

# Forty Years Later, From Dictatorship to Neoliberalism. Portugal as a Model for a New Socialism?

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Theme: [Global Economy](#), [History](#), [Poverty & Social Inequality](#), [Women's Rights](#)

*A vision becomes tangible. Here at the edge of Europe, models for a new socialism arise, for the lived experience of justice and freedom; for the healing of nature and for regional self-sufficiency.*

*Interconnected communities and regions – and no longer (only) the working class – are the revolutionary subjects for a new socialism. Amongst them the collective intelligence develops with which they are able to encounter the challenges and resist opposition. The country could thereby again become the Mecca of the world's revolutionary youth. This spark will spread like wildfire – and no power in the world will be able to extinguish it. For a united people, connected through friendship and the sharing of knowledge, in possession of healthy and decentralized conditions of production, unified by a heart-anchored universal ethic – will never be defeated.*

“In my country there is a prohibited word. A thousand times they have put it in shackles, a thousand times it arose again.” (Manuel Alegre)

“It will become plain, that the world has long possessed the dream of something, of which it only needs to possess its consciousness, for it to possess it in reality.” (Karl Marx)

Note: In this text the words socialism and communism are used synonymously. I see their differentiation and the rift, which has been stretched between their representatives, as no longer appropriate today. This article is directed toward all those interested in justice, solidarity and freedom.

## **Part I: Dictatorship and Revolution in Portugal - History of a Dream**

Lisbon, December 1960. In a bar two students clink their glasses to freedom – “A Liberdade!” They are spied on, denounced and finally sentenced to seven years in prison. Under the Portuguese military dictatorship the word ‘freedom’ is prohibited. It was reading about this incident in the London Times which moved the lawyer, Peter Benenson, to found Amnesty International. It would still be thirteen years to the end of the dictatorship in Portugal. On April 25, 1974 left-leaning troops move into Lisbon and within hours take over all key strategic places in the country. The head of state and secret service give up after a short resistance. Forty-eight years of dictatorship are over. The dream of socialism awakens.

Today Portugal suffers under a dictatorship again – the dictatorship of capital, as countless graffiti on the walls attest. Austerity measures, debt and tax regulations pressure the

workers, small business owners, craftsmen and farmers above all others. The wave of privatization pushes masses of people into unemployment. The number of young people leaving the country today is almost as high as during the dictatorship – back then they fled military service and prison, today they flee from the prospect of a bleak future.

But the country and its people have not fully forgotten the dream of freedom, equality and socialism. After the big demonstrations against the Troika in recent years, some pioneer groups moved to the countryside to build alternatives – cooperatives for regional subsistence and neighborly assistance; “Ajudadas” (actions of mutual help); legal and illegal local markets for exchanging goods outside of the monetary system; “Land Banks” for transferring property between landowners and landless people; citizenship academies for conveying knowledge. As small and cautious as these attempts often are they carry great potential. Visionary thinkers already see a new map of Portugal arising – a map of regional economic cycles, modern subsistence, self-confident eco-regions and model villages, which counter the globalized world with another reality.

At a time when the dream of socialism seemed to be over – with the decline of the eastern bloc and the fall of the Berlin Wall, with its activists reintegrating into the capitalist system – it turns out that socialism is a dream of humanity and a dream of humanity cannot be suppressed. It will come out time and again anew until it is realized. However, this might happen differently than its early proponents predicted.

Capitalism is not the final state of civilization. A system directed toward exploitation and profit cannot last in the long run. Its inherent violence destroys everything which is alive and valuable; it destroys resources and the basic necessities of life. Young people are rising up against this in all parts of the planet. It is only a matter of time before the collapse of the system; a short time.

Strange as it may seem, in the countries most affected by the crisis, a possible alternative is arising: a humane socialism of interconnected autonomous regions and communities, of self-determination and cooperation with nature. A socialism of trust in which people can experience community before they engage in the socialization of production. A socialism of self-organization that subverts systems of globalized capitalism because it no longer cooperates with them and no longer offers a target for their counter powers. Once the first functioning examples are visible it spreads among the youth of the world like wildfire.

This movement will, like any other, unfold to its revolutionary potential as far as its advocates and activists become conscious of the dream that connects them all.

### **April 25th 1974 - the “Longest Day”**

“On every corner, a friend. In every face, equality. It is the people who command,” sang Zeca Afonso in the famous, outlawed song, “Grândola Vila Morena.” The lyrics expressed the feelings of the multitude of land workers in the Alentejo, who had long suffered under the feudal domination of big landowners. Bitterly poor, they needed to hire themselves out as day laborers without rights. Tens of thousands ended up in the torture prisons of the notorious “PIDE,” the secret police, for simply voicing their opinion.

There was no freedom of assembly; those who spoke on the street to more than one person at a time were suspected of conspiracy. Portugal had the highest child mortality rate in Europe. The people were denied education; one-third were illiterate. The sons of the country

were fighting in bloody, anachronistic colonial wars in Mozambique, Angola and Guinea-Bissau.

By the end of the dictatorship the mandatory national service was four years long. Today one sees that generation's veterans sitting in the squares and in the sun in front of their homes; old men, traumatized and often mutilated. Without the daily experience of solidarity and mutual help in the village communities, without the dream of a different life, it would hardly have been possible for them to live and have survived the suppression, surveillance and hunger.

When the prohibited Grândola song resounded from Renascença radio on that Thursday, shortly after midnight, forty years ago, the young officers of the left wing "Movement of the Armed Forces" were already on their way to the capital – the operation "End of Regime" began. In the early morning they occupied strategic state facilities. Approaching military troops joined together in solidarity. They were welcomed by jubilant masses who lined the roads with gifts of apples, bread and red carnations. The people thus applauded the coup and gave the revolution its name. In the late afternoon the Head of State Caetano resigned. Shots were fired only in front of the PIDE command central, killing four protestors. By the next morning the curse was over.

Six days later, half a million people celebrated May Day on the streets of Lisbon for the first time in their lives. Everyone was on their feet. Lorries of workers came from the suburbs to the city. Red flags flooded from buses and trains. People were dancing in the streets. Finally the country would belong to those who fuel its economy. Finally the workers would lead the factories. Hunger, poverty and undignified work would come to an end.

Solidarity and community would prevail where fear and suppression had so far reigned. Soon the colonies would be released to independence. The prisons were opened, the political prisoners freed. Dissidents, deserters and socialist leaders returned to their home country. The poet and resistance fighter, Manuel Alegre, was welcomed with fliers proclaiming his own words, "We return in May, when the city dresses itself with people in love, and freedom will be the face of the city."

The dream of freedom and justice, of autonomy and self-determination, of communal property and common responsibility seemed to come true. For many people that celebrated on this day, this dream had a name: Socialism.

### **Looking back to the Beginning of the 20th Century**

This idea had been floating in peoples' minds since the beginning of the century. It entered Portugal with the first trains that returned from delivering cork to northern Europe, arriving into a bubbling social atmosphere. Change was in the air. While the grain barons of the Alentejo were still partying lavishly subversive messages of revolution and communism, anarchism and socialism spread among the land workers. The news of a country that was governed by farmers and workers and where everyone had the right to land sounded like tales of paradise. The notion of a better life gained a specific name; a theory that opened up the world to the people and connected them to a global process. As is the case wherever people have long endured domination and abuse, it was knowledge capable of changing their situation and self-image.

Worlds of new understanding opened up. Catholicism, nationalism and feudalism – the

foundations of society were unveiled as ideologies of domination. Suddenly a land worker in Portugal no longer saw himself as the lowest link in a societal chain, but as part of a global movement. It was an awakening that released new powers, courage and creativity for resistance. Groups of workers hijacked harvest consignments and claimed the profits from sales for themselves. Anarchistic living experiments came into being, which practiced freedom, nudity and subsistence.

But it was still too early; the oligarchy of ruling families was still too powerful. In 1926 the military seized power after only sixteen years of the republic. In 1932 the ascetic and reclusive bachelor professor of economics, António de Oliviero Salazar, rose to lead the military dictatorship with his austerity measures. His “Estado Novo” (“New State”) propounded discipline, strictness and piety. “Lonely and Proud” was its motto; it seemed as if absolutely non-Portuguese principles had taken power. National self-sufficiency, total censorship and the fierce defense of the colonial empire were the characteristics of the one-party state that diverted the people with “Fado, Football and Fátima.” Many resistance attempts were thwarted during nearly five decades of dictatorship.

### **The Awakening and Failure of the Carnation Revolution**

Now in 1974, a new society, hand-in-hand in solidarity and justice, was to arise. The returning socialist and communist leaders entered the stadium together in a demonstration of unity, enthusiastically saluted by the masses of people, “O povo unido jamais será vencido!” - “The people united will never be defeated!”

The entire nation seemed to radicalize. Businesses and banks were nationalized. Students and professors, so recently still spied on and persecuted by their directors, unseated them from their positions without ceremony and organized their education themselves. Thoughts, ideas and groups, which had been prohibited for half a century, exploded like fireworks. Small left-wing factions wrote their slogans and beliefs all over the walls. Throughout the entire country self-organized citizenship and neighborhood committees arose and took over the fire departments, roadwork and other long neglected tasks. The workers drove out repressive factory-owners. The agrarian reform, modeled on the Soviets, nationalized land; large-scale landowners were expropriated. Land workers founded hundreds of cooperatives on Herdades (farms) and villages, mostly in the south of the country. They worked fields and shared the revenue collectively. Volunteers from many countries came to help. For a short time, Portugal became the Mecca for European youth who dreamt of socialism.

But the Portuguese people did not take the world into their reckoning. 1974 was a year when other southern Europe military dictatorships also fell into crisis, as in Spain, or collapsed, as in Greece. It was the peak of the Cold War; every conflict, every uprising became a proxy conflict between East and West. The West was unwilling to support or tolerate a socialist country in Europe. A new Cuba, Vietnam or Chile had to be prevented by all means. The East-West conflict also divided the lauded unity of the Portuguese people. The socialists were increasingly influenced by the European Social Democrats and adopted their motto: “Reforms instead of Revolution.” The Soviet Union openly supported the Portuguese Communist Party; their followers were mostly in the South while in the North, a well-oiled anti-communist propaganda machine was set into motion, financed and organized, many assume, by the United States.

The other reason for the failure of the revolution came from inside - it was impossible to

recover from the imprint of fifty years of dictatorship overnight. The inner wounds were not dealt with and healed, as is still true in many cases today. The unity of the people broke apart principally in those places where there was no real vision and experience of a lived socialism, of actual community. How could people build cooperatives and manage communal properties without knowing how to foster trust among one another? How could one lead without domination? How could one make democratic decisions without getting stuck in a thousand discussions? How should one deal with omnipresent human issues like competition or jealousy? And how could one resolve conflicts healthily without suppression? Uneducated land workers were suddenly responsible for tasks for which they were ill-prepared. The quickly changing governments were still entrenched in economic webs rooted in the principles of capitalism and they did not back the agrarian reforms. People's enthusiasm and positive will alone were unable to withstand the challenges of independence.

The slogan, "Fascismo nunca mais" - "Fascism Never Again," which is still often heard in demonstrations today, was the broadest common ground Portugal could agree on after decades without freedom of speech and information. After a final revolt in the "hot summer of 1976," Portuguese society tipped backwards to a bourgeois way of life. The declaration of socialism as a state goal in the constitution remained as empty words. Step by step capital regained its power. The agrarian reform was revoked; there were bitter scenes as farms were repossessed and small-scale farmers lost the fruits of their work and the land they had just cultivated. The remaining cooperatives - gathering places, the cultural living rooms of the villagers, in which the locals could exchange their products - were deprived of their legal benefits, and therefore, of their basis of existence. Thereby, a centerpiece of the revolution was lost.

### **End of the Line: Capitalism**

The West had won. The entry into the European Union (EU) in 1986 was promoted to the Portuguese people as a way toward security and prosperity. The still quite impoverished country soon became Brussels' exemplary student, eagerly conforming to all requirements. Included in these was a pervasive change in agriculture. Although the large grain fields had largely covered the nutritional needs of Portugal they were transformed into monoculture forests. Pine and eucalyptus trees were cultivated for export as cheap wood for paper and pallets. This was a shortsighted decision. Not only ecologically, but also economically, as eastern European countries could take over this endeavor even more cheaply after the Berlin Wall fell. At this point, however, Portugal was already dependent on food imports which today stand at approximately 80 percent of the country's consumption. This is the situation in a country blessed by abundant sunshine and rain and with a mild climate; the "best growth conditions within Europe," according to Ferry Enthoven of Atlantic Growers, one of the many foreign agri-businesses in Portugal.

The ambitious and destructive mega-projects of the dictatorship, such as the reservoir dams, were carried forward under the EU. One example is the Alqueva Dam in the Alentejo, constructed in 2002, Europe's biggest reservoir dam which flooded villages and historical cultural sites. It destroyed the once splendid Guadiana River and the many rock formations and breeding grounds for rare birds along its shore. Its water - already severely contaminated by Spain's agricultural industry - currently feeds into a canal system. Its head-high concrete pipes and reservoirs go through the entire Alentejo. The profit is almost exclusively reaped by foreign agriculture companies with their immense olive groves, plantations of genetically modified corn and greenhouse tunnels. Instead of bringing wealth

into the region by employing local labor, these projects annually attract many thousands of low-paid migrant workers from Nepal, Bulgaria and Thailand into the country.

Alfredo Cunhal, organic farmer from Montemor-o-Novo says, "In regard to nature and agriculture, dictatorship, socialism and capitalism have all followed the same strategy - centralization and specialization. This has a destructive effect on nature and is fatal for rural development." His attempts at reintroducing the traditional way of farming, Montado and at establishing a diverse farm, deserve all the support they can get.

"Then in the nineties they threw money at us," remembers history professor Antonio Quaresma. "The banks almost chased after us with generous loan offers."

The borrowed wealth blurred people's sense of reality. The country was soon full of brand-new cars, modern one-family houses and unused highways; however they had hardly any means of production that could generate wealth. Quaresma says, "We sensed that we would receive the bill for this at some point, but we didn't know in which form. Now we know."

As a result of the global economic crisis the debt trap snapped shut - on both nationally and individual scales. In March 2011 the Portuguese government applied for the European bailout. The consequences of the consequent austerity measures impoverished large parts of society. According to recent reports 600,000 people over the age of 65 are suffering from malnutrition. The unemployment rate in Portugal is at 18 percent and among people under 24, it stands at 37 percent. Through the hikes in interest rates, countless people were unable to pay back their loans, similar to what happened in the United States. They needed to forfeit their homes, which were financed on debt, and move into public housing projects. Innumerable families broke apart under these conditions, yet maintain the pretense of order. "They are ashamed," notes Teresa Chaves, coordinator of Caritas in Beja, who due to the crisis, has to deal with an ever-increasing number of hardship cases. "School pupils spend the few Euros they have on mobile phones and branded clothes in order to not lose prestige but they don't have any money left for their school lunches." She makes a clear point that the country sits on a social time bomb. In the local elections of 2013 the voters gave the government a sign of this discontent; now half of all municipalities in the Alentejo have communist mayors again.

### **From the Dream to the System Change**

What positive idea can reignite people's will for change after all these attempts and defeats? What is the dream of Portugal?

If one drives through the countryside and stops in remote villages to share bread and thoughts with the locals, one recognizes that something in the people of this nation has remained astonishingly untouched by the many invading forces, including the current demands of globalization. There is a downright defiant connection with the land; village life is still characterized by mutual help, neighborliness and a quiet non-participation in the attitude and pace of global-commercialism; there is also often determined non-cooperation to environmental-economic mega-projects like reservoir dams and mines. Chatting with the customer is still more important to the cashier than the impatient bureaucrat waiting in line. The mechanic still stops working to pet a stray dog. In the bar on the corner one can still get the home-brewed liquor and the cake baked by a neighbor - even for the policeman who turns a blind eye to them; he is part of the village community after all. And it was this community that helped people survive throughout all the times of hardship. Still today, this is more

important to many people than arguments about economics and employment.

It is as if the majority of the people silently follow an approach to life different to that prescribed as a panacea in our modern time. An approach to life that is not centered only around money and profit but around common values, connectedness and mutual responsibility. It seems as if a dream has survived in this country, throughout monarchy and the colonial empire, dictatorship and revolution. Perhaps Portugal is destined to revive this dream.

“All knowledge is remembering,” Plato once said. There are few countries with so many cultural monuments, stone circles and dolmen from the Neolithic era. Nestled in many secluded places they give a deep impression of a timeless, enchanted world. Is it possible that these stone circles tell the story of matriarchal peace knowledge where community and cooperation with nature were still a matter of course? It is as if these monuments coined the history of the country more than all attempts at domestication by church and state.

In times of savage globalized capitalism this original way of life has been pushed to the brink of abyss, declared as weakness, has been sneered at and ridiculed. Yet it did not perish, not here in rural Portugal. Observers ask themselves, ‘Could this world become the center of attraction again now that the hitherto capitalist system is cracking, sickening to the point of collapse due to its inherent flaws?’

In this historical situation, the first young people from the protest generation move to the countryside in order to create a perspective for life outside of the Troika. In this climate, away from the modern centers of power, they breathe a new air of freedom and experiment with projects; regenerating landscapes and reactivating abandoned villages in contact with the old local communities. Confronted with austerity measures and the restrictions of the Troika, projects for neighborly help and modern subsistence arise. They connect to each other, develop alternative cooperatives for regional produce and subvert prohibitions against local trade with creativity and stubbornness. They experience for themselves what the older locals hold clear: that village communities and neighborhoods are the most reliable bases in times of crisis.

If these experiments now begin to catch on and apply the widely available knowledge for ecological healing, decentralized energy technology, community and peace-knowledge and alternative economics, their projects could become laboratories for the future. As unlikely as it may seem, it could thus be that the crisis in Southern Europe could help catalyze a global system change. It is a system change which the whole Earth needs. For not only Portugal lives under the dictatorship of capital; the entire world does. With even the most remote regions under threat of subjugation to the New World Order of free trade, the protest movements on all continents urgently need models to pave the road towards post-capitalism.

Portugal, positioned at the South-Western corner of Europe, is a cultural and environmental bridge between Europe and Africa. Solutions that are developed here and tested under the protection of European security, can also be applied in the Global South and could thereby contribute to dissolving the disparity between North and South. Forty years after the Carnation Revolution, the country could become a model for a new socialism.

Socialism must be renewed and expanded by the knowledge that has been developed over the past century. The following five core points need to be components of a new socialism

for it to gain a greater attracting and manifesting power than capitalism.

Part II: Core Points of a New Socialism

### **1. Socialization and Decentralization of Production**

Socialism means that the economic power is in the hands of the people who operate and live from it. The decisions and responsibilities are carried by those concerned. Profit-centeredness as a motor of economy is not sustainable. Beyond the private enrichment of individuals stands the interest of the community – this is not a moralistic commandment but a law of social peace.

It is not states which should carry the new socialism, but systems small enough to be readily comprehensible– decentralized village and regional communities which are interlinked, largely self-sufficient and in cooperation with nature. The more transparent and comprehensible the cycles of production, trade and consumption, the healthier they are for humans and for nature. Interconnected, diverse and decentralized – the new socialism functions in many areas taking to nature as its role model.

What does regional autonomy mean? First of all, each region brings forth the basic products that are needed for supplying its humans, animals, plants and ecosystems. This mainly applies to nutrition and energy. The surplus products can be traded outside of the regions. The revenue gained from the sale of products stays in the region. Modern, interconnected subsistence is the principle for the redesign of the global economy and the absolute counter plan to the neoliberal globalization.

### **2. Community: the Human Interior of the New Socialism**

Historically socialism did not fail because the idea was wrong, but because people had no substantial experience of community life. If mistrust and fear dominate human coexistence, one will not be able to socialize production. New socialism is based on communitarian ways of life.

The decision to be courageous, just and in solidarity, is not (only) an individual matter. Human development is also a consequence of the social conditions of production, in which a person grows up and lives; the things he or she experiences as a child – the love, home, security or openness. Functioning communities of trust are the most fertile ground to develop solidarity, communitarian consciousness, courage for truth – all the necessary human qualities for a functioning socialism. Under conditions of narrowness and loneliness, human beings become subordinate or consumers, and do not develop into social beings. Wherever they experience acceptance, home and challenge in a community, a dream of humankind is fulfilled.

What the youth of the world experience in the squares and camps of the revolutionary movements and what connects the elderly people in the Portuguese villages is an approach to community. This experience can be modernized, objectified and taught.

The community, into which nuclear families are integrated, is the original home of the human being. “It takes a village to raise a child,” says the African proverb. Community is also the home of love; it bestows protection for love’s sensitive opening here so that a love relationship does not turn into a prison.

### **3. Cooperation with Nature and Landscape Healing**



Every region can produce what its inhabitants – human beings, animals and nature – require to live. “Water, food and energy are freely available to all human beings if we no longer follow the laws of capital, but the logic of nature,” says Dr. Dieter Duhm in the “Tamera Manifesto.” Even landscapes severely degraded by desertification, erosion and deforestation, can be healed. Thus the alimentary biotopes can flourish in abundance, which will deprive the basis for any speculation.

In addition, we need to learn to cooperate with nature. We need to realize that alongside human rights, there also exist rights for animals and the Earth. In the new socialism, the principles of equality and justice do not only apply to human beings, but also to nature. Before making any decision, any measure that concerns a region, the animals, plants and ecosystems which would be affected should be consulted as well as human beings. We can learn to hear their voice.

With knowledge about cooperation with nature we are capable of ending scarcity, hunger and war all over the world. It enables villages and regions to take their supply into their own hands and to liberate themselves from dependence on the globalized systems. It is knowledge for freedom.

#### **4. The Role of Woman and Reconciliation Between the Genders**

The reconciliation between the genders is a condition of peace and justice. There can be no peace on Earth so long as there is war in love. Portugal has always fostered the adoration of the feminine – starting with the aforementioned Neolithic matriarchal tribal cultures, including the worship of the Goddess of the Sky, in Fátima and to the adoration of Mary, present in every village.

A new socialism is unthinkable without higher valuing of women. This is not only about demanding equality but about regaining the female powers and qualities that could not blossom during patriarchy. This is in full accordance with the constitution of the Iroquois where a chief was supposed to be “like a good mother.” In the communities of the future, qualities like care, reconciliation, forgiveness, social responsibility, communication and building trust will be indispensable.

Socialism is based on solidarity with women worldwide. This also means courage to stand for the sexual self-determination of woman; liberation from notions of virtue and morals which are no longer appropriate. This outmoded morality was initially violently imposed on women, until they themselves became its defenders.

Sabine Lichtenfels, theologian and co-founder of Tamera says, “A new feminine power is not targeted at men, nor is it targeted against our love for men – it simply, decisively leaves behind those patriarchal structures that have led to the worldwide extinction of life and love. It is now up to us women to again assume the political and sexual responsibility that we abandoned for so long.”

All areas of life, be it ecology, politics or economy will have a different orientation when women connect with their sources and accept their meaning and task. Communities in which solidarity and trust among women arises, where they take on responsibility for themselves, for their children and for what they love, are anchor places for life itself. Such communities become strong and stable, and can endure many of the storms of our time.

## 5. Ethics and Spirituality: Bridges Instead of Walls

The new socialism needs objective ethics which are anchored in the hearts of everyone and not in religious or political dogmas.

Traditionally, Portugal had been a haven for dissidents and heretics. Tolerance, hospitality and openness to strangers have always been more important to the people than ideology and juridical thought. Paulo Borges, a philosophy professor from Lisbon says, "It is part of Portugal's being to build bridges, rather than walls. The world has been living in a paradigm of separation, leading to exploitation, war and violence for the past 6,000 years. Especially in times of crisis, Portugal can become a birthplace for a new paradigm of empathy and non-separation." The PAN Party he founded - the party for animal rights and nature - already achieved impressive success at the first election they participated in.

After the fateful alliance between church and state, during monarchy and dictatorship, and the abuse of religious dogmas for domination and tyranny, the church in Portugal has changed. Today it takes on helping, social tasks without the moralizing, oversized pointing finger of its past. As understandable as it was that many followers of the socialist movement initially distanced themselves from the church, there is today a pragmatic cooperation in many places. This is how in some places the best of both church and communism unites - the role model of the revolutionary Jesus, combining the stand for social justice with mutual help. The ethics of an engaged, socialist love for the neighbor under the auspices of an omnipresent Marian power, would stand above any religion or ideology, and could unify the new powers of awakening.

Dom António Vitalino Dantas, the Bishop of Beja, is a representative for engaged Christianity. Known for his dedication to social justice, he tirelessly mediates between politicians and citizens. He also supports the manifestation of self-sufficient models and endeavors to motivate landlords to donate their unused properties to new ecological and social communities. Dom António says, "Abandoned villages, schools and farms could be revitalized in that way."

### **Tamera Research and Education Center**

Within these conditions holistic models and socio-ecological experiments prosper. One example is the international peace research center Tamera, founded in 1995 by Sabine Lichtenfels and Dr. Dieter Duhm, a bestselling author of the German "New Left." Today 170 people live here and work on a comprehensive model for a peace society. They thereby develop and combine ecological and social solutions for a post-capitalist way of life which can be replicated worldwide. Besides their pioneering work in ecology, they focus primarily on the healing of love and of human community. Tamera is an international education centre that also brings current ecological and social knowledge into the local region. It is also becoming a meeting point for a regional and local autonomy movement. Other communities and groups already begin to settle, get connected and exchange among one another around this nexus - in close cooperation and complementation with the extant rural population. Rui Braga, co-worker of Tamera says, "This is how the Alentejo could become the new Silicon Valley for autonomy and sustainability."

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