

# The early days of journalism in Ponta Grossa, State of Paraná

## Os Primórdios do jornalismo em Ponta Grossa, Paraná

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### Abstract

The 1890s mark the beginnings of journalism in Ponta Grossa, with traces of the existence of three newspapers installed in the city, entitled *Campos Geraes*, *O Pirolita*, and *O Precursor*. Those papers emerged in a period of reconfiguration of local, state, and national society, with political transformations and the passage from the Brazilian Empire to the Republic. These social transformations included the end of slavery and the arrival of immigrants, as well as cultural transformations with the institution of republican discourses and the rise of the ideology of progress and social ordering. This investigation used an evidential paradigm, following the trail of signs, evidence, and traces of sources about the early days of journalism in Ponta Grossa available in regional collections and in the Hemeroteca Digital Brasileira (Brazilian Digital Newspapers and Periodicals Library). The article aims to present a reflection on the beginnings of journalism in Ponta Grossa, studying the signs of the existence of the press in the city, their founders, political and ideological content and the challenges of the foundation and survival of journalism in Ponta Grossa at the end of the XIX century.

**Keywords:** History of journalism; Ideologies; Ponta Grossa.

### Resumo

Os anos de 1890 marcam os inícios do jornalismo em Ponta Grossa, com vestígios da existência de três impressos instalados na cidade, intitulados *Campos Geraes*, *O Pirolita* e *O Precursor*. Esses impressos surgiram em um período de reconfiguração da sociedade local, estadual e nacional, com transformações políticas, com a passagem do Império para República; sociais, com o fim da escravidão e chegada dos imigrantes; e culturais, com a instituição dos discursos republicanos e ascensão da ideologia de progresso e ordenação

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social. Essa investigação utilizou um paradigma indiciário, seguindo a trilha dos signos, indícios e vestígios das fontes sobre os primórdios do jornalismo de Ponta Grossa, disponíveis nos acervos regionais e na Hemeroteca Digital Brasileira. O artigo objetiva trazer uma reflexão sobre os inícios do jornalismo em Ponta Grossa, estudando os sinais da existência dos primeiros jornais da cidade, seus fundadores, conteúdo político e ideológico e os desafios da fundação e sobrevivência do jornalismo em Ponta Grossa no final do século XIX.

**Palavras-Chaves:** História do jornalismo; Ideologias; Ponta Grossa.

## Introduction

Aiming to analyze the beginnings of journalism in Ponta Grossa, in the state of Paraná, at the end of the XIX century, this article looks into the problem of the first journalistic endeavors in the city. The investigation consisted of an evidential study and follows the process of discovering evidence, indications, and signs (GINZBURG, 1989), seeking to understand a historical reality of the early days of journalism in Ponta Grossa.

The evidential character proposed here is justified by the precariousness of documents about the beginnings of the press in Ponta Grossa. Newspapers from the end of the XIX century are briefly mentioned in chronicles, memoirs, as well as in historiographical works, seeking to understand the beginnings of journalism in the city. However, those productions present narratives with reflections especially focused on two newspapers only, namely, *Campos Geraes*, from 1893; and *O Progresso/Diário dos Campos*, founded in 1907 (ROCHA, 2019; CHAVES, 2011; HOLOWATE, 2018; BITTENCOURT FILHO et al., 2022). Among the publications addressing the beginnings of journalism in Ponta Grossa, we found the dissertations by Rocha and Holowate, which cite the commemorative leaflet *Ideais de Ontem da Cidade Sempre Jovem*, and that of Valfrido Pilotto, from 1973 (PILOTTO, 1973), which records the *Campos Geraes* newspaper as the oldest of its kind in Ponta Grossa. However, none of them mention the papers *O Precursor* and *O Pirolita*. Chaves placed the beginnings of journalism in Ponta Grossa in 1896, which was probably a typing mistake, since when he presented his thesis (2011), the *Campos Geraes* foundation date, 1893, was already well known. Benatte and Bittencourt pointed out that other newspapers existed before *Campos Geraes*, but they also reported the difficulty of dating those publications. It seems relevant to emphasize

that the beginnings of journalism in Ponta Grossa were not the main research focus in those studies.

The study of these newspapers benefited from the existence of original sources preserved and available for consultation by researchers. *Diário dos Campos* can be considered the newspaper that completed the process of consolidation of the press in Ponta Grossa, being published, with few interruptions, until nowadays. Campos Geraes was the first printed paper in Ponta Grossa to remain active as a journalistic resilience, for more than six months. Campos Geraes is generally recognized as the first printed newspaper in Ponta Grossa, but there are no academic studies looking deeper into its trajectory.

Moreover, the ephemeral character of journalism in Ponta Grossa must be understood within the context of political, social, and cultural effervescence of the profound restructuring of Brazilian society at the time. The resignification of old political and intellectual groups, or the emergence of new ones, went through a process of construction of narratives – now, republican and liberal – that were elaborated as an ideological discourse of a new type and, for that very reason, incipient. After all, it was a discourse that was socially and politically constructed at that time. The written press, among other forms of manifestations, was one of the expressions of this new intellectual and political engineering, which implied both the doing and seeking of its legitimacy in local society. As such, the press also proved to be incipient and ephemeral. The poor documental preservation of those periodical confirms these characteristics. This shows that the first newspapers did not achieve political recognition, neither in terms of ideologies nor the actual need for their existence, a phenomenon that gradually changed with the formation and consolidation of an expanded public opinion.

Regarding the first newspapers in Ponta Grossa, the survival of the printed material depended on the ability to raise financial and political support to keep publishing them with some regularity. But it is necessary to consider that the periodicity of those first papers was much lower and less regular than that of the best-known publications in the historiography of Ponta Grossa. Therefore, we could observe only signs and traces of some issues of those publications, while the *Diário dos Campos*, for example, had thousands of published issues.

One huge obstacle for the study of the early days of journalism in Ponta Grossa comes from the difficulty to find original issues of those periodicals

available for consultation. Consequently, references to these periodicals depend on insecure information, contained in memoirs and inventories about the beginning of the press in Ponta Grossa. This is the special case of the Catalog of newspapers published in Paraná, 1854-1907 by Romário Martins (1908), and the aforementioned commemorative leaflet *Ideais de Ontem da Cidade Sempre Jovem*, by Valfrido Pilotto, published in 1973. The catalog by Romário Martins, published in 1908, listed the newspapers published in Paraná between 1854 and the date of publication of that inventory. But the catalog presents gaps and does not mention some journalistic endeavors that took place in Paraná, including some newspapers from Ponta Grossa between 1893 and 1908. Pilotto's leaflet, published in 1973, contains transcripts of parts of issues of some of the first newspapers in Ponta Grossa followed by the author's comments on the owners, the content of some pages and the discursive and literary focus of the newspaper issue, which he could access. In that document, it is possible to find, for example, the transcription of articles from issue 1 of the first phase of the newspaper Campos Geraes (1893)<sup>1</sup>. However, regarding the newspaper *Gazeta dos Campos*, from 1898, Pilotto only accessed and transcribed parts of the 12<sup>th</sup> issue of that paper<sup>2</sup>. In fact, Pilotto transcribed and commented only some loose issues that he could get hold of. Pilotto's leaflet is relevant due to the transcriptions presented of issues of papers whose original versions got lost. However, other existing publications in Ponta Grossa, whose originals he could not access, were not transcribed or even referred to in his work.

With the rise of digitization processes of journalistic archives, the preservation of digitized newspapers and the availability of historical sources for researchers to access in digital media, new perspectives for research were created. As of 2011, with the support of the Research and Project Funding Institute (FINEP, Brazilian acronym for Financiadora de Estudos e Projetos), a relevant journalistic collection, including thousands of editions of regional, national, and international publications, was made available for public consultation by the National Library Foundation through the Brazilian Digital Newspapers and Periodicals Library. Among those newspapers, there are several publications from Paraná, from the time when the first journalistic endeavors were established in Ponta Grossa.

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<sup>1</sup> The authenticity of this transcription can be compared with a copy of the Campos Geraes newspaper, available at the House of Paraná Memory in Ponta Grossa .

<sup>2</sup> Probably due to a typing mistake, Pilotto reports the 12th issue of the do *Gazeta dos Campos* newspaper on 16th April 1989. However, that issue was published in 1898.

Among those newspapers, other printed materials produced in the state of Paraná that are considered the first journalistic productions of Ponta Grossa are found.

When surveying the Brazilian Digital Newspapers and Periodicals Library, we found news and quotes about some Ponta Grossa newspapers of that period in Curitiba newspapers. Although not all printed material from Ponta Grossa was cited, those references gathered information that, when treated as evidence, led to other information that made it possible to carry out a chain of evidential research that allowed the reflections presented in this article.

Thus, the research was carried out based on “keys”, which are words or sets of words that were isolated and inserted in the search boxes of the Brazilian Digital Newspapers and Periodicals Library and considering the existing historiography. After having obtained clues about the temporality and spatiality of those first publications in Ponta Grossa, we could prepare for the entry of keys in the Digital Library, organized as “newspapers in Parana”, dated between “1890 and 1900”. Some keys inserted as “O Precursor” led to the existence of articles about that publication. Those articles presented information that could be transformed into other keywords, such as “Júlio Perneta”, “Club Instrução e Recreio”, among others. The information contained in the results of these investigations, reflected upon along with the historiographical productions about that period, allowed the development of this study on the early days of journalism in Ponta Grossa.

## **Journalism in Parana in the XIX century**

In the late XIX century, journalism was not yet a profession with academic education. Individuals became journalists due to the experience they acquired in the daily work of press offices and through the prestige and recognition they gained with their writings published in the press. Therefore, a series of strategies were used by journalism agents to strengthen the recognition of their articles and the newspapers in which they were published, including praising and interviewing authorities and recognized personalities of local and national society. Another strategy was the republication of articles from prestigious national newspapers and dialogues and collaborations with other papers from nearby regions, aiming to be part of regional journalistic networks. As Corrêa observed, about the period, in addition to institutional political spaces, “the press became the main stage for discussions and political

struggle” (CÔRREA, 2009, p. 140). This means that journalism became an emergent instrument while the public sphere was broadened.

Whenever a newspaper was founded in Ponta Grossa, Castro, Palmeira or neighboring cities, the newsroom of the newly founded paper would send courtesy copies to the newsrooms of newspapers in these regions, especially Curitiba, the capital of Paraná. The newspapers that received those issues wrote comments – either praising or criticizing – the foundation of the new newspaper, inserting them in the social circuit of Paraná journalism.

At that time, one of the communication routes between Ponta Grossa and Curitiba was the so-called Rota do Mate (Mate Route), which connected Paranaguá, Curitiba, Ponta Grossa, Morretes, and other cities in Paraná. The Mate Route, created for the traffic of mules and wagons, as well as people, facilitated the movement of yerba mate from the extraction and processing processes to the product disposal at ports and export spaces, to supply the national and international demand for this local product.

The development of the yerba mate industry in Paraná had begun in the early XIX century, with the installation of the first processing mills in Paranaguá, on the coast of Paraná. Starting from the processing industries in this region, the demand for the product provoked the installation of mills in the Curitiba Plateau and Campos Gerais, the strip of territory of the Second Plateau of Paraná, between the Curitiba Plateau and the Guarapuava Plateau, where the cities of Castro, Ponta Grossa, Palmeira, and Lapa are located.

Since 1876, the stagecoach service managed by Júlio Eduardo Gineste had been installed along the Mate Route. The connection between Ponta Grossa and Curitiba by this service was carried out through weekly trips on a carriage moved by animal traction, and the journey took three days to go and three days back between the cities. For shorter news, Ponta Grossa was also connected to Curitiba, since 1883, by the telegraph line. The newspapers from Ponta Grossa and Curitiba, which were founded at the end of the XIX century and the beginning of the XX century, had the telegraph as an important source of information and presented, on their pages, sections dedicated to national and international telegrams, in which notes were published about the received news. However, in view of the telegraph ability to transmit information, telegraph messages needed to be short and concise, which meant that longer messages, letters, and articles needed to be delivered in person<sup>3</sup>.

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<sup>3</sup> The arrival of the railway in Ponta Grossa occurred only in 1894, a year after the installation of the first newspapers in the town.

In Campos Gerais, in the interior of the state of Paraná, journalism arrived with the installation of the *Echo dos Campos*, founded in Castro, in 1883, by João Francisco da Rocha Pombo (1857-1933), a politician, historian, and lawyer that was responsible for the start of journalism in the region (BITTENCOURT FILHO et. al, 2022). The paper called *Echo dos Campos*, founded in the final years of the Empire, presented among its discourses the ideals of slavery abolition and republicanism, which were debated in the journalistic publications of the time. That period was marked by political crisis between the Empire and other sectors of Brazilian society, including the church, the army, and the agrarian elites (COSTA, 2006). However, the *Echo dos Campos* newspaper was also marked by the journalism participation in the state political disputes. That publication acted in favor of the discourses of the great mate producers in the state, members of the Conservative Party, mainly the Serro Azul Baron, who was Rocha Pombo's friend. The foundation of *Echo dos Campos* helped to leverage Rocha Pombo's political career. As a result, he was elected a member of the Province Assembly in 1884 and, despite having his deputy inauguration being denied by an Assembly that at the time was led by the liberal movement, he was elected again in 1886 (CORRÊA, 2009, p. 76).

Although *Dezenove de Dezembro* and *A República* papers were exception to this rule, both in Curitiba and in the interior of the state, the early days of the journalism in Parana were marked by the occurrence of short-lived journalistic endeavors, which were usually closed after few issues. Several publications, including literary and artistic periodicals such as *A Vida Litteraria* (1887), *Evolução* (1881) and *A Penna* (1897) appeared to stimulate the intellectual production in the Province and in the state of Paraná. Most of them closed after few issues, due to the lack of experienced professionals in this area and lack of long-standing political and economic support.<sup>4</sup>

The first printed publications used to be produced by a reduced team of workers<sup>5</sup>. The news writer's role was especially prestigious, serving as a political and ideological platform and a space to project the power of those professionals. In addition to the news writers, other members of the newspaper staff circle and interested collaborators wrote articles to complete the issue. In newspapers of greater circulation, especially in the capitals,

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<sup>4</sup>These and other publications of the early days of journalism in Paraná, including *Imprensa Livre* (1867); *Livre Paraná*, from Paranaguá (1883); *Sete de Março*, owned by the Conservative Party in 1888; *Diário da Tarde*, 1889; and *O Paraná Livre*, 1894, are available for consultation in the National Digital Library.

<sup>5</sup>The newspaper *O Progresso/Diário dos Campos*, for example, had four employees in the newsroom when it was founded; these included a writer, a graphic designer, an intern, and a delivery person.

some writers had their own columns and received salaries as journalists. But, in the newly founded newspapers of the interior, it was common for collaborators to write for the newspapers for social recognition and without receiving remuneration. As a result, the issues of these first press releases from Paraná did not have a clearly delineated journalistic unit, and their issues exchanged debates and collaborations with writers from other newspapers. Writers moved from one publication to another, motivated by the conflicts that used to occur in those organizations and the opportunities that arose in neighboring newspapers.

But the journalism fragility at the time was also related to the tense transience of the political and social ideas of the time. Especially in a conservative society with a less dynamic economy, such as that of Paraná, the former imperial and slavery regime were still deeply rooted, while liberal republican ideals circulated among restricted groups and had little meaning for most of the citizens. This scenario obviously had repercussions that affected the doctrinal definition of newspapers, and their consolidation as consistent journalistic enterprises.

The paper called *A República*, as an official body of the Paraná Republican Party, had a certain stability guaranteed by the political groups of the Paraná elite that supported the newspaper, but, consequently, the discourse of the writers who collaborated with the publication had to be aligned with those elites' interests. The short-lived journalistic ventures in literary and political publications gave their members greater freedom to spread ideas, but, because they had low financial investments and less stable political support, they generally had difficulties to maintain themselves after a few issues.

In the city of Ponta Grossa, state of Paraná, the potential for the installation of periodicals at the end of the XIX century can be noted by the interest of Ponta Grossa residents in some newspapers from Curitiba, since advertisements and news about local events, and some records of comings and goings of famous personalities from Ponta Grossa and fugitive slaves were found in newspapers from Curitiba. The existence of thousands of Ponta Grossa appearances in Curitiba newspapers, between 1854 and 1890, demonstrated not only the interest of the population of Curitiba in the events of the interior of Paraná, but also the interest of members of the Ponta Grossa population in being seen and have news and advertisements about their actions, published in the pages of the press in Curitiba and elsewhere.



Thus, the presence of powerful personalities from Ponta Grossa society on the pages of publications and recognition by their peers, through the news, worked as a prestige and legitimation strategy. Appearing on the pages of the informative vehicle, a symbol of modernity, which brought the latest news from capitals and abroad that came by telegraph, as well as the emerging sciences and ideologies, and the comings and goings of the elites, provided a social status for both those appearing in the newspaper issues and those who wrote for the newspapers (DENIPOTI, 1998)<sup>6</sup>.

## The city of Ponta Grossa in 1890

In 1890, Ponta Grossa was a city of 4,774 inhabitants (PINTO, 1980, p. 61), including former residents of the urban environment, coming from the *tropeira* (cattle driving) culture and from animal breeding and wintering farms, as well as the groups of German, Italian and Polish immigrants who had arrived in the region in recent decades. Due to the difficulties of agricultural production in their colonies, many of these immigrants settled in urban areas, working as laborers, carpenters, tailors, shoemakers, teamsters, or small business owners.

Reflecting the structural transformations of Brazilian society, the Ponta Grossa community experienced a process of reconfiguration of its elites. The elite was formerly made up of large livestock and wintering farmers and cattle traders, linked to the economic model of *tropeirismo* (cattle driving). Until around 1870, cattle trade had been the predominant economic regime in Paraná, and the drovers invested large sums of money in the purchase of mules, supplies, and cattle, which were taken from Rio Grande do Sul to the Province of São Paulo for sale, making those traders rich. In that economic model, the economy revolved around rural production and the city functioned as a resting place for the troops and a supplier of products for the cattle drivers. The activity of driving and selling cattle began to decline from the moment that the regions that bought the cattle – mainly São Paulo and Minas Gerais – began to be connected to ports and national markets through the railroads that allowed access in a more agile and cheaper way than the commerce on mule back. Despite the decline of these markets, the activity

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<sup>6</sup>When studying the history of reading in Paraná between 1880 and 1930, Denipoti (1998) drew attention to a kind of sacralization of reading in that period. According to that author, readers tended to place books in the national salvation scheme towards the inevitable civilization progress advancement. Bearing in mind the differences between reading books and reading newspapers, we could notice social recognition achieved by journalists, political, social, and economic personalities in societies where they were inserted.

remained as a complementary economic activity in Ponta Grossa up to the early XX century, mainly, with cattle drivers' excursions to Mato Grosso.

In the second half of the XIX century, the economy and political life of Ponta Grossa were restructured following national economic, military, and social projects, such as the construction of railroads and the introduction of waves of European immigrants. The construction of the Paraná Railroad, from Curitiba to Ponta Grossa (1894) and, a few years later, the completion of the São Paulo-Rio Grande Railroad (started in 1897 and completed in 1905), had a significant impact on the economy and on the local political life. Likewise, the entrance of free immigrant labor force stimulated and diversified the demography and the internal market in the region.

These two factors – railroad and immigration – promoted a significant growth, boosting the incipient extractive industries of mate and wood, as well as the expansion of Ponta Grossa core and urban commerce. Thus, Ponta Grossa economy and politics became more cosmopolitan and more diversified.

In such context, a diversification in the investments of the elites began to be verified, which motivated the emergence of groups of merchants, industrialists and urban investors who took advantage of the population increase in the city and installed their grocery stores, yerba mate mills, wood industries, and import houses in the urban environment. Many of these new members of the elite descended from the former rural elites, such as mayor Manuel Vicente Bittencourt, son of a farmer from Morretes who married the daughter of farmers from Ponta Grossa, and preferred to sell the land he owned in the rural area to set up a business called Bittencourt store, a relevant urban enterprise of that period. Others were immigrants, such as Eugenio Gambassi, who had previously been the vice-consul of Italy and who established several enterprises in the urban environment, including the caramel factory and, in the following years, Henrique Thielen, also an Italian immigrant who founded the Adriatic Brewery around 1896.

Although greater social recognition in the city was linked to the culture of the cattle traders' former elite, and several members of the Ponta Grossa upper classes sought to associate with the former elites in commercial ventures, marriages and participation in sociability circles, the economic and political power of the merchants, industrialists and urban investors was also relevant and, therefore, the journalistic enterprises that were established in Ponta Grossa during that period sought to rely on farmers as well as on industrialists and urban investors.

## The *Campos Geraes* newspaper of Ponta Grossa

This “forced modernization”, between the 1870s and 1990s, imposed by the expansion of the global market, promoted a generation of intellectuals and politicians who were somehow committed to an agenda for updating structures in Brazil. This scenario included the reconfiguration of the so-called “public opinion”, now broader and more diversified, and, consequently, of its means of communication (SEVCENKO, 1998).

Such phenomenon fostered the formation of new political and intellectual groups, which was not different in the Province of Ponta Grossa. This trend had already been observed from the mid XIX century, leading famers’ sons to move to the capitals of São Paulo and Rio de Janeiro to obtain their bachelor’s degrees (LEANDRO, 1995, p. 13). After that, they used to return to the region and take positions in the public sector or developed private investment initiatives gathering groups of local investors. The arrival of immigrants reinforced the promotion of ideas and motivated the establishment of those local intellectual groups, who promoted discussion in Ponta Grossa about the themes debated at the national and international levels. Such discourses, produced in dialogue with scientific texts, were reconstructed to match local social issues and the daily challenges of those enthusiasts. Several of those local productions were published in books and chronicles, or sent as letters and articles to newspapers in Curitiba. This intellectual presence stimulated the production of newspapers in Ponta Grossa (HOLOWATE, 2018)

As previously pointed out, Castro was the first town in Campos Gerais to have a newspaper, the *Echo dos Campos*, owned by Rocha Pombo in 1883. Ponta Grossa, which had been separated from Castro and promoted to the condition of municipality did not have a newspaper before the Republic Proclamation. However, in the following decades, a series of journalistic endeavors led Ponta Grossa to overcome Castro becoming the city in Campos Gerais with the highest number of newspapers. This process consolidated and in 1908, when Romário Martins surveyed and categorized journalism in Paraná, he pointed out that up to that moment, Ponta Grossa had installed thirteen journalistic organizations, while Castro founded ten newspapers. It seems relevant to mention that Martins’s list did not include the newspaper *O Precursor*, which is one of the publications investigated in this research.

The *Campos Geraes* newspaper is considered, by the historiography of Ponta Grossa, as the publication that started journalism in Ponta Grossa.

Although there is not, so far, a historiographical production focused on the trajectory of the Campos Geraes newspaper in Ponta Grossa, the mentions of this paper are characterized by the existence of primary sources about the printed material available for consultation at the Campos Gerais Museum and House of Memory of Ponta Grossa as well as the political relevance that the installation of this newspaper had for the formation of journalism in the city.

The Campos Geraes publication had two phases, the first during the year 1893, and the second in 1900. The first issue of the paper started to be published on May 13, 1893, founded by João da Rocha Balls, an important member of the cattle trade elite of Ponta Grossa. That issue was launched in commemoration of the *Lei Áurea* (abolishing slavery) and had on the cover the special title of “fraternization of Brazilians”, as a compliment to the end of slavery in Brazil and in Campos Gerais do Paraná (GONÇALVES, 1979; BITTENCOURT FILHO et al, 2022). This compliment could have been considered paradoxical since Ponta Grossa in 1850 had around 35% of its population still enslaved. Although this percentage dropped to 14% in 1870, Ponta Grossa was one of the last cities in Brazil to communicate their compliance with the slavery abolishment on 29<sup>th</sup> May 1888, that is, fifteen days after the *Lei Áurea* had been signed.

Many readers of this first issue of the *Campos Geraes* newspaper had certainly been owners of slaves five years before. However, once the law had been enacted, the official policy of the Brazilian state was to recognize a post-slavery *status quo*, with policies to reinforce the memory of certain politicians’ actions in the slavery abolishment process and to erase the memories of the slavery phenomenon. Among the several means of communication, newspapers such as the *Campos Geraes* - defended this policy of “fraternization of Brazilians”.

Such “neutral” republican discourse of the first years of the Republic installation in Brazil was also mentioned by Côrrea (2009), when studying the press and the republican discourse in Paraná. The alleged neutrality of republicanism was marked by a policy of alliances and disputes, denial of the social struggles and defense of the ‘order and progress’ discourse (CÔRREA, 2009). However, conversely, the discourses of subaltern groups such as the newly freed black individuals, poor immigrants, and rural workers were neglected, while the ideal of social union promoted by the dominant groups in society in Paraná was aggregated to the official memory.

The article that introduced the *Campos Geraes* newspaper, and explained the ideals pursued by that publication, showed the paper as

[...] simple and modest is included in the journalistic sphere, but just like the rude worker, who despite wearing a *blusa*, remains one of the progress factors in society. Likewise, although the *Campos Geraes* newspaper is simple and modest, it will not fail to defend social improvement, the development of the state vital interests, and mainly for the material and moral development of this fruitful center, which has been giving great evidence of its energy, industry, and advancements (CAMPOS GERAES, 1893, p. 1).

The “blusa” – expression used by that author – was a simple and plain piece of clothing that was generally associated with the workers’ garments, and in this context was contrasted with a coat, for example, which was the type of clothing associated with the elite of that time. The newspaper editor stated that the paper was a production that, through its *work* would contribute to the progress of society.

At that point, we notice the resignification given to work, which was previously ascribed exclusively to those who were enslaved or poor people. The discourse sounds contradictory when compared to the fact that the owner of that publication was a member of the local elite. However, as a *bourgeois* and *modern* discursive strategy associating work and progress, it evidences the cultural and ideological changes of that moment and reveals the newspaper concern with the social and cultural diversity of its readers and, obviously, consumers. A clear legitimization strategy aligned to the new social context of the city.

The *Campos Geraes* newspaper circulated weekly addressing “all topics that might interest humanity in general, Paraná, and the central areas” (CAMPOS GERAES, 1893, p. 1). This means that it was a newspaper that addressed the most diverse topics, including telegrams, news, literary articles, and advertisement in its sections.

Several issues of *Campos Geraes* were cited by newspapers from Curitiba that circulated in that period. The issues of the newspaper from Ponta Grossa were sent to the neighboring city by individuals and by the stagecoach service and received praise and notes, including the reproduction in the newspaper *A República*, on October 25, 1893, of a report by *Campos Geraes* about a murder that occurred in Ponta Grossa (*A REPÚBLICA*, 1893, p. 2), the note of receipt

of an issue of Campos Geraes by the *Diário do Commercio*, on December 4, 1893 (DIÁRIO DO COMMERCIO, 1893, p. 1), and the reproduction, in the *Revista Azul* of September 1893, of a literary article extracted from the Campos Geraes paper (REVISTA AZUL, 1893, p. 6).

Although the Campos Geraes venture was directed by individuals who belonged to the economic elite of Ponta Grossa, there are no traces of this first phase of the publication after December 1893. The only primary source found of the newspaper is the photocopy of issue 1, available at the House of Memory of Ponta Grossa. And, as pointed out, there are reports of issues of the newspaper in May, September, October, and December of that year, which means that the newspaper published at least five issues, but it is not possible to conclude the exact number of issues that Campos Geraes had in that first phase.

In 1900, the newspaper returned under the “material direction”<sup>7</sup> of Julius Koch. In its opening article, it claimed to be an “impartial newspaper” that “will not get involved in political or religious struggles” (CAMPOS GERAES, 1900, p. 1). The newspaper had several opinion articles, including, already in the first issue, a text by Teixeira Coelho, entitled “The press”, where the readers were informed that the newspaper should “have as its guide – the truth, and as an essential complement, clarify it – for being the most sacred duty that reason and common sense imposed on the conscience of every journalist worthy of this position” (CAMPOS GERAES, 1900, p. 1)<sup>8</sup>.

Assertions of impartiality in journalism became common after the journalistic objectivity rise, which expressed the expansion and complexity of that sphere and of public opinion in the country. When studying the history of American journalism, Schudson pointed out that the discovery of the telegraph, in 1837; and the foundation of the Associated Press, in 1846, began to provide the same content of information and news to various journalistic institutions and supported the professionalization of journalistic activities. This process benefited from the construction of an ideal of objectivity that, from the end of the XIX century onwards, defended that the news published in a newspaper was a news reproduction of the events. Such discourse was also supported by the institution of the identity of the reporter in the search for news in the context of events, an increase in the number of readers and

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<sup>7</sup> Probably, this position included the newspaper management and edition.

<sup>8</sup> Teixeira Coelho was one of the well-known personalities of the press in Paraná in that period and was the founder of the *Gazeta dos Campos* newspaper in 1898 (A IMPRENSA, 1900).

the use of photography as a reproduction of reality in newspaper editions (SCHUDSON, 2010). In fact, the construction of a strategy to face the now multifaceted public sphere was observed, which was promoted by the winds of mass industrialization, urbanization, and crowds, that is, modernity.

In the late XIX century, journalistic practice handbooks became common such as that put forward by Edwin Shuman, which defended that:

Opinions are the peculiar province of the editorial writer. The spirit of modern journalism demands that the news and editorials be kept distinctly separate. The one deals with facts, the other with theoretical interpretations, and it is as harmful to mix the two in journalism as it is to combine church and state in government. This, at least, is the only safe theory for the beginner (SHUMAN, 1894, p. 66).

As observed, the discourse of objectivity in journalism did not mean the end of interpretation in newspapers, it rather meant the search for a separation of the sections dedicated to news and those with opinions in the publications. Although the literary sections continued to occupy a relevant space in issues of national and international newspapers in the early XX century, the presence of the discourse of objectivity, in the second phase of the Campos Geraes newspaper, sought to gain credibility for the veracity of the stories published in its issues. Like Campos Geraes, most newspapers from the late XIX century and the early XX century followed this pattern of organizing the sections of the newspaper, separating them into feature articles or editorials, in which the editor or collaborating columnist gave their opinion about characteristics or events in society, followed by objective news sections including telegrams and correspondence from reporters, and literary sections where intellectuals had their works published. In the final part, in the miscellaneous sections, which were next to the advertisements, individuals who were not linked to the newspaper bought space to publish their opinions<sup>9</sup>.

The second attempt by the *Campos Geraes* newspaper did not achieve a better result than the first. From that initiative, only issues 1 to 4 have copies available for research in the Campos Gerais Museum of Ponta Grossa. Also, some parts of issue 1 were transcribed and commented in Pilotto's leaflet.

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<sup>9</sup>The discursive and layout models of newspapers in Paraná were influenced by the international press, and several journalists from Paraná, including Hugo dos Reis, were also readers and sellers of foreign publications, which was observed due to the presence of European and North American advertisement and newspapers.

Despite the ideal of creating a local press and consolidating the journalistic work in Ponta Grossa, that institution also went bankrupt and closed in 1900.

The *Campos Geraes* paper was one of the oldest known publications in Ponta Grossa, which has some copies and issues preserved and available for consultation and citations to the newspaper by other publications in the journalistic network in Paraná. Such network started to be formed in those years but was only consolidated throughout the following decades.

### **O *Pirolita* newspaper**

One of the main sources for the study of the journalism history in Paraná is the Catalog of newspapers published in Paraná from 1854 to 1907 (*Catálogo dos jornaes publicados no Paraná de 1854 a 1907*) by Romário Martins (1908), published in 1908 and listing 425 newspapers that had been installed in the state up to the date of publication of that catalog. That catalog cited the existence of a newspaper in Ponta Grossa called *O Pirolita*, whose date was February 1893 (MARTINS, 1908).

Oswaldo Pilotto, also reported the existence of this paper, which he named *O Pirolito* (with o). He claimed that the newspaper was probably a production for the carnival and was launched in February 1893 in Ponta Grossa (PILOTTO, 1976). Since carnival and other movable holiday dates repeat cyclically, it is possible to identify that the 1893 carnival occurred on 14<sup>th</sup> February, and that, therefore, this publication could be placed in the mid-February 1893.

However, except for the report by Romário Martins and the assertion by Oswaldo Pilotto, no other reference is found to *O Pirolita* in other newspapers in Paraná, which is not usual considering the national journalism of that time. Periodical publications from Paraná, especially the newspapers *A República*, *Diário do Commercio*, *Club Curytibano* and several other papers from Curitiba that were active throughout 1893 cited publications from Ponta Grossa, but none mentioned *O Pirolita*.

Since at the beginning of the national journalism, typing mistakes were common due to the lack of specialized workforce, there is a possibility that the name of that newspaper was misspelt when cited in other newspapers. For this reason, we searched the newspaper collection by inserting other keywords that could resemble a typing mistake but we found no references to this paper by other national journalistic bodies of that period.



The only clue found that might support future research on that publication is in the minutes of the foundation of the *Club Instrução e Recreio*, of fifth March 1893 in Ponta Grossa, reproduced by the paper *O Democrata*, from Curitiba, on 21<sup>st</sup> March of the same year. The newspaper cites among the speakers of the event the citizens Joaquim Pedro da Silva Carvalho, president of the society *Pirolitas do Averno* and the secretary of the same society, João da Rocha Balls. The latter was the founder of the *Campos Geraes* newspaper two months later. However, there is no reference to the carnival publication.

The lack of citations of that paper in the journalistic circles of Paraná is understandable, when considering that it was a short-lived publication during that carnival, with small circulation, limited to a selected group of readers. Therefore, the only evidence of the existence of *O Pirolita* are Romário Martins's catalog, from 1908, and Oswaldo Piloto's report, which from the historiographic standpoint makes it difficult to confirm its existence. Due to the lack of sources, we are led to believe that if the publication really existed, it is very likely that *O Pirolita* had very few or even just one issue published.

### ***O Precursor* newspaper**

The *O Precursor* newspaper was not known by most of those who researched the history of journalism in Ponta Grossa, and therefore was not as prestigious as the *Campos Geraes* among the oldest publications in this city. Another disadvantage is that there are not original sources of the paper available for research. The fact that Romário Martins did not mention the existence of *O Precursor* in his catalog is curious since the newspaper was founded only fifteen years before the publication of his inventory.

However, two citations of *O Precursor* could place it as the oldest publication of this kind in Ponta Grossa. The first is an article in the *Diário da Tarde*, newspaper from de Curitiba released on 27<sup>th</sup> September 1949, which listed the first journalistic initiatives in Ponta Grossa and reported 1892 as the year of foundation of *O Precursor*, which was described as a paper created by Júlio Pernetá and Afonso Gama (PRINCESA DOS CAMPOS, 1949). The article, signed by Alberico Figueira, was published over half a century after *O Precursor* had been closed. The fact that the author stated that his text was written "according to the notes I am handling right now", means that Figueira, might have got access to notes and records about the *O Precursor* newspaper, but he never accessed original sources of that publication (PRINCESA DOS CAMPOS, 1949, p. 1).

Another author to record the existence of *O Precursor* was Dayli Luiz Wambier, a journalist, politician, and chronicle writer from Ponta Grossa. Wambier also signalled the existence of that paper, *O Precursor*, in 1892, confirming that the newspaper was founded by Júlio Perneteta and managed by Afonso Gama (WAMBIER, 1984). However, the similarity between the information provided by Figueira and Wambier, along with the three-decade gap between their reports, suggests that Wambier used Figueira's article published in the *Diário da Tarde* newspaper, or that both had access to the same source, just thirty years apart.

The citations of *O Precursor* provided evidence for possible key words related to the paper and the individuals who managed the publication. We know that Júlio Perneteta was a prestigious intellectual in Paraná, working in several regions of the state, in literary Productions and stimulating the journalistic production, both in the capital and interior of the state. Among the various newspapers in which Perneteta participated in the foundation process, the most prominent were *Revista Azul* (1893), *O Cenáculo* (1895), *A Penna* (1897) and *O Pallium* (1900). He also collaborated with the magazine *Club Curytibano* (1890-1896) (AMOR BUCÓLICO, 1895; O EXORCISMO, 1895)<sup>10</sup>, and published dozens of literary works including *Amor Bucólico* (1895), *O Exorcismo* (1895), *O Clero e a Monarquia* (1897), *Bronzes* (1897), *Malditos* (1909), among others (MELLO, 2008). Afonso Gama, in turn, supported Júlio Perneteta's production in Ponta Grossa. He worked for the telegraph agency, took part in literary clubs, and was president of the *Club Instrução e Recreio* in this city (PONTA GROSSA, 1893). The research based on these two names broadened the evidence of the existence of *O Precursor*.

The *O Precursor* newspaper was mentioned in the book *Cinco histórias convergentes (Five Converging Histories)*, by Epaminondas Holzmann, which recorded some histories from this childhood and teenage in Ponta Grossa. The work was completed in Holzmann's last year of life, and it had been typed by him probably between 1957 and 1960.

We had some weekly papers that did not last long such as *O Precursor*, founded by the writer Júlio Perneteta from Paraná, aided by Afonso Gama, who was the head of the national telegraph agency at the time; the *Campos Geraes* newspaper, which had two

<sup>10</sup> This printed material is available for consultation at the National Newspapers and Periodicals Library. Several short stories written by Perneteta were also published in newspapers, including *Amor bucólico (Bucolic love)* and *O Exorcismo (The Exorcism)*, published in 1895 in the magazine *O cenáculo* (AMOR BUCÓLICO, 1895; O EXORCISMO, 1895).

phases – in 1890 (sic) and 1893 – under the supervision of Rocha Balls and the editor Afonso Gama (HOLZMANN, 2004, p. 261).

Next, Holzmann listed other newspapers that existed in Ponta Grossa in chronological order. However, it seems relevant to mention that Holzmann's work was developed forty years after the events had occurred, and as any memory, it might mean that something was forgotten, and also part of the material were only his own recollections of facts such as the dates he presented for the *Campos Geraes* newspaper phases. Valfrido Pilotto (1973) also referred to the existence of the *O Precursor* newspaper. However, that was only a transcription of Holzmann's text as shown above.

Therefore, although there are initially some sources indicating the existence of *O Precursor* in the early days of journalism in Ponta Grossa, all those texts were produced long time after the real events. Also, their discursive choices reveal that those authors did not have an original or conclusive source to affirm the existence and accurate dates of that publication.

On the 12<sup>th</sup> April 1893 issue of *A República*, a newspaper from Curitiba, a piece of news informed the arrival at the newsroom of the first issue of the *O Precursor* newspaper: “yesterday, we received issue 1 of *O Precursor*, a periodical publication of the *Club de Instrução e Recreio* from Ponta Grossa” (O PRECURSOR, 1893, p. 2), which stated

In its well written introduction article that reads: full of good will, motivated by the best intentions, encouraged by the excitement of many, *O Precursor* is introduced to the broad audience today and at the same time asks its peers a modest place in the journalistic environment. Although it is small, weak champion, it shall work hard to be useful, not only defending the interests of the Club to which it belongs, but also the development and progress of this hopeful city (O PRECURSOR, 1893, p. 2).

As previously mentioned, the occurrence of citations and references between newspapers in Paraná was very common at the end of the XIX century and early XX century. Thus, every time a new paper was produced, it was sent to other newspapers and could have that issue referenced by publications in the neighboring regions. This dialogue between the journalism from Ponta Grossa and Curitiba was a recurring characteristic in the activity at that time and became usual in the journalism consolidation process in Paraná and in Ponta Grossa in the following decades. For example, in the early days of *Diário*

*dos Campos*, its reproduction, replications, and citations by the newspapers *Diário da Tarde* and *A República*, from Curitiba were quite frequent.

The text reproduced by *A República* was the feature article of the issue 1 of *O Precursor*. The feature article was a prestigious column in journalism in the late XIX century. The editor usually published in that column and the space was used to convey the newspaper official opinion, but it could also be assigned to a collaboration article that was considered especially relevant. In the first issue of a paper or when a journalist became the head of the newsroom, the feature article would be an introduction article, where the ideals and projects that the newspaper supported were disclosed. Thus, in that source of *A República* newspaper, parts of the introduction article of *O Precursor* were reproduced, which included that paper journalistic project.

In that article, the editorial staff of *O Precursor* proposed to participate in the journalistic arena in Paraná, as well as their peers in Curitiba. Two choices in the speech of *O Precursor* revealed an intention of longevity of that publication: the first is the connection with *Club Instrução e Recreio* from Ponta Grossa, as the introductory article stated that it intended to defend the interests of the club. Since the club was a permanent institution, the newspaper could only fight for the club interests if it was also participating with issues released in the following weeks. The second is the statement that the newspaper would not only defend the interests of the club, “but also for the development, for the progress of this hopeful city” (*O PRECURSOR*, 1893, p. 2). Such intention of promoting the ideology of progress in Ponta Grossa, which had become one of the main characteristics of the journalistic projects in the city, revealed the intention of intervening in the local public sphere.

There is an indication of at least more than one issue of the *O Precursor* having been published in Holzmann’s notes, which points to the existence of a periodicity of that paper since it was placed among the “weeklies of ephemeral life” (HOLZMANN, 2004, p. 261), which could be associated with the existence of the club and the speech promoting the ideology of progress in the opening issue of that newspaper.

Also, in the article in *A República* about the issue received from *O Precursor* newspaper, it informed that other parts of the newspaper issue “offered a varied and scintillating literary section, worthy of careful reading. The appearance of the new publication, to which we wish a long and brilliant career, signals a high commitment to the fruitful and beautiful city of Ponta Grossa” (*O PRECURSOR*, 1893, p. 2).

Although *A República* did not inform the date of publication of the first issue of *O Precursor*, the fact that the paper reached the other newspaper in Curitiba on 11<sup>th</sup> April 1893 and was reproduced on the following day, it is unlikely that the first publication of *O Precursor* occurred in 1892. We already mentioned that the delivery of documents and newspapers could be done by using the service of private wagons or the stagecoach service, whose periodicity was weekly.

The advancement of our investigation allowed us to discover that the *Club Instrução e Recreio*, organization that managed *O Precursor*, had its foundation reported by *O Democrata* and *Club Curytibano*, both publications from Curitiba. The issue of 15<sup>th</sup> March 1893 of the *Club Curytibano Magazine* announced that

On the 5<sup>th</sup> of this month, the city of Ponta Grossa, in this state, witnessed the opening of *Club Instrução e Recreio*. We thank the invitation sent to the *Curytibano* to be represented in the opening party, and wish prosperity to the new association. The *Club Curytibano* magazine propose a toast to the entrepreneurs (CLUB INSTRUCÇÃO E RECREIO, 1983, p. 8).

The *Club Curytibano* was close to the intellectuals that founded the *Club Instrução e Recreio* and, mainly to Júlio Perneta, who was also a collaborator of the *Club Curytibano Magazine*. Between 1890 and 1896, that magazine cited Júlio Perneta – spelt with one or two “t” depending on the spelling used in the letterpress – 80 times, including literary articles signed by Perneta, news about his trips, and social and political activities published by the newsroom in Curitiba.

Another piece of evidence is the issue of 21<sup>st</sup> March 1893 of *O Democrata*, from Curitiba, which reproduced the minutes of the foundation of the literary club in Ponta Grossa, the *Club Literario Instrução e Recreio*, confirming its foundation on 5<sup>th</sup> March 1893. That club opening occurred in the ball room of the Sant’Ana theater in Ponta Grossa. Several renowned personalities from Ponta Grossa society gave speeches, including Júlio Perneta, who was the first listed in the opening minutes, followed by the Major Manuel Bittencourt, mayor of Ponta Grossa, Cazimiro Cardoso de Menezes, president of the *Clube 13 de Maio*, and other relevant personalities of local society, along with the leaders of the society *Pirolitas do Averno*. The minutes of the opening of that club reports that the club president was Afonso Gama; while João da Rocha

Balls was the vice-president; and Júlio Perneteta was 2<sup>nd</sup> secretary (PONTA GROSSA, 1983, p. 2).

The fact that the newspapers from that time gave detailed information about the foundation of the *Club Instrução e Recreio* and mainly that the *O Democrata* paper transcribed the club foundation minutes shows that the news about the opening party did not reach the newspapers in Curitiba only via telegraph, but rather by means of copies of the minutes and information about the event. This allows the measurement of the time that those messages took to be sent from Ponta Grossa to Curitiba. Between the *Club Instrução e Recreio* foundation event and the news publication in the *Club Curytibano* magazine, ten days passed, and it was published in *O Democrata* sixteen days later.

With the information that the first issue of *O Precursor* was received by the *A República* editorial board in Curitiba on 11<sup>th</sup> April 1893, and that it was founded by the *Club Literario Instrução e Recreio*, while the club was opened on 5<sup>th</sup> March in the same year invalidates the hypothesis that *O Precursor* would have circulated in Ponta Grossa in 1892. Although it is not possible to provide the exact date of foundation of *O Precursor*, that paper was probably founded in late March or early April 1893. We assume this because the time needed to deliver copies of the newspaper from Ponta Grossa to Curitiba in the period before the installation of the railway in Ponta Grossa ranged between one and two weeks, as could be seen in the case of the news about the foundation of the *Club Instrução e Recreio*.

However, as observed, although there is more evidence of the existence of *O Precursor* than information found about *O Pirolita*, the existence of original issues or copies of the former are unknown and the research about *O Precursor* is only based on secondary sources, originated in citations by other publications of that period or chronicles and memories published decades later.

## Final Considerations

The evidential character proposed in this text has a two-fold understanding. First, the documental fragility regarding the early days of the press in Ponta Grossa, which is not only a problem related to the public memory archives, already observed in the country. Second, it reveals how incipient and vulnerable the intellectual and political production of the local community was, which was clearly observed in the press.

Journalism imposed itself as a political instrument of transformations – which we can call modernity – experienced in Ponta Grossa in the second half of the XIX century. However, like the republican and liberal ideas, also the public apparatus, for example, newspapers, were not disposed and consolidated. Since it was not very clear how to produce a newspaper, the population of that time was not sure about its necessity.

Terms such as editors' and journalists' professional “unpreparedness”, and lack of financial support, among others, can only be understood in the condition of the historical weakness of *doing it*, otherwise, it is anachronism. Considering that the incipient character is not only a weakness, it is rather a historical condition.

The clues, signs, and evidence that we gathered about the beginnings of journalism in Ponta Grossa undoubtedly mark 1893 as the starting point, as exposed by the evidence found about the *Campos Geraes*, *O Precursor*, and *O Pirolita*. However, in 1894 they had already disappeared. The context of that period joined the arrival of the railway and the occupation of Ponta Grossa by the Federalist Revolution. How much those events impacted the creation and closing of the newspapers is not very clear, but they are undoubtedly part of the ambiguous scenery of modernization and instability of that time.

Ponta Grossa only had another journalistic enterprise in January 1898, with the foundation of *Gazeta dos Campos* by Teixeira Coelho, which was followed by the foundation of several other publications in the following years, including *O Progresso/Diário dos Campos*, which is still active.

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