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Working Class Justice

"Comrades, we are approaching the decisive battles here, in Alentejo. Our comrade Ze Diogo deserves our support. The boss says that this tractor driver murdered Columbano. The bosses truth is one truth, the truth of the workers is another....Let us show that the arm of Ze Diogo is the arm of all the workers. An end to misery. For the right to work. Solidarity with Ze Diogo. Popular justice, yes. Fascism, no. Long live the working class".

*Red Committee of Castro Verde, Alentejo, Portugal
- Revolucao, December 6th, 1974.*

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Ground Rules

In formulating the features of a revolutionary working class justice certain principles have to be taken into account. I am using class categories developed within the Marxist tradition and am describing concrete objective events. This leads onto the development of a working class standpoint by which the evaluation of different types of justice is possible.

By "Historical analysis of the most important revolutionary crisis in modern times (1)"; we may judge events in the context in which they occurred, the Portuguese revolution 1974-75.

The aim is to formulate "key characteristics from prefigurative collective justice agencies in order to make the concrete direction of progress that little bit more clear for other groups of people making similar attempts to overcome their experiences of oppression (2)".

Our theories must take into account previous working class experience in order to ascertain working principles from these events in their particular historical setting. As theory can never be constructed out of ideas alone, our study of the revolutionary crises in Portugal and the revolutionary forms of justice are important. For, "it is in the nature of expressions of working class justice that they should encounter problems, attract opposition, and be, in the main, short lived. Yet these fleeting histories must be caught and inscribed in our political theory if we are to advance (3)".

It is in situations of revolutionary crisis that the working class can collectively use its own justice. In non-revolutionary situations there are only forms of individualised justice available to the working class, if at all. The movements which build up in revolutionary crises and use their class power to judge cases question the very "legitimacy and challenge the hegemony of the capitalist state. They shared a systematic critique of the mechanisms of social production and reproduction in the capitalist society and created social practices in which more or less radical alternatives were offered (4)".

In such periods of crisis "the question of legality becomes one of the most fundamental social questions (5)" as such instances of revolutionary working class justice are illegal and would result in repression in a non-revolutionary period.

Bourgeois Justice

The type of justice administered by the state in advanced capitalist countries can be termed bourgeois justice. Historically, it is underpinned by the liberal doctrine of criminal law. This came about as a progression from an earlier age where abuse of ^{POWER AND} social and political inequality was rife. Equality of all before the rule of law would supposedly protect liberty. There are several ideal features of this type of legal theory and system.

Law in this case is meant to serve the needs of a given society, whilst

protecting the individual against the encroachments of the state. This takes the presumption of innocence as the guiding principle.

There should be a written code which delineates the criminal law which is open to scrutiny from the people as a whole. Punishment is thus laid out in advance with clarity and certainty, and is essentially retributive. You suffer in a measured way, which means punishment exceeds any advantage gained from the 'crime'.

In an age which valued liberty as sacred, "punishment should correspond with the offence in nature as well as extent(6)" e.g. a fine for a petty theft. The system is based upon reasoned levels of retribution to clearly defined wrongs where the free agent weighs up the pros and cons and decides whether to commit the crime or not.

Bourgeois justice is carried out by the police and has bourgeois professionalised court members (lawyers, judges etc.) This court masks the class content of disputes in numerous ways, whereas a revolutionary judgement illuminates it.

In bourgeois courts the 'client' is seen as an individual subject, both for the plaintiff and the defendant "both parties are subjects at law in this conception, hence justice has no object other than itself (7)". After judgement the working class "will have to struggle continuously to guarantee effective enforcement of any relatively favourable court decision (8)", which are usually

one off and short term. Also, educative and organisational solutions to problems have no place in a bourgeois court and do not come on the agenda.

Rules of evidence are such that the incident is without context, an individualised occurrence. An analysis of the incident set out in a class framework is not sought for. They are "active in this respect. In legal theory the incident is predefined, exists in itself independently of these rules which simply state what information 'about' the incident may be used, it is the rules of evidence..... which constitute it as an occasion without a relevant past, as unique and as complete unto itself (9)". this determines the 'classless' nature of bourgeois courts.

Laws are essentially proscriptive in capitalist society and are framed from a capitalist standpoint which is antithetical to the needs of the working class. There are only narrow solutions in the bourgeois courts, which have to support the settlement offered or issue their order. The lawyers and judges are not accountable to anyone but their peers who determine their own guidelines and conduct. This takes place in a clearly structured justice system which dispenses justice as and when asked. 'Liberalism' takes place in a liberal structure which by its nature does not allow any other perception of events or judgement to take place. Bourgeois justice therefore cannot serve the working class, to the extent that the latter needs different forms of justice.

Crises

It is the concept of 'revolutionary justice' which has been used "to characterise the initiatives taken by the masses in revolutionary or pre-revolutionary crises in response to, and usually in conflict with, the official administration of justice, as in the French Revolution, the Paris Commune, the Russian Revolution, Chile in 1970 - 73 and Portugal in 1974 - 75" (10). It is a working class understanding of justice which is qualitatively different because it is based upon totally different needs and values.

In these periods of acutely intensified class struggle different types of justice were used by different classes in the crises. In Portugal at this time a complicated situation where neither class was powerful enough to impose its own conception upon the others was occurring. This was because the working class did not stimulate dynamic political action. The classical 'Dual Power' scenario characterised and outlined first by Lenin was not in existence, only instances which closely approximated it. It was a crisis better contextualised as "Dual Powerlessness (11)" as it was the first fascist state to dissolve from within i.e. from the armed forces.

Due to the nature of the confrontation in Portugal during the revolutionary period, where only the "most explicitly fascist features of the state were destroyed (12)", the state apparatus was otherwise kept intact, suffering "a generalised paralysis (13)" rather than a collapse or destruction. On the other side there was no working

class rule. The largest 'working class parties', the socialist party and the communist party both favoured policies inside the state apparatus. One, because of its nature, whilst using mystifying arguments about how the army, if supported, would "carry out the interests of the proletariat (14)". The other, because it viewed "the spontaneous mobilisation and creative organisations of the working class, both at the point of production and the the point of reproduction (15)" with scepticism and rejected the working class mobilisation as adventuristic.

Historical analysis of working class inspired revolutionary crises point toward the challenging, taking over and smashing of bourgeois justice by the insurgent working class. Reflecting the revolt of the working class against the official apparatus of justice, which under cover of 'bourgeois democratic order' and the principle of legality, tries to slow down, contain and reverse the revolutionary process. It was because of the generalized paralysis of the state apparatus that "restricted forms of dual power emerged in specific areas of social life and in specific sectors of the state apparatus (16)". One such area was the justice system, which was overtaken by revolutionary justice.

In considering the overtly fascist nature of the 'legal' system in Portugal at this time and the "brutal repression both in industrial cities and in the countryside (17)", enforced by "political police, military and paramilitary forces, shock police, special labour courts,

political courts, political prisons and a national legislative assembly totally controlled by the fascist party - these were some of the direct instruments of political repression under the Portuguese version of fascism (18)". This particular revolutionary period posed the question not about a new interpretation of existing law but the smashing of the fascist state and its laws. The struggle for a new justice was fought for by the reformist institutions, such as the socialist party, the communist party, the constitutional assembly and the armed forces. The class struggle for a revolutionary justice was fought "on the streets (19)".

It was this struggle which combined relics of the fascist era (e.g. labour legislation revoked with no democratic legislation) with new laws, which when passed, lagged behind the popular movement e.g. house occupation. These clearly outlined how both the old and new legislation reflected class interests. This "deprived the oppressed classes of initiative in a class struggle that was being fought with increasing intensity (20)". Therefore, the radicalised sectors of the class movement started opposing the idea of bourgeois justice with the idea of revolutionary justice.

Working Class Justice in Action

None of the cases I describe in themselves constitute revolutionary justice. However, they were a small part of a mass movement with recurrent instances of revolutionary justice and they are of "particular

significance in a country that for fifty years had been ruled by a fascist regime and thus by an authoritarian ideology that demanded unconditional reverence for, and submission to the state apparatus (21)".

The house occupation movement began straight after the 25th April 1974 when the rebels in the army moved against the fascist power. Hundreds of families occupied newly built state and apartment complexes when they used to live in the slums surrounding Lisbon. Although the movement started spontaneously and initially lacked organisation, commissions of slum residents were created as the situation of the working class found itself in ^{WAS IN} need of structure. This controlled and defended the occupation and fought against landlord speculation and corruption. The movement quickly developed to include vacant private housing and rent strikes when it was thought that the rents were excessive. Tenants refused to leave when eviction notices arrived and resistance was organised against eviction notice enforcement by police and army.

When the house occupation movement began to resist eviction orders it became conscious of its own political interest and underwent a process of radicalisation. This was especially true after March 11th 1975 - the date of the abortive right-wing coup. As this politicised the movement of popular working class power (workers' commissions, soldiers' councils, village councils etc) in the direction of building pockets of

dual power, bourgeois justice was confronted with increasing regularity as the mass class movement took "greater political initiative in the struggle for final liberation (22)". Important areas of the armed forces also took the side of the working class.

The combined impact of all this could not have been greater ^{ON} bourgeois justice. Court orders, such as evictions were consistently ignored. Soldiers, when asked to intervene "not only refused to enforce court orders but also protected the occupants against attack.... troops even participated actively in new house occupations (23)". This was revolutionary justice in action against bourgeois justice "we must put the penal code on the shelf and assume a purely revolutionary attitude....there are no limits on revolutionary legality but those imposed by good sense and r e v o l u t i o n a r y coherence....experience tells us which are the good measures and which are the bad (24)". Legality here meaning what methods are permissible using revolutionary justice values and needs "the benefit for the workers (25)".

Thus the experience of revolutionary justice by the participants was viewed as a transitional part of the overall struggle. Being a parallel power or counterpower. In sum, revolutionary justice in a revolutionary crisis is a form of "revolutionary law in action, the embryo of a new power structure (26)".

When the eviction cases brought

by landlords reached trial a political defence was formed, "the revolutionary residents commissions prepared a political response: an active boycott of the trial followed by popular justice (27)". Popular justice meaning a justice which forms the instinctive needs of the working class in a particular time and place which is enthusiastically undertaken by the dynamic working class. It is not separate from revolutionary justice, but is really a part or type of it. The residents' commissions were elected "in General Assemblies grouping all the residents of a given area...up to 500 people attending (28)". In the struggle legality became "a political, not a legal, question (29)" and "the confrontation between democratic legality and revolutionary legality....was....a class struggle and thus an important component of the revolutionary process itself (30)".

By early 1975 it was a national movement despite repression. There were attempts at defusing the situation as in March 1975 some eviction proceedings were suspended and "no important cases were brought to court. Lawyers were even known to have advised their clients to wait for better times (31)". In this situation the state apparatus avoided open confrontation and sought to keep the attacks under control by minimising their effect. This was meant to keep the legal system intact and ready for use when the hoped for better days arrived. This had the effect of leading the revolutionary movement to believe they were scoring important victories as the official

justice system seemed to be neutralised and paralysed. Sadly after November 25th 1975 when the military in support of popular power suffered a total defeat the legal apparatus was at hand and ready to be used. Bourgeois justice was rapidly restored and "the repressive forces recovered their internal cohesion (32)".

The Cases

In April 1975 a new law was passed legalising all the existing occupations and forbidding any new ones. This failed to contain the situation as "the occupation movement continued to expand. The residents' commissions proliferated and took an increasingly active role in house occupations (33)".

This continued until October 1975 when landlords sued the occupants starting an head on confrontation between the working class movement and bourgeois justice courts. The residents' commissions were then engaged throughout October and November organising popular justice courts. One of these cases was that of Maria Rodrigues who was being sued by her landlady for illegal occupation of her house. If convicted Maria faced eviction and up to two years imprisonment. The revolutionary residents' commissions organised a boycott of the trial in the official court whilst calling for a rally at the courthouse on the day of the trial. At court, members of the residents' commission turned up in Maria's place. They declared "she will not be taken from among the people (34)" and announced Maria's trial before a popular court

when the judge postponed the trial date until December.

The trial took place in the inner courtyard of the official court building and all official court members were invited (preferring to watch from the windows). The working class jury was composed of twenty-eight members of the various residents' commissions. The trial started with discussion of the housing question which consisted of analysis of the landlord classes and the need for self-defence groups to fight against exploitation by parasites. Maria spoke of her own class experience "They beat me....they killed the twins I was bearing (35)".

Eventually the sentence read "The popular tribunal in session today, November 4th, 1975, at the Lisbon Courthouse, decide the following in accordance with the will of the people here present

- 1) To consider the landlady a speculator, an exploiter and an oppressor of the people and as such an enemy of the people.
- 2) To consider the landlady's friends as fascists and enemies of the people.
- 3) To have all these fascists submitted to a popular tribunal as the workers seize power.
- 4) To consider Maria Rodrigues acquitted and fully entitled to the house she is now occupying (36)".

With this verdict "vigilance committees were then organised to prevent any attempt at eviction by the police (37)". Cases like this one and the following instance of revolutionary justice will help us break-down events into

component parts which distinguish the elemental features of a working class revolutionary justice.

The first instance of revolutionary justice in Portugal of this period was that of Jose Diogo Luis who was born and still living in Castro Verde (Alentejo). He was arrested by the Portugese paramilitary police for stabbing Columbano Libano Monteiro "an old friend of Salazar (the fascist president), who was known to be a P.I.D.E. agent (political police) (38)". Testimony against Columbano swore that he beat his employees, "torturing the rural proletariat of the area both physically and psychologically, subjecting them for many years to forms of domination and exploitation so cruel that they can be compared only to slavery (39)". Jose was fired and came back looking for work. "The fascist hangman wouldn't even let me speak at all....he called me stupid and even worse names because I hadn't taken off my cap, 'though we were outside in the open air. He grabbed me, trying to throw me out forcefully, striking me, seizing me violently by the arms and making them bleed with his nails....I then lost control of myself and stung the fascist with my pocket knife in self-defence against his claws (40)". As this was not uncommon bourgeois behaviour it reveals the common experience of the relations of production of the rural working class in Portugal at the time.

A spontaneous popular movement of solidarity with Jose began to take shape. The court date was set (May 1975), and a couple of days before an application by the State

Attorney to change venue because of the 'emotional climate' round the case was successful. Publically this revealed "the class character of the bourgeois laws and courts that keep Jose Diogo in prison while the murderers of the P.I.D.E. and the Spinolist conspirators are set free. If in fact there is an "emotional climate" it is nothing more than the expression of the popular feelings about this story and trial: the peasants hatred of the latifundiaro....and their solidarity with a class brother (41)". Another venue was arranged and this too was a deliberate political decision since the trial was being transferred to a "a region of the country where the reactionary forces have lately been acting with increasing violence....where a climate hostile to the defence (42)" could easily be created.

On the day a big rally in support of Jose jammed the area in front of the courthouse, but Jose was not presented to the court even though he was in prison. The court's decision was to bail Jose and postpone the trial 'til October. In three hours double the 50,000 escudos bail was raised. Whilst a suggestion from the Association of Ex-Political Anti-Fascist Prisoners in the courtroom suggesting an immediate trial of Jose by a revolutionary court was accepted.

Twenty working class people were elected to the jury and the revolutionary court sat on the steps of the 'official' court building. Witnesses for the defendant supported Jose's description, and no-one came forward in support

of Columbano despite repeated asking. The jury set out its frame of reference and its legitimating features which gives a great insight into the progressive nature of the insurgent working class. It said "that the constitution of this popular court, given the exceptional circumstances that surrounded this trial in Tomor is entirely correct and just, (but taking into account) that the popular courts must assume the form of assemblies of popular masses as that all the people may participate in them, the popular jury will submit their decision to the popular assembly of Castro Verde for ratification (43)".

After deliberation and from a working class standpoint it was decided to "condemn posthumously the latifundiaro Columbano for the oppression and exploitation of the people of Castro Verde and to consider him an enemy of the people of Alentejo; to consider that Jose Diogo committed no crime 'though in the jury's opinion his act was an individual act, even if excused in view of the circumstances mentioned in the documents read and heard in the popular court (44)".

The local Red Committee of Castro Verde also judged from a working class standpoint "the action of our comrade Jose Diogo was an act of popular justice, a blow against reaction. It was the almost correct answer to the great estate owners. We say 'almost correct' because it is not in this manner that we can overthrow the regime of bandits who have always robbed the people. The blow cannot come from

the single hand of a single comrade, but from our united hands (45)". The question of legality under bourgeois justice is a political issue, not a legal one, and in a revolutionary crisis is challenged by revolutionary justice.

Features of Revolutionary Justice

Revolutionary justice means a total transformation of the bourgeois justice system. From capitalist law and reformist socialist programmes to one based upon the needs and values of the working class. It is the very form of bourgeois justice and the rule of law which is essentially individualistic and capitalist. Not suited to any attempts at reform. By its nature it cannot "play a part in any form of defensible socialist society (45)", socialism and law are concepts in opposition with each other. This is the classic Marxist critique of 'bourgeois law' (eg. Pashkanis). Neither is it "necessary if socialism is to deliver its emancipatory promise (46)". As the emancipation of the working class is to be the task of no-one but themselves. A "Socialist version" of the 'rule of law' is an Utopian illusion.

In outlining a certain ideal theoretical position Hunt (New Left Review) tries to come to grips with a perfect system for an unjust society. Neglecting the needs and values of the working class and formulating an abstract distraction to the development of a revolutionary justice by the working class.

It is envisaged that a real separation

between the form of law and politics is possible. After a perfect decision making system is in place, it is meant to be the only type of law and the results of the system in place, is meant to be the politics which form the only political struggle. Unfortunately, it is impossible to separate law from politics in such a neat manner.

The suggested measures of "more and varied mechanisms of dispute resolution (47)" have so far backfired as a means of working class advance. Measures suggested have so far merely extended the tentacles of the capitalist state (Cohen - Visions of Social Control). As such, even more proposals are dangerous as they are open to manipulation.

Contending that the revolutionary working class provides "no adequate mechanism for handling conflict (48)" ignores previous history (Spain, Russia, Portugal etc.) where the working class power exercises justice on the enemy class and maintains itself in struggle. It is merely an unsubstantiated allegation. Conflicts have been, and can again, be handled by the working class.

Problems such as the above mean we can only outline features which the revolutionary working class uses to judge situations in which it finds itself, those which may assist in the building of revolutionary justice in the context of the struggle to be engaged in.

Naturally it is a fluid conception of justice which is open for debate within the working class. Leaving the working class to determine the

struggle means there are no preconceived ideas to stick to, which inevitably end up as "ideological straight-jackets...."

The masses in action are always more revolutionary than the most revolutionary of the revolutionary organisations. The reasons are obvious. The revolutionary organisations are wedded to past models (usually 1917). The masses want to create the future (49)". These new forms of power and methods of dispute resolution will be created by the insurgent working class.

Revolutionary justice forged by the working class is in direct opposition to or in confrontation with, the state administration of justice. It is based upon working class needs in relation to capitalism and as such uses alternative criteria of substantive legality. Not meaning a simple shift from substantive law to procedural law, which "would not involve a radical breach with capitalist law (50)".

Instead we juxtapose a revolutionary transformation of justice. The legal system as such as such is not separate from society being an outside force, but is driven from within the society and value systems. It is not trying to arbitrate and rule an unjust society with different sites of conflict, but has lost its formalised features and has collapsed or melted into social relations in general. Allowed because the social relations themselves are just, as they have been created by the revolutionary working class.

As the machinery for justice

administration has little or no institutionalisation or bureaucratisation it is an organic situation and open to change and development. There is a subversion of the normative boundaries of the cases which "are transformed so that the class content of the dispute - always mystified by bourgeois legality - becomes apparent (51)". The dispute in question, which is confined by bourgeois justice rules, enters a far wider context, that of the capitalist system and the forces which determine the dispute. Class content is examined by the working class and the real dispute is judged, not the one processed by bourgeois justice.

What would have been inadmissible evidence in a bourgeois court, except possibly in the form mitigation, becomes admissible to the revolutionary court. All facets of bourgeois justice have been changed. As actions in the cases of Jose Diogo and Maria Rodrigues "are contextualised in the history of class struggle in Alentjo and in the urban ghetto....and are evaluated differently in the light of their different meanings in that struggle. There is no strict distinction between substantive and procedural issues, the question of the fairness of the trial is mediated by the recognition that the dispute as brought to court is the tip of the iceberg, a small detail of a much broader class struggle in which the class enemy can never be presumed not guilty (52)".

However, there may, or may not be a revolutionary justice court and it has no set structure. If it has

a working class 'jury' it is there because of its class position rather than abstract citizenship. The defendant in the state court becomes the plaintiff in the revolutionary court, as both parties to the dispute become easily distinguished as belonging to their particular class. The class relation in the dispute become inverted. The classes are seen as 'collective subjects' which means that both sides in the dispute have different class origins. Evidence is assimilated from the specific working class involved in the dispute. Thus in Maria Rodrigues' case, life in the urban ghetto, beatings, generalised housing experience, etc. become relevant in identifying the class enemy by aggregating working class lives.

The bourgeoisie and class accomplices become the accused in a revolutionary justice court. Locally the revolutionary court comprises of elected members of the street or block assembly. They come to a fuller understanding of the class oppression they collectively experience as the problems coming to the working class assembly and court are analysed.

In the exercising of working class judgement there must be accountability and working class people in the courts must be "accountable to the collective (class) they work for as a means of guaranteeing continuing collective working class justice characteristics (53)". The general assembly and its courts monitor the decisions it has made and if necessary continuous action from, by and for the class is orchestrated

by whatever form of working class power is exercising the justice. This means that the elected 'officers' of any court or any working class power unit of the local assembly are instantly recallable to account for their actions, and if felt necessary collectively punished or removed.

Coercive powers may or may not exist formally and will be used as and when the situation is felt to demand it. They tend "to be used in inter-class conflicts for the punishment of class enemies, whereas educative measures to be favoured in intra-class conflicts (54)".

The courts should rotate jobs and court members with the rest of the working class which endeavours to get the class to make decisions and guide the court in what to do "the criterion by which collective justice judges itself is adequate representation of and accountability to the collective which it serves (55)".

The court's accountability to the collective working class assembly is also a guarantee of continuous assessment of effective working class action. This guides "an adequate theorisation of the problems and past practice and to devise an adequate strategy and tactics in the light of this. Adequacy is not an absolute criterion, but one which is decided, both from moment to moment by those working on the problem and in the longer term via the accountability structure in the light of a particular historical constellation of forces (56)". Such democratic practice being the very

means by which the working class can permanently overcome forms of repression and oppression which are part of a working class experience. For the objective of class advance to be met then long term solutions are required. The total situation should be prevented from occurring again which means that a particular experience of oppression must be eliminated for the class as a whole to be said to have made an advance.

Certain characteristics can therefore be seen to be used by the working class to determine the structure of revolutionary justice. They will help form new power centres and methods of dispute settlement, which will be created by the insurgent working class. Revolutionary justice holds three general features (see below) when the working class is judging situations. They have got to be of benefit to the working class and class action around these are to this end. It is based around working class advance on three fronts, or them all simultaneously. As the three fronts relate to each other there are no strict distinctions, because one affects the other and vice versa. These principles are political, social and economic.

1) Politically this means for the protection and advancement of working class interests. In liberty, equality and solidarity, etc. Towards a society whereby all "goods, means of production etc. should be the property of the community (57)". A communism, of which revolutionary justice will be apart, at least for a time.

2) Socially it is for the well being of the working class community, a revolutionary one. Mutual support

in the form of the sharing of goods, services and experiences. As well as real equality, no sexism, racism, homophobia, etc. Rather than a constitutional guarantee, which in practice means nothing. This also involves observation of accepted 'rules' and traditions which have been forged through struggle. These revolve around jobs, money, working class honour, etc. In a strike situation strike breakers feel this as "The community was a strength of the strike, a person standing among his workmates and neighbours was part of his character and life, to abandon the community and cross the line was to take a violent turn against the community. It was a great deterrent (58)".

3) Economic security, stability, and equality is the final feature which is involved on two fronts. For the welfare of the working class community, which is its own internal well being. Externally it is for the development of the political struggle, for factories, land, arms, etc. by whatever means necessary.

Conclusion

Jose Diogo's and Maria Rodrigues' cases of revolutionary justice are embryonic and not organised in any systematic manner, but nevertheless they point towards working class forms of justice. The lack of an overall unified revolutionary strategy to bring the working class to power and the fragmented experiments in a working class justice (see previous examples) meant that they "could not grow into a global confrontation with the bourgeois

state power (59)". In the ruling class use of a strategy of avoiding confrontation it was relatively easy for them to re-establish the dominance of bourgeois justice in a more favourable situation.

I do not believe the Leninist conception of the 'seizure of the winter palace' would have worked either, as "they tend to analyse the revolution in non-revolutionary terms (60)". There is a great distinction between the "dominant conceptions of social revolution and social reform....which lead the revolutionary forces to struggle to seize the existing (authoritarian) power and the forms of power rather than seek to transform such power and develop new forms of power in which the autonomous participation of the popular classes is guaranteed (61)".

The working class revolutionary justice used in Portugal 1974-75 was probably sufficient had its characteristics I have already outlined. ^{BEEN MORE WIDELY KNOWN} It is vital that the collective working class develops its own justice through struggle, for small groups of revolutionaries (such as the Red Brigades) cannot do it for the class.

if it had been part of a greater strategy in the revolutionary period alongside a dynamic mobilised working class, the legacy would have been enormous. A strategy of "a credible, widely accepted, counter hegemonic ideology and a set of political and organisational alternatives minimally structured around clearly defined strategic objectives (62) would have yielded enormous gains for the working class. It could have helped to

realise the historic potential of the working class to emancipate itself.

Notes

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**THIS PIECE WAS
WRITTEN BY
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LONDON CLASS WAR PUBLIC MEETING

**WHY CLASS
ORGANISATION AND
WHY CLASS VIOLENCE
*THIS IS CLASS WAR***

Conway Hall
Red Lion Square, WC1.
(Holborn tube)

**Wednesday 26th October
7:30pm**

ALL WELCOME

GETTING FROM HERE TO THERE

Seventeen years ago the Sex Pistols (who?) sang about it - but this year it's a self-proclaimed conference - whose up for a spot of anarchy in the UK? Ten days that shook the world? Like the levitation of parliament? Or a whole series of "non-violent events" (as opposed to violent events?). This conference is a celebration of what makes the anarchist 'movement' so irrelevant and marginal to the lives of the vast majority of people in this country.

It is little more than a series of unconnected events that are only bound together by a vague, undefined 'anarchism'. The principle appears to be that as long as you call yourself an anarchist, then you can participate in this conference. But it is this lack of clarity and coherence which has led anarchism up to its present dead-end.

What is needed are clear, confrontational politics - ideas that relate to our lives in the here and now and ideas that can take our struggle forwards. That means rejecting any celebrations of self-imposed marginalisation or individualistic day-dreaming. That means getting organised and basing our politics in the working class.

What we stand for is working class revolution, a seizure of power by the working class so that instead of society being controlled by a few powemad rich bastards, a society is created that is based on the needs and desires of the majority. A society that abolishes money, work and individual isolation. A society in which we all have our potential liberated from the current drudgery and fear that is forced upon us.

The question is - how do we get from here to there? This means getting organised to put across our ideas - and getting organised so that we can have a real impact when things start to happen.

We're not going to pretend that this is easy. There's no glory involved in it. But it's what is needed. Individuals can change very little on their own and wrong ideas lead people nowhere.

On Wednesday 26th October London Class War is organising a public meeting - if you're interested in going beyond the ghetto, in revolutionary politics, then come along.

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