – ended up demonstrating the reach of civilization, and the catechetical action among the Indigenous people of Mato Grosso. Such activity was considered by the Salesian Mission a success for Indigenous socialization; however, this gradually mischaracterized these natural inhabitants of their tastes and ways, and shaped them according to an image of civilized of the Old World.

In addition to taking over the Thereza Cristina Colony, the Daughters of Mary Help of Christians were invited, in 1891, by Don Carlos D’Amour, to replace the Vincentian Sisters in the direction of the Asilo Santa Rita. In doing so, the Salesians faced many difficulties since this school, destined to children, adolescents, and young people in need and orphans of the female sex, was going through financial difficulties, “[...] a problem that lasted many years” (LOPES, 2006, p. 179). The Asilo Santa Rita received subsidies from the State for its operation, and, as a boarding school, it offered courses of ornament making, piano and painting, manual works and notions of calligraphy and drawing, Portuguese and arithmetic, geography and history. In addition, “[...] it offered singing, gymnastics, recitation, dramatic representations, and domestic care classes as a way to prepare girls for the varied circumstances of future life” (LOPES, 2006, p. 182-183).

³ The Festive Oratory was a kind of spearhead of the Salesian work, whose primary purpose became the education of the poor youth. Establishing festive oratories created a favorable environment in the locality or city for the progressive implementation of other activities. The Festive Oratory held catechism classes, which helped the better reception of the sacraments, including the first communion. The young people were invited to participate in the main religious festivals. The most assiduous to the Oratory, received awards and tours (AZZI, 1999).

This Asilo enabled many girls and young people to study, especially those from rural areas who found in this institution a space to study and learn the role of housewives, and the incentive to join and enroll in the State Teachers' College. Thus, when they returned to their small towns or rural areas, they could act as child educators⁴ (LOPES, 2006). The motivation of Salesians was not only Indigenous catechetical action; they were also interested in the areas of health and, above all, education, as Azzi (1999) points out:

The mission of the Salesians and the Daughters of Mary Help of Christians in Latin America should be not only the care of the poor and abandoned youth, but also the opening of colleges for the formation of the ruling class, opposing religious teaching to lay teaching. (AZZI, 1999, p.15).

Thus, the Salesians opened schools, colleges, and even hospitals in Latin American countries, such as Brazil. In any case, with the annual arrival of missionaries from Italy and São Paulo, in Mato Grosso, the Salesian Sisters took over the teaching of the functions inherent to the female sex at the time, expanded and started schools in other cities in the interior of the state, such as Colégio Imaculada Conceição, in 1904, in Corumbá; Colégio Maria Auxiliadora, in 1908, in Ladário; Colégio Maria Auxiliadora, in Registro do Araguaia, in 1917; Colégio Nossa Senhora Auxiliadora and Escola Normal [Teachers' College], in Campo Grande, in 1926; Instituto Maria Auxiliadora, in Alto Araguaia, in 1927, among others (LOPES, 2006).

Many Mato Grosso families chose to leave their daughters to the educational care of the Salesian Sisters. However, the Salesians were not the only ones to participate in this new implementation of the Roman Church in Mato Grosso since other religious institutes also collaborated, such as the Lazarists, the Jesuits, the Daughters of Charity, the Franciscans, the Sisters of Saint Joseph and of Saint Dorothy. As Lopes (2006) points out, during the Episcopate of D. Carlos, for example, the Lazarists landed in Cuiabá to take over the Seminary of the Conception, and the Daughters of Charity, the Asilo Santa Rita. Then came the Franciscans of the Third Order of St. Francis (TOR) and the Sisters of the Immaculate Conception.

Salesian action in the creation of secondary education institutions in Mato Grosso lands

With the arrival of the Salesians and Sisters of the Congregation of the Daughters of Mary Help of Christians in Mato Grosso, at the end of the nineteenth century, several schools were established, carrying, according to the Order, "Unlimited charity. Science without privileges" (MARCILIO, 1963, p.166).

Regarding the performance of these religious people in secondary education, the first initiative took place in Cuiabá, in 1895, when the middle school course was established with the first vocational courses, offering workshops of locksmithing, carpentry, tailoring, and shoemaking, so that the School started to be called Lyceu de Artes e Ofícios São Gonçalo.

According to Francisco (2009, p. 95), from then on the educational action of the Salesians was organized "[...] as the radiating center of the mission, became the model of institution and educational practice for the other houses of the State. The Lyceum operated under the modality of boarding school, day school and semi-boarding school, offering primary and secondary courses."

⁴ In 1903, however, the Salesian sisters had to leave the leadership of this Asilo, due to an ecclesial conflict between Don Carlos D'Amour and the Salesians, which resulted in the suspension of all activities of this religious Order throughout the Diocese of Cuiabá, returning only in 1922 (LOPES, 2002; 2006).

Secondary education, aimed at the graduation of bachelors of science and letters, deserved careful attention from the Salesians. It was frequented by the middle class and the children of the local leaders. It was equated to Ginásio Nacional Pedro II in 1902, which represented relative autonomy for the Salesians since their students no longer needed to take the final exams at the Liceu Cuiabano and could implement the curriculum, such as offering the mercantile bookkeeping course, in response to local demands. (FRANCISCO, 2009, p.95).

In 1920, the Lyceu Salesiano São Gonçalo, as it was called, went through difficulties and had some of its activities interrupted, returning in 1935 with secondary school education and entrance exams. In 1944, it received the right to operate permanently by Decree No. 15,633/1944 (MARCILIO, 1963).

With the educational reform of secondary education, sanctioned by the Minister of Education and Public Health, Gustavo Capanema, who established by the Decree-Law No. 4,244/1942 the bases for the organization of this degree of education, this was organized into two cycles: 1st cycle, called Ginásio (secondary, industrial, commercial, and agricultural), and 2nd cycle, divided between classical and scientific, called Colégio. Thus, the Liceu Salesiano São Gonçalo, until the 1950s, operated as Ginásio São Gonçalo, offering the first cycle of secondary education.

In the other localities of the state, new schools were created or began offering secondary education, such as Colégio Santa Teresa in Corumbá, founded in April 1899, in a house rented by the first Salesians who arrived in the city. It focused on the education of boys, with a child and elementary course as boarding, semi-boarding, and day school systems. For the construction of a suitable space, Bishop Don Carlos donated to the Congregation of Salesian missionaries a plot of land in the square of Santa Teresa and the Municipal Chamber donated lots. On “[...] May 29, 1902, the foundation stone was laid and, on January 29, 1905, the feast of the patron saint of the Congregation – São Francisco de Sales –, the first wing of the Colégio was inaugurated [...] where the classrooms and the residence of the Salesians were installed” (SILVA, 2009, p. 46).

According to Oliveira (2014), the data from the school biography point to 1916 as the beginning of the secondary school course, with eleven students in the 1st year and seven in the 2nd year. However, the secondary school course at the Colégio only appears in the messages of state presidents from 1919. The author explains that:

The years coming to 1917 were not positive for the consolidation of the secondary school serial course in Santa Teresa. Between 1918 and 1923, there were several attempts to open the 2nd grade, but they were unsuccessful. [...]. Even in 1929, there was a need to close the secondary school course due to the small number of students enrolled. (OLIVEIRA, 2014, p. 120).

The secondary Course only restarted in full force in 1939, forming the middle and upper layers of society. “In this way, students from these social sectors had the option of secondary education and when concluding it, they went to other states to enter higher education, later returning to Corumbá to assume prominent positions in society” (SILVA, 2009, p. 57).

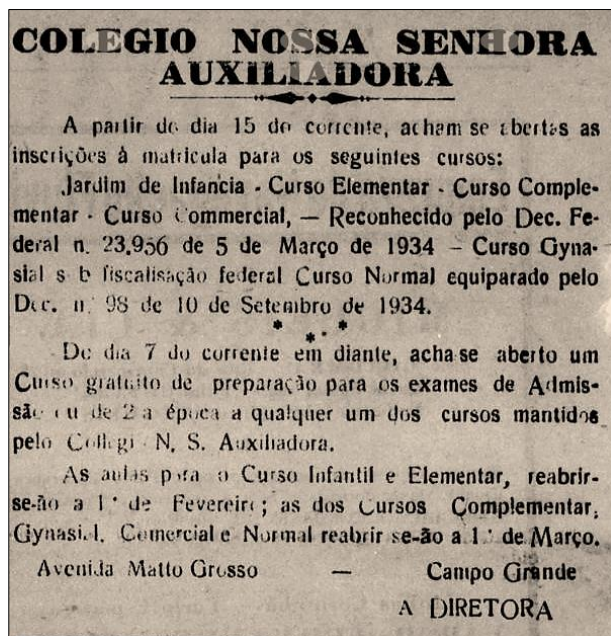
Six years after the arrival of the Salesian priests in the state, the Daughters of Mary Help of Christians also arrived in Corumbá, having been received in Porto Geral. They installed Colégio Imaculada Conceição in 1904, focused on “[...] education of girls as a primary education institution and kindergarten” (SILVA, 2014, p. 63). *O Pequeno Mensageiro*, a journal of the

Lyceu Salesiano S. Gonçalo, after a visit to the Colégio, published: “Corumbá can be proud to own a teaching house such as the Collegio Immaculada Conceição, which, in the genre, is undoubtedly the best in Matto-Grosso” (O PEQUENO Mensageiro, 1927, Issue 116, p. 3). From 1937 onwards, it began offering the middle school course and, in 1941, the Council of the Inspectorate acquired a plot of land for the construction of a building, to expand school coverage.

The Pestalozzi Institute was first installed in Aquidauana, in 1915, by the lawyer Arlindo Lima, offering primary and secondary education. Then, the school establishment was transferred to Campo Grande, according to the proposal of this municipality’s city hall, which, as a result, offered as an incentive to subsidize the institution. In 1922, Arlindo Lima leased the Institute to Professor Henrique Corrêa, who, due to his illness, sold it to Professor Tessitori Júnior, from São Paulo. In its management, the Institute was named Gymnasio Pestalozzi and, with Resolution No. 124, of February 10, 1927, had its name changed to Gymnasio Municipal de Campo Grande (SÁ; BARROS, 2018). In 1930, the Salesian Mission bought the Ginásio Municipal, naming it Ginásio Municipal Dom Bosco and continuing to offer the primary and secondary courses.

Still in Campo Grande, the Colégio Nossa Senhora Auxiliadora was founded on February 22, 1926, which, according to Trubiliano and Martins (2010, p. 3), “[...] proposed to educate the ‘daughters of the hinterland’, offering, at first, the primary course and, later, the teachers’ courses, in 1931, commercial ones, in 1934, and middle school, in 1938. The students could be enrolled in boarding, semi-boarding, or day school.” Although the authors have pointed out the offer of the secondary school course since 1938, we found a record in the *Jornal do Commercio* that declares the existence of the secondary course since 1935:

Figure 1 – Advertising of Colegio N. S. Auxiliadora – 1935



Source: *Jornal do Commercio*, 1935, Issue 1721, p. 4⁵

⁵ Colegio Nossa Senhora Auxiliadora

From the 15th of the current month, enrollment is open for the courses:

Kindergarten – Elementary Course – Complementary Course – Commercial Course – under federal Decree No. 23,956 of March 5, 1934 – Secondary Course under Federal supervision Teacher’s College equated by the Decree No. 98 of September 10, 1934.

From the 7th of the current month enrollment is open for a free Course of preparation for the Admission exams to any of the courses from Colegio N. S. Auxiliadora.

The classes for the Kindergarten and Elementary course will restart on February 1st; those of the Complementary, Secondary, Commercial, and Teacher’s College courses will restart on March 1st.

In this context, when Sister Bartira Constança Gardés began her religious life in 1930, she went to Colégio Imaculada Conceição, in Corumbá, and, a year later, to Campo Grande to work at Colégio Nossa Senhora Auxiliadora. She explained her daily life, as a religious person and educator thus:

My hours were short for so many activities. In the morning I taught in the Commercial course and in the Secondary school (which was created in 1936⁶) Portuguese, French, Latin, General and Brazilian History, Psychology, Sociology, Philosophy, History of Education, Biology. The only subject I never taught was Mathematics.

In the afternoon I taught the third and fourth primary years. I would leave one class, enter another, it was a struggle demanded by the difficulties of the time. We were few sisters and could not hire outside teachers, due to the financial problems we faced with the construction of the school. We had only two professors from the outside: Major Severino de Queirós who taught Portuguese and Schimidt who taught English. (ROSA, 1990, p. 89).

The documentation indicates the Sisters' efforts to build the school building and the use the work overload to save resources. In 1938, the institution was renamed Ginásio N. S. Auxiliadora, and, when providing the 2nd cycle of secondary education, it was renamed Colégio.

According to Bittar and Ferreira Jr. (1999, p. 41), both colleges in Campo Grande operated on a boarding school and day school basis and offered primary and secondary education, "[...] which attracted to Campo Grande, the children of middle-class farmers in the south of Mato Grosso, since the wealthier families sent their young ones to schools in Rio de Janeiro and, to a lesser extent, to São Paulo".

In 1939, in the city of Alto Araguaia, the Salesian school called Obras de Cristo Redentor was founded, which, in 1951, came to be called the Salesian Patronage, receiving male students as a day school and boarding school. Two years later, for providing the 1st cycle of secondary education, the institution was called Ginásio "Padre Carletti" (MARCILIO, 1963).

In a report, the Catholic journal *A Cruz* (A CRUZ, 1959) published the following article about the Ginásio:

Figure 2 – Report on the Ginásio Padre Carletti – 1959



Source: *A Cruz*, 1959, Issue 2273, p. 2⁷

Although the journal points out that this is the “cheapest boarding school in the entire State,” according to Lima (2001, no page, emphasis added), the Ginásio served an economically favored clientele, preparing young people “religiously, *refining the spirit*, but preparing them to be the future leaders of society”. It was intended to educate a select layer of society.

The Salesians “[...] acquired for the comfort of the students a large farm, crossed by a river, where they went to bathe frequently in their tours”, which became part of the institution’s marketing that, according to the announcement, offered “a wide sports square, enchanting places for tours and excursions” (LIMA, 2001, no page).

In the city of Miranda, still in the southern portion of the state, a primary course maintained by the Missionary Congregation of the Most Holy Redeemer was installed, which, in 1955, began to offer secondary education, being called Ginásio Paroquial Nossa Senhora do Carmo (MARCILIO, 1963).

In 1945, the Ginásio Coração de Jesus was created in the capital. In this regard, the history of the school clarifies:

⁷ Ginásio Padre Carletti

ALTO ARAGUÁIA – Mato-Grosso

At more than 700 m of altitude, on the riverbank of the Araguáia, enviable climate, healthy water. On top of serious discipline, you can find family life, communal timetable split between study, prayer, and healthy entertainment, lending familiarity to college life. Wide sports square, enchanting places for tours and excursions.

As the cheapest boarding school in the entire State, by its location, it will help the student to dedicate himself seriously to his studies, with the help of healthy and plentiful food and a select group of teachers.

Only Catholic Gymnasium in the east of Mato Grosso and southeast of Goiás.

Its creation originated at the request of the then Archbishop, Dom Francisco de Aquino Correia, concerned with the education of women youth. In the 1940s, the Salesians, in full development, worked in the field of education and training of young people.

Don Aquino contacted Mother Marta Cerutti, Inspector of the Daughters of Mary Help of Christians (FMA), asking her to create the school since the sisters worked with the Primary School. The students of the Asilo Santa Rita who took the secondary school course went to class at the State School of Mato Grosso. Young women who did not want to study at the State School, or stopped their studies or, according to the possession of the family, went to other states

With the positive response of Mother Marta, Don Aquino, a friend of Dr. Gustavo Capanema (1900-1985), Minister of Education and Health (1934-1945), requested authorization to run the school in a temporary building (Asilo Santa Rita). With this authorization, its operation was speeded up, so it began working with two classes in 1945, with 6 sister teachers. The director of Asilo Santa Rita was Sister Carmelita Nebiolo. (COLÉGIO CORAÇÃO DE JESUS, 2022, online).

The classes began with 64 boarding and 330 external students, who “[...] were divided into two shifts: the middle school course, from 2nd to 4th grade, ran in the morning. The primary and admission course, as well as the 1st grade of the secondary, ran in the afternoon” (AZZI, 2004, p. 329). In an article titled “Ginásio Coração de Jesus: a primeira série ginásial” (first grade of secondary school), from the newspaper *A Cruz* (A CRUZ, 1945), the *Primícias* (*Firstfruits*) recorded:

We here are the – FIRST GRADE LEVEL of Ginásio Coração de Jesus. We are 64 students divided into two classes; we receive classes taught by teachers duly registered with the D.N.E in two large rooms of Asilo Santa Rita, until the majestic building in advanced construction on Rua Comandante Costa, opens its large doors to our joyful and enthusiastic entrance.

We salesianly and joyfully began our, very regular, classes since March 15th. We take a certain air of importance when we start learning living languages and dead languages. Or French and the Latin showing us that we’re not in elementary school anymore... (A CRUZ, 1945, Issue 1673, p. 4).

By signing the report as *Primícias*, they referred to the Civic center *Primícias do Ginásio Coração de Jesus*, which began operating from the first year under the name of Feminine Department of Ginásio São Gonçalo (A VIOLETA, 1945, Issue 319).

Thus, among advances, setbacks, and difficulties, the Salesians and the Daughters of Mary Help of Christians held nothing back to create and constitute a network of secondary education institutions in Mato Grosso, from the late nineteenth century to the first half of the twentieth century, focused on the formation of young men and women, belonging to the elites of Mato Grosso, especially those from the south of the state.

Final considerations

The Salesians, with their strong activity in the educational sector, left deep marks on teaching in Mato Grosso. Regarding specifically the performance in secondary education, we can observe that some of the schools founded since their arrival in the state are still in full operation.

Turning to the delimited period, we explain that the educational activity of the Salesians was directed mainly to the south of the state. This allowed us to conjecture that such an event occurred since its performance in the north of the state turned mainly to catechization and Indigenous civilization, due to the numerous ethnic groups inhabiting the wide region of native areas. Most of the municipalities were in the southern region of the state, with better communication between them and, therefore, a greater number of inhabitants.

In the central cities, such as Cuiabá, Corumbá and Campo Grande, the Salesians offered secondary education for both sexes, in different schools, aiming at the civilizing formation of young people who attended such establishments aimed at the formation of leaders who would act in society, and of women, wives, and mothers instrumentalized and aware of their duties to the family and society.

Although the Salesians were not the only Religious Order to work in school education in Mato Grosso, regarding secondary education, they were the ones who managed to build and institutionalize a network of Catholic schools of private initiative, marking the culture, the history of education, and the formation of men and women of the elites of Mato Grosso.

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