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## Portugal in UNESCO: From leaving in 1972 to returning as a member in 1974

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### **Abstract:**

The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) was established in November 1946. Portugal was formally admitted to UNESCO on 1 March 1965. Since its entry as a Member State, the Portuguese government has been confronted with successive resolutions of the General Assembly and the Executive Council of UNESCO, which strongly condemned its colonial policy. The establishment of diplomatic relations with the organization would only be possible after the democratization of the Portuguese regime and the effective resolution of the colonial issue. Once all necessary procedures have been adopted, Portugal returned to UNESCO in September 1974.

### **Keywords:**

democracy; United Nations; international organizations; foreign policy; Portugal; UNESCO

### **Introduction**

After the end of the Second World War in 1945, the idea of establishing an international and intellectual organization began to be widely accepted. The Charter of the United Nations was approved at the *San Francisco Conference*, which took place in April 1945, as well as a French recommendation that proposed another future conference to define the statutes to create an intellectual organization.

The first conference of the new organization took place in London from 1 to 16 November in 1945, and it was attended by 42 countries. They approved the name to be given to the future organization, the drafting of its constitution and the definition of its principal aims and functions (Valderrama 1995: 21). After the confirmation of its Constitutive Act done by twenty countries and its subsequent delivery to the Foreign Affairs Ministry in London, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) was officially founded on 16 November 1946, and it became one of the several specialized agencies of the United Nations.

As an organization, UNESCO's main objectives were defined in its charter: to contribute to the world's peace and security by encouraging collaboration among nations, ensuring 'unanimous, lasting and sincere support to the peoples of the world', advocating in this sense a peace based on intellectual solidarity and moral character of mankind (UNESCO Constitution 1946: Article 1). As regards its structure, UNESCO was composed of the following organs: the director-general, the highest official of UNESCO, appointed for six years; the General Meeting, which meets every two years and is responsible for appointing the general director, setting the programmes, voting the budget and electing the Executive Board members; the Executive Board, which meets twice a year and is responsible for ensuring the implementation of the programmes adopted by the General Meeting; and the Secretariat, which operates at UNESCO's headquarters in Paris and includes the organization's international staff (UNESCO Constitution 1946: Articles 1–IX). Finally, it is important to mention the role of the various permanent delegations in each Member State – 'to maintain close contacts between the organization and their respective governments' (Valderrama 1993: 244).

The article aims to answer the following questions: Why did Portugal leave UNESCO in 1972? What was the impact of the new Portuguese foreign policy principles after 25 April 1974 on relations between Portugal and the United Nations and its specialized institutions? Was there any intervention from the United Nations in the complicated decolonization process? What was the role of the Portuguese Foreign Office, represented by Minister Mário Soares, in establishing relations with UNESCO? Lastly, what were the main aims of UNESCO's Portuguese Permanent Mission when Portugal returned to the organization?

Following the literature review, the article is divided into four sections. In the first section, I analysed the reactions of the Portuguese government to the creation of UNESCO, the first contacts concerning this possibility of proceeding the application to be a Member State, as well as the reactions of the other delegations to Portugal's entry in March 1965, considering Portuguese colonial policy and its resistance to decolonization. The second section identifies the main reasons that led to the Portuguese government's decision to leave the organization in 1972. In the third section, the principal objectives of Portuguese foreign policy, following the revolution of April 1974, are analysed, emphasizing the rapprochement with international organizations and the start of the decolonization process. The section shall pay attention to the role of the United Nations in Portuguese decolonization and the official recognition by the Portuguese government of the decolonization and self-determination of the territories under its colonial regime, with the approval of Law 7/74 in July 1974. Following the start of the decolonization process, relations with UNESCO were re-established. Finally, in the last section, this article evaluates the role of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs by advancing the procedures

required to regain Member State status. The article concludes by highlighting the main goals defined by the Portuguese Mission established at UNESCO and the first contacts that have been established.

Methodologically, the present article is based on historical research methodology. In addition to the use of secondary bibliography, it was based on primary sources, specifically those at the archive of the Portuguese Ministry of Foreign Affairs, at the António de Oliveira Salazar Archive and Maria de Lourdes Pintasilgo Archive. Electronic documents from the National Archive and Records Administration and the UNESCO Archives have also been very useful. I also used legal texts and other official documents of the Portuguese government as well as selected articles from the Portuguese press.

### **The state of the question**

The relationship between Portugal and UNESCO has not been the subject of diverse research over the past few years. Academic research has analysed the behaviour of the Portuguese government from its inception until it became a Member State in 1965 (Rodrigues 2006), and more recently, a work studied the Portuguese delegation to UNESCO under the leadership of Pintasilgo between 1975 and 1981 (Santos 2018).

For its part, UNESCO has been the subject of abundant literature on various topics in its history. It was concluded that the idea of creating an agency for intellectual cooperation dates from the days of the League of Nations by establishing the International Institute for Intellectual Cooperation from 1922 to 1946 (Renoliet 1999). Several authors have undertaken the study of the evolution of the organization (Valderrama 1995) and the related fields: social sciences, culture, education and science (Elfert 2013; Matasci 2016), concluding that the various initiatives implemented by this organization have a strong impact among the populations that adopt them (Duedahl 2016). However, French historian Chloé Maurel identified a series of flaws in the organization, including tensions between countries, essentially on the appointment of posts, on the access of the new Member States, the choice of where conferences should be held and the languages that should be used (Maurel 2010).

UNESCO is one of the numerous specialized agencies of the United Nations. Portugal became a UN member in 1955. There are also several studies on Portugal's involvement at the United Nations. These studies focus mainly on the organizational attitude towards Portuguese colonialism. The first contacts established with the organization reflect the distrust of the Portuguese regime until effective membership of the United Nations in December 1955 (Castaño 2015). Since Portugal joined the organization, the confrontations with it have increased dramatically because of the persistence of the Portuguese to maintain their colonial empire (Martins 1998; Magalhães 1996; Branco and Garcia 2005).

The disagreements with the United Nations intensified in the 1960s with the decolonization of a significant number of territories under colonial rule and with the approval of a set of General Assembly of the UN resolutions condemning Portuguese colonial policy and defending the independence and self-determination of their colonies in Africa (Silva 1995; Santos 2011).

During the first months following democracy in Portugal, the focus of Portuguese foreign policy was on the way to proceed with the decolonization process, and the United Nations continued to appeal to the Portuguese regime for a quick solution to the colonial problem (Rodrigues 2016). It was

only with the democratization of the regime and the publication of Law 7/74, which recognized the right of self-determination and independence of colonial territories, that the relationship between Portugal and the United Nations has progressively strengthened, as verified, for example, in the Portuguese participation in the UN Security Council in 1979–80, 1997–98 and 2011–12 (Mendes 2015).

### **From permanent observer in 1961 to member state in 1965**

After the end of the Second World War, a new international order emerged. With the creation of the United Nations in 1945, based on the ideals of democracy and freedom, the main European powers began to renounce to their colonial empires, as the right to self-determination was being implemented in an increasingly consistent manner (Santos 2017).

Within the UN system, several specialized agencies have been established through intergovernmental agreements and with international responsibilities in the economic, social, cultural, educational and health spheres directly related to the United Nations (Charter of the United Nations 1946: Article 55). One of the leading specialist agencies is UNESCO, established in November 1946.

As regards UNESCO, the Portuguese government has examined a request for admission as a Member State since its creation. The Portuguese government's interest in the organization was justified as a 'compensation mechanism for the Soviet veto of Portugal's entry into the United Nations' (Rodrigues 2006: 168).<sup>1</sup> However, in conversations with Oliveira Salazar in November 1947, Júlio Dantas, the former representative of Portugal at the International Institute for Intellectual Cooperation, reminded the Portuguese leader that Portugal was not yet a member of the United Nations and that this meant that it could only become a member of UNESCO 'on a special recommendation from the Executive Board and a two-thirds vote of the General Meeting of UNESCO members' (Diplomatic Historical Archive [AHD] 1946).

Having considered the advantages and disadvantages of membership and fearing another international veto, as had occurred at the United Nations, in a memorandum dated 28 January 1947, Oliveira Salazar communicated the decision not to proceed with a proposed candidacy, betting on a 'United Nations devaluation strategy', referencing UNESCO as an institution 'dominated by Russian satellite countries' (AHD 1947). Meanwhile, the evolution of the Cold War developed in favour of the Portuguese regime, with the Allies betting on its survival, preferring a faithful and secure regime, although authoritarian, to a democracy that would allow the Communist Party to participate actively in the government (Rosas 2012: 215).

The late 1940s brought significant international developments to the Portuguese regime: in 1948, an agreement was signed with the United States permitting the use of Lages as an American base (Rodrigues 2005); in 1948, Portugal requested the second phase of the Marshall Plan (Rollo 1994); and in April 1949, Portugal became a founding member of NATO (Telo 1996).

During the 1950s, some UNESCO Member States, such as Spain, Brazil, or the United States, tried to persuade the Portuguese regime to apply to become a member of the organization (Rodrigues 2006: 169). However, the Portuguese government has systematically rejected proposals for possible accession. According to the minister of foreign affairs, Paulo Cunha, Portugal did not intend to 'join organizations that were part of the United Nations', of which it

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<sup>1</sup> Portugal's candidacy to the United Nations in 1942 was vetoed by the Russian vote. About this theme see Branco and García (2005), Castano (2015), Magalhaes (1996) and Martins (2015).

was not yet a member, and was concerned with the excessive proliferation of international organizations that consume activities without providing corresponding revenues 'and divert governments from the important issues' (AHD n.d.d). Portugal feared the growing interference of the organization in African affairs and Portuguese colonialism, and Oliveira Salazar chose, as a precaution, to keep the possibility of candidacy for UNESCO suspended during the 1950s (AHD 1952).

However, with the death of Soviet leader Joseph Stalin in 1953, an agreement between the United States and the Soviet Union, concluded in 1955, on the extension of the United Nations to new Member States became possible. Sixteen new states were admitted, and Portugal became a member on 14 December 1955.

Portugal's entry into the United Nations coincided with the moment where the decolonization movement reached its summit. In 1960, sixteen new independent states were born and all of them became UN members. As a result, the African countries had a strong representation in the UN General Meeting and demanded, as would be expected, the decolonization and independence of the Portuguese colonies and the end of apartheid in South Africa (Pereira 2005: 154).

Consequently, in December 1960, the General Assembly of the United Nations passed three resolutions that directly condemned Portuguese colonialism. The 1514 Resolution condemned all forms of colonialism and declared that 'all peoples have the right to free determination'. Additionally, the 1541 Resolution specified the criteria from which a given territory was considered to be non-autonomous, as one which was 'geographically separated and ethnically or culturally distinct from the country that administers it' or even if it was 'arbitrarily' placed 'in a position or a state of subordination' (General Meeting Resolutions 1960). Finally, the 1542 Resolution presented a list of territories that were non-autonomous, such as Guinea, São Tomé and Príncipe, Angola, Mozambique, Goa and the remainder of the Portuguese State of India, Macau and Timor (General Meeting Resolutions 1960). These resolutions were related to 'the Portuguese refusal to accept United Nations decisions on the provision of information' in respect of the non-autonomous territories (Santos 2011: 62).

At the same time, Portuguese military involvement in Africa increased with the beginning of colonial wars<sup>2</sup> in Angola (1961), Guinea (1963) and Mozambique (1964), as the Portuguese regime decided to fight the nationalist movements militarily, defending 'its empire and its civilizing principles' (Rodrigues 2001: 190).

During the difficult international context of the early 1960s, the Portuguese government decided to name an observer to UNESCO, with the 'right to attend and interfere in all its sessions and activities' (AHD 1961). Through Decree Law n. 44017 of February 1961, Portugal created a UNESCO's representation arguing that greater Portuguese participation in the organization's activities could help to clarify some doubts about 'our culture, education systems, and intellectual, scientific and artistic creations' (AHD 1961).

However, Portugal's presence as an observer at UNESCO quickly brought great controversy, with African delegates strongly criticizing Portuguese colonial policy and the presence of a Portuguese observer at the organization's meetings (AHD 1962). The Portuguese observer was frequently denied the right to speak, claiming that Portugal did not have the status of a Member State, resulting in, in July 1963, a proposal for a motion by delegates from African countries to exclude Portuguese participation in all meetings of the

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<sup>2</sup> About colonial war see Afonso and Gomes (2000) and Pinto (2001).

organization. Although countries such as France, the United Kingdom, Spain and the United States defended the presence of the Portuguese observer at UNESCO meetings, after voting, the motion was approved by a simple majority and the Portuguese delegation was not authorized to continue to participate in the organization's meetings (AHD 1964a).

In November 1964, the Portuguese government finally decided to submit its candidacy to UNESCO. In a letter to Marçal de Almeida dated 25 November 1964, Manuel Rocheta, Portugal's Ambassador to London, clarified the procedure to be adopted by the Portuguese government for officializing accession to UNESCO. The ambassador warns from the beginning that if the application for membership is made, it must be done 'as quickly and unexpectedly as possible' so that any attempts by some UNESCO Member States to prevent our membership are not possible (AHD 1964b).

Rocheta explains that, according to Article 2 of the UNESCO's constitution, 'all Member States of the United Nations have the right to become members of UNESCO'; they only had to accept the document of acceptance of the 1945 Convention in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in London, being considered as a member of the organization 'from the day the Director-General receives the notification of the deposit of said document' (AHD 1964b). On 11 January 1965, the Portuguese embassy in London informed the Portuguese government that Portugal should sign the original version of the convention, dated 16 November 1945, but duly updated, containing all amendments introduced thus far. It was also mentioned that it was not necessary to deliver any note to the director-general of UNESCO in Paris, this notification being made 'automatically by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs based on the accession document' (AHD 1965a).

On 11 March, the government of Portugal signed the constitution of UNESCO and deposited its instruments of acceptance with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in London. On 15 March 1965, Portugal joined UNESCO to become its 119th member (AHD 1965b).

From the point of view of the Portuguese regime, entry into UNESCO would provide several advantages for Portugal 'from the very important technical and scientific collaboration to the great financial support of the organization for the development of various national initiatives'.

(António de Oliveira Salazar Archive [AOS] 1962)

However, the main reason for Portugal's accession would be to frustrate the application of Resolution 1.116 of the Thirteenth Session of the General Meeting (1964) of the specialized agency, which defined the sending of invitations to conferences convened by UNESCO solely to the members of the organization. With the accession of Portugal, the organization would thus be obliged to address an invitation to the Portuguese delegation to participate in all conferences (AHD 1970a).

### **Portuguese reasons for leaving UNESCO in 1972**

The official status as a member, contrary to what the Portuguese government expected, redoubled the intensity of the attack on Portuguese colonial policy: In 1965, the UNESCO's Executive Board considered on an 'examination of the consequences of Portugal's entry into UNESCO', having decided to withdraw a previous Portuguese invitation to participate in the *28th International*

*Conference on Public Education* and, at the same time, asked if the Portuguese government consented 'to conduct a study about Portuguese colonies' education, a study to be carried out by UNESCO's Secretariat members' (AHD 1965c).

Following this decision, in a letter dated 20 July 1965, the director-general of UNESCO, René Maheu, indicated to the minister of foreign affairs of Portugal that it would be useful for the realization of the report and that UNESCO will receive further information on Portugal's position on the current status of education in the African territories under Portuguese administration and asked if he could count on the authorization of the Portuguese government to carry out the studies in the best conditions (AHD 1965e).

On 30 June 1965, the minister for foreign affairs, Franco Nogueira, in a letter addressed to UNESCO's director-general, René Maheu, said that Portugal considered the Executive Board's attitude 'illegal and discriminatory' towards international law and UNESCO's Constitution. Franco Nogueira explains that 'the Portuguese Government, in its wider policy of cooperation and information', agrees with the study, but it cannot constitute a discriminatory measure against Portugal and 'has no suspensive impact on the exercise of Portugal's rights as the Member State of UNESCO' (AHD 1965d). In the words of the Portuguese minister, Decision 70EX/14 should be examined at a meeting of the Executive Board and not at the General Meeting, in which the African and Asian countries had a 'great majority' (AHD 1965d).

Countries opposing the Portuguese colonial policy rejected the proposed conditions and approved Executive Board Decision 70 EX/14, which has determined that the invitations addressed to Portugal are of no effect until the results of a field study on the state of education in the African territories under Portuguese jurisdiction are at hand. The decision was adopted with 26 votes in favour and four abstentions (Germany, Brazil, the United States and the United Kingdom) (AHD 1970b).

The fourteenth session of the General Assembly (1966), the first session to be attended by Portugal, decided to hear the Legal Committee, which agreed with Portugal's request to refer the dispute to the International Court of Justice. However, the countries against Portugal, using the majority that counted in the plenary of the General Assembly, succeeded in prioritizing the vote on two draft resolutions, whose approval no longer warranted a review of the report of the Legal Affairs Committee. The resolutions adopted by a large majority against Portugal – Resolution XI and Resolution XX – were subordinated to matters concerning the elimination of colonialism and racism (AHD 1970b).

Resolution XI stated that assistance should not be given to the governments of Portugal and the Republic of South Africa and the illegal regime of Rhodesia in the fields of education, science and culture, and in particular, these countries should not be invited to attend conferences and other relevant UNESCO activities and even 'renounce the policy of colonial dominance and racial discrimination' (AHD 1970b). In Resolution XX, the General Meeting reaffirmed the right of the organization to take any other necessary steps at a later stage, therefore rejecting the request to refer the matter to the International Court of Justice (AHD 1970b).

Two years later, in 1968, in the fifteenth session of the General Assembly, UNESCO reaffirmed and strengthened its position against Portugal's colonial policy by approving two other resolutions. In Resolution 9.12 (XV), the General Meeting – considering that maintaining colonial regimes and all forms of racial discrimination 'represents a threat to international peace and

security and a crime against humanity' – reiterated that it condemns all forms and manifestations of colonialism and racism. The mentioned resolution encouraged states to make an active contribution to the implementation of the 1960 Declaration on the granting of independence to colonial countries and peoples and on the need for UNESCO to intensify its assistance to the peoples fighting for their liberation from colonial domination in cooperation with the Organization of African Unity and national liberation movements.

In Resolution 9.14 (XV), the General Meeting condemned the colonial domination, the policy of racial extermination and the acts of aggression committed by Portuguese troops in African countries. Referring to the fact that Portugal was constantly opposed to sending a committee to examine the problems of education in its territories, UNESCO condemned Portugal's attitude, contradicting the ideals of the organization, and urged the Member States to suspend all cooperation with Portugal in the areas of education, science and culture, asking the director-general to increase aid and assistance as part of the 1969–70 programme and budget for African refugees from countries and territories still under Portuguese domination (UNESCO n.d.a).

When speaking at the 35th session of the Fifteenth General Assembly, 14 November 1968, Dr Marçal de Almeida underlined that Portugal was prepared to accept that issues relating to education, science and culture should be studied and resolved in the political context in which they are situated. Nevertheless, the concrete measures taken, to date, against Portugal reflect 'a discriminatory attitude of interference in the internal affairs of a Member State' (AHD 1968). As the Portuguese delegate said, if the intention of the resolution was really to study the educational conditions in the Portuguese overseas provinces, it would be sufficient for that study to be conducted in terms acceptable to the Portuguese government, which only requested that it 'be non-discriminatory and did not have any effect on the suspension of Portugal's rights as a Member State' (AHD 1968). Almeida emphasized that Portugal does not have to fear conducting such a study, and that very detailed surveys already conducted in Angola, Guinea and Mozambique were 'extremely supportive of Portugal' (AHD 1968).

In Portugal, the appointment of Marcello Caetano to the leadership of the government in 1968 created a brief expectation of the eventual political reform of the regime that could, therefore, lead to the resolution of the colonial problem. However, Caetano never considered the possibility of ending the war. He advocated an ambitious plan for a gradual autonomy of the Portuguese colonies, but it could never be supported by the most traditional sectors of the system, which strongly opposed its reform and frustrated the expectations of all those who wanted an early resolution of the colonial situation (Pimenta 2016: 120).

Under the government of Caetano, relations between Portugal and UNESCO showed no closeness, and the organization continued to manifest its dissatisfaction with the Portuguese colonial policy.

In 1970, by the decision of the 86th Session of the Executive Council, Portugal would not continue to receive invitations to conferences organized by UNESCO. The result of the vote in the Executive Board on a new decision was 24 votes in favour, five against and six abstentions (AHD 1970c).

In addition, in October 1970, UNESCO's Executive Board decided to 'support aid activities for refugees from colonial territories' and 'to assist the people and organizations in the areas of the already liberated territories' (AHD 1970c). The Portuguese government expressed its dissatisfaction with

UNESCO because it provided 'funding to Portuguese counter-terrorism movements claiming that they were providing educational assistance in allegedly liberated areas' (AHD n.d.b).

Concerning UNESCO and its orientation against Portugal, by a letter dated 31 March 1971 addressed to the general director of UNESCO, the minister of foreign affairs, Rui Patrício, designated the current resolutions adopted by UNESCO as 'an obvious violation of the principles of international life', concerning interference in the domestic affairs of sovereign states and the non-proliferation of specialized international agencies. According to the Portuguese minister, UNESCO has adopted an 'unacceptable discriminatory attitude towards Portugal' and that the resolutions, adopted 'under the impetus of a disinterested majority of legality, international practices, and even UNESCO's goals and interests', are opposed to the letter and spirit of the constitution of the organization, compromising in this way 'the noble mission that must work for the advancement of the knowledge and mutual understanding of peoples' (AHD 1971a).

For example, it referred to the repeated resolutions of the General Meeting prohibiting invitations to Portugal for UNESCO conferences or international meetings, the constant attacks against the situation in the Portuguese overseas provinces and the invitation to all the Member States to suspend all cooperation with Portugal on education, science and culture and to establish aid programmes with the Organization of African Unity (AHD 1971a). Two months later, at a press conference in May 1971, Patrício criticized 'UNESCO's increasing intrusion into the most diverse areas of international policy', which has recently been the financing of 'Portuguese counter-terrorism movements' (AHD 1971b).

In a letter to René Maheu, the director-general of UNESCO, Patrício indicated that the organization had deviated from its original goals and that Portugal could not be a member of an 'organization that does not respect the principles of its constitutional act' (AHD n.d.a). By the Constitution of UNESCO, any Member State may withdraw from the organization and the notification being effective on 31 December of the year in which the decision was made. As a result of international pressure against its colonial policy and its frequent condemnation at UNESCO, by a letter dated 18 June 1971, the Portuguese foreign minister informed the director-general that Portugal was retiring from UNESCO, as the Permanent Delegate ceased to function in June 1971 (UNESCO n.d.b).

#### **Portuguese foreign policy after April 1974**

After the April 1974 revolution, Portuguese foreign policy changed its priorities and a new model of international integration was developed (Teixeira 2004: 1).

One of the main priorities of this new foreign policy was to collaborate with multilateral organizations and fully integrate Portugal into the international system. However, to ensure Portugal's full integration into the international community, it was essential to start the decolonization process, which was the first major challenge of the new regime's foreign policy. The first transitional government, which took office on 16 May 1974, simply recognized that the Portuguese colonial war must be resolved politically, demonstrating its willingness to dialogue with African territories so that, in the future, they could consider the principle of self-determination and explore 'any policies that can lead to an effective and sustainable peace'. However, the programme

did not clearly define the guidelines to be followed concerning the decolonization of the Portuguese territories in Africa (Programme of the First Transitional Government 1974: Article 7).

On 11 May 1974, the United Nations sent a special emissary to the Portuguese capital, Hans Janitschek, to establish the 'first official contact between the United Nations and the new Portugal' (Anon. 1974a: 7). In Lisbon, during the talk with the Portuguese President, António de Spínola and with the foreign affairs minister, Mário Soares, the UN emissary conveyed the 'anxiety of African nations representatives' at the United Nations regarding the plans of the new Portuguese government about the self-determination of African territories (Anon. 1974a: 7).

The United Nations wanted an immediate ceasefire and independence, handing over power to the liberation movements. The United Nations' appeals to the Portuguese regime went on revealing the organization's growing impatience with 'the absence of a clear solution of the Portuguese regime' regarding the colonial problem and the United Nations' support for 'direct and immediate negotiation with nationalist movements' (Rodrigues 2016: 115).

The colonial situation will only be resolved under the Second Transition Government, when Law 7/74 was finally approved on 27 July 1974, which recognized the right to self-determination and the Portuguese government's acceptance of the independence of the overseas territories (Law 7/74 1974). The proclamation of the new law was welcomed by the United Nations, which expected the independence of African countries to be achieved 'as soon as possible, according to United Nations resolutions' (Anon. 1974b: 1-5).

Kurt Waldheim, the UN secretary-general, visited Lisbon on 2 August 1974 during a visit that, according to the Portuguese press, pointed out the end of the 'political indifference towards the wishes of the international community and sadly symbolized in the affirmation of the proudly alone' (Anon. 1974c: 7). The secretary-general met President General António de Spínola, Prime Minister Vasco Gonçalves and Minister of Foreign Affairs Mário Soares. Portugal issued a declaration stating that it was prepared to cooperate with the United Nations and that it would recognize the right to self-determination and independence and guarantee the unity and integrity of colonial territories under its administration (Release Portugal and United Nations 1974).

With the formal recognition by the Portuguese regime of the decolonization of territories, diplomatic relations with other countries did not encounter great difficulties, with 'a multiplicity of connections, contracts, commitments, and interactions, which was crucial to the current democratic regime formation' (Bruneau 1982: 885). The good ties that the minister of foreign affairs, Soares, established with numerous European capitals contributed to the recognition of the regime by other countries (Telo 2008: 189), establishing conversations 'with several governments with whom he had contacted, socialists, social governments, democrats and labour parties that had the power in Europe' (Soares 1999: 324). These contacts enabled him to explain to the European governments<sup>3</sup> the significance of the changes in Portugal 'in foreign and domestic policy' (Soares 1976: 61), clarifying that the government's agenda included the intent to respect international treaties, to contribute to the maintenance of international peace and security and to actively cooperate with the United Nations and other international organizations (Programme of the First Transitional Government 1974).

During a press conference in Palácio das Necessidades on 13 September 1974, Foreign Minister Mário Soares considered Portugal's foreign policy under

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<sup>3</sup> About this topic, the following studies are interesting: Castano (2012); Fonseca (2012).

the Salazar and Caetano regimes as having led to difficult relations with international organizations, as noted in the repeated and rather violent convictions of the United Nations and the Organization for African Unity. Soares recalled that relations with international organizations have been 'truly difficult', with Portuguese representatives 'calling for foreign diplomats and our allied countries, to prevent votes against Portugal', even if the countries that were traditional 'allies' of the Portuguese government felt 'ashamed' to support the Portuguese positions on the colonial issue (Soares 1974a: 8–11).

In the words of the foreign affairs minister, with democratization, the Portuguese government adopted a 'radically anti-colonialist and anti-racist' position. At the beginning of the decolonization process, the Portuguese objective was to consolidate 'peace and solve the problem of decolonization' in the African territories, considering 'the particularities of each one'. Now, Portugal intended to 'be active in its participation in international organizations which had economic and technical recommendation' as well as work for 'Portuguese specialists to enter the international public service, which was not the case before' (Soares 1974a: 35).

No longer focusing on Africa, Portugal would define new external orientations in which at the multilateral level, they were translated by the maintenance and reinforcement of Portugal's Portuguese position with international organizations, of which UNESCO is an example.

#### **The Portuguese return to UNESCO in 1974**

Since May 1974, Portugal expressed a desire to return to UNESCO. In a letter sent to the secretary of state in Washington, the US Embassy in Paris stated that the Portuguese delegation had requested information on the procedures for its readmission to the organization (AHD 1974a), being informed that, as Portugal had already been a member of UNESCO, it could return 'without the need to vote' and that only a few 'administrative acts' would be needed (National Archive and Records Administration [NARA] 1974a).

In a letter dated 30 August 1974, Soares informed UNESCO's director-general, René Maheu, on Portugal's intention to join the organization and its commitment to 'faithfully respect all the stipulations contained in the UNESCO Constitution' (AHD 1974b). In September 1974, Portugal submitted the diplomatic instrument for readmission to UNESCO to the Foreign Office. In a letter to James Callaghan, Britain's secretary of state for foreign and commonwealth affairs, Maheu informed that Portugal's accession to the organization 'came into effect on the same day' and expressed 'great satisfaction for Portugal's accession to the ideals of the organization', adding that 'cooperation between Portugal and UNESCO has been mutually beneficial and crucial' (AHD 1974c). UNESCO's director-general sent a telegram to Minister Soares congratulating Portugal on its initiative. The Portuguese foreign minister thanked Maheu for his words, guaranteeing that the reintegration of Portugal would allow 'loyal and fruitful cooperation, guided by the noble ideals of UNESCO' (AHD 1974d).

At the same time, the strengthening of diplomatic relations between Portugal and the United Nations was also visible. During the 29th session of the UN General Meeting held on 23 September 1974, Soares expressed his satisfaction with the Portuguese presence, highlighting that he represented a 'renewed Portugal' with the ambition of 'participating fully in international life', respecting and collaborating with all 'United Nations recommendations'.

The minister of foreign affairs regretted that, for almost 50 years, 'the oppression and obscurantism that dominated Portugal' did not allow this collaboration due to the systematic disrespect of the UN recommendations. To change this diplomatic line, Portugal wanted to put an end to this 'sad past of isolationism to which it was condemned', asking the United Nations and its specialized agencies 'to support Portuguese participation in the organs from which Portugal was removed for many years'. With the establishment of democracy, 'freed from the burdens of internal oppression and colonial domination', Portugal recovered 'its universal humanism', becoming a free and democratic country, which would be 'proudly accompanied'. At the end of his speech, Soares addressed the African countries, asking for reconciliation with Portugal through a 'fraternal coexistence' based on equality and respect for independence (Soares 1974b: 5, 6, 8, 9, 13, 21, 25, 28, 31).

After returning to UNESCO, Portugal had to pay the contributions due to the organization at the time of its abandonment. Portugal requested the departure from UNESCO in 1971, but this only took effect in 1972. The Portuguese government owed a total sum of \$169,123,50, corresponding to 1969–70 and 1971–72 periods, which by the government's decision at that time was not granted (AHD 1974d). The next UNESCO meeting was to take place in October 1974 and 'the existence of late contributions could, according to the regulation, impose restrictions on voting' (AHD 1974d). Portugal paid the debt with a check sent to the director-general of UNESCO on 10 October 1974 (AHD 1975).

During the eighteenth UNESCO's General Meeting held in October 1974 in Paris, Portugal formally returned to the organization and was welcomed by the other Member States (Oliveira 1996: 66). The Portuguese delegation's presence was led by Education and Culture Minister Magalhães Godinho. During the conference, Portugal reinforced the importance of 'recovering its place' within the organization after a 'voluntary departure' decided by the previous regime (NARA 1974b).

In a plenary meeting performed on 3 December 1974, the Portuguese minister for inter-territorial coordination, Almeida Santos, emphasized that Portugal should not continue to have any type of limitations 'imposed by his colonial heritage'. In the Portuguese minister Almeida Santos's words, it was necessary to achieve 'peace without reprisals, decolonizing territories and re-establishing the diplomatic position' (NARA 1974c). Almeida Santos reinforced the need to rebuild the Portuguese connection with UNESCO by sending technicians, doctors, teachers and engineers, and continuing with cultural programmes.

In a meeting on 5 December, UNESCO Committee IV told the specialized agencies to restart cooperation with Portugal and offer all possible assistance to the peoples who had been under their colonial rule. It was emphasized that Portugal 'has changed from the category of the racist and colonialist regime' to a regime that accepts and 'validates decolonization', which is why the United Nations and its specialized agencies should treat Portugal as they would treat other members (NARA 1974d).

In late 1974, to establish the necessary contacts for the future formation of a UNESCO National Commission, the Portuguese government sent engineer Manuel Rocha to visit UNESCO's headquarters in Paris (AHD 1977a).

However, until a permanent Mission to Paris was established, the Portuguese position within UNESCO was characterized by a certain 'atomization and dispersion' of the contacts established in the organization's secretariat

and by the idea that Portuguese participation was simply of help and not of contribution, 'technical assistance development and mentality' and, finally, the conception that UNESCO 'was still present only as a technical body' (AHD 1977a).

Finally, on 30 June 1975, the president of the Republic, Francisco da Costa Gomes, proclaimed Decree Law 329/75 instituting the establishment of a Portuguese Permanent Mission to UNESCO 'with the desire to intensify and improve' Portuguese relationships with the organization (Anon. 1975a). The Permanent Mission of Portugal had a Permanent Ambassador, an Embassy Counsellor, a Cultural Advisor and/or Scientist, a secretary, two clerk typists, a driver and a continuum (Anon. 1975b).

A few months later, in 23 September 1975, the foreign minister, Ernesto Melo Antunes, wrote to UNESCO's director-general, Amadou Mahtar M. Bow, stating that the Portuguese government decided to appoint Maria de Lourdes Pintasilgo as ambassador to UNESCO (Maria de Lourdes Pintasilgo Archive [MLPA] 1975). The choice was justified. Maria de Lourdes Pintasilgo had a degree in chemical engineering from Instituto Superior Técnico (IST). As an IST student, she joined Catholic University Youth for Women, where she stood out and ended up being elected president in 1952, a position that she held until 1956. As president, Maria de Lourdes Pintasilgo travelled a lot, which allowed her to be well known in international circles and to become the first elected woman president of the International Movement of Catholic Students – Pax Romana – from 1956 to 1958. During her stays abroad, she also had contact with the Graal Movement,<sup>4</sup> and she became its vice president between 1963 and 1968, a movement that she introduced in Portugal in 1962.

At the political level, she was a prosecutor for the Corporate Chamber from 1969 to 1974, being invited by Caetano. Between 1971 and 1972, she joined the Portuguese delegation at the UN General Meeting. During the democratic period, she was the state secretary for social security in the first Transitional Government and the minister for social affairs in the second and third Transitional Governments. In addition to her long political and international experience, she communicated easily in foreign languages such as French and English (Santos 2018: 52–55).

To fully benefit from Portuguese participation in the organization, a preparatory working group of the future UNESCO National Commission was established. This group would be responsible for studying the experience of other countries and collecting the necessary information 'to propose the model of the constitution and operation of UNESCO's National Commission'. The chosen group was made up of outstanding personalities in each field, including Adérito Sedas Nunes (research), João Martins Pereira (technology), Manuel Fernandes Tomás (technology), Teresa Santa Clara Gomes (education) and Ana Hidalgo Barata (education) (AHD 1976).

The main objective of the Permanent Mission was to ensure the Portuguese contact with other cultures while 'affirming itself in its own identity', in addition to contributing to the creation of a new international order by participating in the organization and 'overcoming ideological confrontation and ensuring international peace'. One of the priorities was the reestablishment of contacts with the former colonies, with Portugal intending to send Portuguese technicians to Guinea and Mozambique 'to formally ask the organization for help in a wide range of Portuguese-language technicians', to fill the quota with Portuguese staff at UNESCO by selecting the most competent and, finally, to participate in UNESCO's meetings (AHD n.d.c).

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<sup>4</sup> About Graal, see Fontes (2001).

As a Member State of UNESCO, Portuguese participation has been active and competent, led by Ambassador Maria de Lourdes Pintasilgo. The contribution of the Portuguese delegation in important debates should be mentioned, namely at the nineteenth General Meeting in Nairobi in 1976 and at the twentieth General Meeting in Paris in 1978, focusing on media issues. Portuguese contribution in the debates was so important that several delegations from other countries used the word to support the criticism and suggestions made by Portugal.

Another situation that demonstrated the progressive proximity was the organization of a UNESCO meeting in April 1978 at the Gulbenkian Foundation in Lisbon, the first time that the organization held an initiative in this country and even chose the Portuguese language in the debate (Santos 2018).

Finally, it is worth mentioning the visit to Lisbon in August 1977 by UNESCO's general director, Amadou Mahtar M'Bow, after a Portuguese delegation's invitation. During his stay in Lisbon, M'Bow met the state secretary for scientific research, Professor Tiago de Oliveira; the Republic president, Ramalho Eanes; and the prime minister, Mário Soares to discuss cooperation between UNESCO and Portugal. In the words of Amadou Mahtar M'Bow, his conversations with these state figures convinced him that the cooperation between Portugal and UNESCO was developing in a 'harmonious' way and that its effects 'will be profitable to all the entire international community' (AHD 1977b). The general director's visit expressed 'the recognition, on UNESCO's part, of Portugal's radical transformation' (Anon. 1977: 20).

## **Conclusions**

Since the creation of UNESCO in 1946, the Portuguese regime has considered the possible accession that was initially postponed due to its absence from the United Nations. However, after Portugal's accession to the United Nations in 1955, the Portuguese government decided in 1961 to appoint an observer to UNESCO.

Quickly realizing the political and financial benefits that could be obtained by joining UNESCO and to thwart Resolution 1.116, which stated that the only Member States could participate in the meetings and conferences organized by the organization, Portugal applied to the organization to become a full member on 11 March 1965.

This accession occurred in a difficult context for Portugal due to the strong international pressure that condemned colonialism and pressured Portugal to start the decolonization of its colonies in Africa as soon as possible.

At UNESCO, the attitude towards Portuguese colonialism was quite harsh. Several resolutions were passed against Portugal, which included, among other impositions, the exclusion from meetings convened by the organization, the absence of economic and technical assistance to the Portuguese government and providing assistance to the independence movements. The Portuguese minister of foreign affairs, claiming that the organization was dealing with problems that did not belong to it and that it was moving away from the purposes for which it was created, informed the director-general of UNESCO that Portugal was withdrawing from the organization. Portugal officially left the organization on 31 December 1972.

The democratization of Portugal and decolonization paved the way for a significant change in Portuguese foreign policy as of 25 April 1974, as well as

the regime's recognition that multilateral cooperation was of enormous importance, demonstrated by the concern to actively collaborate with the United Nations and multilateral organizations. This cooperation was only possible after the promulgation of Law 7/74, which proclaimed the recognition by the Portuguese government of the right to self-determination and independence from overseas territories and which officially demonstrated Portugal's acceptance of the decolonization of its colonial territories in Africa.

In May 1974, the Portuguese government, represented by the minister of foreign affairs, Soares, initiated all the necessary procedures to guarantee a quick return to UNESCO. The desire to collaborate actively with the organization was demonstrated by the concern of the Portuguese government that, still in 1974, sent representatives to visit the UNESCO headquarters in Paris to collect all the information necessary for the creation of a UNESCO National Commission. Mention should also be made of the intervention and participation in the UNESCO conference held in Paris in October 1974, in which Portugal, as a Member State, actively participated in the work of the organization, intervening and reinforcing the objectives of the new Portuguese foreign politic based on the desire to participate fully with international organizations and to accept its principles and ideas, of which UNESCO was an example.

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