

**A Response to Alternative Economies Literature**  
**By Kayleigh M. Stack**  
**Writer, Blogger, Ethnographic Researcher, Provocateur**  
**<http://kmswritings.pressfolios.com>**

*“Maoist thought has gone father, by conceiving of the class as the party, the party as the majority of the people, the party as the social majority, and by moving the ground of insurrection from the brief coup d’etat to long-range ware. With Maoism, insurrection has become a spontaneist term.” (Bologna p. 27)*

The distinction, as well as unity, between the *class* and the *party* has oscillated throughout different historical revolutions. Each revolution – beginning with the German workers-council movement in the early 1900s (Bologna p. 5), followed by the Russian proletariat revolution (1917), the workers' control revolutions in Italy and Spain (1920 – 1939), the Venezuelan factory struggles and worker control initiatives (1989-2007) (Wallis p. 13-28), as well as the Argentinian uprisings (2001 -present) (Lavaca collective p. 7) - have all learned from one another and redefined the relationship between class and party in attempt to obtain further success in worker-led movements, where their predecessors may have failed. Of course these movements are not as linear as the above timeline might suggest, however, such sequential order does reveal the origin, development, and current state of international worker-control initiatives. Additionally, in understanding the historical backbone for such revolutions, it becomes clear as to how the Maoist thought - shared in the above quote - developed and if it is still relevant and applicable in today's uprisings against the neoliberal-capitalism.

German workers-council movement originated alongside of Fordism. Before WWI and Fordism, Germany was known for their high quality products as a result of their “exceptionally skilled labor force” (Bologna p. 4). This original framework for German factory workers emphasized worker collaboration with technicians and viewed workers as inventors (Bologna p. 4-5). Fordism, with its efforts on standardization in mass production of consumer goods, shifted factory focus from highly skilled labors, to unskilled, mobile assembly-line workers, efficiently producing more for less. This shift by the capitalist vanguards foreshadowed the soon-to-be extinction of the highly skilled, professional wage laborer, as it not only replaced the labor force, but redesigned the entire structure of capitalism's dependence of labor. As a movement of resistance against this new industrial order, the workers-council movement attempted to reverse capitalist development, not only in German but internationally, in effort to retain factory-power (Bologna p. 7).

The movement emphasized the need for workers to be seen as an autonomous political class – not just as labor power (Bologna p. 16.). This emphasis rejected any previously prescribed script for insurrection, and instead, as defined by Lenin, became an “organization-as-a-process” (Bologna p. 16). However, the German workers-council movement never fully yielded what they were fighting for as a result of not have the political unity between working class, poor proletariat, and sub-proletariat (Bologna p. 17), in addition to workers not knowing how to stand their grounds and maintain concessions, as well as their initiatives continuously being superseded by the efficiency of Fordism.

In Russia - different from other revolutions - the factory takeovers were seen as a revolt against the bourgeoisie rather than a transition to a new form of government. The question that this revolution was out to solve was: if productivity could benefit capitalists, why could it not benefit the workers. Although the Russian factory takeovers in 1917 failed as far as workers control was concerned, they did yield a lesson for other revolts: revolutions in themselves could not lead to self-management unless certain steps are integrated into the process along the way (Wallis p.16). Meaning, class and state power had to work with one another rather than independently to yield desired results.

The need for dialogue between class and state for worker-led initiated to function successfully came up again in Italy and later in Spain. In 1920, Italian factory occupations, for the first time, implemented factory seizure within a capitalist democracy (Wallis p. 17). However this only had short-term results given that workers did not know how to build solidarity beyond the factory, i.e they did not incorporate the state into their planning. Spain, on the other hand, built their worker-led initiatives into other sectors

of the economy outside of just the factory, including agriculture, industries, and services (Wallis p. 18). What assisted in Spain's movement was the fact that there was already an anarchist component found in the country's political framework, and therefore, was the first country to develop worker-control initiatives under the government. However, the victory of fascism and the privatization of agriculture and industry finally suppressed worker control in the end (Wallis. P 21).

Although capitalism consistently reined in the end with all the above movements, each revolution or worker-led initiative paved the way for revolutions taking place today. As seen in Venezuela, there is more of a convergence “between state and non-state protagonists pursuing a common goal” (Wallis p. 29). Albeit still fragile, the Venezuelan Revolution has brought about more social awareness amongst worker-led initiatives (Wallis p. 28). However, as Venezuela has draw from past international worker-control movements to make sustainable advancements on their own, it can be said that, although Argentina may have extracted some principles from previous revolts, they have stood out in that they have chosen to go against the grain and not abide by a “ten-point plan” but rather write their own social movement model (Lavaca collective p. 8-9).

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