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AN EDUCATIONAL STRATEGY FOR COOPERATIVISM: THE FUNCTION OF EDUCATION IN SUPPORTING WORKER COOPERATIVISM IN MALTA

A Research Paper presented by

GODFREY BALDACCHINO
(Malta)

in Partial Fulfilment of the Requirements for obtaining the Degree of

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Members of the Examining Committee

Mr. F.B. Schiphorst
Prof. H.P.A. van Roosmalen

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" Give men a better environment,
and they will respond to it
by becoming better workers,
and better men. "

ROBERT OWEN (1771 - 1858)
reported in Cole (1944,p.15).

CHAPTER 1 : Setting the Case

Introduction

Worker Cooperatives embody a set of socio-economic relations of production distinctly different from both private and state capitalism. Their most fundamental and distinguishing feature is that control of the business is derived directly from working in it. Cooperative structures of work organisation are as old as civilization itself, but their emergence over the last two centuries has been strongly induced by a desire among workers to have more control over the conditions of their work and a more just and equitable share in the fruits of their labour. The cooperative organisation of production also offers an improved access to economies of scale which tend to be reaped by medium and large-scale enterprises without losing the pride of craft, skill and self-control usually associated with self-employment.
The possible contribution by worker cooperatives towards job creation or preservation has led to a renewed interest in such forms of production in a scenario of global open unemployment and underemployment[1], both as part of official Government policy and as worker or peasant grass-roots initiative.

The Issue being addressed and its Justification

The specific concern of this research paper is to examine the function of Education in leading to successful worker cooperative establishment: Success being defined in terms of two major requirements - economic viability and the preservation of worker control and of democratic participation in decision making. The argument is posed within a broad theoretical framework which analyses the

wider conditions that influence the behaviour and performance of worker cooperative structures.

There is a dual justification for my focus on education and its contribution towards successful worker cooperativism. The first is rooted in pragmatism: As a staff member of an educational institution involved in promoting worker cooperatives in Malta, my home country, my concern arises from an actual, immediate situation. My recommendations are addressed as much to maltese policy makers, cooperative members and educational planners as to myself and my colleagues at the Workers' Participation Development Centre.[2] My reliance on secondary data for presenting my case is also corraborated by my own experience in an educational agency involved in cooperative development.

Secondly, cooperation and education are inextricably linked: Owenism, which inspired one of the first cooperative developments in an industrial setting, was, in its very essence, an educational movement. For every Owenite, education in the principles of the new "social system" was a vitally important matter and a requisite for practical success.[3] Robert Owen himself pioneered in the field of cooperative education by opening the Institution for the Formation of Character at New Lanark, in 1816.[4] The Rochdale Pioneers, established under owenite leadership in 1844, aimed not only at enrolling members but at making good cooperators of them in a very broad sense, including not only a clear awareness of the principles of cooperative trading, but also a new outlook on the problems of citizenship and on the forces, moral and material, that were shaping the industrialising world of steampower and mass production that was Britain at that time. Such an outlook made them encourage education in both its technical and cooperative

aspect, and it made them eager to attend to the education of their children as well as of themselves.[5] As early as 1853, two and a half per cent of the Pioneers' trading surplus was allocated to finance their educational activities, which included the maintenance of a newsroom and library.[6]

Yet, in spite of these noble ideals, most cooperatives have failed to live up to the expectations of their founders. Owen's own self-managed community - ironically located at Harmony Hall - became the seat of a bitter conflict within a few years;[7] the Christian Socialists were already disillusioned with worker cooperatives as viable democratic structures by 1851, when the large majority of the cooperatives they had helped to establish had already withered away.[8] Even the Rochdale Pioneers' Manufacturing Society, looked upon by others as a model on how to succeed, was converted into an ordinary joint-stock, profit-making concern in 1862.[9]

Thus, how to set up economically successful worker cooperatives which upheld their democratic principles was already a matter of grave concern over a century ago. Education, in technical and cooperative skills had been recognised as important but, apparently, it was not enough to prevent either liquidation or degeneration. The same concern is at the heart of this research paper.

Structure of the paper

Following the obligatory definition, the paper examines the socio-economic conditions which have led to the emergence of the worker cooperative form of production unit. It also assesses its potential in political, psychological, economic and social respects. Optimism is

however guarded by a consideration of less noble and dignified reasons for cooperative promotion. This is handled in Chapter 2.

Chapter 3 undertakes an appraisal of worker cooperative performance, finds it largely uninspiring and identifies a cluster of failure - inducing constraints. Education in technical and cooperative skills, as practised by the Rochdale Pioneers, would form part of a package to assist cooperatives in remaining economically viable. Yet, oddly enough, economic viability is recognised as not being a sufficient condition for a worker cooperative's success. Rather, certain socio-economic (infrastructural) and socio-cultural and political (superstructural) variables are identified as crucial towards understanding the degeneration problem. Having pojnted out a number of such variables, the argument proposes that these must be countered if cooperatives are to succeed.

But how? The answer suggested is by the adoption of a double-pronged strategy which would foster the emergence of an environment suitable to cooperative development: A progressive "social movement" which, from a position of strength - preferably a political party in power - promotes, defends, inspires and legislates in favour of cooperative development, top-down; and a "counter-hegemonic" educational programme, which is organised initially by the same social movement, and which fosters bottom-up "social objectification" of worker cooperatives, expanding cooperative experience, consciousness, values and legitimacy while and until the cooperative sector develops and nurtures its won. Such a strategy would seek to reform the social environment to the extent that a cooperative enclave could survive and function within it. These considerations are applied to a specific, socio-economic, cultural and

political context in Chapter 4. The contemporary cooperative movement, the school system, social movements, and cultural traits prevailing on the mediterranean island state of Malta are discussed therein.

Issues surrounding the actual provision of counter-hegemonic education are touched upon in Chapter 5 to bring out the persisting threat of degeneration. Finally, concluding remarks are presented in Chapter 6, together with an overview of the main argument.

Normative Standpoint

The defence of the worker cooperative structure in this paper forms part of a broader belief in the emancipatory powers of worker self-management which recognizes workers' self-control and self-responsibility as their rights. It is recognized that the principles of self-management and democratic control, such as would be present in a worker cooperative which upholds its principles, are not simply idyllic fantasies: Cases of successful worker cooperatives are few, indeed, but they nevertheless exist and serve as models of economic viability and product quality, apart from industrial democracy. The quest at the heart of this paper is not the reproduction of such successful models in other contexts; such an approach to cooperative development has been largely recognised as erroneous and simplistic; it is rather the creation of the suitable environment within which cooperative forms of production would flourish as "normal" entities, along with other cooperative forms, not as "abnormalities" in a perpetual risk of liquidation or degeneration. Cooperativism is contrasted intentionally, as the argument unfolds, with the two contemporary hegemonic superpowers - private capitalism and bureaucratic state

socialism - which are felt to be far removed (in strangely similar ways in their daily organisation of production and labour control) from ascribing as dignifying a status to labour, other than in rhetoric. They are both seen to subject workers to superordinate forces and structures, maintaining a basic dualism between labour and management and keeping untapped the workers' own resourcefulness at showing initiative and taking decisions. Whenever they do allow a measure of worker participation, it is usually only a cosmetic concession which serves to legitimize further established power relations. A far cry from what a successful worker cooperative could be, if given the possibility.

This paper looks at the contribution of education in bringing this possibility about.

Notes to Chapter 1

1. The open unemployed refer to "persons without a job and looking for work" - I.L.O. (1976,p.3). The underemployed refer to "persons who are in employment of less than normal duration and who are seeking or would accept additional work" and "persons with a job yielding inadequate income". - Ibid.,pp.17-18.
2. The Workers' Participation Development Centre (WPDC) is a small educational, research and consultation centre which was established with departmental status at the University of Malta in 1981. It operates within the area of industrial relations and seeks to support and promote the process of participatory management within the maltese economy and within society as a whole. See WPDC (1985,p.1).
3. Cole (1944,p.71)
4. Ibid.,p.16
5. The seventh principle of the Rochdale Pioneers stated that their society should serve as a means of educating its members as well as of promoting mutual trade - Ibid., pp.64, 71-2.
6. Ibid., p.85.
7. Ibid., pp.57-62.
8. See "Report of the Society for Promoting Working Men's Associations (1852)" quoted in Cole & Filson (1951,pp.440-3) and paraphrased in Boggis (1973). See also Thornley (1981,p.21).
9. Cole (1944,p.90) and Oakeshott (1978,p.16).

CHAPTER 2 : The Case for Worker Cooperatives

Definition

Worker - or producer - cooperatives represent one of the more elaborate forms of cooperative organisation. They are production units which are controlled by their own workers under a variety of forms. A widely accepted, loose definition suggests that worker cooperatives embody a number of principles:

- Workers are (or can become) members of the firm, by nominal holdings of share capital.
- Formal provision exists for direct participation in the firm's control and management for the worker-members.
- Control is autonomous, usually on the basis of one-member, one-vote.
- Worker-members share in the firm's surplus.
- Capital is rendered a fixed and limited return.[1]

Origins

Cooperative work efforts can be traced to a number of pre-industrial societies where cases of a total or partial communal ownership of means of production and labour cooperation have been documented.[2] Contemporary cases of worker cooperativism are, however, generally a part of a critical reaction to the conditions of hardship and disillusion caused by capitalist development. Worker cooperatives are the children of crisis, expressions of (and practical solutions to) the struggle of working people to emancipate themselves from wretched conditions.

In Western Europe and the United States, the worker cooperative emerged as an alternative form of production to

counter the dehumanizing effects of the Industrial Revolution: The efficiency and productivity of new technology as expressed in mass production, the emergence of the factory and the division of labour, robbed workers of their traditional control over working conditions, the pride of craft, the implements of production and the very product of their labour. New labour habits had to be formed and a new labour discipline imposed- by supervision, fines, keeping time and rhythm, money incentives, threats of redundancy and starvation wages. Worker skill and pride of craft were being transposed into machines with increasing sophistication.

Such conditions have been, for many, quite miserable and degrading.[3] They are also intrinsically exploitative and alienating[4]: Surplus extraction being rooted in the unequal compensation of labour power for the value it alone can generate. Yet, very often, wage employment was practically unavoidable, as former rural workers found themselves adrift evicted from the land and the feudal relations of production which had provided their security and livelihood, and forced to submit themselves to an impersonal cash nexus and sell their labour power to survive.[5] Meanwhile, increasing boredom, fragmentation and isolation along the production line, the meaninglessness of repetitive tasks and the powerlessness to do anything about it fostered a condition of 'estrangement' and loss of interest in work.[6]

A number of different reactions to industrial capitalism emerged: One can identify trade unionism, chartism, socialism, religious enthusiasm and gin.[7] To these may be added the calls of Owen, Proudhon, Fourier and Kropotkin, united in their concern with establishing mechanisms through which a basic principle of political democracy - government by the consent of the governed - could be extended to the workplace. The worker cooperative is one expression of workplace democracy.[8]

The prerogative of managerial control and the establishment of property rights have become strongly institutionalized in the industrialized capitalist countries. Agents of socialization transmit among new social members an acceptance of inequality in power and wealth as emerging from property;[9] and they put forward a treatment of labour as a mere factor of production to be controlled and manipulated.[10] The organisations of labour at the industrial level - the trade unions - have been incorporated within this dominant ideology and they tend to implicitly accept the fundamental rules of the game which severely restrict the range of issues falling within their competence: They therefore bargain over the price of wage labour, not to overcome it.[11]

Shifting attention to the socialist countries following the Marxist-Leninist doctrine, the official ideology promulgates the institutionalization of harmony of interests: an all - embracing "ideological unity" which is obligatory and self-righteous.[12] The notion of proletarian class rule as expressed via the vanguard party of the working class does however express a contradiction in the sense that those who govern would have to be at the same time both the representatives and the employers of the ruling class.[13] The institutionalisation of "democratic centralism", which replaces market allocation by a central planning mechanism, cannot condone worker cooperatives or similar self-managed initiatives which would undermine its authority and allocative functions.[14] Thus, while certain cooperative forms of workplace organisation are allowed to function, they are only granted a certain limited measure of independence, on sufferance for "good behaviour"[15], such as producing beyond the set production targets.[16] However, all major plans and decisions continue to require state approval.[17] Different

conditions and patterns of cooperative development prevail in industrializing countries. The condition of state non-intervention and a prevailing attitude of laissez-faire with respect to economic affairs (which were the circumstances in which the cooperative movement in Europe emerged) is noticably absent. In contrast "late late industrializers" are in a race against time to develop their nations' productive capacities as rapidly as possible.[18] The initiative for such a development depends considerably on the State itself. Numerous state-induced experiments with cooperative forms of work organisation have taken place, aiming at the achievement of greater productivity, reduced absenteeism, less work stoppages and industrial disputes, in accordance with the general objectives of national development plans.

Potentials

The case for worker cooperatives can be made with a number of powerful political, psychological, economic and social arguments, such that they appear as attractive alternatives to both large-scale private and state capitalist models. Both private and state capitalism have proved to be effective mechanisms of long-term labour control: Yet, they have only managed to do so with the consequence of dehumanizing the workplace, subjecting workers to superordinate forces and structures and maintaining a basic dualism between labour and management, in spite of ideological rhetoric from both sides to the contrary. An analysis of actual worker experiences on the shop floor reveals their labour control processes as surprisingly similar: A British industrial worker is subjected to very much the same controls as his Hungarian counter-part.[19] The consequence is a situation of chronic conflict, latent or manifest. This is costly in terms of reduced productivity and competitivity, and in terms of keeping untapped a vast

resource: The workers' own initiative and decision-making powers, nurtured by the direct experience of work.[20] Democratic control and management as expressed in a worker cooperative is one way of avoiding this dichotomy of interests between managers and managed, and the potential for normative conflict it generates.[21]

Worker cooperatives can also be seen as "schools of democracy."[21] They have the potential to create decentralized and accessible structures for the discussion and implementation of workers' ideas and for workers to become involved in planning and management. The practice of democratic participation at the workplace is in itself an educational, self-supporting and self-generating process; the more one participates, the better one participates. Thus participation "forces" individuals to be free via socially responsible action. Cooperative forms of work organisation where associated producers control their interchange with nature rationally have been called the most superior forms of production because they provide for the political and economic liberation of men and women, affording them the highest form of freedom in the field of material production.[22]

The psychological perspective argues that most human beings possess both a will and a potential for growth. Unfortunately many social forces and beliefs act to repress both such a will and potential. Pervasive social forces and beliefs include the fixity of the adult personality; the consideration of work as an experience to be suffered and borne, devoid of intrinsic satisfactions; the status of Management as being the sole repository of skill, knowledge, judgement and initiative; the status of Labour as a commodity, to be bought and sold on the market. In contrast, worker cooperatives offer the promise of self-control, elevating work to a more fulfilling, rewarding and emancipatory

experience. After all, work is central to most people's lives not simply as a condition for survival, but as a potential avenue towards self-actualization and as a bestower of self-identity.[23]

A powerful economic attraction of worker cooperatives is that, while they offer the possibility for the preservation of the pride of craft and self-responsibility often associated with small-scale self-employment, they also combine these with the useful economies of scale enjoyed by larger enterprises. Thus workers may band together in a cooperative framework because of a perceived common interest in combining equipment, knowledge, finances and land in production where they would otherwise perform inefficiently and in competition with one another. In the absence of sufficient capital or know-how, the cooperative organisation of work may be the only avenue for small producers to become viable and to exercise greater influence over the vaguaries of the market.

It is difficult to compare the economic performance of worker cooperatives with that of conventional capitalist firms because of the differences and complexities of their objectives.[24] Nevertheless major theoretical and quantitative work over the last few years appears to establish that cooperative forms show both a relatively higher total factor and higher marginal productivity of labour with respect to capital.[25] This commendable economic performance is perhaps due to the greater incentive for cooperative members to be productive and efficient in view of the direct connection between personal effort, enterprise performance and personal gain, reinforced by group pressure and democratic decision-making.[26] The greater readiness towards flexibility and work rotation, and the absence of (or minimal pressure from)

trade union demands reduces the problems and the labour costs otherwise caused by absenteeism and job demarcation. And the possibility of functioning efficiently with minimal supervisory staff - due to workers' supervising themselves - reduces administrative labour costs.[27]

The evidence concerning higher labour productivity in worker cooperatives is not definitive.[28] Yet, labour costs do tend more towards stability because they are less liable to individual or collective production disruptions - wage demands, strike action, absenteeism, sabotage.[29] This increases the attraction for worker cooperatives to create even greater employment opportunities per unit capital than do capitalist firms.

Of course, employment creation or preservation is very often the primary objective for worker cooperative establishment. In this, they appear as ideal organisations for group and self-help mobilisation, with a potentially considerable contribution to make. Many cases are on record, demonstrating how worker cooperatives have taken over capitalist enterprises or sprung up where the profits to be made were not sufficient to lure capitalist investment. Indeed, the ebb and flow of interest in cooperative ventures has been strongly linked to the social system's economic and political dislocations.[31] The Rochdale Pioneers and the early worker cooperatives in Britain emerged during the "Hungry Forties".[32] Hundreds of other cooperative bodies emerged in Europe and the United States during the Great Depression, some with direct state involvement.[33] And during the present time, a reduced demand for labour accompanied by an increase in the size of the labour force has led to employment crises world-wide. Both state and private enterprise seem unable to provide full employment.[34] There are, therefore, powerful

contemporary reasons why worker cooperatives could be seriously considered as viable mechanisms for an innovative and diversified approach to job creation. This is particularly so in Third World countries where unemployment and underemployment levels are of greater concern.[35]

Dangers

A few words of warning are, however, in order at this point. Worker cooperatives are not to be looked upon with blind and boundless admiration as if they are indeed a panacea to contemporary economic recession and unemployment.[36] The literature abounds with exclusive emphasis on the impressive and commendable credentials of worker cooperatives - job creation, labour productivity, economies of scale, worker motivation, democratic management, skill preservation - as if they seem to provide the magical comprehensive, answer to reduced worker morale, deskilling, alienation, industrial action and stagflation. The case for worker cooperatives remains, but its proponents may be motivated by much less noble and dignified reasons than the ones outlined above.

The current growth of worker cooperatives in a condition of recession and labour surplus may be seen as parallel to the mushrooming of small-scale industry, subcontracting, sweat shops, homeworking and what are generally called 'informal sector' jobs in the economy. According to one perspective this is made possible because such areas of employment tend to be unsafeguarded by legislation or trade unionism and the jobs they provide are highly insecure, under pressure from extreme competition.[37] Such harshly competitive areas are, indeed, the most accessible areas of the economy where relatively little capital is required - areas such as restaurants, book stores, food stores,print shops and repair

services.[38] These production units may perform a 'reserve army' role, forcing workers to exploit themselves and receive wages at levels lower than the industry standard.[39] They also tend to serve residual, highly unstable markets which generate insufficient profit - and where the conditions are not favourable to foster stable wage-labour relations - as a result, in such areas, conventional capitalist firms would not be interested.[40] Their existence is one of functional articulation with the formal sector of the economy.[41]

Even in centrally planned economies, cooperaive forms of production perform a functional role. They fill in some of the gaps in the supply of goods and services generated by the dysfunctions of large-scale production and bureaucratic allocation mechanisms; they also provide employment for handicapped citizens.[42] Similarily, worker cooperatives could be quite functional organisations in a predominantly capitalist economy, particularly during the latter's periods of restructuring and dislocation. Such "crisis" periods afford the possibility to capitalism for exploiting a labour abundant situation by pushing down labour costs. One of the ways this is undertaken is to reduce the size of the fully proletarianized section of the labour force, pushing out labour into non-wage labour sub-systems: Hence the contemporary re-emergence of "sweat shops", manufacturing homework, part-time work, large-scale subcontracting... and worker cooperatives.[43] Small-scale worker cooperatives, like other small-scale producers, produce goods and services at lower prices,under pressure from extreme competition in a volatile market, and which then serve as imputs for larger producers. Their labour time therefore does not "exchange equally" on the market because they embody less than what is socially necessary abstract labour time.[44]

A second note of warning with respect to cooperative development is that, rather than being progressive reactions to the exploitative and alienating effects of capitalism, cooperatives could rather be from the outset (or could degenerate into) expressions of capitalism and conservatism. A number of cooperative forms can cover non-cooperative relations of production, disguised, for example, to benefit from tax concessions or to obtain access to certain means of production.[45] Others, democratic in principle, nevertheless operate in a conventional manner with the cooperators acting as (or becoming) shareholders employing second class, under-paid labour to widen their operations and secure even greater profits.[46] Still others adhere to private ownership and individually transferable shares, motivated primarily by the opportunity to make hefty wages.[47]

Indeed, the most economically successful form of cooperative in Western Europe and the United States has not been the worker cooperative but the agricultural service cooperative: Huge business conglomerates which represent conservative reactions by agricultural and dairy producers who initially banded together to purchase bulk supplies and requisites and later on, to market their produce collectively, thus increasing their power in the market to quasi-monopoly conditions. Such businesses tend to be highly capital-intensive and suppress rather than stimulate labour demand in agriculture. The highly strategic nature of their product also contributes to make such cooperators highly effective lobbyists, even contributing financially to politicians in a position to influence decisions concerning milk and agricultural products.[48]

The need for external supervision and support

In view of the possibilities of degeneration, it is quite vital that the case for worker cooperatives be accompanied by the parallel development of a supportive and supervisory structure which ensures that cooperatives uphold acceptable standards relating to minimum wages, other conditions of work, credit availability, technical aid, democratic control and other provisions for social security, health and education.[49]

And it is quite clear that, unless cooperatives have the infrastructure and available funds to provide such conditions themselves, then these conditions can only be provided and maintained with the active support of a powerful social force - most notably but not exclusively the State. Pending the emergence of strong, federated, autonomous cooperative structures, government action may be quite indispensable to ensure proper supervision and development and to guard against a misuse of the cooperative structure for exploitative ends.

The State may also provide temporary guarantees of product demand as a tangible means of economic support for the cooperative initiative.[50] Such a responsibility by the State for assisting cooperative societies in maintaining acceptable working conditions and democratic worker control would be an extension to its concern with assisting cooperatives in achieving high levels of output and product quality in many industrializing countries, where, particularly in agriculture, cooperation is considered an important instrument for the implementation of development plans.

Conclusion

The powerful case for worker cooperatives carries political, psychological, social and economic components, the strongest

contemporary argument being perhaps the urgent necessity of redressing the hardship and poverty of countless unemployed and small producers worldwide by a more innovative approach to job creation. However, without the support and supervision from an external agency - notably the State - cooperatives could turn out to be non-democratic, capital-intensive monopolies or else performing a "reserve army" role within a capitalist economy. The nature of such external assistance will be discussed in subsequent chapters.

The theoretical argument above therefore suggests that worker cooperatives are attractive structures of work organisation, subject to being complemented by an external supportive and supervisory body. If one however looks at the actual empirical record of worker cooperatives, the outcome is disappointing: The hopeful middle-ground of common ownership and collective control has, when actually operationalized, been quite dismal and uninspiring.

What are the reasons for such a poor performance? And what is the contribution of education to improve such a condition? Answers to such questions will be suggested in the following chapter.

Notes to Chapter 2

1. These principles defining worker cooperative organisation are suggested, for example, by Jones (1980,p.42), Thornley (1981,pp.3-4) and Bogardus (1964,pp.19ff.)
2. For instance, Adeyeye (1978,p.12) describes how in West Africa the spirit of togetherness and solidarity has found expression in many kinds of mutual aid institutions, including the Esusu (Yoruba); Dashi (Nupe) or Isusu (Ibo) credit organisations. Mandel (1968,pp.30-6) cites from anthropological literature other examples of indigenous cooperation with reference to Dahomey, New Guinea, Borneo, Russia and elsewhere. See also Mead (1937).
3. For descriptions of the effects of the Industrial Revolution on the emerging working class in Britain, see Thompson (1963, 1967); Engels (1971) and Cole (1944,Chapter 1).
4. As Marx painstakingly argued via his Labour Theory of Value and his concept of "estrangement" or alienation. See particularly Marx (1970) and the Chapter on "Alienated Labour" in Marx (1959) respectively.
5. There were of course parallel ideological developments which helped legitimize the new production relations. Galbraith (1958, Chapter 3) includes among these the study of economics. Bendix (1963) provides a thorough analysis of the development of managerial ideology in Britain and the United States.
6. See particularly the work of Blauner (1964) on alienation and that of Braverman (1974) on the progressive deskilling of work.
7. Cole (1944,p.1)
8. For reviews of the advocates of workplace democracy in Europe and the United States, see Vanek (1975,pp.16-21); King & van der Vall (1978, Chapter 1) and Mason (1982, Chapter 6).

9. This is implicitly but powerfully executed by parents, peers and teachers and transmitted via drama, literature, and mass media. Hymer (1971) analyzes Robinson Crusoe as a study in capital accumulation and managerial control. TV serials like 'Dynasty' and 'Strasky and Hutch' revolve around implicit property prerogatives.
10. Most directly in neoclassical economics, law, schools of management and administration.
11. The channelling of worker energies and aspirations towards reformism and electoralism are reported in Cox (1977) and Fox (1974, especially Chapter 5).
12. This description is from Djilas (1957,pp.73ff.)
13. A contradiction elaborated upon by Bendix (1963).
14. Examples of this include the Workers' Councils in the Soviet Union just after the October 1917 Revolution and the Kronstadt Communes. Other examples include workers' councils in Czechoslovakia (1968-9) and the emergence of an autonomous trade union structure in Poland (1981).
15. As put by Oakeshott (1978, p.217).
16. As is reported, for example in the case of Kolkhozi in Siberia. A condition described by Hank Van Roosmalen during one of our discussions.
17. Galeski (1977,p.22)
18. Gerschenkron (1966) relates development strategies to the relative time reference when Industrialization is initiated.
19. Compare the two volumes on work experience in Britain - Fraser (1968, 1969) - with the biographical material of a Hungarian skilled worker - Haraszti (1977).
20. "The untapped resources of...workers constitutes a criminal waste of energy and achievement, as a result of which the majority of workers go through life without even a glimmer of what they could have attained and contributed to their fellow human beings..." - Roberts (1977,p.149).

21. As discussed in detail by Fox (1971).
22. See, for example, Mill (1911,p.573), Vanek (1975), Horvat (1982), and Marx (1972, Chapter 48, Section 2).
23. See Berger (1963,pp.98-100) on work and self-identity and Maslow (1954) and Horvat (1982) on self-actualization. One could also say that the increased interest in job control in the industrialized countries is in accordance with Maslow's hierarchy, in view of the satisfaction of lower order needs via an improved standard of living and the Welfare State.See Levin (1981).
24. As, for example, discussed by Thomas & Logan (1982,Ch.5)
25. Recent quantitative works include Stephen (1982); Jones and Svejnar (1982);Cable & Fitzroy (1980).
26. Levin (1984, pp.24-6); Horvat (1982, p.260).
27. As described by Greenberg (1984, p.193) in relation to the United States.
28. Pryor (1983,pp.158-9) cites conflicting evidence.
29. See, for example, Vanek (1970); Espinosa & Zimbalist (1978,pp.143-6); Cable & Fitzroy (1980). Thomas & Logan (1982,pp.49-52).
30. See Levin (1984); Jones & Svejnar (1982); Berman (1982) and Jones (1982,p.61) on the United States plywood cooperatives. However, dividend maximization exerts pressure for a run down on membership - See Vanek (1975, Chapter 28) and Roca (1975).
31. Jackall & Levin (1984,pp.3-4). This is why Tucker (1983,p.26) calls worker cooperatives "the children of crisis".
32. See Cole (1944, Chapter 1).
33. See, for example, Infield (1945) on state support for cooperatives in the United States following the "New Deal"; also reported in Pryor (1983,p.138).
34. Kalecki (1976,pp.61-5) argues that they are also unwilling to provide full employment.

35. Ten years ago, open unemployment in the industrializing countries was estimated at 7.4% - Sabolo (1975) and underemployment at 35% of the total labour force - see ILO (1976,pp.17-18).
36. As is done by Young & Rigge (1983,pp.22-32); Louis (1983); Jones (1978); Linehan & Tucker (1983); Boggis (1973); Oakeshott (1978, Chapter 12) and, with respect to Malta, Rizzo (1985) and Baldacchino (1986b).
37. See, for example, the conditions of women workers undertaking manufacturing homework in Britain and Italy in Mitter (1986) and Solinas (1982) respectively.
38. Jackall & Levin (1984,p.9).
39. On this subject, see for example, Defourny (1986,p.4).
40. As discussed in relation to Tanzania by Bienefeld & Godfrey (1975). For an econometric discussion see Vanek & Espinosa (1972).
41. For wider reading on the 'articulation' debate in Marxism see overviews by Bradby (1975) and Foster-Carter (1978).
42. See, for example, Oakeshott (1978) and Bislev (1985) with respect to Polish worker cooperatives.
43. Thus the renowned Japanese enterprise corporatism only operates effectively because of the widespread existence of small-scale industries which operate without life-time employment. In times of crisis, workers from the corporatized sector can be shed via, say, being transferred to a subsidiary which is then forced to bankruptcy - see Dore (1983) and Hoynden (1958,Chapter 5). Bluestone & Harrison (1982,pp.257-262) suggest that Employee Stock Ownership Plans in the United States should be viewed equally critically. Already there are cooperatives which subcontract from industries which are suffering from foreign competition, and from those which are rationalising their most profitable operations - Thornley(1981,p.98).

44. See, for example, Leys (1973) and Bienefeld (1975) with respect to Kenya and Tanzania.

45. In Mozambique, agricultural cooperatives were set up in the interests of small, capitalist farmers because this was a precondition for them to obtain access to tractors and other equipment. See Harriss (1980). Similarly, associations have been formed as legal cooperative entities in Sicily to exploit generous government subsidies for the purchase of agricultural machinery - Schneider & Schneider (1976).

46. As in the case of the Sugar Cooperatives of Peru - See Roca (1975).

47. This is evident even in the legal structure of worker-owned firms in the United States which is usually based on individual shareholding among workers who form the firm. See Greenberg (1984,passim) for a discussion of this feature with respect to the United States plywood cooperatives. See Carnoy (1981) for a general discussion.

48. Nash & Hopkins (1976,pp.10-11). Hence the large agricultural subsidies meted out by EEC countries as part of their "Common Agricultural Policy" which allows farmers to over-produce.

49. Estrin (1985), reported in Defourny & Thomas (1986,p.117) argues that, to guard against dubious motives for cooperative establishment, one should set up "... an entrepreneurial support agency with model rules to prevent the degeneration process and with its own financial or banking department". The functions of this support agency go beyond what Vanek (1975) and Horvat (1982) call a shelter organisation.

50. As was, for example, initially understood in the case of the EMAB furniture factory in Mali - See Kester & Sidibe (1986).

CHAPTER 3 : An Appraisal of Worker Cooperative Performance

Introduction

The case for worker cooperatives may have looked quite formidable as presented in the previous chapter. Unfortunately, long-term survival rates and the level of internal democratic management have both been disappointingly low: Most worker cooperatives have either failed to survive or, if they did survive, failed to uphold their democratic principles of worker control and egalitarianism. This chapter seeks to assess the perfomance of worker cooperatives world-wide in such a way as to highlight the scope of education within a broad strategy aiming at successful cooperative development. The discussion, based on empirical evidence, leads to the proposition that educational provision directed at the development of managerial and democratic skills is useful but quite inadequate to foster cooperative ventures which are successful in both economic and democratic respects. Needed to complement them is the existence of a supportive environment, which could be engineered via the activities of a progressive social movement, (such as a political party in power) and an investment in a more far-reaching form of education. The supportive role of a social movement corraborates the urgency for external support expounded in the previous chapter.

Understanding a Poor Record

Faced with the shattering evidence of dismal worker cooperative performance, one could join Clegg, Blumberg, Meister and Webb in consigning worker cooperatives to the dust heaps of history: More in the series of utopic dreams which cannot become reality.[1] This would, however, imply turning a blind

eye to those few existing cases of worker cooperative success: Scott Bader in Britain, Hirondelle in France, Edilfornicai in Italy, The Cheeseboard in the United States, the Mondragon Cooperatives of Basque Spain, and various others.[2] More positively, one can look critically at the conditions which have contributed to worker cooperative failure from the plentiful case material available: From this corpus, it is possible to identify the following major explanatory variables for cooperative poor performance:[3]

- Failure due to small size, economic marginality and capital shortage. Many worker cooperatives tend to get set up in risky and harshly competitive product domains where failure rates are invariably high. Often the result of rescues or conversions which are almost always due to serious economic problems, many worker cooperatives are, economically speaking, lame ducks from their very inception. In such conditions and often undercapitalized, the cooperatives are unable to achieve economies of scale. Survival is usually in the short-run only, and with worker-members putting in excessively long-hours for a subsistence wage.[4]

- Failure due to lack of managerial skills. Many small cooperatives cannot afford to employ managerial expertise. Others could, but do not, all the same. Cooperative members may actually fail to recognize the need for skilled managerial personnel - these may be considered as simply overheads or symbols of capitalist power relations they could either do without or which they could replace easily themselves. The relative equality of pay and status may make it particularly difficult for worker cooperatives to attract managerial staff with the best credentials whose market price would tend to be higher than what most

cooperatives are able or willing to offer. Also, specific training possibilities for cooperative management do not tend to be readily available in the wider community.[5]

- Failure due to internal dissention. The absence of conventional authority figures and disciplinary structures in a worker cooperative could lead to insubordination, a vacuum of accountability and responsibility and to leadership crises. Efforts to reduce differences in power and influence may generate resistance in giving legitimate authority to positions or individuals. Conflict may be suppressed, taken to imply a failure in human relations, or else handled badly by an ambiguous distinction between union and management structures - if the distinction exists at all. The practice of democratic management may be seen as time-consuming and hopelessly unproductive - which may well be the case, since cooperative skills are not so readily forthcoming from the wider social environment. The acquisition of such skills and techniques is even more difficult when the cooperative is a rescue or conversion from a capitalist firm, in which workers were used to pursuing their interests via antagonistic trade unionism.[6]

- Failure due to adverse external conditions. Even if a democratic culture and structure is successfully established within a cooperative, such a culture and structure are very often anomalies with respect to mainstream social conditions. The dominant ethos which underpins the character and thinking of contemporary capitalist societies fosters values of competition, egocentrism and hierarchy. The social structures of the wider society are also geared to maintain and reproduce

capitalism: Education, legislation, the banking system operate in such a way as to discriminate against non-capitalist forms of production.[7]

- Failure due to Economic Success and Large Size. If a worker cooperative is successful economically, it will also tend to expand. This will by necessity mean the introduction of measures of representative (apart from participatory) democracy. This may introduce a diffusion of responsibility, and to a lack of participation and initiative.[8] It may also set in motion the degeneration of the cooperative into a bureaucratic enterprise.[9]

  The degeneration issue may come about, even as a result of economic success. It seems that, just as a hard and difficult life stirs the cooperative spirit, the urgency to cooperate disintegrates once the hard life is overcome. Economic success increases the incentive to limit membership and employ cheap "second class" labour.[10] Otherwise the cooperative may become a target of private capital which may coax a buy-out from the worker-members by lucrative offers;[11] or else the cooperative could become infiltrated by members of the higher socio-economic strata via the sale and purchase of shares.[12] In any case, the effect is that the original cooperators are transformed into (or replaced by) capitalist shareholders.

An Analysis of Failure-Inducing Constraints

It should first of all be clear that the subdivision of failure-inducing variables above does not do justice to their dynamic relationship. It would have been more realistic to talk in terms of a web of constraints which lead to worker cooperative downfall.[13] The typology misses the process of poor performance for the sake of identifying its components.

Examining the failure-inducing constraints, it appears that some could equally well apply to non-cooperative enterprises. The conditions of small size and small scale may be considered advantageous with respect to working conditions, human relations, job control and reduced alienation.[14] They also contribute to the preservation of direct participatory democracy.[15] Still, there are several factors which explain why large firms do eventually predominate in advanced stages of industrialisation,[16] and why small firms have generally much shorter life-spans than do larger ones.[17]

There are various strategies for improving the economic chances of success for worker cooperatives. Certain cooperative legislation and regulations require serious feasibility studies to be undertaken before any cooperative venture is launched.[18] Cooperation, federation and amalgamation among cooperatives have been shown to be vital for long-term economic survival.[19] Similarly, the existence of a cooperative bank is useful for the provision of financial support most conventional commercial banks or traditional moneylenders are reluctant to provide.[20]

The provision of education is one other option to be pursued for solving some problems related to cooperative failure described above. Training programmes in management, administration and accountancy would generate a higher level of managerial competence among cooperative members; training sessions in committee procedures, group dynamics, the history and practice of worker participation and industrial sociology would improve the skills and knowledge needed for effective democratic management. More broadly, instruction in political science, political economy, social psychology and industrial law would improve the competences of workers generally, making them more capable of pursuing their interests as workers and as citizens. Such an educational

strategy is indeed often pursued by centres of worker and cooperative education worldwide.

However, such educational provision cannot hope but slightly neutralise the conditions which promote cooperative failure. For, looking at the failure-inducing constraints differently, it is clear that the worker cooperative form suffers pressures emanating from the wider environment, which act to drive the cooperative structure either into performing a 'reserve army' role which eventually leads to its liquidation; or, if the cooperative is economically successful, to erode its internal democratic organisation. Such pressures emanate from power relations which are legitimised and maintained by social institutions; from a dominant ideology which breeds values alien to cooperativism; and because the social environment provides at best only episodic experiences in democratic participation. The failure-inducing variables can all be related to this environmental condition. Argued differently, it is therefore more than just coincidence that viable cases of workplace democracy have been accompanied by strong common values and experiences which have served as the basis for an alternative common value system and cultural heritage.[21] Educational provision in the sense described above could perhaps counter the effect of the dominant ideological fabric on one's own value system. But it will not serve much to affect the fundamental power relations existing between people; nor will it affect much the expression of ideology (via culture and social institutions) which legitimizes these same power relations.

The policy implication here is that economic viability is a necessary but not sufficient condition for a successful worker cooperative strategy. And so is an educational programme which aims simply at the provision of knowledge and skills, technical and democratic. As long as minimal consideration

is paid to the specific socio-economical, political environment where the cooperative venture is to be established, then the cooperative will fail, socially and politically, if not economically. This is nowhere more obvious than in relation to industrializing countries where worker cooperative models have been exported - along with capital goods, models of political stability and democracy, models of economic growth, models of tertiary education - as part of a policy grounded in the belief, shared for many years by donors and recipients alike, that the development model of the industrialized West is the only possible and feasible one for the "underdeveloped" state to adopt.[22] This approach has to date been by and large admitted as erroneous and simplistic:[23] the economic, social and political environment of industrializing countries is fundamentally different from that of Europe and the United States, where worker cooperatives often emerged spontaneously and developed autonomously.

Environmental "third-world" conditions

While it is difficult to generalize, a number of environmental 'third world' conditions can be signed out:

- The prevalence of pre-capitalist relations of production. Many producers in industrializing countries particularly in Africa, remain engaged in a small-scale family-based subsistence, rural economy with a rudimentary division of labour, in conditions of mutual isolation and with an open option of self-sufficiency. There is therefore little basis for capital accumulation, no incentive towards change and there also exists an autonomy which enables one to escape policy demands from distant sources - such as the State.[24]

- The role of the State. The development strategy of "late-late" industrializers necessarily relies heavily on the State to take the initiative.[25] The political leaders of industrializing states are in a race against time to maximize the development potentialities of their societies and meet the needs and demands of their peoples. Hence the prevailing attitude towards the economy and society is certainly not that of non-intervention and laissez-faire, as was the circumstance in which the cooperative movement developed in the West in the nineteenth century.[26]

- The "economy of affection". Within many industrializing countries operate invisible organisations of people connected on the basis of blood, kin, community and religion which pervade all spheres of life, including the economic.[27] The maintenance and cultivation of an individual's position in this network of support and interaction is an important personal concern. This process delays the development of a public morality that sustains effective state power and of a fuctional legal-rational bureaucracy.[28]

- The existence of indigenous, traditional, communal practices. Elements of mutual aid in peasant and tribal society - such as at harvest time, planting and house building - and the solidary ties of kinship, marriage, religion and community, have been suggested as advantageous and perhaps necessary preconditions for the creation of modern cooperative ventures.[29] The idea is attractive but suspect: The solidarity of many traditional communities is often an idyllic oversimplicification which camouflages harsh and bitter tensions, inequalities and authoritarian relations.[30]

All these "third world" conditions act as obstacles to the establishment and functioning of a worker cooperative first-world style: that is, autonomously created by workers who recognize their common market class interests in a capitalist economy and who establish a democratic structure with an internal locus of control, upheld by elected managerial staff accountable to the worker members. Within the context of pre-capitalist production relations, class interests do not develop - it is rather racial, ethnic and religious interests which predominate and disguise power relations in the society at large.[31] The perseverance in traditional production practices which have stood the test of generations is of course a wise and functional adaptation - but viewed from the point of view of cooperative development planners it appears as a manifestation of stubborn conservatism which stifles attempts at the modernisation of agricultural organisation. The very establishment of cooperatives depends heavily on the State itself, usually forming a critical part of an overall development strategy, particularly in agriculture: Cooperative development avoids a head-on clash with the peasantry; promises to accumulate capital and establishes structures of ideological influence.[32] It therefore follows logically that there is considerable interest by the State in the regulation of cooperative affairs, such that in some cases cooperatives have been turned into organs of state control.[33] Cooperative structures can easily fall victim to mismanagement, corruption, nepotism and manipulation of rules - because these are perceived as legitimate or unavoidable within the economy of affection. This makes the cooperative structures dependent on traditional power holders, since these are usually in a position to grant favours and credit and make concessions. And finally, even if a common indigenous culture of cooperation exists, taking on the formal institutions of modern cooperatives - such as rational

accounting and managerial control - would challenge the very bonds of trust and solidarity on which the community is based.[34] Hence one argument suggests that for effective worker cooperatives to be developed in the industrializing countries, the society in question must first pass through the transitional necessary evil phase of capitalism - to develop a rational bureaucracy, weed out the "economy of affection", replace traditional power relations with class relations and liberate the productive forces of its workers.[35]

It should therefore come as no surprise that most attempts at establishing viable and democratic worker cooperatives end in failure, particularly in industrializing countries. All too often the effects of the wider economic, socio-political and cultural context are neglected. It has become increasingly evident that, for cooperatives to succeed in an economic and democratic sense, then the right strategy ought to be one which counters the effects of the economic socio-political and cultural environment.[36] More positively, it ought to be a strategy which promotes a degree of social transformation in the desired direction - fostering the emergence of an environment which ideologically, technically and materially supports the cooperative form of organisation.

Models of Social Change considered

Promoting social change, even in a limited sense, is much easier said than done.[37] After all, the environmental variables to be transformed are functional expressions, developed over time, of a particular social history and sets of power relations not so easily dislodged.

A number of strategy models and tactics for bringing about social change can be identified:

- A demonstration effect policy - this hopes for an autonomous spillover "ripple effect" to take place, once a test-case is established and is visibly advantageous. The 'demo effect' occasionally works, perhaps because, being initially a singular phenomenon, it does not threaten traditional power élites and so does not generate too much hostility. Success has however often depended on the mobilization of powerful socio-political support and the existence or development of a suitable ideology.[38]

- The radical policy of starting from scratch - This is based on the premise that the only way to neutralize traditional value systems and power structures is to scrap all existing institutions from a position of force.[39] Such a radical strategy requires a very powerful state apparatus which can effectively defend itself from political opposition, economic pressures and a deterioration of its own ideological commitment towards change. Even then, traditional value systems may be so pervasive that they stubbornly persist and refuse to reform themselves.[40] Or, the new structural boundaries erected may look suspiciously like the old;[41] perhaps because the proletariat remains an object of change to be taught and led.[42]

- The reformist, incrementalist strategy - this lays its hopes in the potential of education spearheading a gradual social transformation. Education is perceived to be a powerful instrument which can bring about social change under the condition of broad social consensus.[43] The model however refuses to consider the functional relationship between education, the respective socio-economic structure and the ideological superstructure. The purpose of school socialization to reproduce labour power and the relations of production - functions which are inconsistent with the values of cooperation and collective consciousness - are subsumed

beneath the liberal myth which proclaims education as the means by which merit, skill, and knowledge might ultimately conquer unearned privilege.[44] This model is, quite expectedly, promoted by intergovernmental organisations who have a vested interest in preserving the status quo.[45]

This is not to denigrate the part which education can play in fostering long-term social change. Rather the point is that, left in splendid isolation, without wider social support and inspiration, an educational programme often serves the interests of dominant classes, and therefore, rather than promoting social change, makes it even more unlikely by reproducing the existing division of labour.[46] The Comilla project case is one such demonstration of the model's weakness.

A Case in Point: The Comilla Programme

The Comilla programme in Bangladesh makes the subject of a useful practical example to demonstrate the effect of the indigenous socio-political context on cooperative ventures. It shows how the economic success of such ventures depends on the support of socially powerful individuals or groups. The case reveals the tenacious power of traditional élites and their manipulation of the cooperative structure for conservative ends. Finally, the case dispels the naive belief that the investment in educational initiatives is sufficient to bring about social change, without the support and inspiration of powerful and progressive social forces.

The dominant mode of production in Bangladeshi agriculture is petty peasant production: Most farming activity is carried out on family land, with family labour and for family consumption. Tenant farming (mainly on a crop-sharing basis) and large land-owners are both not significantly widespread.

This does not imply that there is no stratification or inequality in the rural sector. Even though land and wealth inequalities are not as pronounced as in neighbouring India and Pakistan, there are nevertheless relations of domination and subordination which colour kinship and quasi-kinship formations.[47]

The prevalence of peasant agriculture, the absence of large farms and the long neglect by the Government of rural development in contrast to its active interest in industrialization has meant that Bangladeshi agriculture was for long mercilessly squeezed of its meagre surplus and allowed to stagnate. A realisation of this pitiful condition and a rising food grain deficit led eventually to the establishment of the Comilla experiment in 1960.

The experiment was first launched in the Comilla Thana[48] and later replicated elsewhere in the country. As part of the programme, farmers were encouraged to group together into cooperatives and adopt improved methods of rice cultivation, involving the use of high yielding variety seeds, chemical fertilizers, insecticides and mechanical irrigation, such as tube-wells. The Director of the programme defined the task ahead in more than just economic terms:

> "Economically, the village is explosive, for socially the old leadership and the old institutions are now completely helpless. In some cases they have totally disappeared. Introducing new skills and new implements and new methods will require a complete reorganisation of the social and economic structure of the village."[49]

One of the organisational structures adopted for such a bold undertaking was a two-tier agricultural credit cooperative system: The primary cooperatives which followed the German

Raiffeisen principles, and a central association of primary cooperatives which was intended eventually to become a self-financing institution. Conditions for membership in the central association included certain grass roots initiatives, among which was a commitment to weekly savings and to regular training. The project also invested quite heavily in education: The central association provided crucial training services for selected villagers in extension methods and trained cooperative managers in accounting. These trained villagers who visited the headquarters of the central association once a week to attend scheduled classes imparted what they had learnt to the other villagers mainly during the weekly meetings of the primary cooperative.[50] During such meetings, members were expected to turn up also to discuss and solve any issues collectively.[51] In its educational respect, the programme has been described as exceptional in industrializing countries.[52]

The conditions for the success of cooperative organisations were judged favourable in Bangladesh because of a number of indigenous cooperative practices: Lana - the practice of a number of peasants joining for a year to cultivate and harvest a given area in common; Mang - the practice of providing free labour by relatives and friends during the ploughing or harvest season. The heads of families also came together in a panchayat which is the village judicial system which forces the observance of behaviour norms.[53] The absence of sharp caste barriers and the tendency to marry within the village have been argued to strengthen further the degree of village solidarity.[54]

The stated objective of the Comilla programme was none other than a complete assault on the agrarian problem of Bangladesh - aiming not only at increasing total agricultural output and introducing new technology but also at tilting the balance

of rural power decisively in the interests of the hitherto dependent and depressed sectors of the rural community, developing a new leadership which will challenge the traditional vested interests of landlords and money-lenders.

Unfortunately, such objectives have, by and large, proved to be too ambitious. Cooperation was conceived only as a credit supplying device and not extended to other economic activities. In fact, policies contrary to cooperative principles, such as the encouragement of private enterprise to increase agricultural production, were pursued. Also, the Comilla approach did little to redress income inequalities among the rural population; rather the cooperatives were infiltrated and turned into tools of domination by the relatively well-off farmers. In one particular village, the cooperatives had the capacity to graft themselves onto the more progressive village faction which was challenging the old feudal leadership; they could thus lead to a favourable general response toward agricultural innovation.[55] In other cases, where the leadership was conservative and not receptive to innovation, the cooperatives did not receive the blessing of the authority structures. They fell victim to internal conflict (fanned by the traditional village leaders), fomented the emergence of opposition movements and effectively led to a split in the village cohesion.[56]

The Comilla case demonstrates another example of a cooperative structure which may have succeeded in economic terms (enhancing productivity and yields; generating credit facilities; introducing new technology) but which failed to transform and, indeed helped to reinforce, existing social inequalities. In spite of a impressive educational programme, the project became a channel for "cooperative capitalism."[57] Lacking was an appropriate strategy of social change.

Education may have served to raise the level of consciousness of poor farmers about the causes of their deprivation and the consequent need to organise themselves. But such expectations were soon subdued by the eventual domination of the established institutions by the influencial larger farmers, since the benefits of subsidized inputs, credits and the public works activities were proportional to the size of the land holding.[58] The Comilla case demonstrates that even in a relatively egalitarian society like Bangladesh, education is an important requirement for promoting social change but is not a sufficient one to transform power relations and overcome vested interests.

A 'social movement' approach to change.

There is yet a fourth broad strategy of social change, which perhaps holds such a promise of transforming power relations and overcoming vested interests. These conditions could be met via the existence of a progressive "social movement".[59] A social movement could prove to be a continuous source of support for cooperatives financially, vocationally and ideologically. It could institutionalize a power base and thereby provide a basis for legitimating cooperatives within the community while at the same time adapting these to best fit the local conditions. A social movement could resolve the dilemma between continuity and change by providing continually relevant responses to local problems by virtue of its dynamic character in the face of changing social conditions. It can itself be both an initiator and a motor of progressive social change.[60]

A number of difficulties nevertheless reside with this approach. It, first of all, takes time to mature. Secondly, the social movement's power base must be strong enough to

withstand hostility from those who might feel threatened if genuine cooperativism and worker management take root: Property and business interests, the judiciary, the bureaucracy, the military and foreign interests. Thirdly, it appears contrary to human nature for a powerful social force to purposely adopt a strategy which, if managed successfully, would lead to a generation of democratic consciousness from the experience of workplace democracy such that the cooperative movement and its guiding principles evolve increasing legitimacy and acceptability in the wider social context, thus developing a power base which, in the long run, becomes independent of the social movement which established it in the first place.[61]

If this willingness is for the moment assumed, then, the tactic for such a strategy aimed at fostering a degree of social change should be one of "a war of position": A term used by Antonio Gramsci whose insights are useful in clarifying the role of education and of a social movement in the broader process of social transformation towards cooperativism.[62]

Gramsci's central theme of his vision of the functioning of the capitalist system is that of hegemony: "An order in which a certain way of life and thought is dominant, in which one concept of reality is diffused through society in all its institutional and private manifestations, informing with its spirit all taste, morality, customs, religious and political principles and all social relations, particularly in their intellectual and moral connotations".[63] Gramsci thus identified the superstructure as the depository of dominant culture and as the apparatus of hegemony. He thus goes beyond the classical marxist ascription of the primacy of the economic sphere. The logic of domination is seen to go beyond "economism" into the terrain of culture and ideology.

For such a logic of domination to be eroded, it must be replaced to some extent by a counter-hegemony, one emerging from the mass organization of the working class and by the investment in counter-hegemonic education aimed at developing proletarian institutions, values and culture. In this respect, the seeds for a counter-hegemony already exist since no society is structurally and culturally completely homogenous.[64] In the Gramscian extended metaphor of warfare, such a counter-culture would confront the established bourgeois hegemony in a 'war of position' - of trenches moving back and forth in an ideological struggle over the consciousness of the working class; the objective being for the new superstructure to engulf the old, including the state apparatus. Only then would it make sense to take over State power, since only then would the working class in fact control social values and norms to the point of being able to build a new society. The leaders of the Turin Strikes in Italy (1919-20); the leadership behind the worker and student unrest in France (1968) and Allende in Chile (1970-73) were all underestimating the strength of capitalism and its ideological apparatus. The "war of manouvre" they were pursuing could only work in essentially pre-capitalist contexts as happened with the Bolshevik Revolution in the Soviet Union.[65]

The Gramscian vision of social transformation can be criticized for focusing exclusively on the political and cultural aspects of proletarian domination; it misses to consider the economic constraints to such a transformation. The flow of investment capital, exports and imports of goods and services, the location of the society within the macro economic system appears to constrain significantly any departure from the dominant hegemony.[66] It is therefore more realistic to propose that social change be directed to the extent of creating a cooperative environment <u>within</u> the wider social context; leading to a state of "dual power" with a cooperative

economy and a cooperative environment in articulation with a capitalist or etatist one.[67]

The promotion of education as the avenue for the fostering of counter-hegemony remains problematic. The school, as a social institution, is an integral component and reproducer of the existing dominant hegemony. The actual experience of worker control and of cooperativism, though itself educational, particularly for those actually involved,[68] is not sufficient since it has already been demonstrated how economically successful democratic workplaces tend not to remain democratic in the long run: A consequence of what can now be understood in terms of hegemonic influence.

For Gramsci, what is necessary in the formation of a political party which acts as the primary educational institution of the counter-hegemony. It is the party wich serves as the locus of organized counter-education. The notion of a 'social movement' is similarly that of an instrument for the raising of consciousness among the working class which is not limited to a political party but may, and indeed does, include trade unions and both religious and lay organisations;[69] although political parties remain the best chances of success because of the direct possibility of capturing the state apparatus.

These ideas, developed more than 50 years ago, have been taken up and expanded upon within the literature dealing with workers' self-management and participatory democracy. Various authors have emphasized the imperative need to establish "supporting structures" or shelter organisations as part of the promotional strategy of industrial democracy.[70] More concisely, Vanek identifies a set of twelve fundamental separate prerequisites for optimal and viable labour managed systems, which incorporate worker cooperatives. Among these he identifies:

- "a shelter organisation or institution on the national level...whose express function would be to fund and promote the self-managed sector or economy... Its fundamental objective must be the promotion of the social good of the participatory sector and of the whole country."

and

- "At all times but especially in the early stages, the effort of introducing self-management must be accompanied by an educational effort focusing on both the basic philosophy of economic self-determination and the specifics of self-management. This effort should be cooperative to the greatest possible degree as much as self-management itself."[71]

Conclusion

By itself education in knowledge and skills may contribute to improve the chances of worker cooperative economic viability and adherence to democratic principles. It is however inadequate to mitigate the effects of the specific socio-economic and socio-political environment - the infrastructure and superstructure - wherein cooperative forms of work organisation are located or being envisaged. Therefore any educational strategy ought to be incorporated within an appropriate programme of partial social transformation for it to have the desirable positive effect. Such a programme, in turn, is likely to be successful in contemporary society via a long-term, Gramscian-style 'war of attrition' which involves the inspiration and support of a social movement and the operationalisation of counter-hegemonic education.

It is worthwhile, at this point, to examine the applicability of such a strategy in a specific location: The mediterranean island of Malta.

Notes to Chapter 3

1. Clegg and Blumberg both consider worker cooperatives as inappropriate structures for industrial democracy. Meister has condemned them to an 'iron law of degeneration' into hierarchical and bureaucratic organisations. Beatrice Webb has dismissed them as anachronisms carried over from pre-industrial times. See Clegg (1960,p.126); Blumberg (1968,p.3); Meister (1973) quoted in Rus (1984, passim) and Webb (1920) quoted in Boggis (1974,p.33)
2. The Scott Bader Commonwealth is described in Oakeshott (1978,pp.75-8,82-3); Hirondelle in Oakeshott (1978,pp.130-1); Edilfornicai in Thornley (1981,pp.158-9); the Cheeseboard of California in Jackall (1984) and the Mondragon Movement in various texts but notably in Thomas & Logan (1982).
3. These explanatory variables are based on a similar typology by Pryor (1983,pp.161-2) and are substantiated by a reading of literature which includes Bernstein (1976); Bluestone & Harrison (1982); Bradley & Gelb (1983);Carnoy (1981); Cole (1951); Fals-Borda et.al. (1976); Gamson & Levin (1984); Greenberg (1984); Nash & Hopkins (1976); Meister (1969); Oakeshott (1978); Stephen (1982); Thornley (1981); Vanek (1975); Worsley (1971); Potter (1891) and Webb & Webb (1920), both reported in Young & Rigge (1983).
4. The limitation of small scale saw the end of Little Women in Sunderland while capital shortage led to the winding up of the Triumph Motorcycle Plant at Meriden. See Thornley (1981,p.75) and Bradley & Gelb (1983, passim) respectively.
5. The Ouseburn Cooperative Engineering Works in Newcastle was started in 1871 but was forced into liquidation within four short years, particularly because it entered into the tough and sophisticated market of engine

production without adequate managerial, marketing or costing skills. The trade union movement lost a handsome £60,000 in the process. See Oakeshott (1978,pp.57-8).

6. This was one factor leading to the demise of Kirkby Manufacturing and Engineering of Liverpool. No distinction was made between union and management structures at the firm and discipline could not be imposed. Details from Young and Rigge (1983). For a complete case study see Eccles(1981).
7. As will be discussed in detail in Chapter 4. An example of such adverse external pressure on cooperative forms of organisation is the "quintessentially Californian Search for self-discovery and self-fulfilment" which affects workers at the Cheeseboard to the extent that they reduce their commitment to the cooperative. Further details in Jackall (1984).
8. See, for example, Olson (1965). A strike at Ulgor, the largest Cooperative in Mondragon, in 1974 was indeed blamed on the sheer size of the workforce which had led to inadequate communication networks and to worker alienation - see the brief report in Thomas & Logan (1982,pp.35-6). As a rule, subsequently, workforce size in the Mondragon Cooperatives has a maximum ceiling of five hundred - Young & Rigge (1983,p.137).
9. The 'iron laws' of Meister (1973) quoted in Rus (1984) - and Michels (1958) make a similar point. For more on the "degeneration problem" see Paton (1985).
10. Barkai (1977) and Ben-Ner (1982) discuss this phenomenon in relation to the Israeli Kibbutzim. Roca (1975) discusses it with respect to the Sugar Cooperatives in Peru.
11. A similar process occurs in centrally-planned economies, where economically successful cooperatives are absorbed by the state-owned sector - see Oakeshott (1978,p.217).

12. This led to the demise of the Rochdale Pioneers. See Oakeshott (1978,p.16).
13. The mutual interplay of failure-inducing variables emerges more clearly from a diachronic analysis of why a typical cooperative often fails, as is undertaken by Galjart (1975,pp.75-7).
14. As argued by Schumacher (1973).
15. As argues Galjart (1975).
16. Anderson (1982, p.923) mentions several such factors.
17. As demonstrated empirically with respect to the United States by Bluestone & Harrison (1982,Chapter 7).
18. This includes the Maltese Cooperative Societies Act 1978: Article 13 requests a viability statement set up on the basis of a feasibility study to be submitted and approved by the Central Cooperative Board before a cooperative is established.
19. As is borne witness by the experiences in Italy, France and Basque Spain - see Young & Rigge (1983, Chapter 5). Cooperation among cooperatives is the sixth cooperative principle adopted by the International Cooperative Alliance in 1966.
20. As demonstrated in various cases and as argued by Thomas & Logan (1982,pp.74 et.seq.)
21. These include: the strong presence of Scandinavian immigrants in the U.S, Plywood Coops; Eastern European Jews in Kibbutzim, Basque Nationalists in Mondragon - See Gamson & Levin (1984,pp.225-7). The concept of an "occupational community" used by Lockwood (1966) and Parkin (1967) is also useful in explaining working class consciousness and collective identity.

22. The ethnocentric bias of the Modernisation School was wide-ranging: In economics, the motor force of development was to be rapid industrialization and urbanization, the rural areas being mere residual storage tanks of underproductive labour - see Ranis & Fey (1961), Lewis (1955) and Rostow (1956). In political science, indigenous structures of order and control were dismissed as 'traditional' and in their stead were suggested legal-rational, bureaucratic and institutionalized structures of decision making and political mobilization, in accordance with weberian principles - See Almond & Powell (1966); Riggs (1964) and Huntington (1968). In tertiary education, the proposed curricula and pedagogical styles were the same as those of liberal universities in the West - see Mazrui (1978,pp.331-355); Kelly & Altbach (1978,pp.1-53).
23. See, for example, Hyden (1983, Chapter 7).
24. See for example Foster (1965); Huizer (1970) and Hyden (1983,pp.6-8).
25. As expounded forcefully by Gerschenkron (1966).
26. Inayatullah (1972,p.270); Spear (1972); Hyman (1979) and Bean (1985, Chapter 9).
27. This condition is equatable with the conditions of Gemeinschaft (Tonnies) and Mechanical Solidarity (Durkhiem) which are associated with pre-industrial life.
28. Such problematic consequences are discussed broadly by Birungi (1986).
29. See, for example, Lowdermilk (1964) with respect to the Punjab. See also Dore (1971) and Galjart & Buijs (1982, p.81) for a wider but conditional treatment of this hypothesis.
30. As revealed by Gosselin (1970) with respect to african communities and by various other contributors in Nash et.al. (1976).

31. Inayatullah (1972,p.263).
32. As described in detail by Worsley (1971) and by Reed (1977).
33. As, for example Spear (1982,p.41) reports in the case of India and Inayatullah (1972) with respect to Sri Lanka.
34. Worsley (1971, passim).
35. This view goes back to Engels and to Lenin's debate with the Narodniks. Meillassoux (1972) and Hyden (1973) are notable contemporary adherents to a similar view.
36. This could explain the increased interest in adopting a social anthropological perspective to cooperative research. For example, see Nash et.al. (1976) and Fals-Borda et.al. (1976).
37. "The history of planned development is full of disasters" - Worsley (1971,p.38).
38. The strong cooperative movement in Cyprus owes its origin to such a "demo effect". A progressive Cypriot established the first credit cooperative society in his own native village and then lobbied Parliament to enact supportive legislation - see Cyprus Cooperative College (1975). For an evaluation of the 'demo effect' policy in Africa see Apthorpe (1972,pp.100-2).
39. The Leninist-Marxist strategy of revolutionary change led by a vanguard party of the working class is one variant of this approach.
40. As happened both in the case of Tanzania and Algeria. See Ergas (1982) and Mc Henry (1979) on the former case; and Clegg (1979) and Raptis (1980,pp.65-74) on the latter.
41. Where radicalism has won, it seems that "it begins to look suspiciously like conservatism" - Thomas (1982,p.35).
42. Horvat (1982,p.258), "If the masses only participate through the agency of various mediating devices that

merely bear their name, they cannot effectively participate - Raptis (1980, p.131).

43. As, for example, described by Spear (1982, p.45).
44. See Kessler-Harris & Silverman (1979) and, more extensively, Bowles & Gintis (1976).
45. This is the implication behind such texts as the worker education manuals of the International Labour Organisation. For an inside account of how the I.L.O. acts in the interests of the dominant hegemonic powers see Cox (1977).
46. This point is made, for example, by Galjart (1975,p.75).
47. Inayatullah (1972,pp.47-9).
48. A thana is an administrative unit, similar to a county.
49. A.H. Khan: Part of a speech delivered at the Comilla Academy on February 13th, 1973, reported in Abdullah et.al. (1976,p.221).
50. Inayatullah (1972,p.96).
51. Malek (1976,p.352).
52. Inayatullah (1972,p.269); Fals-Borda et.al. (1976,p.443).
53. Lowdermilk (1964, pp.139-144).
54. Inayatullah (1972,p.48).
55. Rahim (1970,p.48).
56. Haque (1970).
57. Abdullah et.al. (1976,p.253).
58. Malek (1976,pp.365-6); Blair (1978).
59. A social movement may be broadly defined as a socio-political force whose leadership is capable of influencing the behaviour and values of citizens at large by its appeals and statements from a position of authority accompanied by a supportive ideology. Touraine (e.g. 1981) defines it as a collective identity bearing a common field of action and an antagonistic relation to an opposed group.
60. This kind of strategy was pursued by the UNRISD project on popular participation. See Fals-Borda et.al. (1976) for an overall appraisal.

61. This is the process of "social objectification" of democratic management, described among others by Bernstein (1976); Kester (1980); Stephens (1980) and Horvat (1982).

62. See Gramsci (1975). His position has been reformulated by Carnoy (1981) and Gorz (1968), among others.

63. Williams (1960), cited in Carnoy (1981,p.245). A detailed analysis of the origin and meaning of 'hegemony' is also undertaken in Hoffman (1984, especially Chapter 3) and Merrington (1968).

64. Wertheim (1974) calls this potential for a counter-culture the counterpoint phenomenon, which he also sees as the source of all emancipatory movements and of social evolution. For an application of the concept to peasant resistance see Huizer (1975).

65. For Gramsci's analysis of the failure of the Turin Strikes see Anderson (1976). For insight into the Allende era in Chile and reasons for its bloody demise see Winn (1976); for an economic analysis of the Chilean self-managed textile sector see Espinosa and Zimbalist (1978).

66. Johnson (1981) thus relates the demise of leftist governments in Western Europe in the immediate post-war period to the provision of Marshall Aid; the demise of the Allende regime in Chile has also been attributed to the trade practices of the United States and West Germany; the condition is also applicable to Malta - see Chapter 4 Note 55. In contrast, cooperative experiments in industrializing countries have been "successful" to the extent of better linking dependent capital in the world capitalist system - Gagnon (1976).

67. The notion of "dual power" has been applied by Raptis (1980,p.133) and Glucksmann (1968,p.104) to denote the state of affairs in France during the May 1968 events.

The notion is not to be taken as suggesting two mutually exclusive categories, since, as critics of dualist models have sufficiently pointed out, such a mutual compartimentalisation is not borne by social reality - See for example, Breman (1976). The notion of 'articulation', as with that of modes of prodiction, may be useful to understand the dynamic relationship between the capitalist and cooperative sectors - see for example Wolpe (1980); Forbes (1984). The articulation approach however has been criticized for its reductionist tendencies, focusing exclusively on the process of economic exchange - see Foster-Carter (1978).

68. As discussed for example, by Pateman (1970) and Greenberg (1984).

69. Thus Baudelot & Establet (1971) argue how french working class "counter-ideology" is disseminated also by trade unions. The "theology of liberation" expounded by Latin American Catholic priests and Islamic Fundamentalism in Iran can similarily be seen as the ideological arms of religious social movements. One can also mention at least four 'lay' social movements active in the United States since the 1960's - the feminist, ecological, racial and the gay/lesbian which have attempted to develop the elements of a counter hegemonic and oppositional culture - see Aronowitz (1981) quoted in Giroux (1984,p.125).

70. See for example Kester (1980,p.213); Uca (1983,p.202) and Vanek (1970,pp.317ff.). Walker (1974) summarizes a number of studies on this issue.

71. Vanek (1975,pp.35-6).

Chapter 4: The Cooperative Sector, The School and Social Movements in Malta

Introduction

Malta and her sister islands lie midway between Gibraltar and Lebanon, at almost the exact geographical centre of the Mediterranean Sea. Other than this highly strategic position, they have very little else to offer: The 320 square kilometres of land are dry, rocky and barren. There are no forests, no streams and no mineral resources. Up to the sixteenth century, the small indigenous population was poor and predominantly agricultural, regularly dispossessed of its meagre wealth by sporadic corsair raids or by foreign feudal despots.[1]

This chapter will start by describing Malta's colonial heritage and particularly its effects on two different labour segments: Firstly, the agricultural community, whose strategic status in the maltese economy for many years eventually led to the development of an agricultural service cooperative sector. Secondly, the industrial skilled labour force which developed into the vanguard of a progressive social movement which has been promoting worker cooperatives within an overall democratic socialist development strategy. The maltese socio-cultural and demographic environment is analyzed in some detail to rationalize the size and performance of the contemporary cooperative movement. The argument suggests that while at least one progressive social movement exists in Malta, schools remain powerfully involved in reproducing and legitimizing bourgeois hegemony, a condition not readily transformed. Hence the importance to invest in out-of-school education: Centres of worker education, with particular emphasis on cooperative education and training,

and direct experiences in cooperative affairs, both of which can foster a cooperative "counter-hegemonic" culture.

The Maltese Colonial Heritage

The Knights of Saint John obtained Malta as a gift from Charles the Fifth of Spain in 1530. During their stay they established a small naval dockyard, encouraged trade and built new urban centres in the harbour area behind protective walls. Under British rule (1800-1964), the harbour area became a haven for employment possibilities in shipbuilding, shiprepairing and related industries and services connected with the exigencies of the British military and naval presence on the island. The increasing volume of goods which passed through Malta's ports - further expanded with the opening of the Suez Canal - led also to a widening of other opportunities in business, finance and bunkering services.[2] The experience of eighteenth-century industrialization within the context of a fortress economy has made Malta's economic structure more similar to that of industrialized market economies than to industrializing ones - capitalist relations of production are widespread, while the percentage of the labour force engaged in agriculture is small.[3] This condition also laid the basis for the emergence of maltese contemporary class structure: The "new middle class", was composed of importers, contractors and traders who flourished in the presence of the large garrison and also of the civil servants and other employees engaged in the civil administration. The "working class" was mainly composed of the shipbuilding, shiprepair and other admiralty employees who constituted the bulk of the industrial working force around the Grand Harbour.[4]

The new industrial workforce was generally skilled, well paid but without security of employment: Thousands of workers could be laid off when demand for their skills suddenly slackened - as indeed did happen, for example, whenever a conflict in the mediterranean area was concluded.[5] The perpetual threat of redundancy was one major instrument of labour control, tempered by a subtle and effective use of paternalism. The British, like the Order before them, sought not to interfere in the daily, local life of the Maltese. They maintained good relations with the strong Catholic Church - perhaps the only institution strong enough to pose a threat to the anglican colonial administration - and indeed encouraged it to develop a dominant role in local, village affairs. Also, the large maltese wage labour force the British helped create was encouraged to develop internal rivalries, because these removed the potential threat of a united labour movement. The industrial working class and the new middle class in fact collided with the traditional power structures - the professional élites, often in alliance with the Catholic Church hierarchy - in the late 1880s, on the issue of what was to be the language of instruction in schools: The former were in favour of English; the latter, for the preservation of Italian. Their differences were blown up beyond proportion, fanned by the divide-and-rule policy of the colonial administration. They eventually evolved to form the basis of contemporary political party organisation.[6]

The general response of the Maltese to the colonial experience has been diverse. A set of four distinct response patterns adapted from the original Mertonian categories have been identified.[7] Compliance with Paternalism has been the most predominant response pattern, involving a deferential, servile disposition to what is perceived as a benevolent colonial master at the national level; Localism-Retreatism - a

displacement of commitment and involvement from national to local, erupting in a strongly symbolic and rallying role for the Catholic Church and involving a frenzied enthusiasm for "festa partiti": religious celebrations with strong political overtones;[8] Individual Manipulation - a resort to patronage networks which undermines class consciousness; and Political Activism - which does not accept the legitimacy of the status quo (unlike the former three behavioural adaptations) and strives to replace it. It is this last condition, which corresponds closely to the Wertheimian counterpoint phenomenon, that has been by and large adopted by the industrial working class centered at the Dockyard and which developed into the vanguard of the so-called Maltese Labour Movement (MLM): A social movement, since 1971 in control of the state apparatus via its political arm: The Malta Labour Party (MLP).

Focus on Agriculture

In the meantime the agricultural labour force was undergoing a steady decline. To blame were emigration, the drift to the more attractive jobs in the harbour region, in the manufacturing and tourist industry, the encroachment of urban and industrial development on farm land and the lack of adequate water for irrigation. This decline has continued until very recently, such that now the full-time agricultural labour force stands at below 5% of the gainfully occupied population.[9]

The unit of agricultural production remains the labour-intensive household farm with an insignificant wage labour force cultivating a number of small non-adjacent plots.[10] The fraction of owner-occupied farms is very small but although most farmers are tenants, rates of surplus extraction are very low.[11]

The existence of low rates of surplus extraction - which has consequences on the economic and political strength of the farming community - is due to a number of reasons. Contrary to many other countries, maltese landowners were never a powerful or compact class. The Catholic Church and its various religious orders inherited many tracts of land over the years from among the faithful and often gave these out at very low rents for long leases to whoever was willing to work them. The power position of other landowners declined sharply with the availability of non-agricultural employment and the wave of urban-directed proletarianisation which took place already in the nineteenth century. Apart from this, output from a poor, rain-dependent soil in a dry climate was always meagre and scanty and not much capital accumulation could result in any case. Because of the limited food production and a fast expanding population, landowners' concern was more with how to interest potential farmers into working their land. This concern was shared by the British Colonial Administration, particularly also because food scarcities could lead to social unrest which would undermine the image of the British as benevolent paternalistic rulers. Over the last four hundred years parcels of land have been passed to prospective tenants at most favourable conditions in the face of a population explosion and an imminent food crisis. The thirst for usable arable land was so strong that it was also attempted to create artifical fields by encompassing bare rocky surfaces with rubble walls and then attempting to spread out a layer of topsoil which might at best provide output of marginal quality. For a time, the British also seriously considered developing the neighbouring islands of Pantelleria, Lampedusa and Linosa as food-producing centres for Malta.[12] Ingenious plans for expanding agriculture production have also figured regularly in Maltese Government policies.[13] Such a condition has made agriculture a strategic economic sector and has given tenant

farmers strong control over their farms.

One structural feature which was reducing farmers' income and therefore dampening the attraction of agricultural self-employment was the existence of the middleman in the marketing structure of maltese agricultural produce. In the years preceeding the Second World War, maltese farmers are reported to have been plagued by an insecurity of income and a dependence on moneylenders, many of whom were also wholesale dealers in agricultural products. Farmers indebted to moneylenders were forced to channel all their produce via their creditors, who capitalized on the farmers' powerlessness and low level of literacy.[14] This considerable monopsonic position enjoyed by the moneylender-cum-wholesale dealer - know as "il-pitkali" - was spectacularly demonstrated during the Second World War (1939-45) when the colonial administration bypassed the pitkali and collected all produce directly to enforce a rationing system in the face of the Axis blockade. Many farmers were surprised to see their profits increase while the market price of their produce actually fell. This acted as an eye-opener for the administration and the farmers alike: A "demonstration effect" of the potential of doing away with the middleman. As elsewhere in the British Colonies, the legal structure enacted for this purpose was the agricultural service cooperative.[15] Thus the maltese cooperative movement was ushered in specifically as a cost-saving, profit-enhancing mechanism to boost agricultural efficiency and productivity: it involved no commitment to cooperative values, and it was not inspired by a cooperative ideology.

Such an absence among farmers of a commitment to cooperation can be seen as a consequence of a number of factors: Firstly, the typical maltese farmer does not tend to suffer from the cluster of disadvantages which, elsewhere, leads to the so-called

deprivation trap which drives peasants and landless workers to adopting cooperative solutions to their plight.[16] Since rates of surplus extraction are low and average incomes are quite satisfactory (and tend also to be supplemented by off-farm wage employment by the farmer himself and/or by other household members) - there is no perception of being in a "structural bind" and there is therefore no pressure to act collectively in that respect with other farmers.[17] Secondly, the skills and practice of cooperation, along with the economic and technical requirements of running a modern business enterprise are generally unknown and not appreciated. Thirdly, the farmer's long experience of moderately successful agricultural production undertaken on a family farm with family labour has stood well the test of time. Suspicion and disinterest in new techniques of farming, including a cooperative organisation of services, is therefore a normal behavioural reaction. Even if ideas on cost-benefit analysis, rapid response to market conditions, soil conservation and use of high yielding crop varieties and chemical imputs are known, they are generally dismissed with arrogance and haughtiness. Risk-taking and innovation are lacking because failures can mean the loss of one's livelihood , apart from earning the mockery of one's neighbours. The following narrative is a humorous but significant example:

> "On an irrigated holding, carrots proved a profitable cash crop. The farmer was told by a returned migrant that paraffin spray was very suitable as a weed killer. He chose a small patch, in his own words, 'where no one could see what I was doing and laugh' and tried the new treatment. Eventually convinced of its efficacy, this farmer was able to observe the slow visual impression made on his neighbours."[18]

These conditions explain how, in spite of the State's preoccupation to reform the farming community's practices and ideas, farming remains highly labour-intensive, family based, market-oriented, without the benefits of economies of scale, with decreasing soil fertility, without adequate systems of animal and plant health, water conservation and irrigation, often involving crop rotation cycles going back many generations. It is therefore no wonder that the bulk of the farming community remains dependent on a chain of intermediaries for marketing, grading, processing and distributing agricultural produce. In any case, most of the existing service cooperatives can hardly be said to serve as positive demonstration effects.

A Case in Point: Prickly Pear Cooperative[19]

Prickly Pear Cooperative was established for reasons similar to those of other maltese agricultural service cooperatives: The exploitation by wholesale dealers - in this case dealers in prickly pears - who set the product's price which farmers had to accept because there was no alternative market outlet.

The cooperative, committed by statute to purchase all the prickly pears produced by its farmer-members, started off with very few members. In order to attract membership, it was therefore suggested to pay members a higher price for their produce than other dealers. This policy certainly succeeded in raising membership figures. However, it has since then remained standard procedure to pay farmer-members higher prices for prickly pears than those set by the State, regardless of the level of profits being made. This attitude is indicative of conflicting interests which have been described as follows:

> "On one hand, the farmers produce prickly pears for the cooperative acting as suppliers of raw materials. On the other hand, the farmers have the democratic power of running the cooperative and of deciding how much to pay for prickly pears... The members seem unable to realize the benefits of redeploying profits into the cooperative for its development and expansion and are intent only on removing from the cooperative every last cent that is their profit. This concentration on the short-term will have lasting effects in the long run, if the cooperative survives... The conflicting interests...have reduced the cooperative to a secure market for prickly pears and interest in it as a profit making organisation is lacking in members."[20]

The running of the cooperative is not simply infected by this short-term orientation among farmer-members which refuses to see the interests of the cooperative as a whole as being also one's own. There is also a lack of business sense, a weak investment in managerial skills and intermittent invasions of the spheres of competence of professional management by the farmer-members on the management committee, which strains the organisational set-up and blurs respective responsibilities:

- The Management Committee of the cooperative has tended to be composed of the same members, year in, year out. For many years until recently, this committee was dominated by one individual who stifled democratic decision-making processes and effectively restricted the development of management skills.
- The farmers are convinced that the processed prickly pear juice their cooperative produces is good enough to sell itself. They therefore view any marketing and product promotion as unnecessary.

- The Management Committee has asked the cooperative's accountant to refrain from producing accounts because these are "a waste of time and effort". Professional management at the cooperative has in practice been de-skilled, with the quality control manager and accountant performing clerical and secretarial functions.[21]

The restriction on making public information pertaining to an ongoing business enterprise does not allow one to describe the severe economic consequences of such conditions. That Prickly Pear Cooperative has survived to date is due significantly to its involvement in a profitable activity under licence. This profitable activity is however unrelated to the objectives which led to the cooperative's establishment.

The maltese environmental syndrome

The lack of an ideology of cooperation in Malta is not limited only to farmers: It is possible to relate the presence of non-cooperative or a-cooperative attitudes to a confluence of economic, socio-political and demographic factors which have contributed to the formation of the dominant maltese cultural fabric. Malta has been described as forming part of the "Latin/Mediterranean Cluster" - a collection of cultures in a specific geographical region where societies manifest authoritarian, feudal and hierarchical traits: Rigid status and power demarcations are observed, leading to ponderous bureaucraties; Government is distrusted; the law is seen as oppressive rather than regulatory; Heads of State, ministers, mayors, priests and other leadership figures assume authoritarian and charismatic stature and exercise strong power.[22]

The socio-economic, infrastructural explanation for such a mediterranean/latin cultural syndrome is perhaps a consequence

of such nations, located on the European periphery, having embarked on industrialization in an unnaturally rapid and uneven way. Capitalism is not hegemonic in such conditions and therefore pre-capitalist, feudal traits are carried over. This includes elements of "the economy of affection".[23]

Secondly, and in accordance with the conditions outlined above, the Roman Catholic Church in Malta has been particularly powerful and has been intimately involved in political activity at various levels and various times. Part of the explanation lies in the Church's historical role as representative of the village people's interests to the secular authorities governing Malta, in the absence of any form of local, civil government. Similarly, at the national level, the Church has represented the interests of a solidly catholic community with respect to the (in the case of the British, a non-catholic) State. The retreat to religious commitment and symbolism was also a reaction to the denial of self-determination resulting from colonial rule.[24] In this way, the separation between the political and religious domains is unclear and already three times in the last fifty years, bitter politico-religious disputes have flared up, dividing the population into bitterly opposed factions.[25]

A third relevant component of the dominant national culture is that a society with a tradition of institutionalized catholicism, there is a strong ideological basis for a system of patronage because of the correspondence between the function of saints and mortal men. Patronage is very much a feudal trait, based upon a personal relationship between patron and client. A person who seeks to influence the decisions of a higher authority seeks to approach an individual who, by virtue of kin or social status, can influence the

decision-maker on his behalf. The parallelism with saints as men and women of influence with God is clear. In Malta, the parallelism is more obvious and forceful because the word for patron and saint is one and the same - "qaddis".

Such a social condition, reinforced by catholic imagery, arises as a mitigating and legitimating effect over power inequalities and over a savage competition over resources. Patronage has also been actively encouraged by colonial powers since the vertical relationships it implies keep away or break down horizontal, class relationships and thus make more improbable the emergence of class consciousness which would threaten the position and authority of the colonial power.

Fourthly, the long drawn out experience of powerlessness and dependence on foreign powers for employment, defence and survival has also led to a compliant, submissive deference to authority structures, involving a resigned, passive attitude to one's condition and destiny. This condition of dependence upon a benevolent ruler - another residue of feudalism - has again been encouraged by colonial administrators (and sometimes even by post-independence political and religious leaders) by a projection of the self as a paternal, protective being.

The demographic conditions of small size and population density appear to exacerbate centrifugal tendencies further. Malta's size and population density,[26] along with the long history of rule by powerful foreign rulers, has caused the people to live necessarily close to one another both spatially and emotionally, in a tightly-knit web of interrelations that offered good prospects of a common defence, made articulate via the distinct maltese language.[27] Inter-personal relationships still colour persistently many

aspects of social involvement - knowledge which elsewhere is either private or unavailable is quickly acquired, even inadvertently, and rapidly made public, via the exchange of information and gossip. Friendship and kinship ties are also easily identified and consciously cultivated for individual manipulation.[28] In such a psycho-social atmosphere, where people are thus forced to share their privacy, an individual may react psychologically by defending his independence and freedom of action at all costs, avoiding too close an association with others.[29]

These predominant cultural components have coalesced to breed over many years an individualistic, competitive and risk-wary being who is more willing to resort to individual manipulation rather than to collective action to improve his social position and defend his interests.[30]

An enriching insight into such cultural components is provided by delving into the maltese proverbial heritage which embodies traditional expression of a commonsense philosophy of life.[31] Advice to the effect of avoiding insecurity, of competing for scarce resources and of resorting to individual manipulation is recurrent.[32]

In post-independence Malta these attitudinal and cultural obstacles to cooperativism are still perpetrated: The electoral system of proportional representation helps to keep alive the tradition of patronage-style relations between candidate and electorate.[33] Many still cling to the belief that the State - referred to in male terms - is responsible for solving all social ills, including unemployment.[34] And when the State does advocate progressive measures it may not raise an echo in response, as if it is still an alien, colonial imposition. Concurrently, many individuals and

groups turn to traditional leadership figures - such as teachers, lawyers, priests and, more recently, politicians - to take the initiative. This authoritarian role modelling is reinforced by the vesting of such leadership figures with almost divine attributes, charisma and paternalistic symbolism.[35] This process of attributing power and initiative to leaders endowed with almost super-human qualities cultivates passivity and apathy by the rank and file. This vicious cycle is reinforced by the activity of various powerful social institutions, which all in their own way inculcate attitudes of submission, inferiority and lack of initiative. Concurrently, paternalism and patronage, reinforced by catholic imagery, improve the accessability between father and offspring, preacher and congregation, political leader and partisan follower, teacher and pupil, such that such vertical rather than horizontal relationships and interactions are further encouraged and the power inequality is legitimized. Thus, the urgency of competition, particularly at school and work, and the desire for authoritarian leadership styles with open channels of access between leader and led explain why so many Maltese - and not just farmers - are suspicious of cooperatives and are seriously in doubt whether people are at all capable of working together except for furthering their egotistic interests.

The processes of submission, lack of initiative, urgency of competition and other components of a general non-cooperative attitude fostered by the maltese superstructure can be related to the exigencies of the country's infrastructural base. With an open export-oriented economy, dependent on foreign capital inflows and with a strong entrepreneurial class and a large fully proletarianized wage-earning labour force, there is pressure towards a preservation of such non-cooperative value patterns, which can be seen as extensions and reflections of

power relations in production. The maltese School, as a social institution, remains functionally addressed towards producing the workers and the skills required by professional, public and private employment demands; it also produces the values and behaviour patterns which legitimize the undemocratic structure of economic life, the dominance of the employer over the worker.[36] Thus, the requirements for effective cooperative performance remain unavailable to the large majority of students obliged to follow full-time school attendance.[37]

Focus on the School

Liberal ideology would have one believe that "Schooling"[38] is the means towards realizing the ideals of democratic participation. In this view, the School offers all equal opportunity and full personal development via impartial and objectively assessed competition. Social class inequality can thus be overcome through individual social mobility for which the School serves as a direct access mechanism.[39] Those who fail to measure up have only themselves to blame.[40]

A political economy approach, however, suggests that, rather than having an egalitarian effect on social class inequalities, the School serves to perpetrate the hierarchical division of labour, which can be seen as a modern variant of the class structure.[41] The School's major functions are best understood as reproduction and legitimation: It reproduces the existing social system by socializing the young generation into adequate and appropriate civic and occupational roles, making them 'good' citizens and workers, able to comply with the political and occupational demands of their society.[42] In the process, the School also legitimizes the existing social and economic relations and power inequalities such that power domination

persits via consent and not coercion. Thus, in a capitalist society, it legitimizes economic inequality by providing a seemingly open, objective and scientific meritocratic mechanism for assigning individuals unequal status and economic positions; it legitimizes and rewards the pursuit of individual effort and achievement and of inter-personal competition by its individually-based norms of assessment, achievement and of sanction imposition; it legitimizes and enforces power distance, obedience and respectful submission to authority. Thus the School functions as an integration process for the younger generation into the logic of the actual system and cultivates conformity to it.[43] More broadly, the School can be seen as a reproducer and legitimator of forms of domination wider than class - such as patriarchal, racial and age relations.[44]

A more idealistic view of education, traced back to Rousseau and Mill,[45] upholds that the School could and should function differently, serving as a means by which men and women deal critically and creatively with reality, discovering how to participate actively in the transformation of their world, fostering the acquisition of a full range of powers - political, physical, emotional, cognitive, spiritual and aesthetic - to control one's existence and contribute actively to community development.[46] Such a development is however not likely to occur unless in a context of social and economic justice, based on equality, reciprocity and active political involvement.[47]

The operationalization of the reproductive and legitimatory functions of the School is effected by the teacher adopting the triple role of <u>custodian</u> (master of cermonies, arbitor of rules and director of the stage), <u>moralist</u> (substituting for parents, God and the State, indoctrinating the pupil about what is true or false, right or wrong) and <u>therapist</u>

(authorized to delve into the personal life of his pupil, persuading him to adopt a particular vision and morality).[48] In extreme forms of this condition, there is nothing on which the children have to cooperate in order to get things done. The teacher will do it for them anyway. Hence, when the teacher requests cooperation, it is merely a request for submission. In milder forms of this condition, the teacher will see to it that children practise cooperation - in deciding whether to study the Greeks or the Romans, in nominating class officers, in organizing a class project. But these are usually small and trivial matters: All along, the teacher remains ultimately in command and the intellectual and organisational skills associated with genuine group work and cooperation are played down or are manipulated for individual benefits.[49] It is therefore hardly surprising that many young people are in no way prepared to undertake cooperative efforts (among other matters) after so many years of uninterrupted schooling. Pupils get used to having their scholastic life planned in minute detail by the teachers hour after hour; while the subject matter is meticulously devised far away by curriculum developers.[50] Little of what metaphorically might be called "the production process" is left to chance. The schooling process implicitly tends to regard men as passive beings, meant to conform, adapt themselves and submit themselves to superior authority. The principles underlying such schooling have been identified as follows:

a) The teacher teaches and the students are taught;
b) The teacher knows everything and the students know nothing;
c) The teacher thinks and the students are thought about;
d) The teacher talks and the students listen - meekly;
e) The teacher disciplines and the students are disciplined;
f) The teacher chooses and enforces his choice and the

students comply;

g) The teacher acts and the students have the illusion of acting through the action of the teacher;

h) The teacher chooses the program content, and the students (who were not consulted) adapt to it;

i) The teacher confuses the authority of knowledge with his own professional authority, which he sets in opposition to the freedom of the students;

j) The teacher is the subject of the learning process, while the students are mere objects.[51]

One has only to insert the word manager for teacher and workers for students to have an accurate description of relations in the modern workplace. Replacing manager by priest or political leader, and workers by church congregation or political rally audience, gives equally accurate and quite chilling descriptions of other aspects of contemporary maltese society. We appear to be socially trained for the individualized consumption of knowledge, values, commodities and leadership, not for their collective production.

It therefore appears probable that most Maltese are not familiar with the experience, perhaps not even with the knowledge of the existence, of modes of collective leadership, collective responsibility and collective decision-making. And, as has been described, non-cooperativistic values, which are inculcated by the School and other social institutions, can be understood in the light of the blended heritage of colonialism, geography, religion and population density. The inevitable struggle over scarce resources,[52] particularly in terms of desirable jobs, is reproduced and rehearsed in the keen competition for placement in a good class or a good school and in an obsession for "certification".[53] In a society with limited prestige and status outlets, the struggle

for such placement becomes more intense, aroused by expectations resulting from an improved standard of living, the adoption of middle-class values and western-oriented criteria of what job is "best". In spite of generally progressive reform in recent years, which has dampened the stigma long associated with technical training and which has changed the orientation of upper secondary and university courses towards the world of work, still, access to desirable schools and jobs, particularly those jobs requiring a university degree or diploma, depends heavily on cut-throat competition where the person who gets the best grades in most subjects makes it.[54]

These non-cooperativistic conditions are exacerbated by the infrastructural context of maltese society: The strong entrepreneurial class and the large wage-dependent proletariat - both consequences of the strategic (as against economic) exigencies of colonial rule - are not likely to be dismantled: Malta's open, export-oriented economy and large dependence on foreign capital inflows reduce drastically the space to manouvre as much towards alternative relations of production as towards alternative objectives for schools.[55]

An Appraisal of Maltese Social Movements

The foregoing analysis suggests that the little interest in cooperative forms of organisation of production and the nature of the problems encountered with the cooperative sector can be seen as consequences of cooperatives being alien to the maltese socio-cultural environment and to the exigencies of its infrastructural base.

Still, since 1983, a number of worker cooperatives have been established. In a context of large-scale unemployment, four worker cooperatives have been set up:

- First Clothing Cooperative Ltd and Kordin Clothing Cooperative Ltd.
  Both set up specifically to provide employment to workers who had been made redundant from the textile industry. Producing clothes on a 'cut, make and trim' basis, the two cooperatives have 52 worker-members.

- Cooperative Maintenance Services Ltd.
  A business concern bringing together workers skilled in different crafts, offering plumbing, electrical and pest control services. The cooperative has 9 worker-members.

- The Catering Cooperative Ltd.
  Established as a conversion from part of a private catering chain, keeping in employment workers otherwise made redundant. Established in 1984, the cooperative operates three fast-food restaurants with 23 worker-members.[56]

That such a worker cooperative sector, albeit small, exists at all, in spite of the pressure of the environmental variables outlined above, is significantly due to the general supportive role of a social movement - The Maltese Labour Movement (MLM):[57] The Malta Labour Party, in Government, was directly involved in the setting up of the four worker cooperatives in terms of the provision of technical and financial assistance and ideological support. The General Workers' Union (GWU) has also supported the new initiatives, as part of a broader strategy of proposing forms of worker control and worker participation to workers facing redundancies, unemployment or involved in enterprises facing serious difficulties.

The MLM is the institutionalized embodiment of that strand of reactive political activism, which has long been an undercurrent of maltese socio-political life. It represents the 'counterpoint' feature in maltese society which militates against the dominant value system, and from which a cooperative

culture is most likely to evolve and find support. The MLM emerged out of the relative spatial isolation and concentration of the strategic dockyard industrial labour force which fostered a high level of group solidarity, organisation and militancy - apparently a general world-wide phenomenon among dockworkers.[58] Already in 1894, an attempt was made to set up a fully-fledged "Fitters' Union", at the Drydocks, at a time when the religious climate was not at all supportive of such initiatives.[59] The first strike at the Drydocks over a pay claim in 1917 was successful. However, the inexistence of any institutional machinery for negotiation,[60] the lack of security of employment and the general opposition of the Catholic Church made unionism ineffective until 1943 when the first general union - The General Workers' Union (GWU) was formed. Within a year, the GWU had over 20,000 members. A "labour front" was established with the Malta Labour Party (MLP) in 1946 and its pressure contributed to the enactment of labour legislation.[61] Policy disagreements with the British Government in the late 1950s[62] and a second bitter politico-religious dispute in the 1960s further cemented the bond between the industrial (GWU) and political (MLP) arms of this front. By 1971, the MLP was elected to power on a GWU-MLP joint electoral manifesto. The front was institutionalized in 1978 when the GWU and the MLP were united by statute. Two GWU officials form part of the socialist Cabinet of Ministers.

The MLM remains contemporarily the best organised social movement in Malta in terms of grass-roots organisation. It has also actively attempted with some success to supplant traditional power structures (and the perceptions associated with such structures) with more egalitarian ones. These include, for example, promoting the nobility and dignity of

manual labour; a gradual narrowing of income differentials; the expansion of social services; the granting of equal pay for equal work to women; nationalizing basic industries and major commercial banks; and attack on status distinctions and the elimination of undue privileges and unequal opportunities to health, education and social security benefits.[63]

Part of this strategy of supplanting traditional power structures has involved a willingness to experiment with novel forms of relations of production. The development of a worker cooperative sector should be seen as part of this broad strategy. The development of cooperatives has been enshrined in Malta's 1974 Republican Constitution;[64] outdated cooperative legislation, introduced by the colonial administration thirty years before, was amended:[65] It established, among other details, a Central Cooperative Board, empowered with the task of cooperative promotion and supervision which includes the provision of technical and financial assistance. And indeed, that a worker cooperative sector exists at all in Malta today is significantly due to the initiative and leadership of three individuals inspired by (or actually involved within) the MLM[66] and to the wider ideological, financial and organisational support provided by the same social movement.

As for other attempts at overhauling traditional power structures and production relations, the most far-reaching has been the introduction of co-determination at Malta Drydocks in 1971, followed four years later by a form of worker self-management. Malta Drydocks, the country's largest enterprise with the largest workforce, has for more than a decade now served as a "demonstration effect" of the potential of a proletarian hegemony where labour controls

capital; the misfortune is that its economic performance has not kept pace with its innovations in democratic management.[67]

As for other examples of participatory initiatives, worker directors have been appointed on the boards of public corporations; for a time, management committees were set up within manufacturing state-owned enterprises and within the civil service.[68] Workers have been encouraged to question the legitimacy of the control of capital over labour - at the heart of capitalist property relations - especially if the workers are facing serious financial and organisational difficulties or unemployment. A number of worker sit-ins and take-overs in the private sector have occurred since the MLP has been in office, most with the full backing of the GWU.[69] In the majority of these cases, a reversal to less novel forms of management occurred within a short space of time - the worker-managed enterprise going back to private capital control or being transformed into a form of public corporation.[70] Still, the potential for a proletarian hegemony is there: The complex of ideological and cultural relations which forms what Gramsci called "the apparatus of bourgeois hegemony", and which reproduces the maltese worker's self-concept with respect to managerial authority, oppositional trade unionism, extrinsic orientations to work and the legitimacy of surplus extraction remains under threat.

In contemporary Malta, one can speak of two other powerful social movements. The first is that inspired by the Roman Catholic Church which has been until recently the strongest uniting force among the Maltese and whose leadership was a natural rallying point for local patriotism against occupying powers.[71] A series of politico-religious disputes and a wave of secularization have reduced the socio-political influence of the Church over the Maltese. However, it can still count

on a significant percentage of Maltese to rally to its calls, but when such calls have been made, they are generally conservative, aimed at blocking change, not fostering it.[72]

The second potential social movement is that under the leadership of the political party in opposition since 1971, the Nationalist Party (NP). Ideologically conservative in inspiration and appealing basically to middle-class, white-collar support, the NP has swelled to a mass political movement drawing adherents from irreconciliable class positions, also because it has been considered, for the last sixteen years, as the only viable political alternative to the MLP. Such a wide spectrum of support has driven the NP to adopt a more populist image, suggesting for example, policies of worker participation in management in its 1981 electoral manifesto and other more recent documents.[73] Since the NP has not been given the opportunity to put into practice most of these policies, whether they are progressive in intent or merely vote-catching appeals remains to be seen.[74]

The contemporary socio-political environment in Malta therefore does contain a number of "social movements" each of which could inspire and support a cooperativistically-inclined social transformation. Yet, as long as the cooperative movement remains dependent upon the inspiration, initiative, leadership (and at times also the finances) of the MLM - captured state (or any other social movement for that matter), then it cannot rest on a secure base. Rather, the condition is ripe for devolving into a dependence on external initiative[75] and on charismatic leadership; it is also vulnerable to political indoctrination.[76] A social movement may be indispensable for getting cooperatives off the ground in Malta as elsewhere. But, for the achievement of long-term security and self-sustained growth, for the cooperative

structures to develop transformative rather than integrative cooptative potential, a new set of perceptions and attitudinal styles must evolve.[77] There is, therefore, a very real dilemma, not easily resolved, between autonomy and articulation.[78]

The Case for "Counter-Hegemonic" Education

One way of inculcating and fostering the appropriate set of perceptions and attitudinal styles is to combine the social movement's inspiration and leadership with an investment in "counter-hegemonic" supportive institutions, which would hopefully lead to a gradual, long-term but steady development towards an environment supportive of autonomous cooperativistic culture and structure. The existing maltese institutional environment has until recently been exclusively oriented towards the support of traditional capitalist forms of production units. In spite of enacting legislation supportive of other forms of production relations, major social institutions have remained solidly addressed to their traditional role. Were such institutions oriented in such a way as to produce men and women as highly versed in appropriate knowledge, experience, skills and attitudes, and with the same back-up of supportive agencies as are capitalist managers today, than the cooperative story in Malta, and elsewhere, may well have been a different one.[79]

One social institution which would require such a reorientation is the School. However, the argument above suggests quite convincingly that, even with all the good will and support coming from progressive and powerful social movements, maltese schools cannot be expected to foster anything close to "counter-hegemonic" cooperative values and skills: The infrastructural and superstructural constraints weigh too heavily. This is well illustrated by a recent survey of

the teaching of Social Studies in the maltese State Primary Schools. Although this subject is perhaps the most appropriate for imparting skills in the practice of cooperation and exposing pupils to at least what is a cooperative, the evidence suggests rather the stifling effects of examination pressure and of traditional non-cooperative teaching techniques:

- Most teachers do not utilise all the allocated time for Social Studies teaching (three hours per week) and use the time for further teaching in the three main subjects - English, Maltese, Maths - in view of the preparation for the pre-secondary examination.
- Most teachers still rely on blackboard work for teaching the subject, the commonest 'activity' reported being note-taking.
- Examination pressure leads pupils towards a cramming of facts, since what is required to pass the exam is the reproduction of such facts.[80]

What, therefore, is to be done? With the schools breeding non-cooperative values and non-participatory skills, under pressure from economic demands and cultural conditions, are successful long-term worker cooperative ventures in Malta to be written off? A progressive social movement exists, yet its avenues for promoting a counter hegemony appear blocked.

The successful resolution of this deadlock depends on the extent that experiences of cooperativism and collective action are normalized and legitimized within the wider social environment. For one thing, this involves setting up worker cooperatives and letting them foster a cooperative culture, from the very experience of cooperation. It may be true that there is no better educational experience than

the actual practice of workplace democracy;[81] in which case, the social movement would limit its supervisory and supportive role to non-educational matters. However, the extent to which the participatory culture can expand would be severly limited to the number of actual cooperators.

Secondly, one can think of ways of promoting cooperative experience outside school and outside the workplace. One way of doing so is to open up experiences of community participation. This would create wider spaces where cooperative experience, consciousness and legitimacy can be fostered. Today, as during the long colonial period, practically all government services in Malta are administered from the capital.[82] There have never been any village mayors, headmen or councillors who represent or administer individual towns or villages.[83] However, this is not entirely correct for, as has been discussed earlier, the parish priests have for long been the traditional spokesmen at town and village level in both religious and secular affairs for the fervent catholic population, in the absence of secular authorities.[84] That town and village consciousness is most evident in relation to religious affairs such as "festas" is therefore no coincidence: the Church and its social functions have been practically the only channel available for community - based initiatives.

Proposals for introducing "neighbourhood committees" have been suggested in a number of political manifestos but have never been implemented, arguably because they create a structure which competes against political clientelism.[85] The dependence versus autonomy dilemma breaks surface once again: By granting genuine possibilities of community participation in local affairs, bureaucratized and centralized power structures are essentially reducing their own voice

and influence; yet, some degree of decentralisation and de-étatisation is a necessary condition for an effective, self-managed cooperative sector to function.[86]

Thirdly, one can consider the possibility of investing in counter-hegemonic pedagogical provision out of the school system. Relieved from the constraints imposed by the economy's demands and by the social structure's reproductive and legitimatory needs, an out-of-school educational programme can be genuinely directed towards counter hegemonic purposes. In this respect, the number of worker education programmes in Malta have increased substantially in recent years. The social movements in particular have invested in various kinds of out-of-school educational activities, each interested in promoting it own particular vision of society and its own "hegemony".[87]

If such and similar other initiatives are taken to foster a cooperative culture and enhance the legitimacy of cooperative production among the public at large, and if the number of viable worker cooperatives does increase, perhaps consequently, then dependence on external agencies for cooperative education, in terms of technical and cooperative skills as well as in counter-cultural terms, may well decrease in the long run. In which case, the cooperative sector itself would be able to provide and organise, Mondragon-style, its own educational programmes, independent of external support.[88] And while it is still too early to evaluate the contribution of the MLM towards counter-cultural development in Malta, from a quantitative point of view, a number of initiatives have been taken which appear directed towards such a goal.[89]

Conclusion

The argument suggests that the mere imposition of a new form of work organisation does not necessarily entail any change of working patterns, or of attitudes, or of socio-economic structural change: To expect that cooperatives can by themselves transform the social environment has been proved to be quite illusory. In order to develop effective strategies it is necessary to understand, and to a considerable extent control, the process of social change. Instead of wasting precious resources on planting cooperatives in an unsuitable environment, efforts should rather be directed towards fostering changes in the society's infrastructural and superstructural fabric.

The Malta case provides a concrete example of how socio-economic, cultural and demographic variables could explain the existence of an a-cooperative or anti-cooperative environment and which therefore leads to an understanding of the present state and size of the maltese cooperative sector. It also illustrates the effect that a progressive social movement could have in changing this situation, by adopting a strategy which questions traditional authority and power relations and which appears directed at increasing in the long run the acceptability and operationality of a counter, proletarian culture. At the same time, in view of the recognised structural limitations imposed on the school system which do not permit it to support such a strategy of social transformation, a number of alternative ways were proposed in which a counter hegemonic educational strategy could be implemented.

But how is such a counter hegemonic educational strategy actually implemented? The importance of such a consideration

arises from the realisation, a product of my own experience in counter hegemonic educational planning and teaching, that such initiatives could easily prove counter-productive and themselves suffer degeneration. This will be the concern of the following chapter.

Notes to Chapter 4

1. For details on life in medieval Malta see Luttrell (1975); for general histories of Malta since 1530, see Blouet (1972) or Luke (1967).
2. Details on Malta's industrialization strategy are found in Blouet (1972) and Busuttil (1973).
3. Employment by sector in Malta has been as follows (by %) over the last 40 years:

Sector: Year:	1948	1958	1973	1983
Agriculture and Fisheries	24	9	7	4
Construction and Quarrying	8	8	4	6
Manufacturing and Shiprepair	9	10	30	28
Commerce	9	12	12	9
Transport/Banking and Private Services	11	14	18	22
Government Services	13	19	20	22
British Defence Establishment	24	24	5	-
Registered Unemployment	2	4	5	9
Total Labour Force i.e. 100%	92,171	92,330	102,546	120,922

Sources: Malta Development Plan 1981-85, p.49; Kester (1980,p.39); ILO (1985).

4. Zammit (1984,p.25, Note 48).
5. This is poignantly documented in the case of Dockyard workers by Ellul Galea (1973).
6. The pro-English faction, which was pressing for the integration of Malta with Britain in the late 1950s, coalesced round the Malta Labour Party. The pro-Italian faction coalesced round the Nationalist Party.

7. By Zammit (1984,especially Chapter 2). The corresponding Mertonian categories are the Deferential, Ritualistic, Innovative and the Rebellious - see Merton (1968).
8. As, for instance, documented and analyzed by Boissevain (1969b) .
9. See Note 3 above. It is important to note that there are twice as many part -time farmers as there are full-time ones: 10,903 as against 4,383 respectively, according to the latest Census of Agriculture.
10. The most recently available Census of Agriculture notes the following statistical details of the contemporary farming population:
    - 4383 full-time farmers - 3.7% of the gainfully occupied population - of which 3785 are male and 598 are female.
    - Agricultural land area worked down to 32,165 acres (41% of total land area) of which only 4.5% is fully or partly irrigated. The percentage of land area worked was 56% in 1959.
    - Over 92% of farm holdings are under 5 acres in extent - these are usually composed of fragmented, scattered units with an area of a quarter of an acre or less each.
11. Circa 1950, the percentage of total agricultural land owned by a farmer or his family was approximately 10%. Source: Bowen-Jones et.al. (1962 ,p.303,Table 40). Nevertheless, I have calculated the amount of surplus extracted by landowners as rent from tenant farmers to amount to an average of Two Maltese Pounds (US$ 6 approx) per full time farmer per year in 1983. Rent in kind is not normally practised. Source: Census of Agriculture 1982/83 pp.viii,16.
12. Blouet (1972,p.172).

13. These include solid waste recycling projects to provide effluent for irrigation; land reclamation schemes; poultry and other specialized farming; and concentration on high priced crops.
14. Camilleri (1984,pp.3-5).
15. As for example, in Kenya, Uganda and India. See Spear (1982,p.41) and Brett (1970).
16. For details on the 'deprivation trap' see Chambers (1983,pp.108-114). The relative affluence of farmers, arrived at via independent research, assumes a homogenous farming population. Therefore the suggestion - in OPTIMA (1985b,p.5) - that middlemen "often get a bigger share for their services than the farmer himself" might apply to the less well-off farmers.
17. The "structural bind" is a term coined by Young (1970) to describe peasants who know that they cannot redress an unequal power-balance individually but believe they can do so collectively - reported in Galjart (1975,p.77).
18. Reported in Bowen-Jones et.al. (1962,p.328).
19. While the details reported here are true, the name of the cooperative and its product are fictitious.
20. The quotation is taken from a dissertation by a University undergraduate completed in 1984.
21. Details taken from the same dissertation.
22. As described by Mr. H.Salman, lecturing at the Institute of Social Studies, The Hague - April 1986.
23. This explanation is suggested by Mann (1973,Chapter 5) and, more specifically to the Mediterranean, by Pitt-Rivers (1963).
24. Boissevain (1969,pp.134-5). For further elaboration on the changing role of the Catholic Church in Malta see Vassallo (1979).

25. See Zammit (1984,pp.15-15,36-37). Vassallo (1979,p.7) calls the Catholic Church in Malta "an almost surrogate form of political expression and nationalism".
26. The Maltese Islands comprise a total of 320 square kilometres. With an indigenous population of about 330,000, the resulting population density is one of the highest in the world for a nation state, even excluding the significant tourist inflow.
27. Vassallo (1979,p.14).
28. As elaborated by Boissevain (1969a,1974).
29. Hatt-Arnold et.al. (1964,pp.45-6).
30. So, for example, the paramount importance of job security in view of the long experience of an unstable labour demand determined primarily by external conditions beyond one's control. See Baldacchino et.al. (1986,p.209). Interestingly, Bowen-Jones et.al. (1962,p.352) describes how the distribution of settlements in Malta and the huge wealth and effort invested in churches are other reflections of fear and insecurity.
31. This technique has been used by Zammit (1979) and less extensively by Boissevain (1969b, passim); Zammit (1984, passim) and Stafrace (1984,p.77).
32. For example: "Ghall kull ghadma hawn mitt kelb" - (for every bone there are a hundred dogs); "Ahjar ghasfur f'idejk milli mija fl-ajru" - (better a bird in hand than a hundred in flight); "Minghajr qaddisin ma taghmel xejn" - (Nothing is possible without Saints).
33. Boissevain (1969b,p.132).
34. The Government, il-Gvern, is often "Vaguely referred to...as a remote centre of authority which is endowed with every conceivable power and which is held responsible for many economic and social problems" - Bowen Jones et.al. (1962,p.344).

35. So, for example, former Prime Minister Dom Mintoff has been projected as a father, a teacher and a man "sent to us from God" - a Saviour for Malta. See his personality analysis in Zammit (1984,Chapter 4).
36. Bowles & Gintis (1976,p.54).
37. In all fairness, a number of recent reforms have been introduced in the maltese state schools, aiming to rectify somewhat the imbalance against cooperative promotion. These include the introduction of Social Studies into the secondary school curriculum and a text on cooperatives for trade schools. Such reforms are however broadly insubstantial and of marginal effect.
38. Schooling "is the age-specific, teacher-related process requiring full-time attendance at an obligatory curriculum" - Illich (1972,pp.25-6).
39. The liberal myth of education as the avenue of social mobility is critically discussed with respect to the United States by Kessler-Harris and Silverman (1979, pp.605-7) and Bowles & Gintis (1976, Chapter 1).
40. Bowles & Gintis (1976,p.4).
41. Bowles (1974,p.220).
42. This takes place irrespective of socio-political and economic context. "Unequal schooling perpetrates a structure of economic inequality which originates outside the school system in the social relationships of the capitalist economy" - Bowles & Gintis (1976,p.242). While, in the Soviet Union, "the organisation of many school activities stresses group achievement rather than individual excellence... The top scholar is perceived as one who is industrious, highly motivated by the system, selfless and cooperative..." - Medlin et.al. (1971,pp.183, 193).
43. See, for example, Bowles & Gintis (1976,Chapter 4); Braverman (1974).

44. Giroux (1984,p.129).
45. Rousseau and Mill, theorists of participatory democracy, have their ideas on education discussed in Pateman (1970,Chapter 2).
46. See Dewey (1966); Freire (1972).
47. These are, once again, the ideas of Rousseau, Mill, George Cole and modern leftist theorists of Education, such as Gorz (1973) and Lerner (1973).
48. Illich (1972, pp.30-1).
49. Reisman et.al. (1954,pp.83-4)
50. Husen (1974, p.18)
51. Taken from Freire (1972,p.59)
52. Boissevain (1974) suggests that the struggle over scarce resources explains many behavioural and sociological traits among the Maltese.
53. Credentials, like marks, simplify and legitimate the process of social closure - see Parkin (1979,pp.54-60).
54. As was admitted in a recent interview by Dr.Alfred Sant, President of the Malta Labour Party and Chairman of the Commission for the Development of Higher Education: "One consequence (of the present system for entry into higher education) was that students just went flat out for as many subject grades as possible... The real difficulty is that nobody has a working alternative solution to what is being done now" - The Teacher (Movement of United Teachers publication), New Format, No.17, May 1986,p.16.
55. As is borne testimony by the short-lived epoch of participatory management in the maltese parastatal enterprise sector. See Kester (1980,pp.128-131, 150-153).
56. These details are taken from Rizzo (1985,pp.25-6). The maltese contemporary cooperative sector is outlined in Appendix I.
57. As argued also in Baldacchino (1986b,p.28)

58. As, for example, described by Sandbrook (1981,p.18) and Kerr & Siegel (1954).
59. This union was forced to change its function into that of a mutual aid society for the sick. Its name was also changed to "Società Operaia Cattolica San Giuseppe" - see Kester (1980,p.24).
60. The earliest legislation which allowed for trade union recognition was the Trade Union Act of 1929.
61. These included the Trade Union and Trade Disputes Ordinance (1945); the Industrial Training Act (1948); the Conciliation and Arbitration Act (1948) and the Conditions of Employment (Regulations) Act (1952).
62. These revolved round two main issues - the flouting of integration proposals with Britain and the commencement of the British Services sudden run-down.
63. These achievements are discussed within the context of the personality of the MLM's long-time charismatic leader, Dom Mintoff, in Zammit (1984,Chapter 4).
64. Article 21 of Malta's Republican Constitution (1974) states: "The State recognizes the social contribution of cooperatives and shall encourage their development" - quoted in Rizzo (1985,p.27).
65. The Cooperative Societies Ordinance, enacted by the British Colonial Administration in 1946 was amended by the Cooperative Societies Act in 1978.
66. The two textile cooperatives were created upon the initiative of the current President of the MLP, the Catering Cooperative is led by an activist and shop steward from the GWU; the Maintenance Cooperative was formed with the assistance of a left-wing intellectual.
67. While a strong participatory consciousness appears to have taken root among Drydocks workers - such that many now consider participation in management to be their right (Baldacchino 1984,p.47), nevertheless the industry has been regularly making heavy losses since 1982.

68. The history of Worker participation in Malta, particularly since 1971, is documented in Baldacchino et.al. (1986, pp.191-4).
69. See Kester (1980,Chapter 8).
70. A Management Committee at the country's only Casino was discretely made defunct when a private buyer for the establishment was found. An indefinite sit-in at the local radio and television broadcasting stations led to the formerly british owned firm becoming a state-owned company; a worker take-over still under way after many months in a metal furniture factory was fomented by the GWU Metal Workers' Section in view of wages being regularly overdue to workers.
71. Vassallo (1979,p.104) and Boissevain (1969b,p.134). This was most clearly evident during the french occupation of Malta (1798 - 1800).
72. One recent notable episode was the dispute over the status and financing of Church Schools in Malta.
73. For example: "A cardinal principle of Christian Democratic ideology is that all should participate in decisions which affect them closely; this not only in the political but also in the economic sphere... Elsewhere, we encourage the development of cooperatives..." translated from Partit Nazzjonalista (1986,pp.17-19).
74. The Nationalist Party did organize an employment bureau for some weeks when hundreds of its supporters were temporarily dismissed from work when they followed a Party directive not to report for work on a particular day in June 1982.
75. As indeed the four existing maltese worker cooperatives have shown. See Note 66 above.
76. Kester (1980,p.16) defends the importance of "social objectification" as follows: "Government intervention is a necessary but not a sufficient condition for

democratization. The propagation of ... self-management ... may be political window-dressing or even outright manipulation."

77. Stephens (1980,p.3) argues that structural designs can lead to either "integrative" or "transformative" consequences, reinforcing traditional perceptions and power relations, or inculcating new ones. The designs in themselves do not predetermine their effect.

78. As described by Inayatullah (1972,pp.270-1) and Bonow (1966).

79. A point suggested by Jones (1976) with respect to Britain.

80. The survey was presented as a course work assignment by students in the Faculty of Education at the University of Malta. The survey findings are summarised in Decelis et.al. (1985).

81. "...participation has a major effect on consciousness, serving to modify general values about work relationships and leading not only to increases in the desire for participation among workpeople but also to its acceptance as a 'normal' means of reaching decisions within society" - Poole (1975,p.29).

82. The few exceptions include certain postal and social services, but all Ministries and Government Departments remain situated in the capital city or its immediate suburbs.

83. The French and the British actually established short-lived village councils in 1798 and during the last century respectively. The Gozo Civic Council established in July 1961 is the latest effort to initiate a measure of local government - see Gulia (1966).

84. Boissevain (1966, p.2).

85. Similar ideas have also been put forward in the 1981-85 Development Plan but have not been implemented - See O.P.M. (1980,p.190).

86. As argued, for example, by Stojanovic (1973).

87. Thus, for example, both major political parties have active "Education Departments" which organise seminars, publish books and press releases, invite guest speakers on topical issues, etc.

88. Provision for this already exists in the Cooperative Societies Act (1978). Bringing into force Section 24 would establish an autonomous apex organisation which will provide, organise and supervise effective centralised services for the local cooperative sector, including cooperative education and training. With respect to the educational system in Mondragon, see Thomas & Logan (1982, pp.52-66).

89. These include: The establishment of University evening courses addressed at worker participants, including a 3-year Diploma course in Labour Studies; a number of locally produced television and radio programmes which highlight aspects of working class culture, worker participation and worker cooperatives; the establishment of the Workers' Participation Development Centre in 1981 which recently has been involved, in collaboration with the Central Cooperatives Board, in a long-term project of cooperative development; and a popular education programme by the GWU, launched "to enable participants to be in a position to understand well and have a sound knowledge of the basics of economics, political science and the social relationship between workers and the process of production" - see "Workers must take new initiatives", Labour Post (GWU monthly publication) March 1986,pp.19-20). Such imputs go hand in hand with the actual promotion of worker cooperatives, and a number of recent developments in this respect have been forthcoming. See Appendix II.

Chapter 5: Problematics of "Counter-Hegemonic" Education

The Dilemma

This chapter considers some of the problems associated with the provision of "counter-hegemonic" education. The major issue at stake is a fundamental dilemma which, unless resolved, can easily lead to the degeneration of the educational strategy such that it too ends up reflecting and reproducing the established power relations and cultural traits.[1] In view of its political long-term objective, counter-hegemonic education is meant to be the site of a battleground where different ideologies cross swords. Its objective is to develop a conceptual framework which challenges the dominant value system and which, at the same time, presents a conprehensible, alternative character; this, when all the ingredients available are themselves products of the dominant value system: The subject disciplines, the aids and technology, the teaching styles, the very teachers and students of the learning process. Even the language itself is a product of the dominant ethos: Such that, for instance, the terms teacher and student embody authoritarian, power-unequal relations.[2]

Subject Categories

The process of counter cultural educational provision involves the imparting of knowledge about the nature of society which enables one to probe deeper into its inner logic, clear away any assumptions implicit in the judgement of social phenomena, and therefore question what one may be otherwise inclined to take for granted.[3] Social Studies is perceived as the only adequate ground to cultivate such a "social literacy": An understanding of social institutions and the role of the individual within them, is felt, can only be grounded upon the

basic principles of economics, sociology, law. political science, psychology and anthropology.[4]

It is however all too easy to maintain the artificial academic subdivisions between these "school subjects", often constrained by the availability of teaching personnel who are only competent in one specialised domain and no other. Yet, effective teaching should recognise that these are unreal fragmentations of total human experience, and therefore one should be free to draw from different formal disciplines and treat whole problems and issues as such at any particular time, once these are considered relevant to (or, better still, by) the group in question.[5]

This may prove easier when the educators are not professional teachers. Workers from the production line, trade unionists, managers, leaders and animators in social and community affairs could perform a very relevant role in counter-hegemonic education,[6] and could take to a problem-solving, multi-disciplinary approach more easily and naturally.

Teacher-Student Relations

A second issue related to professional teachers is that they tend not to be student-centered in their normal routines at school: Their concern with keeping time, imparting a set package of information, abiding by an established curriculum, keeping aloof and insisting on authoritarian control of the classroom...such constraints are carried over and assumed even outside school. The consequence of such a transposition is that the educational programme becomes counter-productive, reinforcing rather than challenging and replacing the anti/a-cooperative skills and attitudes inculcated by the school and the wider society. The requirements of educational

activity for worker cooperativism are such that the style of the activity itself "should be cooperative to the greatest possible degree as much as self-management itself."[7]

This does not imply that there is no longer any room for any teaching - that is, for the imparting of knowledge and skills by individuals appointed for that purpose. After all, the importance of competent, professional management has been recognised within worker cooperatives as one of the prerequisites for viable economic performance. But then, such managerial staff remain ultimately accountable to the workforce. Thus, generally speaking, a change is necessary in the authoritarian relation between teacher and student, which would reflect better the relation between a manager and any worker-member in a worker cooperative.

This is not an easy task, since both sides of the learning process have been formed in the old style: Potential students may give in to the scorn and ridicule encountered from peers for "going back to school". And, if such social pressures are overcome, thay may seek authoritarian answers as they have been accustomed to do.[8] The teachers, on their part, trained as professional disseminators of information, may be predominantly concerned with the preservation of the control over "cultural capital": Knowledge.[9] One way this manifests itself is in considering that the imparting of information - especially one's brand of information - is so important that little time is left for anything else.[10]

Group Work

One pedagogic technique which is especially relevant to the development of cooperative skills is group work. It is suggested from social psychological research that there are many ways in whcih cooperation can be taught and understood,

and that such methods often lead to both better individual and group performances, apart from improved interpersonal relationships.[11] Teaching strategies, however, should incorporate tasks that are appropriate to a cooperative structure and construct groups in a way that allows individuals to participate equally. There ought therefore be careful preparation of topics as well as of personnel and physical components.[12] Otherwise, group work sessions may be manipulated by domineering individuals who stifle group discussion and assume leadership status which the rest of the group may be all too willing to concede. Such authoritarian led groups may perform effectively in the short run and in the presence of their leader; democratically led groups, in contrast, would tend to take more time to reach agreement but then perform more effectively in the long term, even in the group leader's absence.[13]

This is not to argue that leadership is some intrinsically evil phenomenon to be weeded out from democratically run units, be they worker cooperatives or educational group sessions. To the contrary, evidence suggests that the question of leadership is quite a crucial one, particularly in cooperative structures.[14] The point, rather, is that such leadership, which may indeed be charismatic, remains accountable to the general membership and respectful of its participatory rights.

A recent innovation in group work technique is the T-Group: A meeting of some eight to twelve individuals, with an experienced trainer, concerned to learn more about themselves and the way people relate to one another in order to influence change within organisations and the wider community. The teacher, relative to the traditional role of a teacher, is passive, intervening in the discussion about as often as the

other members of the group. When such interventions take place, it is not to take up the traditional didactic role: Rather, it is to encourage the members to observe and reflect on group processes; to offer interpretations of member behaviour; to suggest that other group members share their feelings in relation to group events.

Games and Play

Other educational devices and formats which foster group consciousness and which are not rooted in authoritarian relations between the two sides of the learning process include also role play and other games.[15] These allow students to live situations in which they can bring their own experiences and skills to bear, taking realistic decisions and facing the consequences. In participating in such educational activities, the student becomes involved deeply, and may start understanding the socio-psychological processes which influence his and others' behaviour, the relations of power between different people, the usefulness of group cooperation as against competition. Hence, the direction of the programme is towards the awakening of consciousness, a change of mentality involving an accurate, realistic awareness of one's locus in nature and in society; the capacity to analyse critically its causes and consequences, and rational action directed at its transformation.[16]

Participation in the Management of Education

Democratizing education also means involving more people in its management. Areas in which such an involvement could occur include the fixing of educational objectives, the establishment and organisation of courses, the definition of subject matter, handling problems of method and of pedagogy,

recruitment of teaching personnel, supervision of results and dealing with salaries and regulations.[17] The involvement of students in such areas of decision making may be thwarted by the initiators of the educational programmes who may consider such an involvement as unnecessary, presumptuous and an invitation to trouble, since students would be expected to manipulate the process of decision making to their own advantage. While this may be true for the students, it may be also true for the "managers" of the educational programme. The likelihood remains that, even if avenues for co-management and self-management are institutionalised, they may be manipulated, perhaps quite unconsciously, such that students may be presented with a "fait accompli" which makes further deliberation superfluous or else, they may be overawed and subdued by the professional authority and persuasive talents of their educated mentors. This, in itself, is an argument for providing worker education.[18] Otherwise, the condition is likely to lead to management interests being put on the agenda and eventually being advanced. The experience is closely paralleled by that of workers involved in "participation in decision making within undertakings" where managerial rights tend to be consolidated and managerial authority more strongly legitimized.[19]

Selection Criteria

Most institutions of learning, traditionally, have been receptive only to such students who have completed a prescribed set of studies and performed at a specified level on accepted examinations. Such selection criteria are to change if one is not to discriminate against the multitude without the traditional requisite credentials. Consequently, such details as work experience; activism in worker and community organisations; leadership qualities; and experience in participatory structures

should be included among alternative selection guidelines. Nevertheless, credentials are not the major obstacles towards enrolment to counter-hegemonic education programmes. More fundamental constraints include lack of finance, unavailability of time, unavailability of domestic support and study space. Such constraints are more difficult to mitigate, and are particularly responsible for low levels of female enrolment. While public and trade union funds may be forthcoming to subsidize worker participants, these may all the same be dissuaded due to a considerable loss in terms of opportunity cost: having to forfeit overtime or a supplementary job to attend classes and to study. The ILO adopted Convention number 140 in 1974 in favour of paid educational leave and ratification of this by Governments would act as a partial solution. However, up till 1985, only seventeen countries had ratified the convention; and, even then, the principle is mainly applied to formal types of education.[20]

'Distance Learning'

One other way of circumventing the issues described above is to adopt "distance learning" techniques, making use of mass media to carry the message.[21] Radio, newspapers and, more recently, television, are being used for worker education purposes, exposing a larger number of persons to educational stimuli, even though they cannot provide the depth and scope of coverage that is possible in a more extended course of study. In industrialising countries with still widespread illiteracy, radio is the only advanced communication technique which has found a proper place. Its low cost, adequate reliability, low maintenance requirements and widespread distribution have been used to good effect in a number of countries.[22] Still, poeple seem to be mesmerised by the reputedly greater efficiency of other media, notably television,

particularly since the latter reproduces both audio and visual cues. However, all too often, sophisticated communications technology ends up transmitting western produced software imbued with western values; therefore the technology acts as an instrument of cultural domination.[23] Also, such technology, sophisticated as it might be, allows only one-way traffic, which is amenable not to discussion but to rhetoric, and vests considerably more power in the hands of the transmitter vis-à-vis the receiver. In contrast, a significantly larger educational role can be played by interactive networks - such as the postal service, the telephone or the two-way radio which can be extended to conference circuits. Such distance learning aids would help to facilitate access between participants in the learning process and develop in them a sense of self-sufficiency to pursue their own education. In contrast, one-way traffic technology (which often includes the teacher) mystifies the source of knowledge.[24]

Focus on Women

From experience, it has proved very difficult to organise educational courses for working women, particularly wives and mothers, because their 'dual burden' does not permit them the necessary time, energy and commitment. Unless this issue is handled and faced squarely, then the appeal for a cooperative culture and society will be implicitly an appeal for preserving the patriarchal structure of social and political life. Participation, democracy and cooperation at the workplace would be thus implicitly treated as the preserve of men, while, behind the scenes, women continue to provide the material and emotional support essential for the reproduction and maintenance of labour power. It is so much part of our life, that it is easy to miss this crucial point: The workers who are to enjoy

the new opportunities and responsibilities of cooperative management would be in a favourable position to do so precisely because they have wives.[25]

True, women now account for a substantial proportion of the occupational labour force in many countries, including Malta.[26] However, female workers remain culturally, socially and economically disadvantaged: They are not represented equally in the various sectors of the economy; they are apt to be less skilled than men; when skilled, they usually hold subordinate posts with little prospect of promotion; their wages for identical work are generally lower than those of their male colleagues, in spite of basic "equal wage for equal work" legislation.[27] They, especially married mothers, also tend to be concentrated in part-time or casual occupations with low security of employment and with limited entitlement to various social welfare provisions. They are thus the most likely victims of reduced labour demand. Women's first responsibility in the eyes of society (and of their menfolk?) still tends in many cultures towards the home and motherhood. Thus, most of those women who do take up paid employment, do so as part of a double shift: One paid at "work" and one unpaid at the home. Women are therefore structurally inhibited from taking their place as equal participants and full members of democratic workplaces. Their disadvantage with respect to men is reflected in the relative scarcity with which one finds women engaged in extra-home, community affairs. In Malta, as elsewhere, Parliament, trade unions, cooperatives and worker education classes are invariably male dominated affairs. It may therefore be suggested that radical changes in the domestic sphere as well as at the workplace and in the wider community ought to be the targets of "counter-hegemonic" education.

Conclusion

The issues raised in this chapter correspond to one of the fundamental principles which should guide the design of educational programmes for democratic workplaces: An identity between the practice of self-management and the nature of educational programmes for self-management.[29] The discussion centered on a number of pitfalls "counter-hegemonic" education could fall into, leading to its own degeneration. The recommendations made in this respect should be seen as ideal situations to be aimed at; their actual operationalisation is as much a long-term process as the strategy of cooperative development; and, similar to the latter, it must also start off from a position of dependence - in its case, on the educational agency - from which it is gradually to be weaned.

Such counter-hegemonic education is nevertheless possible. The Mondragon worker cooperative movement began through the efforts of five graduates who had studied at a small technical school that had been established years before by a Jesuit priest in that Basque community. While the curriculum is focused on technical subjects, the school itself - now developed into a fully-fledged polytechnic and a students' factory - is operated according to the same cooperative principles as the other cooperative firms.[30]

Notes to Chapter 5

1. Interestingly, Haddab (1985) discusses how projects which were originally established with the aim of fostering lifelong education in Algeria were diverted towards becoming mere ideological pronouncements, fulfilling the objectives already held by institutions that form part of the traditional educational system.
2. Schuller (1981,p.285).
3. Rizzo (1985b,p.3).
4. Lee & Entwistle (1966,pp.105-6).
5. Hopkins (1985,p.42). The argument is similar to Marx's criticism of "vulgar economics" in contrast to "political economy" - See Marx (1970,p.85); Rowthorn (1974).
6. Gelpi (1985a,p.18).
7. Vanek (1975,p.36).
8. Lewis (1969,p.31).
9. This has been argued with respect to all professionals by Illich (1977).
10. Hopkins (1985,p.168).
11. Gamson & Levin (1984,p.242).
12. Hopkins (1985,p.170).
13. A pioneering study over the effect of leadership styles on group performance is that by Lippitt & White (1960).
14. There is a persistent association between cooperative structures and charismatic leadership - Cruz Azul in Mexico, the Comilla Academy in Bangladesh, Mondragon, Deeder Cooperative in Pakistan are cases in point. The issue beckons further analysis.
15. The advantage of using games as educational tools has long been recognised by management development agencies. See for example Williams (1961).
16. Such is the Freirean pedagogy of "conscientization". See

Freire (1972, 1974). Such approaches generally utilize elements of popular culture which can be considered as counterpoints and which show that there is already some kind of resistance to the dominant culture on which counter-cultural education could be based - see Huizer (1975). For a concrete application of the Freirean perspective see the educationalobjectives and processes of the International Cooperative University in Mexico in Haubert (1986).

17. Fauré et.al. (1972,p.78).

18. Baldacchino (1985b) discusses the importance of worker education as a means to improve the chances of successful negotiation by worker representatives in their dealings with professionally trained, managerial staff.

19. Within this perspective fall many of the practices of the Human Relations School - see for criticism Panitch (1978); King & Van der Vall (1978,Chapter 1); Pateman (1983, passim).

20. Hopkins (1985,p.193). In Italy the "150 hours" educational leave is mainly used for the completion of compulsory schooling - Lichtner (1985,p.122).

21. Although it has been claimed that a commitment to time-off during working hours is an "essential prerequisite" for broadcast worker education programmes to be effective - Turner & Count (1981,p.392).

22. The use and misuse of radio as an educational medium is discussed in relation to Dahomey (Benin), Togo, Mali, Niger and Zaire by Defever (1977).

23. For example, in eleven industrializing countries surveyed by Katz (1977), an average of 55% of television broadcasting time was taken up by imported programmes, and the proportion was even higher if one examined only prime time hours. The United States was the predominant supplier.

24. Illich (1972,p.76).
25. As argued by Pateman (1983,pp.115-8).
26. In 1960, the lowest female participation rate in the OECD countries was the Netherlands with 22% - see OECD(1970). In Malta, the rate is currently 29% as reported in Labour Post (GWU Publication) No.40, Sept.1986 p.19.
27. Even in the Mondragon Cooperatives, women have not acquired equal access to higher job strata - Thomas & Logan (1982,pp.65,69).
28. Boissevain (1966) is a dated but comprehensive study of the changing position of women in maltese society.
29. Vanek (1977). He also includes these other principles: Full disclosure; transparency; pairing of co-workers; proximity between educational activities and the workplace; subordination of training in skills to the development of a critical consciousness. Levin (1980,1981) identifies independently five dimensions which require changes in the educational system: The ability to participate in group decisions; capacity for increased individual decision-making; minimum competences in basic skills; capacity to receive and give training to colleagues; cooperative skills.
30. Thomas & Logan (1982,pp.52-59).

Chapter 6: Concluding Observations

A Review of the Argument

The main task being handled in this paper is the examination of the function of education in fostering worker cooperatives which are recognised as instruments capable of redirecting inequality, poverty and reduced job opportunities and at the same time redirecting also the alienation, deskilling and the treatment of labour as a mere factor of production which is prevalent in the immediate workplace experience of both state and private capitalism. This is not to imply that the issue of labour control/motivation becomes irrelevant in a worker cooperative setting; indeed, the absence of clear positions of authority may make it more problematic, as has been described in Chapter Three. Rather, labour control/motivation is recognised as a necessary feature of any society which depends upon labour power for the process of production.[1] Still,worker cooperatives are seen as holding a potential for a form of labour control/motivation which is more attractive and rewarding, less dehumanising but just as stable as those practised under both state and private capitalism.

This paper recognized from the start the importance of some form of external support and supervision to exist with respect to a cooperative sector such that the latter's democratic principles and minimal standards of working conditions are upheld. This was followed by an examination of the factors leading to poor cooperative performance, from which the significance of the socio-economic and cultural environment on cooperative success was identified. So much so that the degeneration of a cooperative into yet another structure which reflects and reproduces the existing dominant socio-economic relations and cultural traits appears only to be

prevented by a definite investment in social transformation. Hence the need for external support recurs with a more concrete agent in mind: A progressive social movement which will advance (perhaps from a position of political power) a long-term strategy of social change, which it will motivate, defend and inspire from above. Concurrently, the social movement should promote an effective educational strategy which nurtures and expands the radius and influence of "counter hegemonic" culture from below. The latter was recognized as difficult to implement within the context of the formal educational system, because of the school's intimate, functional relationship with the existing socio-economic and cultural logic of domination. Outside the school, there does however seem to be a stronger likelihood of success. Yet, for counter-cultural education to be effectively developed, one must be aware of the dangers which could subvert the counter-cultural educational strategy itself: The degeneration problem is not simply one of worker cooperatives but of all elements anomalous to the dominant value system and relations of production.

Emerging Propositions

The research undertaken to elaborate the above argument has brought to light a number of general propositions of which those involved or interested in setting up successful worker cooperatives should perhaps be aware:

a) The worker cooperative form of production can be functionally advantageous to its broader economic context, by effectively subsidizing it, with the consequences of low wages and unsuitable conditions of work for cooperative members.

b) The worker cooperative as a structure cannot simply

be imported and transplanted piecemeal from any one context into another. An appreciation of the socio-economic and cultural environment, the society's infrastructure and superstructure, is necessary.

c) The socio-cultural supersturcture, although a reflection of power relations at the infrastructural level, is in itself a powerful factor which contributes to the atrophy of anomalous forms of production into "normal" ones in any economy, especially if they are economically viable. This can be posited as an explanation to the pervasive "degeneration problem".

d) The provision of technical and cooperative education is necessary but, by itself, will not effectively defend worker cooperatives from the conditions of (a) and (c) above. A progressive social movement which invests in counter-hegemonic education was proposed as a solution.

e) Counter-hegemonic education is not readily implementable via the school system because, being a component of the social superstructure, its very function is to legitimize and reproduce the exisiting power relations and the values supportive of such relations (patriarchy, hierarchy, competition, individualism, consumerism...)

f) The provision of counter-hegemonic education does not only involve pedagogic provision; this should ideally involve also the provision of experiences of cooperation and participatory democracy at work and in society, together with an improvement in the position of women, in and outside the home.

g) One of the fundamental principles of counter-hegemonic education is that it should be cooperative to the greatest possible degree as much as self-management itself. Traditional authoritiarian teaching practices should therefore be replaced by more democratic ones, where that is applicable.

Directions for future research

As a conclusion, it is worthwhile making some further observations on certain points developed in the research paper which beckon further and more elaborate analysis:

a) The Issue of Autonomy versus Dependency - Education in counter-culture, which also includes experiences of collective action and decision-making, was suggested as a crucial component to supplement a social movement's activities towards successfully establishing a worker cooperative sector. This is because worker cooperativism has been proposed as an avenue for creating space where people can "self-actualise", control their own future, and refuse all forms of tutoring, dependency and conformism.[2] In other words, people cannot be developed; they can only develop themselves.[3]

However, for such a self-managed development to take off, the initiative of the social movement has been recognised as vital: It is unrealistic to expect significant grass roots initiatives towards worker cooperativism to occur and, even then, the likelihood of liquidation or degeneration loom large, unless a social movement slips in to supervise and support. Therefore, a social movement may be deemed responsible towards supporting the fledgling cooperative sector; at the same time such a movement must help workers to educate themselves in the practice of self-management.[4]

The social movement here has a critical choice: a choice between either creating a genuine self-managed sector or keeping down and manipulating people. The choice may be within the social movement's control, and determined by the power dynamics among its leadership; otherwise, the

choice may be made implicitly by the outcome of certain courses of action;[5] or else, the choice may be determined by the power struggle between the social movement and the cooperative sector it is fostering and which may be developing aspirations for fuller, democratic self-management.[6] These possibilities - and there may be others - indicate that an element of faith and trust in the leadership of the social movement may be quite inevitable; after all, in terms of power and influence, fostering an autonomous cooperative sector is against the social movement's interests. At the same time, the process of counter-cultural development is a dynamic one, not only in terms of the perpetual struggle against degeneration, but also in terms of the shifting and diverse political objectives of the cooperative process held by those involved and which are in some way resolved.[7] In this respect, it would be interesting to examine actual cases of self-management initiatives to assess the significance of "noble aspirations" among the social movements' leadership and the impact of power politics as the self-management experience unfolds.[8]

b) The Location and Operationality of a Cooperative Sector - The argument has suggested that, the best chance of a worker cooperative movement being successfully established is at the meso-level in society: The micro-level is weak and vulnerable, liable to degeneration and liquidation, more likely to serve a "reserve army" function and having little spill-over influence, as has been discussed. The macro-level, that is, a cooperative society replacing capitalist relations of production, hegemony and all, is quite utopic and unrealistic.[9] As has been discussed in the case of Malta, the economic

structures and the integration of such structures in the world economy, not to mention the interests thus generated among the local dominant classes, makes such countries part and parcel, though perhaps unwillingly so, of the world capitalist system.[10] The actual possibilities ahead for operationalising worker cooperativism are conjectural. But if Mondragon, the U.S. plywood cooperatives and the french building cooperatives can be taken as models, then it seems that the likelihood is for a condition of "dual power" with a cooperative sector/environment in articulation with a capitalist one. Thus, unless the cooperative sector develops into a self-sufficient, self-contained enclave,[11] it is recognised that there will always remain external constraints impinging on the working of cooperative firms - such as market mechanisms, state policies, international events, the requirements of economic viability and competitivity, the inflow and outflow of goods and services.[12] The threat of degeneration will remain, although it may reach the point of being bi-directional.[13] The dynamics of such an articulation are beyond the scope of this study; but it would be interesting to consider them further either theoretically or from case material.

c) Marx Reconsidered - The foregoing analysis faithfully supports the hypothesis that no society can escape its past in looking for a future.[14] Every society lies embedded in a historical process which is determined by the way people relate to each other in the course of production and, going beyond class, by other cultural elements which together provide the general structure of hegemony, in whose context social stability and change are to be understood. Therefore, while the concept of hegemony as domination is useful to appreciate how social

> and cultural reproduction and legitimation take place, it could be extended to include an analysis of how it functions to empower specific social movements to engage in, and bring about, social change.[15]
>
> The hypothesis that social change can be brought about in spite of the heritage of the past requires further investigation. The extent to which Marx's well-known statement - that it is men's social being which determines their consciousness[16] - is reductionist is debatable.[17] But it is precisely on the extent to which a society can escape from being "the captive of its own history"[18] that the potential of progressive social movements for bringing about social change is based. Marx's historical determinism, influenced by Hegel's dialectic,[19] does recognise the potential for social chnage. However, that such change is confined to the relatively fixed direction of class dynamics has been contested.[20] Marxist laws of social development could be seen as laws of tendency only;[21] and this is, perhaps, as Marx himself intended them to be seen.[22]

Perhaps rigorous, empirical field work would be helpful to assess the effects that progressive social movements have on people's values and social perceptions, if at all;[23] such an investigation would also help determine the conditions and dynamics which lead to the origins of social movements themselves.[24]

Notes to Chapter 6

1. See Harrod (1986) who also suggests that "labour control" and "labour motivation" are interchangeable.
2. Gelpi (1985b, p.22).
3. J.K.Nyerere: Speech on Freedom and Development, October 1968. Reported in Nyerere (1973, p.60).
4. Raptis (1980, p.67). A similar point is made by Luxemburg (1970, p.78): The dictatorship of the proletariat "...must proceed step by step out of the active participation of the masses... it must arise out of the growing political training of the mass of people".
5. As in fact has been described with respect to educational provision in Chapter 5.
6. Yeo (1980) discusses this dilemma as the need to reconcile patronage and self-reliance.
7. Stephens (1980) adopts a similar approach in analyzing the Peruvian experience of industrial democracy in the period 1968-1975.
8. For example, certain developments at Malta Drydocks, which operates under a form of self-management, may have occurred not because, but in spite, of the MLM leadership's support. This hypothesis cannot however be substantiated and carries in itself the potential for future research.
9. Although, admittedly, the overthrow of capitalism was the long-term objective of the Gramscian vision.
10. As has been argued ad nauseam by the theorists of the Dependency School. See, for example, Wallerstein (1979). Frank (1983) has argued that for socialist self-reliance to take place, industrialising countries must 'de-link' themselves from the capitalist world system. For a criticism of the dependency theory, see Leys (1977).

11. As it may be tempted to do as a defence mechanism for self-preservation.
12. Vanek (1982) in fact considers some of these constraints, which include inflation, depreciation and investment decisions.
13. If a strong cooperative sector is developed, then a process of 'counter-degeneration' could take place.
14. Hyden (1983, p.191).
15. Giroux (1984, p.121).
16. Taken from Marx (1911, p.15).
17. See, for example, Cottrell (1984, Chapters 1 & 2) for an attempt at reconciling different degrees of reductionism in the works of Marx.
18. Hyden (1983, p.213).
19. For an analysis of the influence of Hegel on Marx, see Balinsky (1970, Chapter 2).
20. For example, in Aronowitz(1981) and Giroux (1984).
21. Merrington (1968, p.147).
22. Ibid., p.146. He argues that this blind belief in the irreversible forces of history is not a legacy of Marx but of the professorial marxism of the Second International.
23. Zammit (1979, 1984) studied Malta Drydocks GWU shop stewards for evidence that they were internalizing socialist perceptions propounded by the MLM leadership. The hypothesis was that, being the vanguard followers of the MLM, they would be most likely to manifest such perceptual shifts from the entire maltese population. The result of the study showed that minimal perceptual shifts have taken place so far.
24. In this respect, the theoretical contributions of Offe, Habermas and Touraine applicable to contemporary society are useful; they all transcend the limits of exclusive class analysis. See a review of their position in Cohen (1982).

Appendix I

Registered Cooperatives in Malta (May 1985)

Service Cooperatives	Sector	Membership
Gozo Milk & Agricultural Cooperative Soc.	Agric.	1,068
Agricultural & Trading Cooperative Soc.	"	645
Rabat Farmer Cooperative Society	"	302
Milk Producers' Cooperative	"	214
Pig Producers' Cooperative	"	181
Dingli Farmers' Cooperative Society	"	103
St.Paul's Bay Farmers' Cooperative Society	"	77
Farmers' Wine Cooperative Society	"	75
Siggiewi Farmers' Cooperative Society	"	74
Mgarr Farmers' Cooperative Society	"	63
Zebbug Farmers' Cooperative Society	"	57
Zabbar Farmers' Cooperative Society	"	41
Qormi Farmers' Cooperative Society	"	40
MAS Cooperative	"	20
The Fisheries Cooperative	Fishing	215
Stevedores' Cooperative	Transport	15
Farmers' Central Cooperative Society	2nd level agricultural coop.	
Worker Cooperatives Established since 1983		
Catering Cooperative Ltd.	Catering	23
Cooperative Maintenance Services Ltd.	Repairs	9
First Clothing Cooperative	Textile	26
Kordin Clothing Cooperative	Textile	26

Source: Reply to a Parliamentary question by the Minister of Agriculture & Fisheries, May 1985. The table was reproduced in Rizzo (1985,p.37).

Appendix II

Recent Developments in Cooperativism in Malta

The following press cuttings give an indication of contemporary developments in cooperativism in Malta, practically all of which have taken place upon the initiative of the Malta Labour Movement:

1. The Deputy General Secretary of the GWU talks about the advantages of worker cooperation and of the need for worker education as he opens a popular education programme for which a thousand participants had registered. See Exhibit A - Labour Post (GWU monthly publication), March 1986, p.19-20.
2. The Minister of Agriculture and Fisheries (who is also the Minister responsible for Cooperatives) discloses that a meat company is to be established with majority shareholding reserved for the farmer-members of the Milk Producers' Cooperative (KPH) - see Exhibit B - L-Orizzont (GWU daily newspaper).
3. Also reported in the same press cutting above is that the former state-owned milk marketing undertaking was transfered into a company whose majority shares are reserved for the farmer-members of the KPH.
4. The Minister of Agriculture & Fisheries talks about the benefits which have accrued to those farmers who have formed cooperatives. He claims that cooperation is the only means for the primary sector to wean itself from subsidies - See Exhibit C - L-Orizzont, 28th April 1986, p.15.
5. The GWU establishes a committee to make preparatory work for the setting up of a worker cooperative for taxi drivers - see Exhibit D - L-Orizzont, 26th July 1986,p.2 and Labour Post, September 1986, p.22.

Exhibit A

WORKERS MUST TAKE NEW INITIATIVES

WHILE workers must once and for all put aside the antiquated mentality that only capitalists are capable of setting up and managing enterprises, they should at the same time have the courage to take new initiatives by involving themselves more actively and directly in the economic fields and whenever there is the necessity or possibility organise cooperatives to establish new undertakings of their own.

This was stated by Harold Walls, Deputy General Secretary of the General Workers' Union (GWU), while delivering an opening speech during the inauguration session of a Course in Political Economy organised for union members by the GWU Education Committee.

EDUCATION

Forming part of a vast and wide-ranging programme of Popular Education for 1986 by the Education Committee of the union, the course – which is being attended by around one hundred participants – includes lectures by experts in the various fields of economics.

Harold Walls said the aim of the course is to enable the participants to be in a position to understand well and have a sound knowledge of the basics of economics, political science and the social relationship existing between the workers and the process of production.

Everyone knows, he said, that in order to survive man must produce those things which are essential for life – such as food and clothes – and he must also build the houses where to make his home. This brings the worker who produces in a social relation with the process of production.

There are three systems of economy, Harold Walls said. First there is the capitalist system where industry and all the means of production of the country are all and totally in the hands and under the control of a few private people who own capital and therefore the profits made from production go for the benefit of these few who one could also say are the privileged ones.

Secondly there is the socialist system where all economic activity is jointly in the hands of the state and the workers with the result that profits made by undertakings are shared between the state and the workers.

In the third instance there is the mixed economy system combining together the capitalist and socialist systems and where the economic setup is composed of both state and private-owned undertakings and also joint ventures between the two sectors – public and private.

The latter is the economic system existing in Malta and this system was chosen by the ruling social democratic Malta Labour Party and the GWU because it is the best one for the country's environment which has a lot of limitations and no natural resources whatsoever till now.

Malta's developing economy and its needs for the generation of jobs require investments by the state and investments by local and foreign entrepreneurs so that all the country's financial assets would be put for useful purposes to activate all possible national wealth.

But all the vital sectors of the Maltese economy, Harold Walls emphasised, must remain state-owned in the supreme interests of the country and, especially, the workers – because these sectors are the main arteries that convey the blood of life to all sectors of production and services.

These vital sectors of the economy include the national airline Air Malta, the national shipping line Sea Malta, the telecommunications corporation Telemalta, the energy corporation Enemalta and the commercial banks.

BENEFITS

Profits being made by these vital sectors of the Maltese economy are being passed over to government – and therefore to the people – to make good for a part of the vast financial resources required for social benefits, for free education from the primary up to the tertiary level, and for free medical treatment and health care for all citizens.

If these high earning sectors were in the hands of a few private individuals who own capital, then the Maltese workers would not have been in a position to benefit from them in such a wide-spread way from their profits and government would have had to resort to taxes in order to finance social benefits, education and health.

Being without national resources and a very small country with a relatively big population for its size, Malta has to import most of its needs, including foodstuffs and all raw material needed for industrial production. The importation sector is therefore very essential and a big profit making one.

Harold Walls opined that this sector could be of a great benefit for all if it is handled – especially where essential items are concerned – by workers' cooperatives so that the profits made from this business would not go into the pockets of a few importers and who, come rain or shine, always have it good.

COOPERATIVES

Workers should be encouraged to set up cooperatives. As an example Harold Walls mentioned the Catering Cooperative Society Limited which runs three restaurants that were previously owned by a private company and wanted to close them down because of the big losses it was making.

To save their jobs the GWU wisely led the workers to form a cooperative and start running the three restaurants themselves. And they have succeeded in their venture and are making increasingly encouraging profits while their jobs are fully safeguarded.

Another case is that of the Bezzina Bros. Limited kitchen and office steel furniture manufacturing plant. For a long time the workers' jobs were in jeopardy and the plant was on the verge of closing down. But while showing great courage and initiative, and well guided by the GWU, they are now running the undertaking themselves with very positive results.

Harold Walls said that these are all proofs that workers could and have the ability to run enterprises with the same efficiency as private entrepreneurs – and sometimes even with much more efficiency.

In order to take new initiatives and be successful in them, the workers should have a sound knowledge of at least the basic principles of economics which, together with political science, have a forceful determining effect on the social progress of the country as a whole – and the workers are the backbone of the country.

Exhibit B

l-orizzont – It-Tnejn, 21 ta' April, 1986

Il-Ministru tal-Biedja u Sajd is-Sur Joe Debono Grech jidher flimkien ma' uffiċjali tal-K.P.H. ikellem lir-raħħala preżenti għal-laqgħa ġenerali annwali.

IL-LAQGĦA ĠENERALI ANNWALI TAL-K.P.H.

Se titwaqqaf kumpanija tal-laħam

•VALLETTA, il-Ħadd. – Il-Ministru tal-Biedja u Sajd, is-Sur J. Debono Grech, ħabbar illum li l-Gvern qiegħed jaħdem biex flimkien mar-raħħala Maltin u ma' kumpanija barranija, iwaqqaf kumpanija tal-laħam fuq l-istess linji li waqqaf il-kumpanija Malta Dairy Products, li ħadet post l-MMU, u li l-akbar sehem tagħha jinsab f'idejn ir-raħħala Maltin u Għawdxin permezz tal-Koperattiva tal-Produtturi tal-Ħalib.

Il-Ministru Debono Grech ħabbar dan meta dal-għodu kien qiegħed jindirizza l-Laqgħa Ġenerali Annwali tal-Koperattiva Produtturi tal-Ħalib, li saret fil-bini tal-Malta Dairy Products, il-Ħamrun.

Huwa żied igħid li s-sehem tar-raħħal fil-kumpanija l-ġdida jrid ikun wieħed dirett. Dan biex ma jibqgħux l-abbużi b'laħam tal-friża jinbiegħ bħala ċanga friska. "Dan huwa abbuż li jrid jinqata'. Il-kumpanija jkollha sehem importanti wkoll fejn jirrigwarda importazzjoni ta' barrin għall-qatla. Min ikun irid jidħol fil-kumpanija l-ġdida, irridu naraw kemm veru jkollu interess. Iżda ħadd daqs ir-raħħal ma' jista' jkollu interess dirett. Ma rridux li jkun hemm min isir sinjur minn fuq dahar ir-raħħal," sostna l-Ministru Debono Grech.

Il-Ministru żied igħid li meta fil-kumpanija Malta Dairy Products iddaħħal is-sehem barrani kien hemm min qal li l-Gvern għamel dan biex jeħles mir-raħħala. Il-Ministru qal li llum ir-raħħal jafu li din kienet gidba u li dan kien tixwix. Ir-raħħala llum kisbu l-frott diġa' minkejja li l-kumpanija għadha kemm bdiet taħdem. Il-Ministru qal li s-sehem barrani kien meħtieġ minħabba n-nuqqas ta' esperjenza lokalment f'din il-materja. Huwa għall-istess raġuni li anke fil-kumpanija tal-laħam se jiddaħħal is-sehem barrani.

Il-Ministru kompla jgħid li fit-twaqqif tal-Malta Dairy Products l-aktar kwistjonijiet kienu dwar dak li sostna l-Gvern, li jekk xi ħadd minn dawk li jiffurmaw il-kumpanija jkun irid ibiegħ is-sehem tiegħu, dan ma jistax jagħmlu, jekk mhux lir-raħħal. Huwa qal li jinsab żgur li din il-problema terġa' tqum meta tiġi biex titwaqqaf il-kumpanija tal-laħam.

Fil-bidu tad-diskors tiegħu l-Ministru tkellem dwar ir-raħħal fejn jikkonċerna l-ħalib u l-kumpanija l-ġdida Malta Dairy Products. Huwa qal li kien hemm min daħak meta hu kien qal li l-MMU għandha tkun f'idejn ir-raħħala. "L-interess tal-Gvern kien u għadu li tgawdu intom, ir-raħħala. Dan għamiltuh u l-koperattiva tagħkom illum saret l-għira ta' ħafna u j'Alla sservi ta' eżempju għal ħaddieħor."

Il-Ministru żied igħid li bil-programm li tħejja mill-istess raħħala, il-produzzjoni tal-ħalib telgħet u x-xogħol qiegħed joħroġ aħjar. Issa, li se ssir il-produzzjoni ta' prodotti ġodda, tinħtieġ il-koperazzjoni ta' kull raħħal. Kull raħħal irid jifhem li għandu jimxi ta' raġel mieġħu nnifsu issa. Min mhux serju m'għandux postu fil-koperattiva. Jekk il-ħalib ikun imħallat b'xi ħaġa ma jkunx hemm prodott tajjeb.

Il-Ministru rrefera għall-kwistjoni tal-kwota tal-ħalib, li issa żdiedet. Huwa qal li qegħdin isiru konsiderazzjonijiet u mistenni li din terġa' tiġħla, "iżda jekk wara jirriżulta li din il-miżura ma sservix ta' ġid għall-istess raħħal, allura ħadd m'għandu jiddejjaq li nerġgħu mmorru lura. Ma jfissirx li se jsir ħekk, għax fil-fatt il-kwota ma reġgħetx tniżżlet.

"Wasal issa ż-żmien li wlied ir-raħħala nibdew nibagħtuhom barra, jitgħallmu, ħalli r-raħħala ma jiġu bżonn ħadd. Illum anke wlied ir-raħħala jafu l-iskola, u dawn m'għandhomx jibqgħu jiġu mgħallma biss kif jaħilbu. Il-Gvern lest jagħti kull għajnuna biex ulied ir-raħħal jmorru jitgħallmu barra." Ir-raħħal rebaħ ħafna diġa' u issa jonqsu jirbaħ din biss, biex żgur ikun jista' jgħid li qiegħed imexxi lilu nnifsu," qal il-Ministru.

Huwa rringrazzja lir-raħħala kollha li kkoperaw miegħu minkejja li kien hemm żmien li dawn urew dubji minħabba t-tixwix li sarilhom. Huwa wieġħed li r-raħħal Malti u Għawdxi se jibqa' jsib lill-Gvern warajh f'kull diffikultà li jista' jħabbat wiċu magħha.

Ir-raħħala, membri tal-KPH, ġew indirizzati wkoll mill-General Manager tal-Koperattiva, is-Sur Ġejtu Buttigieg, li huwa wkoll Direttur f'isem ir-raħħala fuq il-Bord tal-Malta Dairy Products. Kien hemm preżenti wkoll is-Sur Lino Debono, Chairman tal-Bord tal-Koperattivi.

Kważi miljun lira Maltin f'għotjiet lill-bdiewa taħt Gvern Soċjalista

•SAFI, il-Ħadd. – Ir-rekord tal-Gvern tal-Ħaddiema f'għajnuniet għall-biedja, tiżboq bil-kbir dak li qatt inġabet taħt amministrazzjonijiet oħra, tant li tul is-snin taħt Gvern Soċjalista, l-għotjiet lill-bdiewa kienu javviċinaw il-miljun lira Maltin, waqt li mill-1962 sa l-1970 l-għotjiet ma qabżux it-300,000 lira Maltin.

Dan ħabbru l-Ministru tal-Biedja u Sajd, is-Sur Joe Debono Grech meta kien qed jitkellem f'Ħal Safi, f'waħda minn sensiela ta' laqgħat għall-bdiewa, sajjieda u raħħala.

Il-Ministru Debono Grech qal li jekk l-amministrazzjonijiet ta' qabel Gvern tal-Ħaddiema, kienu kkonċentraw fuq għajnuniet ta' self b'imgħax lil dawk involuti f'dawn is-setturi, il-Gvern tal-Ħaddiema aktar ikkonċentra fuq għotjiet bħala inċentiv u biex jieqfu fuq saqajhom l-industriji tal-biedja u sajd.

Il-Ministru Debono Grech qal ukoll li l-bdiewa, sajjieda u raħħala, l-1 ta' Mejju, Jum il-Ħaddiem, għandu jservi bħala tifkira tal-bidwi u s-sajjied fl-imgħoddi u l-progress li nkiseb tul dawn l-aħħar snin biex il-bdiewa, sajjieda u raħħala jinsabu kif qegħdin illum.

•Jekk l-Ewwel ta' Mejju, fl-imgħoddi kien iservi biex niftakru fil-battalji li kellna, il-persekuzzjonijiet u biex infehmu dak li konna neħmnu fih u dak li riedna li jsir għall-pajjiż, illum Jum il-Ħaddiem ifisser għalina kull kisba għall-poplu tagħna permezz tal-Partit tal-Ħaddiema fil-Gvern.

Il-Ministru Debono Grech sostna li l-bdiewa, s-sajjieda u r-raħħala wkoll huma ħaddiema u għandhom imgħoddi f'hiex jiftakru, kisbiet u ġejjieni lejn x'hiex iħarsu.

Il-Ministru kompla d-diskors tiegħu billi qal li bħalma l-ħaddiema bl-għaqda ta' bejniethom kisbu livell t'għixien tajjeb u li jħabbatha ma' pajjiżi oħra, dawk involuti fis-settur agrikolu għandhom jagħmlu l-istess u jibdew jemmnu li fl-għaqda hemm is-saħħa u jemmnu li jekk jingħaqdu aktar il-ġejjieni għalihom ikun aħjar.

Il-Ministru Debono Grech kompla jgħid li x-Xirkiet Koperattivi huma l-frott taddutrina Soċjalista u dawn f'pajjiżna intlaqgħu tajjeb ħafna l-aktar fis-settur agrikolu.

Dawk involuti fis-settur agrikolu, sostna l-Ministru Debono Grech daqu l-benna ta' dawn ix-xirkiet li għandhom iservu bħala xhieda talbenna tas-soċjaliżmu – idduttrina li terfa' kull settur tas-soċjetà 'il fuq permezz ta' l-għaqda u toffri ġejjieni aħjar għal kull min jifhem ittifsira tagħha.

Jekk nieħdu l-każ tar-raħħala, sostna l-Ministru Debono Grech, dawn imxew 'il quddiem permezz tal-Koperattiva tagħhom.

•"Imxew 'il quddiem għax fehemu li l-għaqda hija s-saħħa u permezz ta' din l-għaqda daħlu b'sehem qawwi fil-Malta Dairy Products, dik li qabel kienet l-impriża għall-bejgħ tal-ħalib u qed jitħejjew biex ikollhom sehem fil-kumpanija li se titwaqqaf biex tirregola l-produzzjoni u l-industrija tal-laħam", sostna l-Ministru Debono Grech.

"Il-bdiewa u s-sajjieda", kompla l-Ministru Debono Grech, "jinħtieġ li jifhmu li ħadd m'hu se jgħidilhom biex jaħslu wiċċhom biex jiġu isbaħ minnu. Hemm bżonn li dawn isusu fuq uliedhom biex jistudjaw aktar ħa jaħtfu kull okkażjoni biex jistudjaw barra.

•"Irid jispiċċa ż-żmien li l-bdiewa u s-sajjieda jiddependu fuq klassijiet oħra biex jieħdu l-inizjattiva u jitgħallmu aktar biex jispiċċaw jagħtu pariri lill-istess bdiewa. Ulied il-bdiewa jridu jkunu biex jagħmlu dan ix-xogħol, ħadd ħliefhom ma jista' jifhem xi tfisser li taħdem ir-raba' u toħroġ tistad biex taqla' l-għixien tiegħek u tgħajjex il-familja tiegħek".

Il-Ministru Debono Grech temm id-diskors tiegħu billi saħaq fuq dawk preżenti biex l-appell li hu ilu jagħmel kemm ilu Ministru tal-Biedja biex dak kollu li jikkonċerna l-bdiewa u s-sajjieda, jieħdu ħsiebhom huma permezz tal-Koperattivi, ma jaqgħux f'widejn torox għax dik hija l-unika triq li twassal biex dan is-settur ma jibqax jistrieħ għal kollox fuq l-għajnuniet iżda jieħdu l-inizjattiva hu stess biex joħloq u jippjana aħjar il-produzzjoni tiegħu li għandha ttejjeb aktar il-qagħda tal-bdiewa u s-sajjie Maltin u Għawdxin.

TWAQQAF KUMITAT FI ĦDAN IL-G.W.U. BIEX TITWAQQAF KOPERATTIVA TAT-TAXIS

VALLETTA, il-Ġimgħa.

•F'LAQGĦA li ssejħet għall-ħaddiema u sidien tat-taxis, membri tat-Taqsima Port u Trasport tal-General Workers' Union, ġiet diskussa l-possibilità li titwaqqaf Koperattiva tat-Taxis sabiex b'hekk il-ħaddiema u s-sidien tat-taxis ikunu organizzati kif jixraq f'organizzazzjoni sabiex darba għal dejjem ix-xogħol tagħhom ikun ippjanat u mqassam aħjar.

Press Release maħruġa mill-Public Relations Office tal-GWU qalet li waqt din il-laqgħa l-ħaddiema u s-sidien tat-taxis ġew indirizzati minn Tony Zarb, Segretarju tat-Taqsima Port u Trasport tal-GWU, li ta tagħrif dwar laqgħa li saret riċentement u li kienet ippresjeduta minn Joe Grima, Ministru tat-Turiżmu.

Għal din il-laqgħa kienu preżenti, minbarra r-rappreżentanti tal-ħaddiema u s-sidien tat-taxis, il-Kummissarju tal-Pulizija Dr A. Pullicino; l-Assistent Kummissarju Mifsud Tommasi, kif ukoll is-Sur Joe Sammut, Segretarju Amministrattiv u li kien qiegħed jirrappreżenta lill-Prim Ministru.

Waqt din il-laqgħa, kompliet tgħid il-Press Release il-partijiet kollha ħassew il-ħtieġa u l-importanza li titwaqqaf organizzazzjoni fis-settur tat-taxis. Min-naħa tiegħu, il-Ministru Joe Grima wiegħed l-għajnuna kollha tiegħu sabiex tiġi mwaqqfa din il-Koperattiva.

Il-Ministru Joe Grima qal li hekk kif il-ħaddiema u sidien tat-taxis jiddeċiedu li għandha titwaqqaf din il-Koperattiva, huwa jsejjaħ laqgħa bejn il-GWU u r-rappreżentanti tal-ħaddiema u sidien tat-taxis mat-Tour Operators, sabiex flimkien jintlaħaq ftehim għal xogħol mill-ħaddiema tat-taxis bi prezzijiet speċjali.

Il-Ministru Grima wiegħed ukoll li jinġieb espert minn barra f'dan il-qasam sabiex igħin fit-twaqqif ta' din il-Koperattiva.

Sabiex il-ħaddiema u sidien tat-taxis ikunu jistgħu jagħmlu mistoqsijiet dwar kif taħdem u x'vantaġġi għandha jkollha koperattiva, għal din il-laqgħa attenda wkoll Lino Debono, Segretarju tat-Taqsima Parastatali u Industriji tal-Poplu u Chairman tal-Bord Governattiv tal-Koperattivi.

Waqt il-laqgħa, qalet il-Press Release, Lino Debono fisser lill-membri preżenti x'vantaġġi jistgħu jinkisbu jekk titwaqqaf din il-Koperattiva. Huwa wiegħeb ukoll għal diversi mistoqsijiet li sarulu fuq dan is-suġġett mill-ħaddiema u sidien tat-taxis preżenti għal-laqgħa.

Waqt din il-laqgħa twaqqaf Kumitat Proviżorju sabiex flimkien mat-Taqsima Port u Trasport tal-GWU jaħdem fl-ippjanar ta' statut u kundizzjonijiet li fuqhom għandha titħaddem il-Koperattiva tat-Taxis.

Għal dan il-Kumitat kien hemm b'kollox sitt nomini li kkontestaw għal tliet postijiet. Wara votazzjoni sigrieta ġew eletti Elia Grixti, Shop Steward tal-GWU, Martin Pace u Leli Grixti. Sar qbil ukoll biex it-tliet membri li ma ġewx eletti jagħmluha ta' sostituti f'każ li xi wieħed mill-membri eletti ma jkunx jista' jattendi għal xi laqgħa uffiċjali.

Il-membri mhux eletti, kompliet tgħid il-Press Release, xorta se jieħdu sehem fit-tfassil ta' l-istatut u kundizzjonijiet li bihom sejra titħaddem din il-Koperattiva.

Is-Segretarju tat-Taqsima Port u Trasport tal-GWU ħabbar li kienu sejrin jitqassmu formoli apposta sabiex il-ħaddiema u sidien tat-taxis jiddikjaraw li huma kienu lesti li jekk titwaqqaf il-Koperattiva tat-Taxis, huma jkunu lesti li jagħmlu parti minnha.

Huwa ta' sodisfazzjon għall-GWU li fi ftit sigħat kien hemm rispons tajjeb ħafna. Fil-fatt ħafna ħaddiema u sidien tat-taxis diġà wasslu l-formola mqassma lilhom, fl-uffiċċju tat-Taqsima Port u Trasport.

Fl-aħħarnett it-Taqsima tappella lil dawk il-ħaddiema u sidien tat-taxis li għadhom ma wasslux lura l-formola tagħhom sabiex jagħmlu dan mill-aktar fis possibbli ħalli b'hekk tkun tista' tkompli ssir il-ħidma għat-twaqqif ta' din il-Koperattiva.

Is-Segretarju tat-Taqsima Tony Zarb irringrazzja lil Ministru tat-Turiżmu Joe Grima għall-għajnuna li dan qiegħed jagħti, kif ukoll lil Lino Debono, Segretarju tat-Taqsima Parastatali u Industriji tal-Poplu tal-GWU u Chairman tal-Bord Governattiv tal-Koperattivi u Joe Fino, Research Officer tal-GWU u li kien għal żmien twil membru tal-Bord tal-Koperattivi, li taw sehemhom fil-laqgħa.

TAXI OWNERS-DRIVERS TO SET UP COOPERATIVE

MALTA'S taxi owners/drivers who are organised in the General Workers' Union, have decided to set up a cooperative so that their work would be better planned and their overall earnings – mainly coming from the thousands of tourists who visit the Mediterranean island – would be fairly distributed between them.

The decision to set up this cooperative was taken during a meeting for the taxi owners/drivers held by the General Workers' Union and during which they were addressed on this project by Tony Zarb, Secretary of the union's Port and Transport Workers' Section.

In attendance for the meeting there was Lino Debono, Secretary of the Parastatal and People's Industries W rkers' Section of the General Wo n and who is part-time chairman of the government's Board of Cooperatives.

Present for the meeting was also Joe Fino, the Research and Education Officer of the General Workers' Union, and who for a number of years was a member as the union's representative on the same board.

Tony Zarb said that the idea to establish this cooperative came up during a meeting which the union had with Joe Grima, Minister for Tourism, who from his side offered all the assistance that would be needed.

Minister Grima, Tony Zarb said, was very enthusiastic to see the setting up of this cooperative in order to put the taxi sector in Malta on a more modern basis and thus it could be able to provide better and efficient service in the tourism sphere that forms a most important mainstream of the country's economy.

From their part both Lino Debono and Joe Fino answered questions put by the taxi owners/drivers regarding how such a cooperative could function and the advantages that it could offer for the further amelioration of their work and social advances.

At the end of the meeting the taxi owners drivers elected representatives from among themselves so that together with the administration of the union's Port and Transport Workers' Section draw up the conditions and rules upon which the proposed cooperative would be functioning.

These conditions and rules would then have to be approved by the government's Board of Cooperatives which from its side could even in the initial stages of the cooperative forward financial assistance.

SEPTEMBER 1986

Exhibit D

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