

PORTUGUESE SCIENCE SCHOLARS VISITING EUROPE IN THE BEGINNING OF 20TH CENTURY: ENGAGING IN THE PLANS OF JUNTA DE EDUCAÇÃO NACIONAL (JEN) [PORTUGUESE BOARD OF EDUCATION]

Emília Vaz Gomes, Augusto Fitas

CEHFCi (Centro de Estudos de História da Ciência), Universidade de Évora, Portugal

In Portugal, since the end of the eighteenth century, science professors at superior schools made scientific voyages through Europe. In 19th century, the country possessed two Polytechnic Schools, at Lisbon and Oporto, and one University in Coimbra, already centenary (1290). In the first decades of 20th century the Portuguese Governments tried to implement reforms at the superior education. In 1907 it ordered the establishment of grants to subsidize visits abroad, hoping to contribute to the development of the country. The superior schools were in charge of all the administrative process and they distributed the grants only among their scholars. Few professors had made those trips. Meanwhile, the republican movement appealed to the improvement of the country through progress and in 1911 they made a big reform on University. The professor's visits abroad were also here but not many were undertaken. Besides the University of Coimbra there were created two new universities, at Lisbon and Oporto, based on the previous Polytechnical Schools.

It was just after 1929 that we assist to the intensification of visits abroad, due to the work of Junta de Educação Nacional (JEN) [National Education Board]. JEN's main objectives were to support, manage and promote the scientific research in Portugal. One of its main tasks was to provide grants to foreign countries. This was intended to comprehend all scholar population and not only to the university one. However, later on the majority of grant holders was attached at a superior school as professor or professor assistant. In the period 1929-1938 (roughly JEN's first decade) the grants to foreign countries were around 32 by year. England, France and Germany were the countries more frequently chosen. Furthermore, there were grant holders going to Switzerland, Italy, Belgium, Poland, Yugoslavia, Spain and United States. So, Portuguese grant holders were visiting Central Europe, but also equally the western one. Grants to foreign countries covered a great scope of disciplines, from Astronomy to Zoologie and the preferred countries varied accordingly with those disciplines. The scientific activities developed by grant holders varied accordingly with their objectives and the period of time to accomplish them, as agreed with JEN. Those activities could be of different types, as apprenticeships, stages, voyages, or just taking a quick look to surroundings, so the expression "visit" abroad has a vast range of meanings.

At our work we are studying JEN's activities related with the service of grants abroad. Based on JEN grant's information, we can take grant holders as professors of superior schools and the expression "visiting" abroad would have a great scope directed to the activities developed during the grant period. Then, JEN's study would highlight us about the "visit professor" phenomena.

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