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**PORTUGUESE
COLONIAL
EXPLOITATION IN
MOZAMBIQUE AND
THE MIGRATION OF
WORKERS TO THE
TRANSVAAL, 1897 –
1930¹**

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Abstract: When the Portuguese metropolis occupied the territory of Mozambique in 1897, it established rules to effectuate the subjection of the population and make the Mozambican colony productive and profitable. The goal of this work is to demonstrate how this occupation was carried out and the transformation of southern Mozambique into a large reserve of labor for diamond and gold mines in the South Africa's territory. Anchored in the source organized and compiled by Luís Antônio Covane "The economic relations between Mozambique and South Africa, 1850 - 1960" and the bibliography on the subject, we discuss how Portugal exploited the Mozambican workforce, leading a good part of the workers to emigrate to the Transvaal. Between taxes and forced labor, the occupation of Mozambican lands took shape and led Africans to the habit of work. The agreements between Portugal and the Transvaal involved the brokerage of manpower and the use of the railways, thus serving the interests of the Portuguese metropolis, which profited from each worker emigrated to the Transvaal and, on the other hand, also met the great need for manpower, for the exploration of gold in the Rand region.

Keywords: workers; migration; Mozambique; Transvaal.

After the Ultimatum of the Colonial Powers at the Berlin Conference² the occupation of the colony of Mozambique was urgent. To this end, the Portuguese metropolis commissioned Antônio Enes to carry out the occupation and pacification

of the territories of Mozambique. To make the Mozambican colony prosper, it was necessary to civilize its population. By gradually abandoning their customs and learning the benefits of work, the indigenous could aspire to assimilation and progress. The Portuguese administration created mechanisms to subject Africans and force them to work and thus obtain conditions and income to implement the colonial project. By monetizing the economy and imposing the hut tax, the metropolis forced Africans to look for paid work. Mozambicans, of the black race, who were caught on the streets and who could not prove the registration of an employment contract would be subjected to forced labor.

THE OCCUPATION AND COLONIZATION OF MOZAMBIQUE

What really mattered in practice, after Berlin, was an effective occupation also in the countryside, although the Treaty of Berlin did not specifically say so.³ The effective occupation and pacification of the territories of Mozambique would have to be carried out with commitment, since in the Portuguese metropolis the "press and parliament were agitating the idea of selling the territory".⁴ Antônio Enes and his team of Portuguese officials were tasked with this feat and were "more or less obsessed with the 'colonial question'.⁵ And Enes, in his own words, expressed this responsibility: "... the persuasion continued in my mind that it was necessary to do something, a lot, perhaps everything,

2. The Berlin Conference lasted from November 15, 1884 to February 26, 1885 and it was up to the Conference to bring to Africa the benefits of civilization in general and of commerce in particular [...] decide rules for the occupation of the new territories of the African coast, for the cause of peace and humanity. WESSELING, H. L. *Dividir para Dominar: A partilha da África (1880 - 1914)* Trad. Celina Brandt. 2 ed. Rio de Janeiro: UFRJ, 2008, p. 130.

3. WESSELING, 2008, p. 212.

4. MACAGNO, L. O discurso colonial e a fabricação dos usos e costumes: Antônio Enes e a "Geração de 95". In: FRY, P. Org. *Moçambique Ensaios*, Rio de Janeiro: UFRJ, 2001, p. 68.

5. MACAGNO, 2001, p. 62.

for Mozambique in favor of Portugal.”⁶ To bring the process of effective occupation of Mozambique to a “successful conclusion”, a group of military, administrators and colonial governors⁷ accompanied Antônio Enes. “It was the ‘Geração de 95’ that, through colonial practice, personified the process by virtue of which ‘de facto power’ became ‘right power’ and force became ‘legitimate power’”.⁸ Before the strengthening and consolidation of the administrative system, the pacification of areas not yet incorporated was carried out. This period of “effective occupation” was carried out through two major military operations: one in southern Mozambique for the incorporation of the Kingdom of Gaza (1895-1897), and another in the region of the Zambezi River, which consisted of the conquest of the Barué (1902).⁹

Lorenzo Macagno argues that the two main tasks for which Antônio Enes was consecrated and perpetuated as the great colonial reorganizer consisted of the process of administrative decentralization, where the laws of the Metropolis must be applied only to the Metropolis and the laws in the colonies must correspond to the “degree of evolution” of local populations. The second task was a major reform regarding work in the colonies, in the context of a configuration that emerged from the process of the abolition of slavery and the rise of plantation economies. Enes’

6. ENES, A. **Moçambique – Relatório apresentado ao governo**. 4ª edição Fac Similada pela de 1946. Lisboa: Imprensa Nacional – Agência Geral do Ultramar. 1971, p. 67.

7. This group of Portuguese military, administrators and colonial governors were called the “95 Generation”. MACAGNO, 2001, p. 62.

8. MACAGNO, 2001, p. 63.

9. MACAGNO 2001, pp. 63-64.

10. MACAGNO, op. cit., p. 68.

11. MENESES, M. P. O “indígena” africano e o “colono” europeu: a construção da diferença por processos legais. **E-cadernos ces**, Lisboa: mar, 2010. Disponível em: URL: <http://eces.revues.org/403>. Consultado 27 fevereiro 2014, p. 73.

12. ENNES, 1946: 27 apud MENESES, 2010, p. 75.

13. MENESES, 2010, p. 78.

14. Compulsory labor called Shibalo in Mozambique is found with several spellings, but always with the same meaning of forced labor. Author Jeanne Penvenne writes Chibalo and there are still authors like Feliciano who write Xibàlu. For this work we will use the Shibalo spelling, unless we are citing another author.

15. MENESES, op. cit., p. 75.

16. ENNES, 1946: 28 apud MENESES, 2010, p. 75.

labor reforms were functional not only in terms of the reconversion of markets, but also in the civilizing emphasis with which they were presented.¹⁰

The main goal of the Portuguese colonial mission, according to the anthropologist Maria Paula Meneses, was to “free the indigenous people from barbarism, transforming them into more evolved beings by teaching them the times of modernity, filling their ‘empty’ world with the knowledge of civilization”.¹¹ However, at the end of the 19th century, the main challenge that Portugal faced was to force the overseas provinces to produce “.¹² And among the Portuguese colonial political philosophies was the philosophy of “work as a civilizing instrument”.¹³ It was the duty of the colonial government to develop the moral propensities of the indigenous people, encouraging them to fulfill their moral obligations to improve their living conditions by engaging in compulsive labor activities (Shibalo)¹⁴ for six months a year.¹⁵ Antônio Enes was the creator of indigenous labor policies and argued “Our tropical Africa is only cultivated with Africans”.¹⁶ Enes believed that the State, as sovereign and depositary of social power:

...must not have scruple to oblige and, if necessary, to force them to work, that is, to improve themselves through work, to acquire through work the means of a

happier existence, to civilize themselves by working, those rude blacks of Africa, those unborn pariahs of Asia, these wild ways of Oceania.¹⁷

With the approval of the Regiment for the Administration of Justice in the Colonies, in February 1894, the penalty of compulsory labor for indigenous people was formalized. And with this regulation, it was necessary to define the figure of the indigenous, defined as "natives from overseas, of indigenous father and mother and who are not distinguished by their illustration and customs of their race."¹⁸ In this law, two distinct legal regimes were established: the law for civilized white settlers of Portuguese descent and the private law for indigenous people.¹⁹ Legally, by not being considered a citizen and not being accepted as civilized, the African did not have civil rights, being forced to work in poorly paid activities and in minor and unhealthy professions. Relegated to attend separate and inferior schools and being subject to beatings and all kind of physical violence, banishment in penal colonies and forced labor on plantations, roads, railways and in the port of Lourenço Marques, These rules demonstrated the centrality of the question of indigenous work to colonial policies.²⁰

THE PORTUGUESE COLONIAL EXPLOITATION IN MOZAMBIQUE

The Portuguese colonial ideology was

based on the motto "One State, One Race and One Civilization" and built on a non-racist "civilizing mission" that operated through conversion to Christianity, miscegenation and assimilation.²¹ According to Peter Fry, "without capital, the Portuguese were not able to develop their colonial economies in a way that their internal market would become a stimulus for Africans to seek employment."²² Considering all the private venture capital invested in Lourenço Marques until 1894, for example, only 27% was Portuguese.²³

Portugal, both at home and in its colonies, was contaminated by an absence of national private venture capital.²⁴ The basic developments had originally been guaranteed on a concession basis by foreign capital, as Portuguese capital, both private and state, was lacking. The city's original power grid, electric car network and the first modern pier complex were all undertaken by foreign capital, many with direct links to South Africa's mining unions.²⁵ The Portuguese colonial administration created, through the tax mechanism, the inclusion of Africans in the circuit of the monetized and capitalist economy. The hut tax was the main tax that led the Mozambican population to seek salaried work:

The hut tax began to be required in 1898, shortly after Maguiguana's death.²⁶ In 1904 it was 100\$00, in 1918 it was 150\$00 plus 25\$00 for dog licenses, even if the

17. ENNES, 1946: 27 apud MENESES, p. 75.

18. MENESES, 2010, p. 82.

19. MENESES, 2010, p. 82.

20. MENESES, op.cit., p. 82

21. FRY, P. Culturas da Diferença: sequelas das políticas coloniais portuguesas e britânicas na África Austral. In: *Afro-Ásia*, 29/30, 2003, p. 276.

22. FRY, 2003, p. 275.

23. *O Futuro*, 22 de novembro de 1894 apud PENVENNE, J. *Trabalhadores de Lourenço Marques (1870-1974)*. Maputo: Arquivo Histórico de Moçambique. 1993, p. 16.

24. Eduardo de Sousa Ferreira, 'Portugal and Her Former African Colonies: Prospects for a Neo-Colonial Relationship', *UFAHAMU*, V, 3, 1975; Alan Smith, 'Antonio Salazar and the Reversal of Portuguese Colonial Policy', *Journal of African History*, XV, 4, 1974, pp. 653-667. apud PENVENNE, 1993, p. 16.

25. PENVENNE, 1993, p. 16.

26. Maguiguana was the commander in chief of the army of Gungunhane, the king of Gaza. The Portuguese victory and conquest

population did not have them. Those who did not pay it (the hut tax) went to Xibàlu, as happened in 1901, the year in which the defaulters went to work on the Chibuto-Mudipsane road, and in 1921, they went to work in the administration of Chibuto. In addition to paying these taxes, there was also the obligation to pay licenses for carts, weapons and, in 1957, also bicycles.²⁷

The colonial administrator Antônio Enes expressly prohibited, in 1895, as it was a usual practice, the burning or destruction of the huts of those who could not pay the tax and established that “indigenous people who find themselves in these circumstances will only be obliged to work for six consecutive days, at the order of the administrator, within the circumscription area, receiving on these days only food or the amount necessary to feed themselves”.²⁸ The constant increase in the hut tax and the collection, from 1906 onwards, in Pounds Sterling, meant a 100% increase in the value and motivated the practice of countless and constant acts of violence. It was common to extrapolate the deadlines for free work required for non-payment of the hut tax. It was also common practice to arrest women if their husbands could not be found, and force them to work under shibalo until they had payed off all the tax and fines levied on them.²⁹

Social historian Jeanne Penvenne demonstrates that “under the Shibalo

system, Mozambicans were caught – in the literal sense of the term – and taken away by the police and collaborators of the powerful bureaucracy of Indigenous Affairs”.³⁰ According to Penvenne, in her interviews with 157 workers, when interviewed and asked about Shibalo most answered that people were picked up for Shibalo, no one volunteered. Around 5,120 ‘Shibalos’ were employed at the port by the end of 1972.³¹ The construction of the roads, railroad and port was done, for the most part, with Shibalo workers. In addition to the bureaucratic abuses that were notable and denounced by the local press, as Shibalo workers were forcibly recruited from within the rural peasantry and were distributed to public officials or private entities through patronage networks, as if these workers were private property.³² The XXIX Judicial Reform, undertaken by Antônio Enes, was another source of Shibalo workers, as the penalty of correctional work of fifteen to ninety days would be applied only to the black inhabitants of the province of Mozambique, who were subjected to the Mussoco and hut taxes, or the one who had committed, among other crimes, the crimes of vagrancy, drunkenness, disobedience to the authorities. The penalty of compulsory work, in these cases, replaced the prison sentence.³³

of the kingdom of Gaza only was complete after the death of Maguiguanaon 21, July 1897. RITA-FERREIRA, A. **Fixação portuguesa e história pré-colonial de Moçambique**. Lisboa. Instituto de Investigação Científica Tropical / Junta de Investigações Científicas de Ultramar, 1982, p. 199.

27. FELICIANO, J. F. **Antropologia Econômica dos Thonga do Sul de Moçambique**. Maputo: Arquivo Histórico de Moçambique, 1998, p. 139.

28. “Organização Administrativa do Território do Maputo. (1895)”. Art. 12, parag. 2º e 7º, *In*: Antônio Ennes. *A Guerra de África...*, p. 502-4. *Apud* ZAMPARONI, V. **De Escravo a Cozinheiro: colonialism & racism em Moçambique**. 2 ed. Salvador: EDUFBA: CEAO, 2012, p. 75.

29. ZAMPARONI, V. **De Escravo a Cozinheiro: colonialismo & racismo em Moçambique**. 2 ed. Salvador: EDUFBA: CEAO, 2012, p. 75.

30. PENVENNE, J. *Trabalhadores de Lourenço Marques (1870-1974)*. Maputo: Arquivo Histórico de Moçambique. 1993, p. 15.

31. PENVENNE, 1993. Notas, pp. 39-40, this stretch was highlighted by the author.

32. PENVENNE, 1993, p. 21.

33. ENES, A. **Moçambique – Relatório apresentado ao governo**. 4ª edição Fac Similada pela de 1946. Lisboa: Imprensa Nacional – Agência Geral do Ultramar. 1971, p. 483.

BETWEEN AGREEMENTS AND MIGRATION TO THE TRANSVAAL

The legislation established between the Portuguese colonial administration and the British colonial administration was set to meet the ambitions and needs of the two colonies.

The Portuguese colonial administration, trying to expand and improve the mechanisms of control of emigrant labor, especially those who emigrated clandestinely from the province of Inhambane, instituted, in 1891, the use of the passport (Doc. 1.3) and created facilities for the embarkation of workers in the ports of Lourenço Marques and Inhambane (Doc. 1.4). In 1896, at the request of the government of the South African Republic [sic], the Governor General of Mozambique, J. Mouzinho de Albuquerque, authorized voluntary emigration. (Doc. 1.5). With these initiatives, the (Portuguese) Colonial State was able to guarantee substantial income by collecting taxes from emigrants and recruiting agents.³⁴

Transnational agreements involving rail, port, trade and border issues were part of the relations between Mozambique and the Transvaal. "Due to the geographical situation of the Transvaal, as a hinterland territory there was a need for an exit to the sea."³⁵ The closest way was through Lourenço Marques, with Mozambique becoming a provider of rail-port services and supplying migrant labor to the neighboring colony. In 1901, the "Modus Vivendi" was signed, which established the duration of the work contracts of Mozambican migrant miners and a fee of 13 Schillings as a fee for each recruit, including inspection expenses, passport, contracts and registrations and also established the addition of 6 pence

per month during the entire period of re-contracts. The same agreement made the supply of Mozambican labor conditional on guaranteeing the use of the port of Lourenço Marques and the railways, which linked the Transvaal to Lourenço Marques. These agreements immediately resulted in a more than threefold increase in the transport of goods on the railways and in the port of Lourenço Marques, consequently increasing the revenue for the colonial administration of Mozambique by threefold.³⁶

This legislation was revised and renewed in the agreements that followed, as in 1912 and reinforced in 1928 where the Portuguese government made the agreement with the WNLA³⁷ of deferred payment. Deferred payment was a system in which mining companies paid half the wages of Mozambican miners in the mines and the other half only in their home community, after the Mozambican mining worker returned.³⁸ The deferred payment brought to the colonial administration the inflow of direct and indirect resources and also benefited the trade in southern Mozambique, the payment of the hut tax, the contribution due to the régulo and the purchase of consumer goods in local canteens.

CONCLUSION

In order to carry out the Portuguese colonial occupation in Mozambique, the metropolis through the "Generation of 95", implemented the colonial project establishing legal and labor regulations to make the colony produce and become profitable. It created and increased taxes, monetized the economy

34. COVANE, L. A. *As relações econômicas entre Moçambique e a África do Sul, 1850-1964: acordos e regulamentos principais*. Maputo: Arquivo Histórico de Moçambique, 1989, p. 14.

35. COVANE, 1989, p. 17.

36. COVANE, op. cit., pp. 38-40.

37. WNLA (*Witwatersrand Native Labour Association*) was the organization responsible for recruiting and hiring miners in Mozambique.

38. COVANE, 1989, pp. 89-91.

by forcing Africans to look for paid work. Anyone caught without a work contract was subject to *Shibalo*, accused of vagrancy. Deprived of public or private capital for the construction of railways, the port, roads and infrastructure, Portugal, in the words of the colonial administrator Antônio Enes, had no scruples in forcing Africans to work and in this way cultivate the Portuguese tropical Africa.

Migrate to South Africa's labor markets, especially gold mines, was clearly the most common strategy conceived by the peasants and workers of Lourenço Marques. This way they avoided *Shibalo* and earned a salary that allowed them a small margin of prosperity. If Mozambicans wanted to have money for *lobolo*,³⁹ livestock or instruments of production, their best opportunity in the field of wage labor was work in the mines of the Transvaal. Through the brokerage of Mozambican labor, which involved negotiations for the use of the port of Lourenço Marques and the railways between Witwatersrand and Mozambique, the Portuguese metropolis made substantial profits, earning huge revenues with each migrant worker on the way to the Rand.

39. In Baixo Limpopo, as in much of southern Mozambique and southern Africa, marriage was preceded by the payment of *lobolo* by the fiancé or his family to the bride's family. From the beginning, *lobolo* has been a rigorous institution of social control and a form of investment. The social and economic nature of *lobolo* demonstrates the importance of the productive role reserved for women in the husband's family. COVANE, L. A. **O trabalho migratório e a agricultura no sul de Moçambique (1920-1992)**. Maputo: PROMEDIA, 2001, p. 83.

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