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easily have taken the initiative — but they didn't. Some, admittedly, were moving in this direction. Party banners were prohibited on demonstrations (there were workers who forced groups like the Trotskyist PCP to take down their banners and shroud them with their own red ties).

People moved from a situation which ridiculed the claims of particular vanguard parties to a situation where they were openly saying that there were too many vanguards. What was missing was to go a stage further — and see that vanguards were superfluous. If the parties could not bring about radical change — and if radical change was what one wanted — one would have to consider alternative means of achieving it. If that was the dream was to become reality, self-mobilization on an enormous scale had to be undertaken and certain new institutions created. Throughout the whole of the Portuguese revolution, this was to remain the biggest problem of all. And it was to remain unsolved.

There can be no lasting revolutionary upheaval without a change in how people live. If one compares everyday modern life in 1975 with that of 1973, or even 1974, there was clearly a difference. The external symptoms of upheaval were obvious enough. Politicians toured the villages in the South, holding 3 to 5 large meetings per day, in which they would "turn nice marxist phrases round in their mouths." The radio stations blared out songs of so-called revolt. But the gestures and cultural habits were also in upheaval and it was the most striking change that were to be registered. It was in the depth of this feeling that the real revolution was taking place. It is much easier to change regimes than to change lives.

The agricultural cooperative of Casabras was set up in February 1975 and comprised almost 4000 hectares. It was in many ways a model of the revolution. In the village a model cooperative, one to be held up as an example. The old bosses had left the land fallow and used the best part as hunting grounds for Portuguese latifundistas and German and American friends. New soil had been turned and the land was growing a variety of new crops. The workers were full-blooded communists: the land and everything on it was for everyone, they said.

In 1975 the tractor in the large sign at the entrance proclaimed "The dictatorship of the proletariat."

Alvaro Cunha (PCP leader) was to visit the cooperative and a troop of aides went to the farm to receive him. The sign at the entrance was "ideologically correct," the PCP explained, but would have to come down. "The elections had to be won."

"But it's in your writings," one of the aides suggested. "We are not there. There's some mistake," the PCP delegate explained. "The Seventh Congress of our Party voted against the dictatorship of the proletariat."

"But it's out there," the workers insisted. They took out a written copy signed by "José Maria and Engels to prove it." The PCP militants from Lisbon were completely at a loss.

This story shows a deep sense of class justice and real communist principle. But there were darker sides. In the cooperative which had two tractors there were often squabbles over who should work them. At Aveiras de Cima, a cooperative about 40 km north of Lisbon, this problem was to lead to "strife" between workers. Other problems concerning the division of labour also at times caused bitter disputes. Housework was a case in point. In the canteen of the "comuna" (a 19th century mansion belonging to a rich bourgeois family) which included a library, meeting rooms, a school, and a medical centre) a sign on the kitchen door testified to this struggle. "He who leaves his dirty dishes in the sink for someone else to wash is a scoundrel." In another meeting there criticised the lack of initiative of the men in this direction and a "strike" by the women forced the work to be divided more equally. In fact, the women continued to do housework and washing up, despite their complaints.

The division of work varied from cooperative to cooperative. In the better or-

ganized ones a rota was set up, but often work was not done when it should have been, and in most cases it was left at that. There were cases where workers were disciplined by the other workers.

Another serious problem was drunkenness. Portugal, after France, consumes most alcohol per inhabitant. In fact it is quite possible that with all the home-made brews (both wines and aguardentes) Portugal actually consumes more of this wine or drunk in the countryside. In cooperatives near Evora, in Alentejo, and more per day, men consumed up to 5 litres and more per day.

At the cooperative of Torre Beça, in the region of Azambuja (north of Lisbon) the women held a meeting to discuss the drinking habits of their men. It was decided that if they were drinking too much and that a limit had to be set. A compromise was finally worked out: the limit would be 4 litres per worker!

At the Neflix textiles factory near Porto, the workers had entered into self-management in late 1974. Relations within the factory improved greatly and one of the most popular "improvements" was the construction of a bar within a factory. The only problem was that the workers began using it. Production slumped. When a member of



**"Despite the freedom to demonstrate, everyday relations had changed less."**

the Workers' Committee was discovered snoring merrily in a drunken stupor under one of the machines, the workers called a meeting and resolved to close down the bar. They later rescinded this decision and decided to keep it open during certain hours. This case was not unique.

Despite all the freedom to demonstrate and go to meetings, etc., everyday relations had changed less. Men continued to go to the taxis and women, while they could now not attend meetings, usually remained at home. More change took place within the agricultural cooperatives than in the cities.

Clearly the mode of living is not altered overnight. The organisation of creches and parks which was taking place all over the country was positive as was not related to the necessities of State planning. While it liberated women from child-minding, the level of unemployment was some 12% and thus no new work-force was required immediately. Creches were on the whole organized by the women in the area, often aided by progressive teachers and other young professionals. In general they emerged from the Neighbourhood Committees.

Within the cooperatives and self-managed factories working relations changed in a definite way. Workers had more freedom in coming and going, in many cases they could come and go as they pleased. This was important was not being parasitical on the work of others. But this experience varied from cooperative to cooperative. In some cases the CTs began to behave as though they were the new bosses. Decisions were not always taken in common and the Committee went around snooping on the other workers. The textiles factory of Jotocar in Vila Nova de Gaia near Porto was a typical case. The CT (Workers' Committee) which consisted of members of the "Union of Textile Workers," spent more time doing political work on a national level than concerning itself with the factory. For this it was "hated" by the workers, who accused it of being party-oriented (PCP). There were many other cases where the workers weren't so vigilant and the Workers' Com-

mittee became a bureaucratized organization, having little contact with the base.

The cooperatives were what their members made of them. Some were far more radical than others. Cooperatives with names like "José Carlos" or "The State of Lenin" functioned through instructions received from the "Union of Agricultural Workers" in the PCP stronghold of Beja. Life there changed very little, though the work was organized differently and meetings could not avoid some of the problems inherent in this. Other more autonomous cooperatives tried to establish quite different working relations to deal with their problems.

Argea, a village of about 300 inhabitants, 20 km from Santarém, was an example. The cooperative was set up initially by a group of intellectuals from Lisbon. Because of the level of unemployment in the village it quickly integrated many of the local inhabitants and the latter soon became a majority. The initial suspicions with which the industrial and commercial operatives eventually transformed into enthusiastic support. A collectivized butcher's shop was set up in the village (to the annoyance of the resident butcher who was forced to lower his prices and close down his business). He eventually transformed into enthusiastic support. A collectivized butcher's shop was set up in the village (to the annoyance of the resident butcher who was forced to lower his prices and close down his business). He eventually transformed into enthusiastic support.

One of the most difficult problem of all was the organization of housing on the occupied farms. Accommodation was scarce and when two or three houses existed they had to be shared. The family unit underwent a social change. The idea of individual families struggling on their own was obsolete: the economic survival of the entire cooperative was a communal preoccupation.

The counter-coup: in no way were the workers going to support one side or the other. After 20 months of the "revolutionary process" and leftist talk they had drawn one conclusion: workers had to be organized and trained for specialists. And anyway, they had to work tomorrow.

A group of us went to the local barracks, genuinely expecting only half the folklore had been said to be given guns. But the soldiers on guard said they didn't know what we on — they hadn't heard the news. The commander came out, brusquely asking what we wanted. We wanted to "talk or to talk about great things like the fight for the revolution." Instead, we just asked him if he knew what was happening. "It's nothing, nothing really" he said, signaling his men to get inside. The soldiers, surprised, jumped back into their barracks. So much for our guns!

We went to the LUAR headquarters, near where we live. There we found a bunch of confused militants. . . trying to pick up the BBC. No guns. No leaders. No plans. Nothing. Only the myths of the past. Towards midnight the streets rapidly became and dead, everyone going off to bed as instructed.

What had happened on November 25 was that one of the bureaucratic-military groups (actually an alliance of groups) had managed to suppress its rivals and all the others. But there were serious differences between the old PIDE and the new police: the new regime regarded the "opposition" parties as essential and concentrated its attacks on the base groups. During the first waves of reprisals, the parties had defended themselves first and foremost. They "forgot" all their former fine phrases about "the defence of the workers." Their first reflex was to tighten up their own apparatus. But really they had little to fear: they were essential to the new schema.

The government moved more cautiously in relation to the work class in general. They were confronted with some 800 industrial cooperatives and with some 200 cases of workers' control, not to mention the thousands of cases of "workers vigilance" (a term coined by a Linnaeus worker) to describe the situation in that firm). In addition there were over 600 agricultural cooperatives (only 390 of them legalised by February 1976). This meant that over one-fifth of all agricultural workers (over one million hectares out of 4,974,158) was under some form of collective control. House occupations, which had reached 35,000 before

November 25, continued. Squatters were not prepared to give up their rights just because the PCP and left parties had lost a few ministries.

November 25 was, however, to affect the workers. The Communist Party (CP) had been frozen after March 11 "for the remainder of the year." They were now "re-fixed" and this meant they now incorporated all the hidden, State-supported inflation that had occurred in the last interval of three months. After January 1976 there was an all-round 40% increase in food prices. People complained and there were cases of refusal to pay. But no organized opposition developed, despite the fact that the PCP, PRP. The workers tried to increase their pay packets, to get the extra month's wage which most had "won" over the previous year, but which many private and State enterprises were refusing to pay. During February and March 1976 some 380 factories were on strike and thousands passed protest motions against the new policies. The bosses had found a new confidence and the State had a new confidence in the workers.

The Portuguese experience is modern in every sense. So is the Portuguese revolutionary movement. Modern not just in the attitudes of the workers and in the nature of the movement, but also in the intervention of State-capitalist counter-attack which the working class practices unleashed. It is a movement which has transcended the sterile arguments between Leninists and left communists and has opened up new horizons. The advocates of the Vanguard Party are forced to disclaim the very core of their beliefs and to say that they are not parties. Council forms are fetishised and put on show, but they are not to be confused. And people who call themselves materialists (even historical or dialectical materialists) refuse to see the material reality that stares them in the face.

The Portuguese experience between 1974 and 1976 shows that revolutionary activity does not develop as the result of strategies devised by systems analysts or bourgeois planners, masquerading as revolutionary generalists, despite the fact that a revolution emerges in the course of the struggle itself, and its most advanced forms are expressed by those for whom it is a necessity to struggle.

The cooperative movement was not born as a revolutionary challenge to capitalism but as a State-capitalist attempt to control the crisis and to guide it into land, houses, factories. The State then comes along with promises to "legalize" the cooperative movement. The workers, in order to survive, were forced to accept these recuperated results of their own self-activity.

Why was the government interested in industrial or agricultural cooperatives? The answer is simple. Believing that the State factories were their own the workers would work twice as hard as they ever did for private bosses. The government lacked hard cash to invest in the restructuring of capitalism. They found something else to invest labour power. Through this means the government secured its objective of increased production. While the workers worked towards their own integration, the leadership of the State capitalised on it, having avoided a complete breakdown of the system. Many agricultural workers toiled 10 to 12 hours a day to reorganize the farms. In industrial enterprises they produced more surplus value than any other workers could ever have extracted from them. They self-managed their own exploitation.

Hundreds of thousands of workers entered the struggle. But the enemy concentrated before them in unexpected garb that of their own organizations. Every time they set up an organization they found it manipulated by so-called vanguards or leaders who were not of their class and who were not of their spirit. Believing that they were the vanguard of the working class, they fell to a critique of State capitalism did so because of their weakness. They were forced to support the base organization for the time being. They were less than Gans for having a critique of State capitalism for their denunciations proved to be denunciations of particular sets of bureaucrats, not critiques of the system per se. The revolutionaries — on the other hand — were not concerned with the problem, not part of the solution. In this the Portuguese experience may prove to be a pre-figuration of revolutions to come. The lessons should be pondered while there is yet time. The workers are not to be confused, not only by the liberators of the workers is the task of the workers themselves.