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«Commemorating the Portuguese Revolution of 1974 &  
Evaluating the Future of Democracy's Third Wave»

**Between modernization and democracy:  
public education policy cycles and their values**

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Since the 74' transition to democracy, the history of the educational system in Portugal has been one of a periodic oscillation between a democratic ideology and the desire or need for – permanent – modernization of the productive forces, in a dialogue that has not yet ended, but which we will try to explore. Our focus will be, mostly, the political processes around basic and secondary education.

Correia (1999) offered a typologization of these ideological fluctuations, which have continued to this day, in government programs and their implementation. A first cycle corresponds to an ideology of *democratization*, of emancipatory interest, legitimized by the need for flexibility in a period of social transformation in a belligerent context and in which the political actors are in the educational communities, such as that which corresponds to the PREC period. A second cycle corresponds to the *democratic* ideology, of universality and axiological neutrality, aimed at social integration, mobilizing the State and representatives of the educational system. The *modernization* cycle has a definition of cultural and economic effectiveness, placing the system in a relationship of instrumental utility with economic development and its legitimate actors are those in the business world and the education technicians. Finally, the ideology of *inclusion* works in an educational market environment, based on political tolerance and is instrumental to

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the needs of users, flexing to promote inclusion. Its legitimate actors are social and school managers and education «scientists».<sup>2</sup>

We will seek to summarize some concerns, relating to the ideological alternatives that were present in the democratic transition process in Portugal, focusing on the six years between the Veiga Simão Reform and the end of the PREC, taking into account that:

An exclusive analysis of the limited period between 1974 and 1976 may lead us to errors in reasoning. This period is a period where education transformed. It is in the educational world that youth are located, it is in the educational world that intellectual demands and movements can be seen more easily. This period is a mix of anarchism and generous ideas, some utopian, without a common thread. Only later will things settle down. I would say that this period is that of a laboratory of ideas, which would be interesting to analyze, where many things that the democratic forces condemned in the previous regime became stronger, where facilitation's spread due to the nature of the situation and given that the structures were shaken and diluted, where there was an explosion of completion of courses, which were delayed in exams, without minimum knowledge. Therefore, characterizing this period is like a resonance curve with ups and downs and it is difficult to say what remained of the reform.<sup>3</sup>

### **1. An educational «Spring»: «first, development»**

The process of Modernization and organization of education at a global level (1945-1973) is characterized by the emergence of the Welfare State, equal opportunities and the development of educational provision. The strengthening of public (state) educational systems combined motivations relating to the right to education with the theory of human capital, mass education with increased pedagogical freedom, in a climate of hope and innovation. In Portugal, the «Marcelist Spring» had its peak in the educational system reorganization with minister Veiga Simão, aiming to modernize the country.<sup>4</sup> The «decisive battle of education», as Marcelo Caetano called it, introduced a relatively new rationale and language, under the slogan of «democratization of education» (Lima, 2018), «a set of coherent projects and actions, with the well-defined objective of democratization, associating equal opportunities with access based on merit».<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> J. A. Correia (1999) As ideologias educativas nos últimos 25 anos. *Revista Portuguesa de Educação*, Braga, n. 12, (1999): 104-109.

<sup>3</sup> Veiga Simão interview to A. Teodoro: António Teodoro. *As Políticas de Educação em Discurso Directo. 1955-1995* (Lisboa: Instituto de Inovação Educacional, 2002), 107.

<sup>4</sup> José Veiga Simão. *Educação em Mudança*. Comunicação apresentada ao Ciclo de Debates «Tempos de Transição: a política educacional, social e de saúde». Lisboa, 23 de outubro de 2008. Cit. apud. Valter Lemos. *A Influência da OCDE nas Políticas Públicas de Educação em Portugal* (Coimbra: Almedina, 2014), 112.

<sup>5</sup> Licínio Lima. «Lei de Bases do Sistema Educativo (1986): Ruturas, continuidades, apropriações seletivas.» *Revista portuguesa de educação*, vol. 31 (2018): 75-91.

This period in the history of education in Portugal was greatly guided by the Mediterranean Regional Project, a request from the Portuguese government to the OECD, which «saw a great opportunity to influence the definition of public policy towards the link between education and economic growth, and by extrapolation, social progress. [...] the central objective of the PRM was to forecast school needs and the respective financial impacts [...] in relation to the workforce, particularly of a scientific and technical nature, depending on the expected growth until 1975».<sup>6</sup>

Teodoro (2000) points out how the PRM made, in fact, «a decisive contribution to the turning point in Portuguese educational policy in the sixties and seventies»<sup>7</sup> and a «radical change in the history of Portuguese education», both political, technical and semantically.<sup>8</sup> As minister, Veiga Simão found a difficult situation but already evaluated. As the OCDE report indicated, it was mostly due to the lack of free of charge schooling, the incomplete network of facilities, insufficient staff, low remunerations, deficiencies in teaching programs, a too long professional education and a lack of coordination in the system, which presents itself as «strongly selective» and full of «barriers»<sup>9</sup>. From his inauguration speech, on January 15, 1970, until 1973, the year in which the *Lei de Bases da Reforma do Sistema Educativo* was approved, Simão insisted on «the fight for a freer Portugal», «the education' rights», the «conscious freedom», the «peaceful revolution», the «educational crusade», «equal opportunities», aiming to promote a «peaceful and profound revolution in schools» (Veiga Simão, 1973)<sup>10</sup>. Abandoning what was the central reference found in Estado Novo, the indoctrinating function of education, defending the values of the regime and the current social structure, had the goals of social mobility and development.

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<sup>6</sup> Lemos, *A Influência da OCDE*, 89. The situation diagnosed in 1966 (OECD, *Le Projet Régional Méditerranéen - Portugal*. Paris, OECD) showed an illiteracy rate of 20%, more than 75% of the population with a primary level of education, 67.2% having dropped out before certification; the latter and the illiterate constituted 90% of the active population in 1960 and only 0.4% of them had completed secondary education. The ratio of middle to senior technical staff was 1.5 to 1. The OECD considered that the level of compulsory education was exaggeratedly low, as were school enrollment and achievement rates.

<sup>7</sup> António Teodoro. «O fim do isolacionismo. Da participação de Portugal no Plano Marshall ao Projecto Regional do Mediterrâneo.» *Revista Lusófona de Humanidades e Tecnologias*, 3, (2000): 54.

<sup>8</sup> Lemos, *A Influência da OCDE*, 101. A change noticed from Minister Pinto Leite (modernization vocabulary) to this day.

<sup>9</sup> Lemos, *A Influência da OCDE*, 97.

<sup>10</sup> J. Veiga Simão. *Educação... Caminhos de liberdade: Três anos de governo*. Lisboa: (CIREP/Ministério da Educação Nacional, 1973) [compilação e coordenação de Rita Pinto Leite].

The «democratization of education»<sup>11</sup> was, by then, one of the most discussed topics, especially by democratic opposition sectors. The central lines of force were the expansion and modernization of the school system but with a meritocratic tendency. So, the search of the «elites of the most capable», undoubtedly referring to a kind of «aristocracy of talent», as acidly analyzed by Michael Young (1958)<sup>12</sup>, were also present<sup>13</sup>. This need to produce qualified labor was a kind of vocationalism *avant la lettre*.<sup>14</sup>

The educational reform led by Veiga Simão, will be seen in the future as corresponding, in its main features, to Marcello Caetano's initial strategy «first development, then democracy» (Freitas do Amaral, 1995)<sup>15</sup>. Materialized in law N. ° 5/73, july 25, «the reform» was presented as the most visible face of the regime's desire to «renew», its legal-political expression. The Veiga Simão Reform – as a School System Project and the General Guidelines for Higher Education Reform – had a special importance due to «1) the central role played by education for the Portuguese State; 2) the fact that the Reform acted as an axis in the country's development/ modernization debates, and 3) the impact of the Reform on a specific political situation (a conjunctural crisis) that gave it back an importance and autonomy that education generally does not had».<sup>16</sup>

In the Minister own words, even if in a much later period of life:

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<sup>11</sup> Becoming his main instrument for mobilizing predispositions and legitimizing government action. By that time, and even before, the OCDE already recommended schools systems that in fact provide equality of opportunities for everyone who participates in it, depending on the «merit» of each individual. The increase in the number of graduates is linked to economic development, opening the system to a wider layer of the population, an that's what's commonly known as «democratization». Cf. Sacuntala de Miranda «Portugal e a OCDE. Expansão económica e planificação educativa.» *Vértice*, XXXIV, Maio/Junho: 324. This is a logic of education economics, which, in addition to being a public service, becomes an investment. Cf. Valter Lemos, *A Influência da OCDE*, 87.

<sup>12</sup> Michael Young. *The Rise of Meritocracy* (New York: Routledge, 1994).

<sup>13</sup> Suggesting the Stephen Stoer question «Social Development Project or 'Humanist Disguise'?» [S. R. Stoer A reforma de Veiga Simão no ensino: Projecto de desenvolvimento social ou disfarce humanista? *Análise Social*, 77/78/79 (1983): 61–83.]

<sup>14</sup> Teodoro, *A Construção Política da Educação*, 249, states that, in the beginning of Marcelo's term of office, there was a «policy of decompression at the political level» and the adoption of a «developmentalist economic policy, clearly favorable to European integration and open to foreign investment».

<sup>15</sup> Diogo Freitas do Amaral (1995) *O Antigo Regime e a Revolução*. (Lisboa: Bertrand Editora, 1995). As Freitas do Amaral, some researchers found that Veiga Simão himself recognizes this in the interview with António Teodoro, *As Políticas de Educação*, 77-121, back in 2002, but it's not clear for us. In this interview Veiga Simão portrays himself as a political vanguard, working from education to press Marcelo to the very needed political change, having political democracy as the only goal. The ideas expressed here are already present in the guidelines for its policy (Veiga Simão, *Educação... Caminhos de liberdade*, 12) as Teodoro, *A Construção Política*, 264, underlines: education is the «ultimate» problem of a human life «worth living», facilitating social justice, which is inherent to improving living conditions. «Educating all Portuguese people» is an absolute value.

<sup>16</sup> S. R. Stoer. *Educação e mudança social em Portugal: 1970-1980, uma década de transição* (Porto: Afrontamento, 1986): 79-80.

The 1973 Basic Law intended to overcome the Minister's partisan political incapacity to enshrine, in the Political Constitution, fundamental rights of citizens and fundamental principles and to have the personal political strength to be able to express them in a specific law. These concepts, many of them said in the same or another way, are today in the Portuguese Political Constitution. [...] pointed to major transformations in Portuguese society, with the force of vanguard law.<sup>17</sup>

But how it would be possible to achieve it without democratizing the country, in a political and constitutional framework that contradicted the possibilities of democratization? As the Democratic Opposition Congress puts it:

The education reform announced by the current minister is in contradiction, in the principles that dominate and proclaim it, with the economic-social and political constraints that characterize current Portuguese society and that the reform theoretically seems to ignore. Everything indicates that, when translated into concrete realities, this reform will do nothing more than deny its proclaimed assumptions, adjusting to those constraints that contradict it, or being completely sacrificed in its intentions expressed in the constraints that oppose it.<sup>18</sup>

In consequence, «the school system was updated and modernized, more from a structural and morphological point of view» than from the point of view of an effective democratization of education and schools, which is why matters linked to the governance and administration of schools and universities were practically absent (Lima, 2018)<sup>19</sup>. Parallel to the public debate and the technical, legal and political preparation of the reform law, until its approval by the National Assembly in July 1973, Veiga Simão developed an intense legislative activity, approving an impressive set of partial diplomas that enshrine the system renovation fundamental aspects<sup>20</sup>. This legislative action is generally carried out under the pretext of pedagogical experimentation, using for this purpose a famous decree published by Galvão Telles<sup>21</sup>, and aimed to create a situation of fait

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<sup>17</sup> Veiga Simão in: Teodoro, *As Políticas de Educação*, 116.

<sup>18</sup> VVAA. 3º Congresso da Oposição Democrática, Aveiro, 4-6 de abril de 1973, *Conclusões* (Lisboa: Seara Nova, 1973): 88-89, cit. apud. Teodoro, *A Construção das Políticas de Educação*, 277.

<sup>19</sup> Lima, *Lei de Bases do Sistema Educativo*, s/n.

<sup>20</sup> Decreto Lei N.º 524/73, October 10, was one of most importance, establishing «free education in eight years, corresponding to the four-year preparatory education defined in the reform of the educational system» a key part of the reform and perhaps its most substantial decision, not least due to the financial investment it entailed, as well as the immense needs for recruiting teachers and creating/expanding their initial training systems and ensuring its quality through continuous training.. Having a direct relationship with the objectives of Lei N.º 5, for example: Lei N.º 5/77, creates the public pre-school education system; Decreto Lei N.º 61/75, changes the access to university; Decreto Lei N.º 6/77, creates normal schools for kindergarten teachers.

<sup>21</sup> Decreto Lei N.º 47587/1967, de 10 de março de 1967, «It allows the Minister of National Education to determine or authorize the carrying out of pedagogical experiments in public education establishments dependent on the respective Ministry, beyond the cases and limits in which this realization is already possible according to current legislation [...] Considering the need to promote the gradual adaptation of study plans, programs, texts, teaching methods and conditions to the progress made in the different domains

accomplish and pressure on the most orthodox and conservative elements of the regime, seeking the proposed law, to reform the school system, approval.

Once approved, this law would act as a legitimizer of the intended new ideological and institutional framework. Two areas can be presented as paradigmatic of this strategy: 1) The creation, from 1972-1973, of what was called the 3rd and 4th experimental years of the preparatory cycle, anticipating the framework in which a mandatory period of 8 years schooling would take place in the future, and 2) *educational reform*, in accordance with what was designated by Lei n.º 5/73: preschool public education; «democratizing» de access through the unified compulsory education of 8 years; by then, the most preeminent political decision; secondary education of 4 years (2 + 2) in «multipurpose secondary schools» (overcoming the division of secondary vs. technic education); diversification of higher education, at the regional, institutional and organizational level; introducing the concept of Permanent Education. It served, firstly, to mobilize the Ministry's technical staff in drafting documents, monitoring the debate and preparing technical studies to support reforms, opening it up to the participation of personalities traditionally identified with the democratic opposition. But it served, at the same time, to legitimize profound changes in the structure and management of the Ministério da Educação, renewing its leadership and modernizing the educational administration, with the technical support of the OECD (and legal support from Freitas do Amaral).

The Veiga Simão reform, unquestionably, represented a period of mobilization of wills and predispositions that placed education at the center of debates on the development and modernization of the country (Teodoro, 2000)<sup>22</sup> and, «was unique, as a focal point of the constitution of a new political and economic organization of social forces organization,

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of human knowledge and to the achievements achieved in the field of pedagogy; considering that it is advisable to carry out pedagogical experiments, when circumstances allow them, as a safe way of assessing the merit of projected innovations, before putting them into effect, and as a way of making them known and providing them with greater conditions for success».

<sup>22</sup> António Teodoro. *A Construção Política da educação. Estado, Mudança Social e Políticas Educativas no Portugal Contemporâneo* (Porto: Afrontamento, 2001): 264, «It will then be at the height of the *Marcelist spring* that Veiga Simão will take office, beginning in Portuguese society a period of *educational mobilization*, which will go beyond the borders of the education system and place development and modernization at the center of the political debate».

that, although temporarily threatened, ended up being strengthened by the revolution of April 1974»<sup>23</sup>.

## **2. The revolution and its «shock waves»: democracy**

From mid-1973, coinciding with the successive closure of all hypotheses of evolution of the regime, signs of Marcello Caetano's (simultaneously President of the ANP and head of the Government) distancing from Veiga Simão's actions began to appear. These signs became public at the last Ação Nacional Popular congress (May 1973), where the Minister actions were attacked several times.<sup>24</sup> And then came the revolution.

The Revolutionary Cycle – the period that elapsed from April 25, 1974 until the first constitutional government – it's characterized by the efforts of provisional governments to put into practice measures that broke with the policies of the dictatorship and, at the same time, ensured the functioning of the system within a framework of evolution towards a «socialist democracy». The social dynamics – known as «processo revolucionário em curso» (ongoing revolutionary process) – that were generated, went beyond the logic of the reformist functioning of the State and put into practice important changes without resorting to regulations to do so. Despite the risks, measures consistent with an open, democratic and plural vision of the educational system were taken, while the different provisional governments sought to break with the «fascist ideology» and the social movement challenged the «reformist logic of the State» (Barroso, 2003).<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>23</sup> Cf. Teodoro, *A Construção Política da educação*, 278. Teodoro, *O fim do isolacionismo*, 48-54. Stoer, *A reforma de Veiga Simão no ensino*, 17, 23, states that, from the beginning, Veiga Simão's proposals (in a communication to the country dated January 6, 1971, *Projecto do Sistema Escolar e Linhas Gerais da Reforma do Ensino Superior*, <https://arquivos.rtp.pt/conteudos/comunicacao-de-jose-veiga-simao/>) «attracted the attention of all Portuguese people», as «a crucial point of socio-political life», by «embodying» the people aspirations, constantly postponed. And he adds that it had an «exceptional importance»: «1. Due to the central place that education held in Portugal, whether historically, as a force promoting or controlling social change, or symbolically as a factor in the reproductive process; 2. Due to his impact in a given political situation, when his speech and his program were an essential part of a far-reaching social change. »

<sup>24</sup> The materialization of this distance, at least with regard to university policies, can later be found in the recommendation by Caetano of Veríssimo Serrão as Rector of the Universidade de Lisboa, a fierce critic of the democratization of education. Other names, closer to the guidelines he defended for university reform and proposed by Veiga Simão, were not accepted.

<sup>25</sup> João Barroso (2003) *Organização e regulação dos ensinos básico e secundário, em Portugal: sentidos de uma evolução. Educação & Sociedade*, vol. 24, n.82 (2003), 66. Barroso refers the «great political instability» and «reduction of the State's capacity for intervention», the «heated dispute» between the left-wing parties and the «intense civic and social mobilization». Teodoro, *A construção política da educação*, 347: «Power moved to schools and the social movement», with emphasis on the emerging trade union movement, in «unlimited use of freedoms of association and expression».

During this period of revolutionary management of the Governos Provisórios that emerged with the *coup d'état*, there was a process of initial convocation of the Lei N.º. 5/73 (I Governo Provisório, «development of educational reform», Decreto Lei N.º. 203/74, May 15, issued by the Junta de Salvação Nacional) which later evolved to its progressive abandonment, opening the doors to major changes in educational policy. The creation of a unified secondary education was the result of the turbulence in schools and the challenges to the duality of this cycle, seeking for an «integrated and coherent» restructuring. But the compulsory schooling expansion to eight years suspension<sup>26</sup> maintained the duration of six years and thus *de facto* revoke the Law n.º. 5/73.<sup>27</sup>

### **2.1. The «optimistic search for education»**

As Teodoro (2004) states, thanks to the «existence of a strong popular social movement, which drove many of the transformations seen in Portuguese society» (a characterizing element of the political process that began in April 1974), and to «the widespread paralysis within of the structures of the State apparatus, as a result of a heated struggle for its political control», which took place between 1974 and 1976, the democratic transition provided by the events of the 25th of April «allowed for a social mobilization unprecedented in the country's history».

In the field of education, there is a widespread consensus regarding the fact that it was carried out, above all, by school actors, the «peripheries of the system», which resulted in «a shift of power to the schools». This, Teodoro (2000) argues, allowed a reformulation (and remobilization) of the objectives of educational reform, initiated by Veiga Simão, «giving it new dimensions in the fields of democratic participation, equal opportunities for success in education, learning content and connection to society», imposed to *the center* of decisions and measures. Teodoro calls this movement the «optimistic search for

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<sup>26</sup> Circular N.º 12/75, September 1, establishes that «the 7th year of schooling does not constitute compulsory education».

<sup>27</sup> The rupture with the Veiga Simão reform was also symbolically materialized by the II Provisional Government with the removal of all management staff from the Ministry of Education, and the appointment of new teams for general directorates and similar bodies, generally using personalities with no previous responsibilities in the central administration and coming from different sectors of the Democratic Opposition. António Teodoro. Mobilização educativa em tempos de crise revolucionária. Periferia e centro no processo de democratização das escolas (1974-1976). *Revista Portuguesa de Educação*, 17(2), (2004): 188.



education», which, until the First Constitutional Government, would reinforce «the education-democracy axis».<sup>28</sup>

Also, for Grácio (s/d) this is «a time of rupture. A time that raises tensions and accumulated problems; that releases pent-up creative forces», in education, but also in other areas of society. In schools, it will mean the search for «a new order», which will not be entirely peaceful as it will come at the cost of «political and pedagogical improvements — or the purification of the system», in Grácio's words, but which essentially focuses on pedagogical dimension, that is, in the «request for new teaching plans and contents, for renewed forms of assessment — or the political, cultural, pedagogical reformulation of the objectives of education».

This contemplates a vision of the organizational whole and is articulated with «new modalities of government and administration of educational establishments — or democratic school management» as well as the free association of teachers, whose unions will mark, over the next fifty years, the successive governance, despite the progressive loss of real representation of the professional class.<sup>29</sup> This political movement responded with the unlimited use of freedoms of association and expression, imposing solutions in practice before any legislation. In parallel with what was happening with political parties, the social movement in schools will also assert itself without needing any prior regulatory legal diploma, rather conditioning, through its practice, the legislation that will later be published. In the social movement, the demands were that a *new Portugal* required a *new educational reform*, which would be a *job for new men*.<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>28</sup> Teodoro, *Mobilização educativa*, 181-182.

<sup>29</sup> Rui Grácio (s/d) *A educação, dez anos depois. Que transformações, que rupturas, que continuidades?* <https://a25abril.pt/wp-content/uploads/2019/01/RuiGracio.pdf>. Consultado em 22 de maio de 2024; Licínio Lima. *A escola como organização e a participação na organização escolar. Um estudo da escola secundária em Portugal (1974-1988)* (Braga: Instituto de Educação da Universidade do Minho, 1992); Stephen R. Stoer. *Educação e mudança social em Portugal: 1970-1980, uma década de transição*. Porto: Afrontamento, 1986). The process is accompanied by the election of steering committees with the participation of teachers, students and workers, the immediate integration of teachers dismissed by the Estado Novo, the demand for profound changes in the Ministério da Educação apparatus, showing that the political initiative was on the periphery of the system. Teodoro, *Mobilização educativa*, 185. Stoer, *Educação e mudança*, 127, adds that, within schools, there was also a shift of power, «from school directors and traditional teaching staff to progressive teachers and the student body».

<sup>30</sup> Teodoro, *Mobilização educativa*, 185.

So, during this rather «creative and innovative period» the assumption of «democratic reform» is a reform of «education at the service of the people [...] in their hands, a democratic instrument for the conquest of the future», which would oppose the «shadow» of Veiga Simão, still hovering in the political system.<sup>31</sup> Some voices at the time consider that the reform of Marcelo Caetano's former minister has already made its way, with insufficiencies, errors and a demagogic elaboration and feasibility, but even so:

It is a reform with immense potentialities that it would be dangerous not to recognize and extremely incorrect don't take that advantage. But it is a reform that was carried out with and under fascism: it was proposed by a fascist government, supported by a fascist Corporate Chamber, ratified by a fascist National Assembly, pseudo-endorsed by a farce of popular participation.

The proposal, then, is to maintain what is positive and then guarantee a new, true reform, «as a whole, thought out and discussed collectively, elaborated and applied in a participatory manner», suitable for a new country.<sup>32</sup>

The dismissal of Palma Carlos and the appointment of Vasco Gonçalves as Prime Minister, put an end to any intention of proceeding with the *development of educational reform*. Its internal logic was unusable, «both for reasons of a *technical-political nature* as strictly *political* in nature», which subordinated the educational system to the needs of the [capitalist] economic system, transforming «the school into a factory level» and not serving the «interests of the working classes» (Hespanha,1979). It corresponded to that proposed by the OECD and existing in the most advanced countries of Western Europe, a logic that «was not salvageable after the 25th of April»: the educational system «must serve the capitalist economic system», which had already been in crisis since the 60; «liberalism in education», as well as the «free play of individual aspirations» and the quantitative expansion of the system, «could result in a democratization of this [...] an

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<sup>31</sup> Rui Grácio *A educação, dez anos depois*, s/n. Initially thinking of Veiga Simão to lead this government, Spínola did not, as is known, have the political conditions to carry out his intention. It will be Veiga Simão that Spínola will turn to for the elaboration of the Program of the 1st Governo Provisório, which will be approved, not by the Government itself, but by a decree from the Junta de Salvação Nacional. Veiga Simão turned to Adelino Amaro da Costa, then Director do Gabinete de Estudos e Planeamento of the Ministério da Educação Nacional, to prepare the project requested by Spínola, and Amaro da Costa then asked Freitas do Amaral to write the first — and, possibly, decisive — draft of the program of the provisional government. At the level of educational policy, the program was very generic and a single explicit guiding thread — the *development of educational reform*.

<sup>32</sup> «Preparing a new education is a job for new men» (Open letter to the Minister of Education and Culture of the Installing Committee of the Teachers' Union, dated May 20, 1974). Teodoro, *Mobilização educativa*, 185-186. From the personal archive of documents of the Installing Committee and Commission Directive Provisional of what became the Teachers' Union of Greater Lisbon.

attenuation of cultural and educational inequalities, with direct and indirect impacts on social inequalities and economic». Since the 1970s, it had been realized that this would not mean a «democratization of the social structure» and that «the imbalances were even more accentuated», requiring «compensatory measures».<sup>33</sup>

Education Policies developments in other European countries also showed that the systems were «not very capable of absorbing great social and educational tensions» and only function in «very integrated societies [...] with little contradictory aspirations». Hespanha' «second order of reasons» was that Veiga Simão's policy «could not maintain itself», as it now «lacked a repressive framework» [previously provided by the Ministério do Interior]» and with high tensions the system entered into dysfunction, so «the channels opened by the reform» were not enough to «absorb the enormous educational and social tensions that arose», also with the 25th of April, and left no alternative for the II Provisional Government «to show that it was cut off from everything [...] even specific injustices».<sup>34</sup>

## **2. Dealing with the «collapse»**

[...] the atomization of education took place, in large numbers schools became small independent kingdoms, legislating for themselves, the natural drunkenness of mass meetings often paralyzed their functioning and there was a fall in ease [...]. For its part, the Ministry does not have the means of action to adequately face such an emergency situation, it is paralyzed by legislation and a set of obsolete and stuck bodies.<sup>35</sup>

With Vitorino Magalhães Godinho, the II provisional Government defined for the first time a policy for the education sector, which clearly intended to break with the legacy of Veiga Simão and establish a transition program that would allow the State to resume the initiative and its power of regulation, strongly shaken by the rupture of «most of the

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<sup>33</sup> But it was with Veiga Simão that the importance of social support in the implementation of universal and free basic education was recognized for the first time, with the creation of IASE, Decreto Lei n.º 178/71, de 30 Junho), with the purpose of ensuring that students with intellectual capacity could progress beyond compulsory education. «Article 1 - 1. The Institute of School Social Action is created in the Ministry of National Education, under the direct dependence of the Minister, which will aim to enable studies, in addition to compulsory schooling, to those who have the intellectual capacity for the continue, as well as providing students in general with favorable conditions to get the most out of their studies».

<sup>34</sup> Educar em Portugal. Mesa-Redonda, *Raiz e Utopia*, 9/10 (Primavera/Verão) (1979): 63-64.

<sup>35</sup> Vitorino Magalhães Godinho. *A Educação num Portugal em Mudança* (Lisboa: Edições Cosmos, 1975): 26.

dikes» and the «collapse [of] a large part of the school building» that the revolution and the *end of fascism* had caused. The lines of action, presented on August 16, 1974 by Magalhães Godinho in the Council of Ministers, and unanimously approved by it, pointed out three significant short-term guidelines:

- a) Ensure the regular start and operation of the next school year.
- b) Dismantle the teaching that the old regime bequeathed to us, adjust it to the changes political and social issues that have occurred, correct the lack of control in the process of recent months (which was already coming from behind), reintegrate into a whole, now different, what was pulverized, lay the foundations for a future profound reorganization.
- c) Create the means for a new educational policy in a Portugal that is democratizing and eliminate the bodies that prevent it from taking off and continuing.<sup>36</sup>

Magalhães Godinho intended «a few basic reforms» in order to «lay the foundations so that citizens can decide for themselves the paths of the future»<sup>37</sup>, namely, to guarantee, through the Ministério da Educação e Cultura, «to the entire population» a service within the competence of the government, around «democratically elected management committees», with assemblies of teachers, staff and/or students, now having just «a consultative character»<sup>38</sup>. His dismissal occurred rather soon, in a context of progressive worsening of the school situation, affecting both basic and secondary education but mostly high schools and university education.<sup>39</sup>

Having difficulties in finding a consensual civilian personality for the Ministry of Education, Vasco Gonçalves and the MFA Coordinating Committee decided to assign the portfolio to a military man, the Lieutenant-Colonel Rodrigues de Carvalho. With this decision, an attempt was made, through a military minister, to converge the two legitimacies — the revolutionary of the MFA and the political-administrative nature of the provisional government, believing that, in this way, the relationship with the more radical student movements and with the communities themselves would be facilitated.

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<sup>36</sup> Godinho, *A Educação num Portugal em Mudança*, 28.

<sup>37</sup> Magalhães Godinho, *A Educação num Portugal em Mudança*, 174.

<sup>38</sup> Joint order from the Secretaries of State for Administração Escolar and Orientação Pedagógica, September 27, 1974, 34. Teodoro, *Mobilização educativa*, 190.

<sup>39</sup> The University was facing the impossibility of receiving all students finishing secondary education and also crossed by violent conflicts between students' partisans' organizations for schools' control, especially at the universities of Lisboa and Coimbra. Completely deprived of the means to intervene in schools, the Ministry of Education blamed the situation on the ideological radicalism of some, and sought to empower the elected management committees, or those in charge of management, to resist the demands and pressures from student plenaries, but also from teachers and staff, considering their respective actions as consultative only. Teodoro, *Mobilização educativa*, 189.

Armed Forces, whenever it became necessary, intervene to restore legality, through their own command, COPCON.

Teodoro (2004) affirms that the MFA, from the 28th of September, due to the *impossibility* of not carrying out *fundamental reforms*<sup>40</sup>, as advocated in the program of the III Governo Provisório, under penalty of mortgaging the April revolution objectives of the government itself, was led to the decision to proceed with the elaboration of the *Policy Economic and Social Program*, which was done under the coordination of Minister Melo Antunes<sup>41</sup>. Within the framework of *sectoral policies*, education is identified, simultaneously, as «one of the fundamental supports to boost economic development» and «a means of transition to a new society and a new humanism»<sup>42</sup>. The goals to achieve in the field of education had, as dominant concerns, the control of the school situation, the democratization of school lives and the reorganization of the Ministry's services, associated with a vague appeal to *generosity, lucidity and a spirit of cooperation* of all those who work in the education field.<sup>43</sup>

The values indicated are, essentially, to clean up and to restore trust, integrating schools «into a national whole» of programs, organization and operation. Also, «democratize the school» but in such a way that's manageable and guaranties that functions efficiently. In the dominant dimension of *democratization*, which will remain a decades-long battle, «democratize access to school», with students from «all classes», according with their «personal capabilities».<sup>44</sup>

It was in a context of acceleration of the revolutionary process that, during the IV Governo Provisório mandate, the Council of General Directors of the then designated Ministério da Educação e Investigação Científica ( MEIC ) approves, in successive meetings in the months of April and May 1975, a program that would fit into the «revolutionary strategy established in the program of the Armed Forces Movement», having as its *main objectives*

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<sup>40</sup> III Governo Provisório da República Portuguesa, *Programa de Política Económica e Social*, 7 de fevereiro de 1975, 7.

<sup>41</sup> Ernesto Melo Antunes. *Programa de Política Económica e Social* In: «Plano Económico», *A Capital*, n.º 830, 21 de fevereiro de 1975, 1-20. Requested by the III Provisional Government, the working group also included Rui Vilar, Silva Lopes and Maria de Lurdes Pintassilgo.

<sup>42</sup> III Governo Provisório, *Programa*, 137.

<sup>43</sup> Teodoro, *Mobilização educativa*, 190.

<sup>44</sup> III Governo Provisório *Programa*, 138-139.

«the establishment of a socialist society and the reinforcement of national independence, through the broadest participation and organization of the popular masses». The program defends «the education tasks are among the priority tasks of the Portuguese revolution», and must therefore be assumed «by all progressive and patriotic forces», and their main objective is the *democratization of education*:

Democratizing the school is, therefore: (a) opening it to all social and regional layers, prioritizing, for now, access to school for the working classes and rural populations; (b) put it at the service of the real interests of the Portuguese people in their march towards socialism and complete national independence; and, (c) make all entities interested in the revolutionary process intervene decisively in the elaboration of school policy and not just the «corporate» school community of teachers and students.<sup>45</sup>

Previous to this educational project was that «to an elitist and repressive conception or to a project technocratic and consumerist we oppose a conception revolutionary school integrated into a project revolutionary and socialist for the country» and so, the intention was to give «unity and meaning to the piecemeal measures to be taken in the field of education in the coming years».<sup>46</sup>

The defeat of the military left within the structures of the MFA, in August 1975, had an immediate consequence, at the government level. The fall of the V Governo Provisório and the constitution of a new government, obeying radically different criteria. Although the VI Provisional Government kept the Ministry of Education under the dominant influence of the MFA, there were important changes in the policy configuration. Teodoro (2004) observes that «subject to enormous pressure from the PS», the socialist party lead by Mário Soares, «and the parties to its right, and viewed with extreme suspicion by the PCP», the communist party lead by Álvaro Cunhal, «and far-left organizations, Vítor Alves, the new minister, sought to orient his action in the Ministry of Education around what he himself designates, in clearly military language, where the three *mission*: “stabilize, organize and develop what is possible”».<sup>47</sup>

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<sup>45</sup> Program approved by the Conselho de Directores Gerais of MEIC, in April/May 1975, point 2. Cit. apud. Teodoro, *Mobilização educativa*, 192, from the author personal archive.

<sup>46</sup> Conselho de Directores Gerais, point 4. Among the most emblematic measures are «the remaking» of school programs in a «progressive sense» and the «intimate link between teaching and productive practice», the axis of pedagogical transformation that removes the bourgeois reference once and for all. *Program*, point 9, as Teodoro, *Mobilização educativa*, 193, indicates.

<sup>47</sup> Teodoro, *Mobilização educativa*, 193-194.

Grácio (1981) defining the process as a balance seeking purpose, due to the options assumed and their synthetic character, recognizes the *blurring* of contradictions, shadows and excesses, as well as «the distance between the ideal and the real, between design and implementation», but also presents a *frankly positive list* of the process of educational democratization initiated by Governments provisional:

- a) Change in all degrees and branches of education, of the contents of learning.
- b) Dignification of the pedagogical, social and civic status of the teaching profession.
- c) Transformations of institutional relations in the teaching apparatus, freed, or tending to be freed, from repressive forms of authoritarianism and political, administrative and pedagogical mandarinism, as well as some teaching staff, and others, who embodied them.
- d) Modification of the objectives proposed for the education system in its relations with the global society, trying to break with the deliberate isolation and subordination to the interests of social minorities.
- e) Cooperation of the education system in the social democratization, seeking to change its function of reproducing and legitimizing social and regional inequalities.<sup>48</sup>

After all, the revolution not only *remobilized the Veiga Simão Reform*, in terms of its own content, as it expanded its democratization action, but allowed the Reform *to come into contact with society*. According to Stoer (1986), this *remobilization* was due to a «shift of power from the Ministry to the schools», which allowed a reformulation of the objectives of the *educational reform*, giving them new dimensions in the fields of democratic participation, equal opportunities for success in education, learning content and connection to society.<sup>49</sup> These policies, still inserted in a context of *optimistic demand for education* reinforced the *education-democracy* axis, allowing, in these times of revolutionary crisis, to mobilize actors and legitimize their educational policy options.

With the *Constitution of the Portuguese Republic*, April 2, 1976, education made a decisive contribution to the consolidation of democracy, not only in its dimension political, but equally — and insistently — in its social dimensions, identified in the constitutional text with the «transition to socialism», through the « democratic power exercise by the working classes» (art. 2 of the Constitution). In the chapter referring to *cultural rights and duties* (arts. 73 to 79), the 1976' Constitution attributed to the State the greater responsibility of «promoting democratization of education and the conditions

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<sup>48</sup> Rui Grácio. *Educação e Processo Democrático em Portugal* (Lisboa: Livros Horizonte, 1981):106-108, 42; but also: Stephen R. Stoer. *Educação e Mudança Social em Portugal. 1970-1980, uma Década de Transição* Porto: Edições Afrontamento, 1986).

<sup>49</sup> Stoer, *Educação e mudança social em Portugal*, 127.

for education [...] to contribute to the development of personality and the progress of democratic and socialist society» ( art. 73, no. 1), arguing accordingly that teaching should be modified «in order to overcome its conservative function of the social division of labor» ( art. 74, no. 2), and even pointing out that «access to the University must [...] stimulate and favor the entry of workers and of the children of the working classes» (art. 76). The inclusion of so many democratic ambitions in the constitutional text – of which the «paths to socialism» and its statist perspectives would be eliminated from the Constitution in a subsequent review<sup>50</sup> – was not done or implemented without many precocious embarrassments, inconsistencies, battles for partisan interests and political revenge, so:

Democratization quickly turned into anarchy, since there was no political leadership capable of containing the excesses that would inevitably have to occur after about five decades of authoritarian rule. The changes that were attempted, both in the primary and secondary education systems and in higher education, ended up in most cases resulting in a huge failure, since there were neither structures nor agents with the capacity to implement the measures that were planned in the offices. [...] In other words, the Revolution of 1974 ended up, to a certain extent, becoming an obstacle to the educational reforms conceived by Prof. Veiga Simão and his team in 1970 and enshrined in the basic law that was approved and published in 1973 (Law n.º. 5/73, of 25 July) and which for the time represented an extremely relevant step towards the modernization and opening of the Portuguese education system.<sup>51</sup>

Nevertheless, as Grácio expresses, «it would not be expected that, in the beginning, the break with the repression and exploitation of the dictatorship would take place in peace», nor that the educational sector «would be able to avoid the more or less widespread social

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<sup>50</sup> «It wasn't just Dr. Soares was the one who put socialism in the drawer, it was the entire country. If the 1976 Constitution, in its original version, provided for revolutionary tutelage over the regime, through the Council of the Revolution, this tutelage disappeared with the 1982 revision. It was envisaged that the country would be “on the path to socialism” and the construction of a “classless society”, in which there should be “collective appropriation of the main means of production” and nationalizations carried out after March 11, 1975 were considered “irreversible” and the nationalized sectors were “prohibited to private initiative”, the review 1989 ended these restrictions. The demo-liberal regime was the essential work of the 1976 Constitution. » Luciano Amaral. A herança de duas constituições. *Diário de Notícias*, 27 de abril de 2006. <https://www.dn.pt/arquivo/2006/a-heranca-de-duas-constituicoes-639647.html/>. Consultado em 22 de maio de 2024.

<sup>51</sup> Eduardo M. Grilo. O Sistema Educativo. In A. Reis (Coord.). *Portugal, 20 Anos de Democracia*. Lisboa: Círculo de Leitores, 1994, 406. ) ??? The former minister adds that, despite everything, during the 1974-76 period «some projects and initiatives with immense potential were conceived», such as the pursuit of the unification of the 7th and 8th years of schooling.«as well as «the profound modification» of the curricula, «from which the subjects and contents most markedly associated with the deposed regime were removed» (p.434).



disorganization that was reflected in the tensions at the level of power political, which, in turn, were projected onto it. »<sup>52</sup>

Even so, the idea of «education democratization», the enrichment of its understandings, a rise in levels of aspiration and demand, were also induced by the expansion of the education offer and planning. Those were the times of new beginnings, changing «mental representations of teaching agents, student expectations, of parents, populations, business bodies, formation of public opinion in its current diversities» (Grácio, s/d) which would progress in the following decades and, despite the difficulties and weaknesses, were one of the great successes of the revolution and, later, of Portugal's integration into the European Community.<sup>53</sup>

### 3. Concluding: The «Normalization» and its values' fluctuations

The Basic Law gives up being a driver of change, of new thoughts and of transmitting, in a vision of the future, the answer to new problems, some that are developing and others that are on the horizon. These are the great challenges of our time, the dehumanization introduced by technologies, the need to humanize development, the vision that economism must be integrated into humanism. The Basic Law should reflect some concerns, related to violence, ethnic problems, love of Nature... It is in this sense that it lacks soul, not giving us an idea of building the future. [...] should be an intermediate messenger between the Constitution and life.<sup>54</sup>

As Stoer (1983) states, «for some, the Veiga Simão Reform played, firstly, a *control* role with the aim of neutralizing and/or breaking the unity of the opposition, or even legitimizing or providing a continuous flow to the “Social State”»; for others, acted «as agents of democratization of Portuguese society, that is, it fulfilled, above all, a function of social improvement». Being an epicenter of debate on the development/modernization of the country, it was a «legitimizer of an attempt to restructure the form of the State», in a progressive collapse since the 1960s, «through access to citizenship» in economic terms (with the expansion of education planning, at the service of economic development), but

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<sup>52</sup> Grácio, *A educação, dez anos depois*, s/n, which adds: « This without forgetting the dysfunctions of the system before 74, particularly in higher education, even regardless of the very serious “academic crises” at the Portuguese University before the 25th of April.»

<sup>53</sup> Rui Grácio *A educação, dez anos depois*.

<sup>54</sup> Veiga Simão in: Teodoro, 117. This is a central question in Veiga Simão, who declared in 1970, referring to education policy: «And because this society has become less human and less humanistic, more focused on the matter of that the spirit entered a deep crisis.» Simão, 1970, 125, cit.apud. Stoer, *A Reforma de Veiga Simão*, 24.

also through political and cultural mobilization, democratization through the enlargement of the citizen category, not only economically, but politically. It was, therefore, a project of social progress, of access to a better standard of living and of political participation, «as popular resistance, as opposition to a) political exclusion and b) technocratic determination». And, going a slight further, to «create the necessary terrain in which discontent could make its voice heard».

The approval of the Constitution, the legislative elections (meaning the influence loss of the Communist Party), and the 1st Governo Constitucional, enabled the emergence of the «Normalization» Cycle of the Educational System and continued until 1986, with the approval of its Basic Law, which is, in some way, a need/requirement for the integration of Portugal into the European Economic Community. Politically, the intention was to eliminate «revolutionary drifts». The State should regain power and control over education, introducing «criteria of “technical rationality” in political decision-making, namely, through the reinforcement of structures and planning processes», an ongoing practice.<sup>55</sup>

This period of increasing normalization is also a stage in which the Veiga Simão Reform receives a “new vigor”, despite making it “unrecognizable”. As Grácio (1983) indicates, «being strengthened by the revolution of April 1974», as seen before, was also «extended it to hitherto untouchable areas (such as the democratic management of schools)». Is a period of «new vocationalism»:

concerns about effectiveness, quality standards and job training overlapped with concerns “about the democratic curriculum, teacher autonomy or class, race or gender inequality” that is, where the binomial education/modernization of the productive fabric took the place of the education/democracy binomial”.<sup>56</sup>

The 1986 Basic Law (Lei N.º 46/ 1986, October 14), which culminates normalization, will emerge under political conditions – motivated by European integration – that had already lost the self-management and direct democracy impulse, but are imbued with democratic principles of constitutional inspiration. The Law ensures many compromises between democratization and modernization, between participation and rationalization,

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<sup>55</sup> Barroso, *Organização do ensino*, 68.

<sup>56</sup> J. A. CORREIA (1999) As ideologias educativas nos últimos 25 anos. *Revista Portuguesa de Educação*, Braga, n. 12, (1999): 89-90.

with increasing advantages for the technical and instrumental perspectives of education and training. A little later, it will be neoliberalism and New Public Management that inspire the reconfiguration of the role of the State, privatization and «school-centered management» policies. concentration of structures, with their quality and competitiveness agendas, in a hybridity that, in the future, will be marked by the European Union, its «convergences» but also the new challenges facing democracies, which we believed to be consolidated. But, however, new demographic changes and political challenges endorse the inevitability of questioning ourselves on how education should – again – support democracy.

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