

Disability, Diversity and Inclusive Education in Haiti

Learning, Exclusion and Educational Relationships in the Context of Crises

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Chapter 1

The challenges of expansion and democratization of education

A historical look at school exclusion in Haiti

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1 The challenges of expansion and democratization of education

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1.1 Introduction

The last 35 years in Haiti have been marked by bitter struggles to fund a democratic rule of law. These struggles have their political foothold in the new constitution adopted on March 29, 1987, which outlines a set of rights and freedoms which have so far failed to materialize. The 1987 constitution lays the legal foundations for a democratic political regime with its legitimacy based on the will of its citizens. In order to be able to exercise their rights freely, the people must be as enlightened as possible. It is up to schools to create access to this essential illumination for the preservation of democratic freedoms. We find in the revolutionaries of 1789 – Condorcet, Daunou, Lepelletier de Saint-Fargeau, Talleyrand... – the school's role of socialization and indoctrination which will characterize education throughout the nineteenth century. Condorcet writes in his *Essays on Public Education*:

The more we are trained by education to reason clearly, to judge the validity of ideas, to reject the errors by which we could be entrapped, the more enlightened our nation will become, the more rational a larger number of its citizens, with better hopes for good laws, a wise administration and a constitution of true freedom.¹

Jules Ferry encouraged teachers to support the principles of the French Revolution of 1789 and the Third Republic of France, which he hoped they would sustain and advocate in their teaching.² The Haitian minister Léger Cauvin declared in 1889: “I know of no greater danger than to arm an illiterate with the ballot, and, since we cannot restrict universal suffrage, we cannot escape the need to enlighten him.”³

This need for civic education involved a move toward mass education in Europe and in the United States in the nineteenth century,⁴ along with the democratization of education, specifically the provision of free and compulsory schooling. Analysis of legislative and administrative sources reveals two constant facts in the history of public education in Haiti: on the one

hand, the desire to spread education among the urban and rural masses, and on the other, the volatility of concrete actions aimed at achieving this objective. From this reality stems another constant of our educational system, the exclusion of the common people. In this contribution, we will try to understand why, despite assertive speeches by its leaders, Haiti has not succeeded in effectively spreading mass education, in educating all its children, or in democratizing education by creating a system that offers equal chances to everyone. We will survey the challenges and flaws that have created massive obstacles to the establishment of an education system that makes school accessible to all children and offers them the same opportunities for success. We do not claim to be able to provide a complete response to this crucial question, the sheer timespan of which makes it an immense subject that this contribution cannot cover.

The first part of our discussion begins by examining the three main principles that seem to characterize Haitian legislation on education, namely that it be free, liberal, and mandatory. The second section examines how these principles form the basis of a proactive movement to turn theory into action. The impulse to action is always constrained by challenges that make the provision of democratized mass education a chimera. In the third section, we will explore and attempt to explain these challenges. The section ends with a “story-testimony” illustrating the phenomenon of school exclusion in Haiti.

1.2 Free and mandatory education, an abiding principle of Haitian law (1804–1987)

The instructions given in 1801 to Victor-Emmanuel Leclerc, Captain General of Saint-Domingue, prohibited public education in the colony.⁵ As a consequence of this radical ban, there was “no public school” in Haiti in 1804.⁶ The principle of the establishment of public education appeared in the Constitution of May 20, 1805, which prescribed the creation of a public school in each military division.⁷ There would therefore be six public schools for the entire national territory if this constitutional provision were applied.

Following the assassination of Jean-Jacques Dessalines on October 17, 1806, elections were held to form a constituent assembly. This assembly adopted a new constitution on December 27, 1806, which ignored public education. However, quarrels which arose from voting frauds recorded during these elections led to the establishment by Henri Christophe of a new constituent assembly which adopted a new constitution on February 17, 1807. This Constitution concentrates all the powers in the hands of the “President and Generalissimo of the Land and Sea Forces of Haiti,” who is appointed for life. It provides for the creation of a central school in each military division and special schools⁸ in each district.⁹ By stipulating that it will be “open to any citizen to

operate special education,” this Constitution revives the liberalism of Toussaint Louverture in the matter of education.

The Constitutions of 1805 and 1807 did not set out any rules about the costs of instruction, the latter leaving it to a future special law to deal with the salaries of professors and teachers. The Constitution of 1807 adopted the principle of freedom of instruction, which presupposes the initiative of individuals in the field. Unfortunately, we do not have precise information on the level of state responsibility for education spending during this period. Freedom of education also implies freedom of methods, curricula, and textbooks.¹⁰ It is curious to note that the 1805 Constitution of Jean-Jacques Dessalines is the only one of all the Constitutions that the country has known that has not expressly accepted school liberalism, a system which has shown its total ineffectiveness.¹¹ The decree of August 30, 1805, however, fixed a price for children’s education as provided by private teachers.¹² The system adopted by Dessalines was probably intended to be public education, but, given the nonexistence of schools caused by Bonaparte’s prohibition of public education in the colony, and pending the construction of the schools provided for by the Constitution of 1805, people turned to private lessons, which the decree of August 30 was intended to regulate.

Free schooling is mentioned explicitly for the first time in the Constitution of June 2, 1816, a revision of that of December 27, 1806. This Constitution decreed that school must be free, declaring that it is “essential for all men.” Article 36 reads as follows: “A public institution will be created, open to all citizens, free with regard to the parts of education essential for all men, and whose establishments will be distributed gradually according to the divisions of the Republic.” This article reproduces word for word a provision of the French constitution of September 3, 1791, only replacing the word “kingdom” with “republic.”

The principle of free primary school was therefore adopted very early in Haiti. In the northern kingdom, the ordinance of November 20, 1818, laid out a uniform educational system, creating a Royal Chamber of Public Instruction, composed of 17 people,¹³ charged with its direction and supervision. Article 11 establishes free public education. It reads: “In national schools, academies and colleges, education is free; the government pays teachers and teachers, provides books and other items necessary in these establishments.”¹⁴ Article 17 reaffirms the principle of freedom of education: “Any person or association may find a school or academy, provided that the teachers have a certificate of competence and an authorization from the Royal Board of Public Instruction.”

Freedom of education and free primary school are two basic principles of Haitian legislation concerning education. They go back, as we have just seen, to the turn of the century, one could even say to the colonial era with regard to educational liberty. While reaffirming the principle of freedom of education and free primary school, the Constitution of 1843, following

the fall of Boyer, specifies that “major towns also have higher schools¹⁵ in which science, belles-lettres and beaux-arts are taught” as well as “the languages used in the country.”¹⁶ The Constitution of 1843 created a department of public education which gave the education sector an “autonomous organization.” The attributions of this department were stated in the law of June 7, 1844: “to carry out the laws relating to education and public instruction, to supervise public and private schools, schools of sciences, letters and arts, to encourage scholars, men of letters and artists, to correspond with foreign learned societies, and to oversee the Haitian University¹⁷ and correspond with commissions appointed by law to inspect public educational establishments.”¹⁸

All Haitian Constitutions of the nineteenth century, except those of 1846 and 1849,¹⁹ maintain the principle of freedom of education and that of free primary school. They also tend to strengthen the education sector by broadening the course offerings, diversifying the types of training,²⁰ and extending free access to higher levels of education. The Constitution of 1874 inaugurated a third basic principle of school legislation: compulsory primary school. Haiti was thus ahead of France, which did not formulate this same principle until 1882, with the Jules Ferry law of March 28.²¹ In the Constitution of 1879, public education was free at all levels of education: primary, secondary, and beyond. Haiti had become one of the few countries in the world where free public education was universal. However, some continued to insist that only primary school should be free, being everyone’s right, and that some people, servants for example, did not have the capacity to attend secondary school.²² In addition to making free education universal, the Constitution of 1879 again proposed the creation of primary teacher training colleges²³ and teacher training colleges.

With a few nuances and modifications,²⁴ the Haitian Constitutions of the twentieth century were also characterized by three fundamental principles: freedom of education with the authorization and under the supervision of the State, mandatory primary school, and free education at all levels. From 1946, the constituents saw fit to reinforce the principle of universal free education via the idea that public education is a responsibility of the State and of the municipalities or local authorities.²⁵ The 1987 Constitution recognizes education as a right guaranteed by the State, which must take an interest in the integral education of the citizen, by ensuring “the physical, intellectual, moral, professional, social and civic training of the population.”²⁶ Articles 32.1 and 32.2 state:

Education is a responsibility of the State and the local authorities. They must make schools accessible to all free of charge and ensure the level of training of teachers in the public and non-public sectors. The first charge of the State and the local authorities is widespread schooling, the only way to develop the country.

The 1987 Constitution intends, if not to erase, at least to reduce inequalities between the territories and between the individuals by specifying that “the State must ensure that each local authority is endowed with establishments adapted to the needs of its development,” and that it “guarantees people with special needs protection, education, and any other means necessary for their full development and their integration or reintegration into society.”²⁷ This Constitution obliges the state “to take all necessary steps to strengthen the mass literacy campaign.” It can rightly be considered the most advanced constitutional text in the history of Haiti, in the area of education. From the outset, it is part of the logic of inclusive schooling, mass education, and the democratization of schools.

1.3 From words to action

Henri Christophe created national schools in the northern parishes, founded a meteorological observatory and vocational schools, and a royal academy where medicine, surgery, and hygiene were taught. He called for English teachers and put them in charge of these establishments.²⁸ Unlike Louis Joseph Janvier, who saw Henry I as “a sovereign essentially an organizer, administrator, moralizer,” “who inspired a wave of civilization in the country,” “ahead of his time by showing his concern for the education of the masses, in widely spreading the taste for intellectual culture in the lower classes, by opening primary schools everywhere,”²⁹ Ardouin says that there were “few other institutions other than a few primary schools in the major towns.”³⁰ Not troubling to conceal his “anti-Christophian” bias, Ardouin even denies the very existence of the Royal Academy, for which, in 1818, the Royal Chamber had appointed three general overseers: the Chevalier de Petigny, Silvain Hyppolite, and David. The description given by Beaubrun Ardouin of the state of education in the Kingdom of Christophe recalls that of Hérard Dumesle, who wrote of his trip to the North of Haiti: “In the kingdom erected by Christophe, everything depended on a few men, since after elementary school there was no establishment capable of preparing suitable men for important jobs for the future.

In the West and South Republic, the law of August 14, 1817, relating to the annual salaries of public officials had provided for, for this year, a number of eight primary schools and two high schools, one in Port-au-Prince and one in *Les Cayes*.³¹ As Vincent and Lhérisson write, the government of Geffrard gave a “fruitful impetus” to public education, by reorganizing the medical school of Port-au-Prince and the lycée of the same city, “by founding a law school, a drawing school, a music school, by opening primary and secondary schools everywhere.”³² Jean-Baptiste Damier, Minister of Public Education from 1862 to 1866, played an important role in the impetus given to education under the Geffrard government. The attempt to create elementary schools from 1843 did not

produce the expected results.³³ The law of October 11, 1881, establishing that the Communal Councils should create and supervise free primary schools was met with no action.

At the beginning of the 1890s, Dantès Rameau, Secretary of State for Public Education, affirmed that, under his administration, all efforts would be made “to spread the wealth of education to remoter towns where there is a need to fight ignorance, that leprosy of the human spirit.”³⁴ As for the rural communities: “All my concern goes to the countryside. I place a high value on their improvement by education.” Dantès Rameau linked the development of the country to public education. He expressed his government’s firm opinion that the education of the masses was a means to set the country on the path of progress, through work, order and public education, “this torch which must dispel the shadows of ignorance and reveal to man the secret to happiness.”³⁵ The progress made in his time in the field of education, he said, “gave rise to legitimate hopes for the future of the country.” The wish expressed by Dantès Rameau to be able to restore public education to “its past splendor” in the near future suggests that at the end of the nineteenth century, national education was still facing great difficulties and that progress was tentative.

Access to secondary education for a minority of students from working-class and rural areas was made possible through a government scholarship system. In his report of January 6, 1891, to the President of the Republic, Florvil Hyppolite, Secretary of State for the Department of Public Education, stated that the legislative body had created new scholarships at the *Collège Jean-Jacques du Cap-Haitien*, the *Lycée national des Gonaïves*, and the Institution of MM. Jean-Jacques and Léon des Cayes. Other private institutions, such as the boarding school of the Sisters of St. Rose of Lima, *Pensionnat des Sœurs de Sainte-Rose de Lima*, *Petit-Séminaire-Collège*, the institution of Madame Belmour-Lépine and the Polymathic School also received state scholarships. These scholarships were created, Rameau tells us,

with a view to promoting in our secondary schools the intellectual development of children of the needy class who would distinguish themselves in primary schools and who, for lack of means, would be forced to abandon their desire to take their studies further.³⁶

For the municipalities to benefit from a sufficient number of full scholarships, children whose parents lived in the capitals of the school districts could only receive half scholarships. Thus, in the subsidized high schools and colleges, there were boarders and half-boarders.

In his letter responding to the Secretary of State, the President of the Republic showed particular interest in the development of public education in the countryside.³⁷ He asked for precise information on the number and the operations of the rural schools, which had spread since the

government had increased their number to 504.³⁸ At the beginning of 1891, construction of premises for these rural schools, left in the hands of district commanders, was going well, if we are to believe the Secretary of State.³⁹ Despite efforts, the target of 504 rural schools set in the budget was not reached due to numerous difficulties.⁴⁰ And the schools that were created did not always meet government expectations.

Macdonald Apollon, who succeeded Dantès Rameau as the Secretary of State for Public Instruction, was concerned with the rural people, fearing that the indifference of the government “to alleviate their plight” would label them as “the nation’s destitute.”⁴¹ He insisted that the government should provide everything needed to build the school premises: planks, fittings, nails, etc. For Apollon, “it is through popular education that we will succeed in raising our country to meet its aspirations in the world.”⁴² Therefore, it was necessary to educate and moralize the people of the countryside. District commanders must use their legal prerogatives to make recalcitrant people to send their children to school. This will make “our race” grow and be respected.

The law of September 3, 1912, made primary education essentially free in public schools. A commission was in charge of drawing up a list of children from 7 to 14 years old. With the aim of making school attendance easier, the law of August 19, 1919, created a school fund in each municipality which would have legal force and whose budget was supplied by donations and bequests. This fund created canteens, provided materials for needy children, additional salaries, cost of living allowances for teachers, etc.⁴³ A law of 1915 had already doubled the salary of the teachers.⁴⁴

Just before the American occupation, the Secretary of State for Public Education, Léon Audain, made grandiose speeches on public education. He said in a letter to the President of the Republic:

The people have the right to education, so the state has the duty to educate them. Any citizen of any country who aspires to freedom must at least know how to read and write, know his duties and rights, and have moral guidelines however simple they may be.⁴⁵

The construction of schools seemed to be his main concern. For a swift solution to this problem, he advocated the adoption of the American method, which he summed up as follows: “everywhere at once and everywhere on a vast scale.” He based his hope and optimism on the help and good faith of the Americans. “there are no ruins from which one cannot recover when one can count on the sincere and loyal help of a state as financially powerful as the United States of America.” His program called for the creation of school-farms, which would constitute a kind of secondary agricultural education. There is also the idea of primary and higher teacher training schools which would be integrated into

the new Lycée d'Haiti. With all other high schools in the country to be closed, the Lycée d'Haïti, which would hold competitive examinations, would become the only high school in the Republic. The law of August 5, 1919, provides that at least one boys' and one girls' school would be created in each rural section, and that scholarships would be reserved to children "who have revealed exceptional intellectual qualities,"⁴⁶ in private high schools and colleges, upper primary schools, agricultural or industrial vocational schools. The provisions of this law suggest that Léon Audain's plan, which proposed that upper primary schools and vocational schools be compulsory and free, had been adopted, but with new limits on access.

The *École normale supérieure*, the creation of which had been planned for more than a century, did not become a reality until 1947. The law of August 29, 1947, establishes the mission of this higher school, affiliated with the University of Haiti. Article 1 states that the mission of the school is "to ensure the training of a body of teachers particularly qualified for the functions of secondary education and higher education in Letters and Sciences of the University."

Believing that "the future of democracy depends on the level of education of the people, and the degree of civilization of the people, on the education of the masses,"⁴⁷ and faced with the high number of illiterates in the country, Dumarsais Estime wrote a law, also in 1947, inaugurating an adult education campaign, which aimed at the "complete eradication of illiteracy" in the country. This literacy campaign was to teach adults to read, write, and "understand French by means of Creole." Article 7 of this law states that, starting in 1949, "preference for hiring and promotion shall be given to those who can read and write." Dumarsais Estime also signed contracts for the management of primary schools with religious congregations, such as the Sisters of the Hôtel-Dieu of Saint Hyacinthe, the Sisters of Saint François d'Assise of Quebec, the Missionary Sisters of the Immaculate Conception of Montreal, the Sisters of Saint Anne of Lachine, and the Sisters of Charity of Saint Louis de Bienville.⁴⁸ Schools run by religious congregations were to be free.

The decree of March 30, 1983, passed in the international context of the commodification of education, claims to promote equal opportunities and to make the education system "one of the fundamental instruments of the economic and social development of the nation."⁴⁹ This decree defines the Haitian school as a school which promotes "a single education system and which ensures everyone access to knowledge and science by adopting in particular a structure and a mode of operation giving equal opportunities to all." It is a "fundamentally democratic" school. This decree emphasizes the school's economic mission. It encapsulates the ideal of a school that trains citizens capable of modifying their environment for the greater creation of wealth, goods, and services.

1.4 The challenges of massification and democratization of the school

Despite the ambitious speeches and the new laws, Haiti missed the train of democratization of education. This “great work” encountered many obstacles from the start of the nation’s history, which only unwavering determination, clear vision and unshakeable conviction could have overcome. Dantès Bellegarde makes a necessarily partial list of these obstacles: “lack of money and management, lack of trained teachers, insufficient salaries, scarcity of school premises, lack of good roads in the interior of the country.”⁵⁰ At the start of the twentieth century, Léon Audain, Minister of Public Education, remarked that he had always been “painfully struck by the appalling ignorance of the vast majority of Haitians, who completely lack even the most elementary primary notions.”⁵¹ Even today, the Haitian education system continues to face countless challenges: access problems, problems in training teachers, inadequate and poor infrastructure, inequalities of opportunities, unsatisfactory quality of education, education, lack of standardization, outrageous deregulation, etc. In this part of our contribution, we will only stop at the first three challenges. There is a limit to the reasonable length of a book chapter, but we will develop this question further in an upcoming work on the history of public education in Haiti.

1.4.1 Limited access to school

Towards the end of the nineteenth century, the results recorded in the country in terms of progress in public education were disturbing. Secretary of State for Education Macdonald Apollon expressed his disappointment in a letter to the inspectors. He writes:

We have long held out a hope of developing the intellectual faculties of the common man, but despite our continual efforts, we are still far from the desired result to lift him to his potential in the world. Each year, the state makes heavy sacrifices in its budget, and yet we feel the need, the urgent need, to promote the development of popular education. Why are our plans so unsuccessful?⁵²

Vincent and Lhérisson clearly describe the gap between the speeches and the concrete achievements:

From this overview of our school legislation, it is easy to get a more or less exact idea of the efforts made by our various governments to foster the normal and rational development of public education in Haiti. We’re not short of official documents on this subject, as indeed in all the others. Laws and decrees, regulations and programs, have been drawn up as prescribed, and it is hard to believe that this important branch of the administration was subjected to so many and so

varied demands. However, when we take a simple glance at the real state of our national schools, we are immediately led, without the slightest ulterior motive, to wonder if there is a Ministry of Public Instruction in the Republic of Haiti responsible for providing any organization for these institutions, and university authorities responsible for their supervision, so distressing is the spectacle of abandonment and miseries offered by our schools.⁵³

The authors attribute this sad state of public education “to the completely unsatisfactory conditions of the infrastructure” of the schools and to the non-enforcement of the laws. The infrastructure of the school refers to the overall learning environment: classroom, school buildings, furniture, teaching materials, location, etc.

According to Louis-Auguste Joint, who unfortunately did not give his sources, in 1894 only 8% of 400,000 school-age children were in school.⁵⁴ This figure is underestimated, in comparison with that of 44,542 school children provided for the same year by Vincent and Lhérisson, and Edner Brutus. This figure represents 7.63% of the school-age population, estimated at 583,709, or 2.28% of the total population.⁵⁵ The percentage of school attendance fell to 6.55% in 1914, on the eve of the US occupation, or 1.80% of the total population.⁵⁶ In 1936, the country had more than a thousand public and private schools, including 17 secondary schools (7 academies and 10 colleges) and 15 special education schools for girls.⁵⁷ By the first half of the twentieth century, the rate of illiteracy in the country was around 80%.⁵⁸ In 1942–1943, school attendance was estimated by Brutus at 9.23% or 2.77% of the total population.⁵⁹ These figures are not completely reliable, since various governments, in order to give more weight to their reports, have sometimes exaggerated them.⁶⁰

The principle of free access and the desire to disseminate culture to the rural and urban masses have never been realized. Helen Hill-Weed attributes the failure of this ideal to the long years of poverty caused by the indemnity imposed on the country by France, as well as the incessant civil unrest that has marked its post-independence history.⁶¹ The system that developed has favored an elite representing only 5% of the population, excluding the urban and rural masses from the benefits of education. This elite possessed, writes Hill-Weed, “the highest culture that civilization can acquire,” while about 90% of the peasants and 60% of the urban masses were illiterate.⁶² In 1954, the national enrollment rate was only 19.7%, of which 64% was in urban areas and 17.5% in rural areas.⁶³ Glaring inequalities have always existed between the countryside and the city. According to Louis-Auguste Joint, Haiti had three million school-aged children (5 to 14 years old) in 1995, 48% of whom could not go to school. Children in rural areas were even more disadvantaged: 79% of them were not in school.⁶⁴ Children in rural areas were virtually excluded from secondary education. Only the scholarship system allowed “the brightest” access.

In its report to the President of the Republic, the Working Group on Education and Training, GTEF (*Groupe de Travail sur l'Éducation et la Formation*), stresses that it is time that, “beyond the discursive register, the country passes from words to actions by putting in place concrete measures so that, in 2015, for example, the government can accommodate all children of school age in the two cycles of Basic School.”⁶⁵ The report reveals that “25% of school-age children are in the streets” and that more than 80% of the 75% who are educated are in private schools.⁶⁶ At the same time, 76% of Haitian families were living below the poverty line, on less than \$2 a day. This situation favors the proliferation of so-called “borlette” schools, deprived of the material, financial, and human resources essential for quality education, the clientele being almost absolutely unable to pay. These figures bear witness to a radical change over the course of the twentieth century in terms of the state’s contribution to the education of children. By 1895, 85.4% of school children attended a public school.⁶⁷ The state also supported scholarship holders in private schools.

The liberalization of the education market over the last century has favored the swift growth of private educational institutions, indicative of the progressive disengagement of the State from the education sector, abandoned to individuals, according to the principle of freedom of education.

Given the poor quality of public education, the Haitian system excludes many from school and sustains social inequality, since it offers only two options for children from poor families: to grow up completely outside the school system or to join it at its lowest level, neither of which paths is likely to lead to social advancement or personal opportunities compared to children from economically advantaged families.

1.4.2 Insufficiency and poor quality of physical infrastructure

We described above the concerns expressed by Dantès Rameau, Macdonald Apollon, and Florvil Hyppolite

regarding the need to build rural schools, the number of which has been fixed in the budget. The method adopted by the government was to provide residents with lumber and hardware so they could construct schoolhouses themselves. At the same time, Vincent and Lhérisson noted sorrowfully that “schoolhouses do not exist in Haiti.”⁶⁸

They report the opinion of a Haitian citizen, A. Bonamy, on the issue of school buildings, as follows:

We have never been bothered about the construction of schools. Apparently no one in charge of directing national education has understood the importance, for the proper functioning of a school, of an appropriate setting. ... We also believe that, in the whole

Republic, you will not find a single schoolhouse worthy of the name belonging to the State.⁶⁹

Schools were often housed in inappropriate spaces and with none of the materials essential to the learning process. This is the case of the rural school of Pont-Rouge, not far from Port-au-Prince, which was “at the entrance to a bayahondes wood,” and which shared a two-room building with a noisy military post. Vincent and Lhérisson describe the scene:

Four filthy soldiers in rags sat on the floor on the remains of what were once rush mats, noisily playing dice. From time to time they threw back large gulps of tafia and punctuated the game with curses that would make a firefighter flinch. At the same time, incredibly, it was a school. No benches, no chairs, no tables, no maps, no desk for the teacher, nothing! Ten children were there, some sitting on small chairs that they themselves had brought to school, the others on rocks. The classroom floor was covered in a thick layer of dust, and, as the doors had been removed, the local teenagers hung around there at night. They usually left evidence of their nightly visits there.⁷⁰

More than a century later, similar scenes are seen all over the country. Vincent and Lhérisson attributed the absence of schoolhouses not to a lack of money but rather to a failure of patriotism on the part of leaders whose actions did not live up to their speeches. They believed that with an investment of 200,000 gourdes per year in physical infrastructure, the country could, within 20 years, have all the schoolhouses it needed.⁷¹ Vincent and Lhérisson provide a table of public education expenditure for the financial year 1893–1894: salaries of school staff, payments to scholarship holders, subsidies to private institutions, salaries of inspectors, etc. There is no item for schoolhouses. According to them, this is because they didn’t exist.

We described above the importance of the construction of schoolhouses that Léon Audain included in his general plan for the reform of public education at the beginning of the twentieth century. As early as 1912, the Guilbaud law granted the Department of Public Instruction \$50,000 annually for the construction of schoolhouses. There was a 10 centime tax on imported tobacco. This law permitted the construction, during the 1913–1914 financial year, of the buildings of the Elie Dubois and J.-B. Damier Schools and the premises of the Port-au-Prince School Inspectorate. Then the financial difficulties of the Oreste Zamor government forced him to deduct 8 centimes from this tax, a sum which was devoted “to the guarantee of a local loan.” During the entire period of the US occupation, the proceeds of this tax were never returned to their original purpose.⁷² This annual revenue, relatively close to the 200,000 gourdes annually indicated by Lhérisson and Vincent, would have permitted the

construction of all the public schools needed in the Republic over 20 years, had the law been correctly applied.⁷³

The law of December 18, 1918, which Bellegarde succeeded in passing, allocated 70% of civil status revenues to the construction of schoolhouses and the provision of furniture and teaching materials. Despite American opposition, this law was enforced and permitted the construction or restoration of several schools, as well as the distribution of furniture and teaching materials to primary schools in the Republic.⁷⁴ However, these efforts were not enough to provide a definitive solution to the crucial problem of the shortage of schoolhouses of sufficient quality and quantity.

1.4.3 A poorly qualified teaching profession

One of the determining factors in the quality of education is the teaching staff. The quality of education depends first of all on the training of teachers and their socio-professional conditions. The problem of the low quality of the teaching profession has afflicted Haiti at least since the end of the nineteenth century. In order to provide the education system with qualified teaching staff, the state at various times proposed to create primary and higher teacher training schools. But these ideas were never followed up. “We hope,” write Vincent and Lhérisson,

that the country will soon have the three or four good teacher-training colleges which are urgently needed for the recruitment of teaching staff. The Ministry of Education must take an active part in this, because in order to have good schools, you must have good teachers. And God only knows if you can find good teachers in this country.⁷⁵

The problem of the professionalization of teaching was described at that time. For some, teaching had to stop being a “stopgap” and become a real career. This is an essential condition for having enough good teachers, especially teachers in urban primary schools.⁷⁶

More than a century later, the shortage of qualified teachers remains a problem. The report submitted in 2010 to the President of the Republic, René G. Préal, by the Working Group on Education and Training, gives alarming figures on the situation. Of the 60,261 teachers at the elementary level, “79% have not received any initial basic training ... 40% of these 79% have not reached 9th grade.”⁷⁷ The remaining 21% are academics (4.84% of total teachers) and student teachers (10.64%) or *capistes*, holders of a certificate of aptitude for teaching (6.34%). It is important to note that academics do not necessarily have the right training to teach. These are people who enter the education system while waiting to find something better in their field of training. However, their number has experienced a dizzying increase between 2002–2003 (4.83%) and 2007–2008 (58.47%).⁷⁸ Teachers of older elementary students and secondary students

have practically the same training profiles, which vary from 9th grade to university. As for secondary specifically, only 12% of teachers are student teachers, while 58% are academics who practice without having previously received the required disciplinary and pedagogical training.

At the preschool level, “fewer than 35% of teachers have the skills required to exercise their profession.”⁷⁹ With regard to preschool education, there are only around thirty public and private teacher training colleges throughout the country responsible for training preschool teachers. The low capacity of these schools and the meager attractions of this career make it impossible to attract enough qualified teachers for this level of education.⁸⁰ The educational level of preschool teachers varies greatly. Some are academics while others have a level below grade 9. Only 42% of these teachers have the academic and professional training required to properly teach preschool.⁸¹

According to officials from the Ministry of National Education and Vocational Training (MENFP), 150,000 teachers in the Haitian education all system are underqualified and in need of training.⁸² The same officials say the educational science faculties of regional public universities (UPRs) are not mature enough to contribute significantly to solving this problem. The most viable solution, in their eyes, seems to be to strengthen the continuing education programs set up by various public and private institutions.

The same report, whose recommendations constitute the main guide for the 2010–2015 Operational Plan drawn up by the MENFP, notes:

Achieving the objective of universal education means training 2,500 new teachers per year. The current teacher training institutions do not meet a quarter of these needs. [...] In the short term, to train a large number of qualified teachers to meet the ideal of universal education, we should make use of information technologies to offer continuing training programs for practicing teachers, based both on subject-oriented content and the professional skills required by the profession....⁸³

1.5 Understanding the challenges of massification and democratization of schools in Haiti

The statements made in this section are hypotheses that need to be explored by more in-depth research. Understanding why, 217 years after independence, Haiti is failing to educate all its children and create a democratic education system which offers equal opportunities to all, is a crucial question that we propose to explore in the larger work mentioned above. This section is therefore only an outline of the challenges that plague the Haitian education system, preventing the real massification and democratization of schooling.

1.5.1 Contempt of the ruling classes for the education of the masses

Helen Hill-Weed and Louis-Auguste Joint attributed the serious shortcomings of the Haitian school system to the many economic and political constraints facing the Haitian state. Joint points out that the many reform projects did not produce the hoped-for results “because of political and economic constraints and the application of the logic of inequality in the distribution of social benefits. ...”⁸⁴ Léon Audain thought that Haiti’s lack of progress in attaining public education was its “unhappy political state.”⁸⁵ In the 1890s Macdonald Apollon, Secretary of State for Education, attributed the government’s failures to two main factors: the organization of education – “old prejudices, wrong methods, old-fashioned principles” – and “weaknesses in the teaching force.”⁸⁶ We believe that these factors all stem from the negative effects of a primary cause: the contempt of the ruling elites for the education of the masses. This contempt stems from a conscious, calculated choice, and not from Haiti’s adverse conditions, as the mention of economic and political constraints may suggest. This choice is linked to an outdated economic system, based essentially on the production and export of agricultural raw materials, not on industry. The farmers of the colonial era, whom the vagrancy laws of Toussaint and Leclerc’s era made into a class of men attached to the soil, did not improve their status after independence. Under the weight of the spade and the hoe, they were not considered worthy of access to a liberating education, both dangerous for the political domination of the urban elite and useless for an economy based on the cultivation and export of agricultural commodities.

Throughout the history of the state of Haiti, public education, despite the pompous speeches of the leaders, has never been the true object of responsibility by the state, whose actions have never met the country’s needs. Under the government of Jean-Jacques Dessalines, public education was not only neglected, but abandoned, according to Beaubrun Ardouin.⁸⁷ In a state forced to remain on the alert and on a war footing in the face of a permanent threat of a return of the former colonial power, public education was not important to the Emperor, who believed that independence depended chiefly on strengthening the military. Ardouin doubts the six schools provided for by the Constitution of 1805 were ever established. The Constitution of 1806 does not even mention the question of public education, which suggests that, contrary to the assertion of Louis-Auguste Joint, these schools were never opened.⁸⁸ Dessalines only wanted to found “an Empire of material strength” “regardless of the competition that this strength finds in the power of developed intelligence, nourished by education.”⁸⁹

The neglect of public education seems to be linked to a perception by the Haitian ruling classes that it poses a threat to the control of political power. Regarding Henri Christophe’s educational policy, Hérard Dumesle

asserted that he “neglected true education” deemed “dangerous to his tyranny.” Boyer closed the schools opened by Christophe in the north and “those he found open in the East” and “gagged the Haitian press in its cradle” He “forced the people to languish in ignorance and superstition so that, completely stupefied, they would always allow themselves to be led by him or by the heirs of his policy,” wrote Louis Joseph Janvier.⁹⁰ His distrust of education led him, in 1842, to withdraw the decree creating the *lycées* of Cap-Haitien, Cayes, and Santo Domingo, as soon as he saw that the project had been taken into consideration by the Chamber.⁹¹ Stewart William Hanna, an English missionary who visited Haiti in the late 1830s, writes:

The policy of the government is to discourage the education of the lower classes, who are in a pitiable state of ignorance. Even Borgella, the most intelligent of the native chiefs, appears to think that it would be an unwise measure to bestow the boon of education upon those whose station in life is that of labour and dependence.⁹²

For their part, the American occupiers did everything in their power to prevent the advancement of education in the country, including using the lever of financial control.⁹³ They categorically opposed the creation of the teacher training college provided for by the Guilbaud law of August 26, 1913, and refused to disburse the funds necessary for the project. Even the project of teacher training classes annexed to certain upper primary schools, as designed by Louis Dantès Bellegarde, was unable to obtain financial support from the occupiers, despite the inclusion of the necessary funds in the budget of the fiscal year 1919–1920. Unable to immediately create a higher teacher training school, Bellegarde proposed to set up a two-year teacher training program at the Lycée de Port-au-Prince, but he again encountered the categorical refusal of financial advisor John McIlhenny, who argued that the most pressing need of the Haitian people was training for teachers of primary education. He refused, however, to provide this level of education with a teacher training school. Bellegarde attributed the difficulties encountered in implementing secondary and higher education reforms to the lack of culture of most American officials sent to Haiti, which made them incapable of “appreciating the usefulness of higher education” and to “their hatred of the Haitian intellectual elite.”⁹⁴

The American occupiers also opposed the efforts of the Haitian authorities in the area of vocational and technical training. Higher education met even worse treatment. Six professors from the School of Medicine, Pharmacy and Dentistry were dismissed for refusing to vote for the Constitution of 1918. This school was expelled by military force from its own premises and the students were refused entry “to the Haitian hospital where their practical training was to be done.”⁹⁵ The systematic

opposition of the Americans to the most realistic projects aimed at developing public education in the country, by means of their stranglehold on the treasury of the Haitian Republic, was part of a policy of “starvation” of which the objective was the control of the Haitian education system. “They wished to demonstrate that Haitians were incapable of making changes for the better, incapable of conceiving and achieving progress, incapable of raising themselves, by their own effort, to a higher state of civilization,” writes Bellegarde.⁹⁶ Behind these prejudices, we find the desire of the occupiers to impose a school system on Haiti that would suit its racist image of Haitians, who were, according to an American, “made to be hewers of wood and drawers of water.”⁹⁷ According to this theory, the only school system that suits Haitians is a “purely vocational system.”⁹⁸ This is what Rayford W. Logan suggested in 1930 when he wrote: “The work which is apparently being attempted today is to convince them (Haitians) that vocational education is the only system which is good for them.”⁹⁹ The educational policy of the American occupation, characterized by a deep contempt for classical education, did not bring about any change in the situation of the peasant, who remained suspended in the deepest ignorance.

The contempt of the ruling classes for the education of the masses favored the establishment of an exclusive and unequal educational system, incompatible with any prospect of massification and democratization.

1.5.2 A system of exclusion

From the first quarter of the nineteenth century, a school system was established that excluded the majority of children, especially those of peasant origin. The law of July 4, 1820, established that a father who wanted to have his child admitted to a primary school must be able to testify to the various services he had rendered to the homeland in a petition to the Commission of Public Instruction. This narrow admission requirement was removed by the law of December 29, 1848, which ordained that any child aged 7 to 14 years old could be admitted to a national primary school.¹⁰⁰ However, only two children per family would be admitted to a single school, “unless the premises allow for a larger number.” Exclusion was maintained at the secondary school level. Admission to high schools was reserved preferentially

to the sons, brothers or nephews of citizens who have rendered eminent services to the fatherland, or who have distinguished themselves in arms, letters, sciences, the arts and particularly agriculture; to the sons, brothers or nephews of military officers and public officials; to orphans; to children from other schools who have distinguished themselves by their conduct and intelligence.¹⁰¹

Considering the extremely low rate of school attendance during the first half of the nineteenth century, children who could meet these requirements were a small minority.¹⁰² It was the President of the Republic who ultimately judged the value of services rendered and distinctions, since admissions were subject to prior authorization by the Commission for Public Instruction. And not everyone was given this authorization.

Under the Boyer government, Black students were even displaced from schools by students of mixed race.¹⁰³ The educational system was also marked by strong gender inequalities: of the 505 rural schools that are said to have existed in the country by the end of the nineteenth century most were boys' schools. Only a few rural areas had schools for girls.

National schools, especially urban ones, were never completely free; they included day students and state scholars.¹⁰⁴ According to the law of December 29, 1848, education in national primary schools was free for all children and citizens. But the state did not support boarders in secondary schools. There could only be day students from the state, for whom education was free. The municipalities could maintain pupils there at their own expense (boarders or day students). They also received private students. The high schools could receive boarders and day students from the state. A boarding school for young women was created in Port-au-Prince. Residents would be received either at the expense of the municipalities or at the expense of their parents. National rural schools would receive boarders from the state, municipalities, and individuals. While the law of December 29, 1848, extended free primary education to all children, that of December 7, 1868, reserved it for children from needy families. The State also maintained boarders in private schools such as the Sainte-Rose boarding school in Lima, the Saint-Louis de Gonzague institution, Females de la Sagesse school, and the Petit-Séminaire College of which the principal and teachers were paid by the Republic.

Free school was never more than an illusion. The insufficiency of schools seems to have led the various governments to adopt a mixed system combining free education with a form of early "commodification" of education, even within national schools, both primary and secondary. This practice tended to encourage the development of private initiatives in the education sector, the "commodification" of education by the State itself creating a situation open to exploitation by individuals and private organizations. An environment favorable to the development of the principle of freedom of education, marked by the dizzying growth of private schools during the second half of the twentieth century, therefore came about.

Towards the end of the nineteenth century, the country had five high schools, one of which was in each of the following cities: Port-au-Prince, Cap-Haitien, Cayes, Gonaives, Jacmel.¹⁰⁵ At the time of the American occupation, Léon Audain, Minister of Public Education, devised a general plan for the reform of public education which reinforced this already too selective system, by proposing to close all high schools in the Republic,

with the exception of the one in Port-au-Prince which would become the Lycée d'Haïti. Audain presented himself as the standard bearer of the policy of renouncing universal free education adopted in 1879. He believed that the application of the principle of free education to secondary schools was a mistake, a distortion, an "anomaly." For the minister, the constitutional article which established the principle of universal free education had become obsolete because of the very existence of the Haitiano-American convention. The abolition of free general secondary education seemed to Audain a fair measure, the state not being obliged to provide this level of education. "The state once offered it, but we can no longer do so, so we are cancelling it," he wrote.

I had a valuable possession which I lent to you and you enjoyed it for a long time. But circumstances demand that I repossess my property, which I was not obliged to lend to you. What do you have to say?¹⁰⁶

Audain held the opinion that the arrival of the Americans constituted a revolution that demanded the consolidation of Haitian public finances. The idea of abolishing free secondary education, an offer whose requirements were, according to Audain, out of the reach of Haitian finances, was part of the government's effort to show the Americans that Haiti respected the modern principles of good financial governance. It is important to note that Audain's plan to eliminate free secondary education was being developed in contrast to the massification of secondary education in Europe and the United States. As we noted above, this massification was linked to a new economic structure which made it important to train qualified workers on a large scale. The choice of the Haitian Minister of Public Education would seem more suited to an economic system based on the production of crops, as in colonial times, which requires only minimal qualifications. To flout the Constitution and choose to limit free primary education reflected the total support of the Haitian authorities to the international division of labor established by Western imperialism, allowing this division of labor to dictate the limits of the Haitian educational system, limited by inequalities and exclusions. Thus the minister proposed to abolish all the secondary schools in the province.

1.6 School exclusion in the Abricots commune: the case of Fouache between history and testimony

Fouache is a small town in the fourth communal section of Les Abricots. It borders the locality of Durocher belonging to the same fourth municipal section. Located in the mountains, in the 1970s Fouache was, like many rural areas, devoid of everything: health, school, energy, hydraulics, administrative infrastructure. ... The State was however omnipresent thanks to a network of militiamen, in charge of the police and justice. Although

unarmed, these “volunteer” officials had an authority that was properly respected, for it was exercised on behalf of the army and/or militia (the notorious and dreaded VSN). This authority was extended to anyone close to or allied with the official holder, which increased its efficiency.

This part of the chapter presents, in the form of a testimony, the brief history of the coming of the school in the town of Fouache. It is a perfect example of exclusion and inclusion in schools.

1.6.1 General context of the opening of the school in Fouache

In the late 1970s, there were no schools in Fouache, and very few people understood the importance of educating their children, who were totally excluded from the enjoyment of the right to education. The level of culture of the “inhabitants or peasants,” as the people of the countryside are known, their level of culture, shall we say, did not allow them to grasp the importance of school in the development and economic success of their children. In the eyes of parents, children were still considered as a work force. According to their ability, they helped their parents in their daily activities, mostly domestic and agricultural chores. This situation had prevailed in the country since the beginning of the nineteenth century. However, some governments fought against this practice. In 1852, Emperor Faustin I blamed the indifference of some parents for the many children who “grow up deprived of the benefits of education.”¹⁰⁷ The laws of December 29, 1848, and December 7, 1860, imposed fines against parents who took their children out of school prematurely. The additional law to the law of December 29, 1848, imposed fines on those who resisted the education of their children. Its article 1 stipulates:

Any head of family who is an owner, farmer or tenant, and who has in his family one or more children of age to be admitted to the national school, and who cannot justify that he has at least one child in the imperial primary school of his parish, or in a particular school, will be liable to a fine of 5 to 25 gourdes.

Anyone who took their child out of school was liable to ten days in jail.

The plight of Fouache changed with the arrival of a man called Belot. We do not know his full name or where he came from. But his well-fed outline, hidden under his striped T-shirt and shorts (*bout kanson*) – a uniform he wore almost every day – is engraved in my memory. He may have been one of those men of the time who, although endowed with a certain culture, vegetated in restless unemployment and sought their fortune elsewhere. They came to the town of Fouache from almost everywhere, and even from Les Cayes. In Fouache, Belot proposed to create a small school. But no suitable space was available. Delouis Etienne, a notable of the district, then offered to host the school in his *gagewre*.

Although he was a farmer who could barely identify the letters of the alphabet and a few numbers, Delouis Etienne¹⁰⁸ had unwavering faith in school, which he believed to be the infallible instrument for the improvement of man. He did not want any of his seven children to follow him through the harshness and difficulty of peasant life. He silently bore within him the painful scars of a profession he practiced from need and not out of deliberate choice. He wanted to offer other possibilities to his children that his time had not offered to him.

His belief in school as a way out for his children stemmed from conflicts related to the division of family inheritance. To him, school was the only way to save his children from endless land disputes that pitted children against each other. These intra-family quarrels ran contrary to his values of generosity, charity, hospitality, sharing, solidarity, and mutual aid. He was convinced that education was a formidable weapon against the injustices of the judicial system and the systematic denial of the rights of peasants, in a country where the precariousness of land titles favors the drain on the resources of the countryside by the city by means of interminable trials. In other words, school represented in his eyes the premier instrument of the defense of rights and dignity. This is why he barred his children from working the land. They had to help him in agricultural activities, but none of them could farm their own patch. All of them had to go to school.

Delouis Etienne was well known as a cockfighting enthusiast. He had a *gagueure* where he held an annual fair, for two days, during the last week of February. It was two days of festivities (Saturday and Sunday) for lovers of cockfighting, where vendors of griots (roast pork), *ri sòs pwalsouch*¹⁰⁹, tafia, fried fish, *kabich*¹¹⁰, strong liquor, fried chicken and fritters, and sellers of lottery tickets congregated and there were games of chance (mostly three-seven card games and dominoes). The children played ball games where you could bet up to two, three, or four times fifty cents. Delouis Etienne owned a lot of land planted with sugar cane, coffee, cocoa, yams, breadfruit, mangoes of all kinds, malanga (tayo), mazombelle, plantain and *ponyac* bananas, and so on.

These two days of *gagueure* were always eagerly awaited by the whole community, since everyone could profit from them, children included: they made little thatch-covered wooden tents and rented them out to the merchants, two or three gourds for the two days. Respectable people from far away (Dame Marie, Apricots, Chambellan, Jili, Taponna, Irois, Anse-d'Hainault, Bariadelle, Birotte, La Seringue, etc.) were seen parading for the occasion, riding their well-harnessed horses. The Sunday evening ball, hosted by the Super Solid orchestra, which came from Sixième, closed the festivities. It was an opportunity for lovers to enjoy, far from the prying eyes of parents, the little freedoms that are easily overlooked. The latter even benefited from the rewards collected by the young girls who had had the chance to dance with lovebirds capable of inviting them to the "vive."¹¹¹



Figure 1.1 Makeshift classrooms in gambling cocks. *The gageure of Delouis Etienne, which housed the small school in Fouache.* It was the place where children started their first years of school.

Photograph taken by Jean Fritzner Etienne, on August 12, 2017.

1.6.2 Fouache's first school, a cultural revolution

Delouis Etienne offered his *gageure* to host the first small school in the district. It was a small revolution, because any parent who wanted their child to be educated had to send him to town (Dame Marie, Abricots and Jérémie in particular) or to Lesson, where there were two schools, a national primary school and a Catholic boarding school which included the first three classes of secondary as well as a vocational school. The towns of Saint-Victor and Montagnac each had a primary school. These schools were located many kilometers from Fouache. To reach them, you had to walk all day on foot, through mountains, valleys, and steep roads. Parents had no guarantee that the children actually spent the day at school, since they could easily pass their time instead in swimming, fishing, football, playing marbles, etc. – all the activities that can distract young people away from their education.

The small school in Fouache welcomed students from nearby villages – Durocher, Nan Soupriz, Gayino, Marcorel, Congos Tous Nus, etc. Classes were held from 9 am in the same arena used for cockfighting. They consisted of the first rudiments of reading (*Ti Malice*), writing and arithmetic. All ages were accepted and united in the same struggle against ignorance. Children seven years old sat beside young people as old as 20. The same course was offered to everyone. Only their individual learning pace distinguished them as students.

Some intelligent individuals stood out from the rest. Between these quick students a fierce competition ensued as to who would learn the

lesson of the day fastest to move on to another. The main competitor of the author of this chapter still lives (2021) in the town of Durocher where he runs a small school.

The first hours of the day were the most fearful, because we had to do our recitations, and woe to those who had failed to study, for Belot's strap was never far away. Not having learned mine, one day I hid under a bed, determined to skip school. The whole school went looking for me. Flushed out, I managed to escape to the valley near the *gaugeure*. Sent to find me, the other students captured me and handed me over. I received a firm spanking that day for causing such a fuss.

While human resources were nonexistent at the time, the fourth communal section of Les Abricots was experiencing a positive development in terms of education. It is not uncommon today to come across young people living in localities such as Fouache, Durocher, or Marcorel who have successfully completed two or three years of secondary school. They usually work there as teachers in small schools that they run either on their own or on behalf of the state (PRONEC). Are we seeing a process of young people returning homeward and teaching schoolchildren in their own environment? What do these young people bring in terms of added value to the economy and social life of the countryside? Does their presence have a positive impact on the quality of education in the villages? While these questions deserve to be explored, they go beyond the simple testimony that we are offering in this section of the chapter.

In terms of school infrastructure, the situation has not changed significantly today. After two or three years of the small school in Fouache, most of the pupils were excluded from the school system, despite the immense progress which their enthusiasm and their ability allowed them to make. Those whose parents were in no position to send them to Saint-Victor, Lesson, Montagnac, La Hatte, or even toward the city, were forced to end their schooling, while continuing to occupy them with domestic and agricultural work: production and processing of foodstuffs, cattle breeding, surveillance of fields, in particular rice fields, against devastation from harmful birds, care of fighting cocks (food, grooming, etc.).

In 1982, a national school including the preschool (CINEC¹¹²), primary, and vocational sections was built in La Hatte, a village connected to the commune of Dame Marie, located about ten kilometers from the small school of Fouache. The opening of this school caused the decline of the small school in Fouache, especially given that Belot's skills were limited. For the first time, we were in contact with well-trained teachers, the majority of whom came from the École normale d'instituteurs in Marfranc. The teaching staff carried out their work with eagerness and selflessness. In CM2, additional lessons were given free of charge by the titular teacher whose only aim was the success of his students and who considered himself a coach participating in a competition, the Certificate of Primary Studies, which he had no right to lose.

The history of the Fouache school can be considered a perfect example of school exclusion, a phenomenon all too common in the history of Haiti. Until the 1970s, it was rare for families in Fouache to send their children to school. Most school-age children grew up outside the education system, totally ignorant of the most rudimentary elements of instruction, while engaged in domestic and economic chores. Several reasons came into play: the absence of schools in Fouache, the economic inability of almost all families to send their children to schools in distant towns like Lesson, Montagnarc, and Saint-Victor, parents' ignorance of the value of education in the development and success of their children, etc. Till the 1970s Fouache was excluded from the Haitian educational system, completely ignored by municipal and government public education programs, then the Belot initiative, supported by Delouis Étienne, was a project of really inclusive education, which found a way to teach a group of heterogeneous students of different ages and abilities. Fouache's little school was only a single classroom which mixed pupils of all conditions – economic, social, religious, and all ages – in the same struggle against ignorance. It was a successful example of inclusive education, offered by a fairground schoolteacher who, in all likelihood, had never received any basic academic training to practice the profession.

1.7 Conclusion

The massification and democratization of education constitute a real challenge for the Haitian education system, which has been so plagued by exclusion and inequality. The legal bases of this system go back to the very creation of the State of Haiti, in particular, to the Constitution of 1805, where the principle of public education was introduced, making it the responsibility of the State. From the first half of the nineteenth century, numerous legislative and administrative texts were drawn up, aiming at organizing public education in the country. These texts are imbued with powerful aspirations which border on naivety. This aspiration did not always take into account of the constraints that affected its realistic expression. Hence, the immense gap between rhetoric and concrete achievements. By the end of the nineteenth century, the situation was alarming, and the miserable state of the Haitian educational system was appalling. Until the end of the first half of the 20th century, the percentage of school attendance never reached 10%. Access to higher levels of education was virtually closed to some groups. This is the case with secondary education, which was almost unattainable for those coming from rural areas. Imagine the impossibility for them of access to higher education! Haiti therefore promotes an unequal, undemocratic education system that promotes the social advancement of a few, while condemning the majority to an inferior position.

The deplorable state of public education has also been characterized by the insufficiency and even total absence, at certain times, of schools – a problem far from being resolved today – and the lack of qualified teachers, a major challenge that governments have tried to solve, without success, for more than 60 years, their plans for the creation of training schools for primary and secondary teachers never coming to fruition.¹¹³ The increasingly important place that private schools came to occupy in the Haitian educational system suggested that the principle of freedom of education was incompatible with that of free public education.

If economic and political constraints play an important role in the deplorable situation of public education in Haiti – the weight of the independence debt, civil wars, foreign occupation – it seems that the main causes are found both in a political mentality which sees education as a threat to the dominant classes, and an economic system based on the production of agricultural products, not on industry and the development of the service sector. This economic system has been undemanding in terms of qualifications and has felt like a regression compared to the colonial economy, which has made more and more use of new technologies. In such a system, the importance of education became less relevant in the eyes of the ruling elite. These flaws constitute the real challenges of the massification and democratization of schools in Haiti. These ideas deserve further study, but we have only used official sources for this chapter, and a full study must be which must be reinforced by other sources.

Notes

- 1 Condorcet Jean-Antoine-Nicolas de Caritat (Marquis de), 1791. *Cinq mémoires sur l'instruction publique*. [Paris: Garnier-Flammarion, 1994], p. 17.
- 2 Leliève Claude, *Éducation et/ou instruction? Association française des acteurs de l'éducation*. 2014, No 142, p. 11–15. Online: <https://www.cairn.info/revue-administration-et-education-2014-2-page-11.htm>
- 3 Vincent Sténio, Lhérisson, L.-C., 1895, *La législation de l'instruction publique de la République d'Haïti (1804–1845)*. Paris: Dunod et Vicq, p. 13.
- 4 In France, the phenomenon of mass education, that is to say the increase in the number of children attending school, originated with the laws of Jules Ferry of 1881–1882 which opened schooling to all children via free, secular and compulsory schools.
- 5 Roussier, Paul, 1937, *Lettres du général Leclerc, commandant en chef de l'armée de Saint-Domingue en 1802*, Paris: Société de l'histoire des colonies et Librairie Ernest Roux, p. 28.
- 6 Bellegarde Dantès, 1953, *Haïti et son peuple*. Paris: Nouvelles éditions latines, p. 56.
- 7 Article 19 of the general provisions. Public education was the responsibility of the Minister of Finance, according to article 40 of the constitution.
- 8 National primary schools (See Sténio Vincent and L.C. Lherisson, op. cit., p. 16).
- 9 Article 34.

- 10 Article 10 of the decree of July 26, 1893, states: “The directors of private schools remain entirely free in the choice of the methods according to which they wish to teach the subjects set out in articles 2, 3, 5, 6 and 7 of the present decree.”
- 11 Joint Louis Auguste maintains that in the face of the inadequacy of public schools, Dessalines, like Toussaint Louverture, encouraged individuals to open private schools which were subsidized by the state. Joint unfortunately did not reveal his sources (Joint, Auguste, 2009, *L'école dans la construction de l'État*, In *Genèse de l'État haïtien* (1804–1859). Under the direction of Michel Hector and Laënnec Hurbon, Éditions de la Maison des sciences de l'homme. Online: <http://www.openedition.org/6540>).
- 12 Sténio and Lhérisson, op. cit., p. 64.
- 13 Rather than the fifteen people as claimed by Beaubrun Ardouin (Ardouin, Beaubrun, 1858, *Études sur l'histoire d'Haïti*, volume 8, Paris, Chez l'Auteur, p. 388).
- 14 Ordinance of the King, December 25, 1818, In the Royal Gazette of Hayti, December 28, 1818.
- 15 Secondary schools (see Constitution of 1867).
- 16 Article 31.
- 17 According to the law of December 29, 1848, the Haitian University is made up of the young people in schools, the inspectors, members of public education commissions, and secretaries attached to these commissions.
- 18 Bellegarde Dantès, 1938, *La nation haïtienne*, J. de Gigord, p. 224.
- 19 They only maintained the principle of freedom of education.
- 20 Agricultural primary schools, vocational schools, arts and crafts schools, higher education, etc.
- 21 Bellegarde, *ibid.*, p. 225.
- 22 Sténio Vincent and L.-C. Lhérisson, for example, commenting on the provisions of the Constitution of 1879 making free access universal, wrote: “Claiming to promote intellectual progress and support so-called democratic ideas still in vogue in the aftermath of our stupid civil wars, the following provisions were introduced in these constitutional pacts. ... Public education is free at all levels. Primary education is compulsory and free. ... It is easy to understand providing primary education free of charge. It is a natural consequence of obligation. But making all education free is not based on solid arguments. Free education cannot be an absolute principle.” (Vincent and Lhérisson, op. cit., p. 11). François-Elie Dubois believes that secondary education should be reserved for those of high intelligence (*Ibid.*, p. 18.).
- 23 The laws of December 29, 1848 and December 7, 1860 provided for the founding of primary and secondary teacher training colleges (1860). A bill creating a primary school teacher training college was presented by Boisrond Canal on June 26, 1877. It was voted on by the Chamber of Deputies and adopted by the Senate. Towards the end of the 19th century, primary and secondary teacher training colleges remained “the most sought-after wish of the Department of Public Instruction.” (Vincent and Lhérisson, op. cit.)
- 24 The constitutions of 1935, 1939, and 1944 limit free education to secondary school. The last two Constitutions were only revisions of the Constitution of 1935.
- 25 See the Constitutions of 1946, 1950, 1957, 1964, amended in 1971, 1983, and 1987.
- 26 Article 32.
- 27 Article 32.7 and 32.8 of the Constitution of 1987 amended in 2011.

- 28 Janvier Louis-Joseph, 1886, *Les constitutions d'Haïti (1801–1885)*. Paris: Marpon et Flammarion, pp. 105–106.
- 29 Ibid.
- 30 See Vincent and Lhérisson, op. cit., p. 25.
- 31 Pradine, Linstant, 1860, *Recueil général des lois et actes du gouvernement d'Haïti*, volume 2, Paris, Auguste Durand, p. 555.
- 32 Vincent and Lhérisson, op. cit., p. 287.
- 33 In the decree of July 8, 1843, the Municipal Committee of Port-au-Prince created six municipal schools: two in Port-au-Prince, one in Pétion-Ville, one in Cazeaux, one in Carrefour, and one in Fond-Ferrier.
- 34 Rameau, D.-S., 1891, Report. *The Secretary of State in the Department of Public Instruction to His Excellency the President of Haiti, January 6, 1891*, in *Bulletin des lois et acts du Gouvernement*, No 22, 1891. Paris: Dunod and Vicq, p. 55.
- 35 Ibid.
- 36 Ibid.
- 37 *Reply from President Hyppolite to the Secretary of State for Public Education*, January 16, 1891, In *Bulletin of Laws and Government Acts*, No. 22, op. cit., p. 61.
- 38 Rameau, *Rapport...*, op. cit., p. 57; also, Rameau, *Rapport au même*, of February 14, 1891, In *Bulletin...*, No. 22, op. cit., p. 111.
- 39 Letter from President Hyppolite to the Secretary of State for Public Instruction, February 20, 1891, In *Bulletin ...*, No. 22, op. cit., p. 113.
- 40 Rural schools were established for the first time by the law of December 29, 1848, under the ministry of Jean-Baptiste Francisque. Articles 117, 118, and 119 state.
- 41 *Circulaire du secrétaire d'état au Département de l'Instruction publique, M.-P. Apollon, aux commandants des arrondissements de la république*, septembre 1891, in *Bulletin...*, No 22, op. cit., p. 217
- 42 Ibid., p. 217.
- 43 Bellegarde, 1938, *La nation haïtienne*, op. cit., p. 235.
- 44 Audain, Léon, 1916, Letter of February 9, 1916, in Département de la justice, 1917, *Bulletin des lois et actes*. Port-au-Prince: Imp. Nationale, p. 29.
- 45 Ibid., p. 29.
- 46 Bellegarde, *La nation haïtienne*, op.cit., p. 234.
- 47 Law of August 29, 1947 concerning the start of a literacy campaign, in Département de la justice, 1947, *Bulletin des lois et actes*, 18 aout-31 décembre 1947, Port-au-Prince, Imprimerie de l'État, p. 53.
- 48 Law of September 23, 1947, in *Bulletin des lois et actes...*, ibid., p. 268.
- 49 *Decree of March 30, 1982, organizing the Haitian education system with the intention of offering equal opportunities to all and to reflect Haitian culture*, in *Le Moniteur*, N° 27, April 5, 1982.
- 50 Bellegarde, *La nation haïtienne*, op. cit., p. 341.
- 51 Audain, op. cit., p. 29.
- 52 Circular from the Secretary of State for Public Education to the inspectors of the constituencies of the Republic, September 12, 1891, in *Bulletin des lois et actes du gouvernement*, no 22, op. cit., p. 219.
- 53 Vincent et Lhérisson, op. cit., p. 100.
- 54 Joint Louis-Auguste, 2008, "The educational system and social inequalities in Haiti. The case of Catholic schools," Research and resources in education and training [Online], 2 |, posted on April 24, 2020, consulted on December 10, 2020. URL: <http://journals.openedition.org/rref/861>; <https://doi.org/10.4000/rref.861>

- 55 Brutus Edner, *Instruction publique en Haïti (1492–1945)*, 1948, Port-au-Prince, Imp. de l'État, p. 428.
- 56 Ibid.
- 57 Bellegarde, *La nation haïtienne*, op. cit., p. 341.
- 58 Ibid., p. 342.
- 59 Brutus, *ibid.*, p. 430.
- 60 Ibid., p. 428.
- 61 Ibid.
- 62 Ibid.
- 63 Joint, *ibid.*
- 64 Ibid.
- 65 GTEF, 2010, *Pour un pacte national sur l'éducation en Haïti*, p. XXXII.
- 66 Ibid., p. XXXIV.
- 67 Of the 44,542 students enrolled in public and private schools, 38,039 were in public schools. However, 255 to 50% of these pupils were funded by their parents.
- 68 Vincent and Lhérisson, op. cit., p. 89.
- 69 Ibid.
- 70 Ibid., p. 103.
- 71 Ibid., p. 93.
- 72 On this law, see Bellegarde, 1937, *La résistance haïtienne, (L'occupation américaine d'Haïti)*, Montreal: Ed. Beauchemin, pp. 96–97.
- 73 Bellegarde, *ibid.*, p. 96.
- 74 Ibid.
- 75 Vincent and Lhérisson, op. cit., p. 61.
- 76 See Audain, op. cit.
- 77 GTEF, op. cit., p. XXXVI.
- 78 Ibid., p. 84.
- 79 Ibid.
- 80 Ibid., p. 76.
- 81 Ibid., p. 75.
- 82 Information gathered in 2017 during an interview with officials of the Ministry's Training and Development Department.
- 83 GTEF, op. cit., p. XLIV.
- 84 Joint, 2008, « Système éducatif et inégalités sociales en Haïti... », op. cit., p. 19.
- 85 Audain, op. cit.
- 86 Letter of September 12, 1891, op. cit.
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- 89 Ardouin, *ibid.*, p. 189.
- 90 Janvier, op. cit., p. 150.
- 91 Ibid.
- 92 Stewart William Hanna in *Haiti après l'esclavage. Formation de l'État et culture politique populaire (1804–1846)*, Jean Alix René, 2019.
- 93 On the obstacles placed by the American occupation to the development of public education in Haiti, see Louis Dantès Bellegarde, *La Résistance haïtienne*, op. cit.
- 94 Bellegarde, *ibid.*, p. 91.
- 95 Ibid., p. 99.
- 96 Ibid., p. 105.
- 97 Ibid., p. 112. Taken from Emily Balch, *Occupied Haiti*.

- 98 Ibid.
- 99 Quoted by par Bellegarde, *ibid.*, p. 113.
- 100 This law assumed the creation of a primary school in each community.
- 101 See Laws of December 7, 1860, and September 3, 1864.
- 102 The percentage of school attendance was estimated in 1844 at 0.60%, or an enrollment of 2,000 children out of 331,216 children and young people of school age. This rate rose to 2.69% in 1854 (see Brutus, *op. cit.*, p. 427).
- 103 Janvier, *op. cit.*, p. 152.
- 104 Law of December 29, 1848.
- 105 Respective dates of foundation: 1816, 1844, 1845, 1860, 1869.
- 106 Audain, *op. cit.*
- 107 See Additional law to the law of December 29, 1848, on public education (in Vincent and Lhérisson, *op. cit.*)
- 108 He was married to Clervane Saint-Fleur, born in 1930, who also stood out for her courage and faith in the virtues of education. Delouis Etienne was born on August 26, 1926, in Durocher, a small town in the fourth section, bordering on Fouache.
- 109 Rice with a sauce made with green peas.
- 110 A kind of large roll.
- 111 Buffet where the young women could buy products of her choice on her admirer's account (cola, sweets, Nestlé milk, and other small sweets).
- 112 Integrated community nutrition and education center. Created by the decree of March 30, 1982, the CINECs constitute, along with kindergartens, the first steps of education.
- 113 The École normale supérieure provided for by article 106 of the law of December 7, 1860, was not established until 1947–1987 years later.

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