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and her new book *Six Months in Soviet Russia* publicised their case. But the decline following the end of the war in November 1918 spelt disaster for the rebels. Mass unemployment set in, and as elsewhere, vocal shop stewards were victimised and hounded out. The national leaders dealt swiftly with Lavit and co and union 'law and order' was re-established. Lavit retired, not even a footnote in IWW histories, joined the Republican Party and died peacefully in 1951. Again conclusions about the instability of anarcho-syndicalism and the IWW strongly present themselves.

Points

Several lessons, apart from those mentioned above, seem apparent from this whole episode. While full scale workers councils are associated with a wider crisis in industry and society, the centrality of members involvement at the bottom level, stand clear and apparent.. Even with a mediating influence of union structure, the large number of strike meetings in this episode were dominant. Workers power did control the events.

Secondly with the ideology of national trade union leaders exposed as bankrupt and uncritical, as in all the industrial countries like Britain, Germany, France and Italy, workers themselves spent thousands of hours devising an alternative program based on a worker controlled economy. The more recent example of the Lucas Aerospace Shop Stewards Committee Alternative Production Plan in 1970s Britain [Wainwright] and the almost simultaneous proposals of the All Russian Soviet of Factory Committees that challenged Lenin's Party socialism in 1918 [Brinton], are other instances of this ability to prepare a fundamentally new society despite political parties.

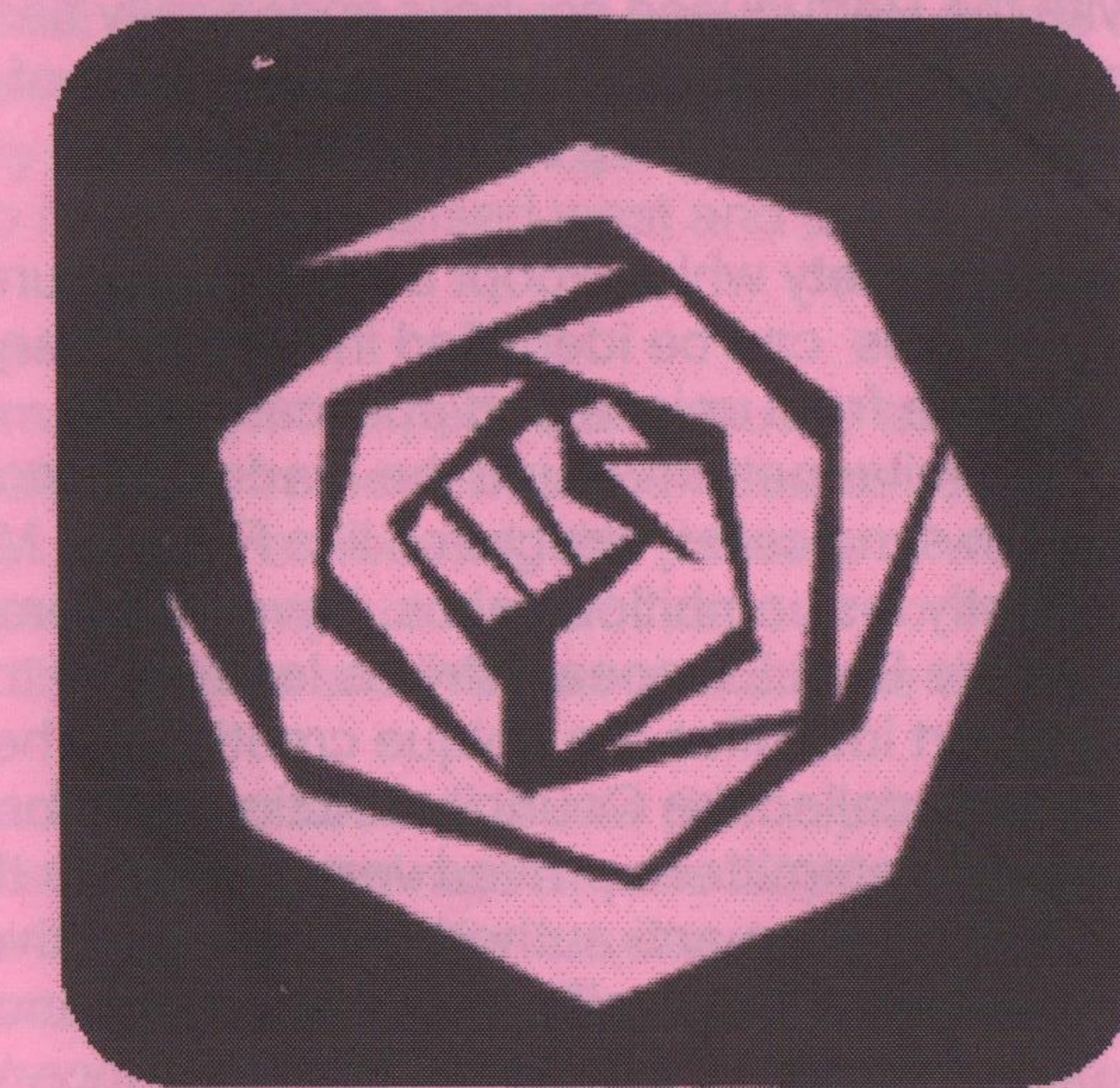
Though the episode has not been entitled as 'council communism' this is clearly what it is. Even more importantly, such narratives appear to have occurred around the world for some decades before history was written, and these can be firmly located in the category of 'hidden history', or perhaps 'concealed' would be a better word. As such, unknown workers history can be seen as a central part of radical history, free of overt political party influences.

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Workers control

- the why, where and when's of workers councils

a booklet of reasons, places, dates, participants, etc and gazetteer of reported cases of workers control, with reading references for more information



by Alan Woodward

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Gorter Press 2012

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Workers councils can be defined in their political role as the agents for the replacement of private and state property by collectively controlled ground level bodies. The composition is of delegates elected at sovereign assemblies in workplaces or residential areas, who are instantly recallable and elected at 6 monthly intervals anyway. The area councils are usually called neighbourhood and frequently linked to parent workplace institutes.

From this base, the next level is district councils, always on a de-centralised, federated basis. These can be linked to industrial areas, as in Chile, or combines within an industry or employer. The essential features are the federal structure and the intermediate level of responsibility. National level bodies remain to be defined by circumstances and events.

The "soviet" model from post 1917 Russian society is an inferior version in that it allows representatives from political parties and is in any case governed by an executive comprising political party personnel [Brinton] .. The standard version from Italy to Portugal, and beyond, follows the original version, with the Portuguese councils specifically banning political representatives for example [Mailer]. The overall purpose of councils is the supervision of the transition of existing into a new society.

Bodies within capitalist society which adopt a similar structure but with a slightly different procedures can be identified in revolutionary Spain 1936, where the delegates were from unions and political groups. American experience follows a similar pattern round the 'trades council' pattern, which also flourished in syndicalist structures like France. Many strike committees, with slightly less ambitious aims, have had something like this, and indeed it was in the East European strikes leading up to 1905 Russia, that Rosa Luxemburg first identifies the unique creations [The Mass Strike]. In the UK, a hybrid body called the Council of Action was formed after 1920, but these unusual committees proved very modest in their socialism. These bodies generally have an anti authoritarian perspective but many are similar more concerned with specific grievances than social transition

### Recap

"Workers control in society" is a piece of short hand for the means by which those who oppose capitalism wish to see its replacement. Capitalism is a political system that fragments and separates opposition into groups that are as small and weak as possible. The chief method which a collective and united group can mount a serious challenge is through the collective action of the workplace in the form of a committee or council, to take

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control of that workplace. Then expands this control out from its base to challenge private and state control in society

### The pioneers

Such a philosophy was first formulated by the so called "Council Communists" in 1920 who from being long standing marxists, disagreed so strongly with Lenin and the Bolshevik regime in post-revolutionary Russia that they separated into their own structure, determined to formulate their own policy, method, activities. Their central theme was the workers council and the 'council communists' struggled on for decades, seeing their fortunes raised by the Hungarian workers councils in 1956 against Russian control and continuing the fight

It can also be determined that the emphasis of local councils and workplace organisation reflected strongly the tradition of the other main philosophy, of anarchism or libertarian socialism. That great protagonist of the workers councils Antonia Gramsci, worked in collaboration with Italian anarchists. [Williams] The dual nature of a political philosophy thus predominates, despite occasional attempts to claim it for one side or the other [Rachleff]. Since WW2 the regular insurrections around the world have been characterised by an independent tendency, and are opposed by private and state ownership in the industrialised west and the Russian empire.

### More definitions

Movements from below in this period are usually as resistance to the authority but within that framework some have developed the embryo of a socialist society. Those advocating the primacy of workers councils, rather than the political party solutions of various forms of marxism, can be called socialist libertarians and we can re-state the definitions again for our own purposes:

*A Socialist Libertarianism society is one that replaces private and state property with a socially owned model, one displaying a planned and ordered structure. This allows the maximum freedom for the activity, development and satisfaction of the individual. It would reject supernatural theories beyond humanism. While it makes no claim to be "scientific", it would celebrate diversity, imagination, co-operation and bottom-up control of workplaces, communities, institutions and society. In opposition to those systems obsessed with economic determinism and political party solutions, it is concerned with the collective ownership and management, previously associated with other non-market, non-State beliefs like anarchism and socialism*

[Woodward]

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### Anti-Bolshevism

The great council communist activist Herman Gorter spelt out the implications in his devastating reply to Lenin about the nature of the new society [1920]. Council communism advocates a prime structure of workplace or residential, organisation in the form of councils, which are autonomous but linked through a federated body and without party political control. Workers are therefore in total control of their own destiny without Party interventions. Within these institutions, "those who see furthest", make up the political group, or groups, which as an organisation, guides, organises and influences the controlling bodies. Gorter spelt out the damage of Party control, the mythical mass party and the monopoly of the single Party leaders, the Communists. His predictions have been verified on dozens of occasions.[Mattick]

### Organisation today

Of course workplace organisation is always fragile outside a revolutionary situation, this cannot be instantly rectified but the work of the political groups can proceed regardless. It has its priorities -

- to build workplace councils where possible in spite of the orthodox trade unions and their obsession with negotiations
- and the political organisation or party that can help in the political transition.

We can always organise meetings, publications and a few events on a small scale. It is within this framework that most of us, most of the time, have to work. Our story is therefore not one of immediate insurrection events around the world but assisting those that do occur and keeping up out broad propaganda work at home in preparation.

Our problem is that the dominant philosophies are from the residual marxist groups with their political routes and intervention, and the piecemeal anarchist theories which are primarily concerned with opposing the authoritarians. Between the two, council communism (or socialist libertarians) struggle to make headway and recruit mainly from those disgusted with the main players. Hence we work under several handicaps, as critics but advocating our own ideas. So we criticise our opponents with their journals and books but progress is slow.

In this document, I start with a political consideration about the essential nature of the concept of workers control - marxist or libertarian - through a ten point plan. In the second part, I reproduce a gazetteer of why, where and when's of workers councils, which does often requires amendment. Part three comprises reading references for readers wanting more

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information. The appendix looks at an example of shop stewards activity, outside of a general crisis in capitalism and before the recognition of the term 'Council Communism'. It is perhaps typical of a part of hidden history, which appears to be more common than realised.

### Part One, Formation & definitions

I try to determine whether the body of ideas sometimes referred to as 'council communism' are a form of libertarianism or can be called marxist. Numerous volumes choose the later classification, with all its implications but this document believes it should be the former. We therefore identify the cardinal points of the 'council communism' and then examine them to determine their origins and decide on the proper classification overall.

The concepts, as developed historically, hold:

1. *that the system we live under is characterised by private property, the exploitation of labour to produce profit, or 'capital', for investment within a market capitalist framework, to produce more profit etc;*
2. *that a further source of disaffection for the population as a whole is their removal from any means of control of their lives and society - they are effectively powerless - 'alienation' as it is called;*
3. *that resistance to the established economic dictatorship is best arranged around the collective action of the many, especially in the workplaces, and that such structures form the basis of a new world of economic freedom with these collectives to be the basis of political rights;*
4. *that the mechanism for defence and resistance in the present, and as a basis for the new world was workers councils. They were to be considered as the pre-figurative institution.*
5. *that there have always been, and will always be people who are aware or conscious of the nature of our society, and wish to change it; therefore the other important component is the political party to guide, advise and from the position of 'those who see furthest';*
6. *that the adoption of dominant political parties as the means of resistance is a diversion at best which can easily be subverted by the authorities, as electoral processes to parliament have been;*
7. *that these same authorities have converted the leaders of labour organisations into support for the existing order; many have commented on the duplicitous role of trade union and Labour Party leaders in this connection;*
8. *that even if political parties did introduce a transformed society, this would quickly be transformed again into a new dictatorship, a*

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*prediction many believe occurred following the hijacking of the October revolution in 1917 Russia by the marxist bolsheviks ;*

9. *that a further diversion is support for alternative exploitation by indigenous free marketeers under a national liberation anti imperialism banner and, that in contrast, replacement systems need to be international in nature ;*
10. *that actions for change based on State activity would in the long run, and by definition, be self defeating and not valid action*

Is such a programme ;marxist; or 'libertarian' ? I consider ten important points .

### One, the system

The system we toil under is called capitalism and the most publicised writer on this is certainly one Karl Marx. However the characterisation of opposition as 'marxist' is a misnomer, as Marx merely copied the ideas free circulated decades before he was even born. Such ideas are quite comprehensive and a diligent reader

- K Marx ? - could get an all round critique without any political party overlay.

We speak of British writers like Thomas Spence, William Cobbett, Thomas Hodgskin , William Thompson, Robert Owen among others [ N Thompson] . Anti capitalist Hodgskin for example in 'Labour Defended against the Claims of capital' , 1825, elaborated a systematic theory that contained all the essence of his views. Marx acknowledge this : 'Here at last the nature of capital is understood correctly' he wrote in 'Theories of Surplus Value' . Not a complete version but more than enough to pinpoint the salient points even without the political implication, and correctly identifying ownership of wealth and capital as the pivot. Cobbett identified the corruption essential to the system and the poverty resulting.

Robert Owen picked on the need for political action outside the market in the form of plans for the unemployed , in his 'New View of Society ,' 1819 and 'Report to the Country of Lanark' , 1821. Nor were there ideas just locked up in the minds of intellectuals . The 'Labour Exchanges' movement of the 1820/30s in London and Birmingham , showed an astonishing alternative to the market. The destructive action of new machinery by the Luddites groups , 1811-2, shows a last resort by the disenfranchised producers[ Reid ]

Thompson's 'An Inquiry into the Principles of the Distribution of Wealth', 1824, led directly to the theory of the exploitation of labour by the

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ownership of capital, and advocated that the produce of labour should be in the possession of the labourers. He saw ' an antagonistic relationship between capitalists and labourers ' the class struggle in fact . This has one effective conclusion , and that is political , that to be fair , labour should control accumulation and suchlike.

Perhaps the major reference however was Thomas Spence's 'The Real Rights of Man', a reply to Tom Paine's political polemic 'The Rights of Man', 1793, and which looked at more practical and significant economic power and personal freedoms. Ignoring much publicised political issues, he pinpointed private ownership as the essence of power and all that flowed from it. Produced as a result of a lecture, it was sold on the streets by his children and others . Arrests followed - this was outright subversion and then more prison. Later he moved to London and published a journal 'Pigs Meat' also agitational, before dying in poverty in 1814. His ideas lived on and inspired many of our contributors above. Curiously the best source for Spence is Mary Ashraf (nee Kemp) who wrote from Berlin and traced out many of Spence's ideas, like that of a general strike years before Benbow was said to have proposed it

In this thumbnail sketch, we can see the early identification of the essential features of capitalism in these British writers that all pre-date Marx. Later, examining his writings directly, anarchists were to trace more roots among contemporaries and to state that he derived these from other writers. The Chinese anarchist Shen Zhongjiu wrote for the long running Peoples Tocsin in 1927 that Marx had copied his most basic ideas from others - class struggle -Guizot, Considerant , Blanc, Proudhon ; surplus value - Sismondi, and Blanqui ; the concentration of capital - Considerant ; rate of profit - Ricardo ; historical materialism - Vico and Herder. This is recorded in the recently published history of Chinese anarchism [Dirlik].

So to conclude our first point, there is nothing exclusively marxist about an economic analysis of capitalism and if awards are to be made , they should go to the originators some of whom were libertarians .

### Two, personal alienation

The system of capitalism removed progressively the power of individuals to control any aspect of their lives. After Acts of Enclosure forced workers off the land and into industry, the control regulations within the occupational area and residency in the terrible urban slums , with no right even to take part in the corrupt parliamentary elections, people who effectively rendered powerless. This was alienation - from their lives, their work, their neighbours , their fellow workers and usually their families.

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Marx took from the philosopher Hegel and Feuerbach, the theoretical concept and it figured in his earlier writings, especially the occupational aspect. In his later writings, it was downgraded to below economic exploitation in the hierarchy of accusations and was not given much importance even by Marcuse and co. By contrast, the idea was considered crucial to anarchists, Proudhon framing the famous quote about the loss of his personal freedom.

In libertarian writings, one aspect of the idea was the systematic loss of freedom to an encroaching State and the personal rights that have been a debatable issue ever since. What is rightful authority? Are elected leaders, especially delegates, legitimate people? Some anarchists will consider no restriction over their rights, as Bakunin famously pointed out . . . .

The anarchist answer was not a change of bosses but control by themselves alone, but that is a further development, see below.

### Three, the response

The collective nature of the working class - who were 90% of British society at the time - was expressed in several features. The trade unions and the co-operative movement both found a sponsor in Robert Owen but these rapidly outgrew this modest idea. The Luddites were collectively organised as were the Chartists and many of Owen's other projects [Taylor]

Proudhon

Some writers developed the idea of collective action and effectively formulated beyond this the concept of workers control of the workplace, and subsequently the structures above this. This can be found to have begun with the establishment of permanent structures of the working class in the form of trade unions. Strangely, one of the earliest references comes from the writings of the French anarchist, P J Proudhon.

His perspective of workers control was prophetic and significant. Proudhon adopted it in a specific form from the workers of Lyons after the 1840 insurrection. Its essential features were an overall association of labour and:

- ❑ every associated individual to have an indivisible share in the enterprise,
- ❑ each worker to take his share of heavy, dirty, or dangerous work, in the workplace and /or society,

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- ❑ each to be trained for, and to do, all the operations of the workplace or industry,
- ❑ remuneration to be proportional to skill and responsibility of the job,
- ❑ profits to be shared in proportion
- ❑ each to be free to set his own hours, work as defined and leave the association at will,
- ❑ management and technicians to be elected, and work regulations to be subject to collective approval,
- ❑ office holders to be elected [Proudhon].

Most of the ideas of industrial and political liberation can be implied from the demands, though Proudhon's strong opposition to strikes - the most likely means of achieving these - was just one of many contradictions in his theories.

### Four, workers own councils

The solution advocated by early libertarians, mutualists, or whatever was self organisation, through workplace councils or area communes. Hence the application of this practice in the Paris Commune, as opposed to the marxist theory by which the commune could not happen, as workers had not progressed through the stages outlined so precisely in the Communist Manifesto. There were several such examples of self control as laid out by Proudhon and Bakunin above and the slogan of workers control/ councils became a key part of libertarian theory.

Despite Marx's belated conversion to workers self activity after 1872, this idea found no place in marxism. Indeed the mechanism for establishing it, the general strike, was dismissed out of hand by Marx's colleague Frederick Engels. When workers councils emerged in the strike wave preceding and comprising the 1905 revolution, the bolsheviks opposed them as they were not party organisations. Lenin was more manipulative and proposed using the councils as a vehicle for party control. These workers councils in practice incorporated a degree of party participation by agreeing to their executives having representatives from the political parties, including the Bolsheviks. These were 'soviets' and in that sense they were not true workers councils.

When workplace committees also appeared in 1917, the Bolsheviks ignored them - not party organisations - and only adopted the factory councils in May 1917, several months after the revolution. As is well known, after the October revolution, the Bolsheviks twice rejected a comprehensive National Workers Plan, then incorporated the factory bodies into party run unions and took control of the soviets as Party

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organisations [Brinton] A damning indictment of marxism in practice on workers control.

For the record, workers councils occurred spontaneously and have been described in the file Workers Councils Gazetteer for reading updated

These are the known cases others almost certainly happened. There was little time for these participants to develop political structures but councils were formed. Full marks for spontaneity but none for marxism or anarchism.

### Five, the conscious minority

While marxist ideas have permeated various communist, leninist, trotskyist and miscellaneous marxist groups, the ideas of 'council communism' have been limited to a few institutions. Historically these have been associated with movements for the original German and Dutch council communists itself, guild socialism and WC&SSM in the UK, and Friends of Durruti in anarcho-syndicalist Spain. These are not forerunners in an organisational sense, but groups who formulated their resistance and ultimately politics, as a result of the situations they experienced and their political beliefs. Hence their ideas were at first linked to contemporary circumstances and are partial, and far from comprehensive, but they do reflect the writings of Anton Pannekoek and Herman Gorter in a broad sense.

The Marxist Party by contrast has normally been single minded, expression based on official party sources, for the vast majority of the organisations over time. Lenin allowed a regulated discussion while Stalin has obliterated any such freedom and the picture is much the same in Trotskyism. The party is the Authority and its word is law. Party 'chauvinism' is totally dominant and internecine rivalry is obsessively and deliberately maintained. The concept of democratic centralism encapsulate this autocratic control

Hence council communism is not another leadership party of the rigid type but one working towards a party or organisation - the wording does not matter - that develops the skills, knowledge and initiative of the minority. Gorter emphasised that such an organisation should not aim to be 'mass' as the leninists demanded, but as big as its membership required. He did not rule out multiple 'parties'.

On the other flank, anarchist bodies, while nominally without such a political body within their structure, in practice often display an admittedly lesser degree of organisational chauvinism, but still with internal conflict against

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similar bodies. Fraternal relations have been a forgotten item, in this agenda

So how did the parties of the council communist type function in practice. The first wave were all formed in the volatile interwar period which was increasingly dominated by fascism. In Germany, the Communist Workers Party, KAPD, after functioning in parallel to the official communist party, gradually declined. It did establish links with Italy, the UK, Holland, Bulgaria and such like; it set up an international network, the KAI, went through defections left and right but was finally swept up by Hitler in 1933. The group's main base had moved to Holland where Pannekoek and Jan Appel worked within the GIC. This was a propaganda organisation and produced both educational material and a history of workers councils [Canne Meijer]. Curiously the NAZI invasion, though repressive, allowed Pannekoek to stay free and he began working, in English, on his major publication, Workers Councils. This came out in 1947 in Australia. One inheritor was Cajo Brendel, eventually to become the movements veteran, who died in 2006.

In Britain, sympathiser Sylvia Pankhurst was ruthlessly thrown out of the CPGB, on a trumped up allegation. Her 'Workers Dreadnought' journal continued, exchanged articles with the Italians but was terminated in 1924. Some continuity of ideas went on through the Guy Aldred structures before the Spanish events occurred.[Shipway]. In the USA, where Paul Mattick had gone in 1926, the ideas were kept going by a series of publications and journals. Later significant publications on economics followed, and a major volume on anti-bolshevik communism in 1978. This is a very informative collection of essays by the ex-KAPD man. His son continues to be active, and many other veterans pronounce themselves to believe in council communism [Rachleff]

Two important examples remain. In Spain in 1936, the traditional rulers, threatened by popular revolt, were rescued by a fascist military mutiny which was itself immediately suppressed by a workers insurrection in half the country in July. Anarcho-syndicalists were organised in the union CNT and its political counterpart the FAI. Both faced a choice of joining other groups (reformists) in a government, which was not within their ideological framework, or running their own social revolution. They choose the former.

At ground level, anarchist organisation plus more moderate socialist workers formed collectives to run industrial and rural workplaces, within a socialised economic and political structure. These had various titles but many were just 'comites'. Welfare services were also transformed in this

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longest and most extensive revolution on record. The chosen parliamentary leadership plus nominal anarchists was gradually subverted by the reformist communists, boosted by Russian arms. Franco began his NAZI style repression.

Curiously, half way through, a dissident group emerged named the Friends of Durruti which advocated council communist policies. They drew the unpleasant but necessary conclusions about anarchist organisation and advocated, through their journal, the politics originated by Pannekoek and Gorter a decade previously. They were attacked by the leadership but defended by the rank and file.

In Italy, the activities of the 'New Order', that is Gramsci and L'Ordine Nuovo, though a mixture of anarchists and marxists, known as ordinovistis, functioned as it to order in the post war crisis. A strong syndicalist movement, aided by Antonio Gramsci's group, pushed reformist union leaders into extensive factory occupations, firstly in Turin and later nationally. Shop committees were called internal commissions.

Italian Labour Party action, both within the revolt and in parliament, diverted the struggle, isolating the shop stewards in 1921. The Labour Party subsequently split, many going into the communists. Fascism was adopted by the ruling class, and all the left was crushed. Italian workers have exploded into street revolts and action committees several times afterwards most notably after 1945 and around 1969. [Levy] & [Williams]

### Six, dominant political parties and elections

From an early stage, a division arose, most dramatically in the First International, about whether the response to capitalism should be based on taking the political road or alternatively not relying on the political party - invariable comprising non-worker intellectuals - and building their own organisation. Historical evidence was soon to show the fallacy of the one true revolutionary party, its strategy of combining leadership within trade union bodies and a dependence on the political methods. The bureaucracy of the German Social Democratic Party and the official trade unions was perhaps the most obvious but certainly not the last example. So anarchists standing as candidates was ruled out and even voting was severely questioned. Even so, PJ Proudhon stood for election to the French parliament in 1848, though he later regretted it.

The narrative of the working class leaders who did adopt the political road is instructive. In Britain John Burns, and the miners union leader Frank Hodges were absorbed without trace into parliamentary politics, the same

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such activists in France. In pre revolutionary Russia, the Bolshevik deputies standing in the Duma, allegedly controlled by the all powerful Central Committee, proved substantially less so in practice [Badayev].

In revolutionary Spain in 1936, the movement of the CNT union into the electoral alliance of the Popular Front government, after lifting the election boycott just previously, is seen by many as the cause of the disintegration of the movement, though internal bureaucracy probably played a bigger part [Richards ?].

Guy Aldred, the leading British anarchist of the twentieth century, favoured the nationalists 'Sinn Fein' tactic - standing, getting elected but not taking the seat [Caldwell]. A version of this tactic was used with astonishing success by the nationalist Bobby Sands in the Irish Hunger Strikes of 1981, standing for election from his deathbed in prison and helping ultimately to defeat Thatcher [Ellis]:

As an alternative, libertarians have usually proposed administration through a federated system of collective institutions workplaces, communities and services. Meanwhile many would accept standing in local elections, including Noam Chomsky. Herman Gorter wrote his persuasive 'Open Letter to Comrade Lenin', which out argued the latter as conclusively as Marx had defeated Proudhon in 1847. The result in terms of impact was however much the same.

Gorter makes the point that in a revolution, the tactic of parliamentary activity should not be used in order to maximise the case. He did concede that it could be used in less crucial periods. This was understandable in view of the gross betrayal by the Social Democrats everywhere in world war 1, but the present writer believes that the view of Rosa Luxemburg, that all methods should be used, and that voting as a useful monitoring of opinion, was correct [Luxemburg 2010].

The main theme is that in the inauguration and construction of the new society, electoral voting for political parties has no place. Instead, it is proposed that voting by everyone on issues of the day, similar to the old initiatives or referendums, has a secondary role to the main institutions such as federated workers' councils and communes, but could function as both as a supplement and constitutional check.

It is proposed that national initiatives would be held every two or three weeks with regional and local versions at similar intervals.. The details could be based on the long experience of referendums in countries like Switzerland. One libertarian writer has contributed to this subject. Akiva

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Orr, a long standing member of the old Solidarity- for- workers -power [Goodway], has written an eloquent manifesto for direct democracy [Orr]. His ideas centre around the promotion of "Direct Democracy", or DD, by computer. It calls for the introduction in all sections of life of the principle of individual voting as the sole political mechanism [page 21]. His analysis condemns what he calls "Rule by Representatives", within representational capitalism, as being essentially a corruption of power arising from electoral voting for political parties, [p13]. Readers can decide for themselves whether these internet based plans are valid. We return to the main theme

### Seven, subversion of official leaders of the labour movement

As soon as the workers managed to get themselves together in the industrial revolution, they formed unions and political parties. The pioneering Dutch council communist Anton Pannekoek identified councils as the key structures in the new stage into which he believed society had moved with the new twentieth century. This form of organisation, he believed, characterised the direct workers democracy, and in sharp contrast to Lenin's attempt to re-create the bodies of the pre war period. His analysis may well prove accurate though his time scale appears "telescoped".

Previous stages that he identified were -

- that of the condition of no organisation at the workplace, hence total employer hegemony, marked by insurrections that were either heroic but doomed or to help another class - capitalism - seize power against feudalism,
- reformism, characterised by parliamentary representation [not democracy], labour parties, national trade unions and their formations, and small disjointed and sometimes suspect revolutionary groups. This was the age of winning and using the right to vote, securing minor changes around the edges of society, and a period of learning for workers and their organisations. Regrettably, capitalism has proved able to prolong this phase, and delay the new stage, but not for ever.

Much of his material comes from the historic survey of the emergence of general strikes from 1894 up to the 1905 revolution by libertarian marxist Rosa Luxemburg. These were in what is now the Ukraine or Poland. The organisational centres of the general strikes were the workers councils, soon to assume a political revolutionary role

Council communism is seen as the key institution of modern society [Bricianer] and has been seen as such by council communist groups in

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Holland, the UK and so on. Marxism instead was committed to working though the existing political parties - Labour, Communist etc. As Pannekoek implied, Lenin, in his attack on the new ideas in 'Left Wing Communism', rounded on people like Sylvia Pankhurst in Britain and insisted that the new communist party made a priority of affiliating to the British Labour Party. The CPGB accordingly sought affiliation and secretly infiltrated the LP for some decades in the attempt to win parliamentarians over to 'communism'.

Over the decades to 1989, parliamentary and trade union leadership demonstrated their allegiance to orthodox politics, from the 'no strike' pledges in USA and the UK, the French CP's parliamentary repression 1945-47, and on and on. Progressively Labour and Social Democratic parties have become more openly advocates for the free market and today they are very similar politically to other parties. Marxism has little to boost its prospects here. Parliamentary socialism does not exist.

### Eight, the 'red' dictatorship

Michael Bakunin in his debates with Marx, made a fundamental critique of the possible political take-over of society. He predicted based on his dealings with marxist and knowledge of their policies, that any new society they did create would quickly degenerate into a new dictatorship. The marxists old enemies quickly made precisely this judgement after 1917 in 'soviet' Russia [Maximoff]. Bakunin's analysis of marxism is as comprehensive as Marx's borrowed theory of capitalism, and every bit as relevant. The description of 'state capitalism' fitted the new Russia accurately.

Since the new system acquired European satellite states - by military force not workers uprising - and the disastrous and murderous Chinese regime of Mao and co. Some parts of this red empire still stand, despite opposition as worker struggle to overcome history. The inheritance of marxism stands opposed to council communist concerns.

The classification was widely debated with communists and most trotskyists defending the Soviet Union. It was partly resolved in the 1989 collapse

### Nine, against imperialism and indigenous capitalism

As the blatant economic exploitation practised by the old capitalist states has been opposed by their indigenous victims, new states based on national liberation have been established, primarily in Africa. The whole situation poses a problem of how to regard those agitating for national liberation. Too often, the new states quickly became a new form of

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capitalism and indigenous entrepreneurs used the political freedom gained to establish their own form of exploitation. The people remained in the grip of economic dictatorship, no further forward.

Of our two alternatives Marx advocated national liberation for some countries, not all, due to his obscure theories but Lenin decades later declared an open house. He called for the 'right of self determination of all nations' - which meant the activists could be recruited to his Bolsheviks. The opposing theory, expressed in this case by Rosa Luxemburg from a nominal marxist position, pointed out that it was the capitalists mainly who agitated for change while most workers could see little difference [Luxemburg, 1976].

She writes from within a marxist frame work, though her attitude to Lenin's bolshevism has been described by Daniel Guerin as not very far from anarchism. Further he comments that her expression "mass strike" is essentially the same as the anarcho syndicalist concept of the general strike, and that she tries hard not to associate what she describes as the revolutionary spontaneity of the masses "with the basic anarchist idea of the same kind. [Guerin]

Regardless, the classic libertarian idea has been to agree to national liberation in theory but to reject the leaders of the movement in practice. A recent re-statement by Solidarity points out the reactionary nature of the general demand - and could have quoted a dozen ex liberators now acting as repressive dictators in their own countries.

For our purposes, there is a well defined line between the alternatives and council communism today would be appear to be solidly in the non marxist group.

### Ten, against the State

This in one of the most contentious points. The libertarian - indeed theoretical marxist - analysis in that society comprises almost entirely property owned privately or by the State. This is carefully disguised to appear as a 'democracy' so that the interlocking complex of capitalist property owners, landlords, established religious churches, the Armed forces and Defence chiefs, media controllers and their agencies, civil servants running government departments, transport bosses, local authorities, monarchy and hangers on, politicians of various grades; police, prison, judges, lawyers, barristers and court officials; publishing, entertainment and sports businesses, and all the rest, are nowhere presented in their role as a controlling class of the State.

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Instead our society is described as 'pluralistic', with a mythical parliamentary control of government in charge. Where libertarians and marxists differ is that the former see elections parliament, politicians, Labour Party and trade union leadships as a fig leaf, while the latter have a strategy of participation and 'progressive control'. They believe in representational capitalism, despite all the evidence of its failure, collapse before the authoritarians of business or fascism. By their actions they legitimate the system and weaken opposition to it.

By contrast, libertarians stick to direct action, political action either legitimate or illegal, reliance on their own controllable bodies and ultimately revolutionary action to replace the State and its facades. General abstention, ground level resistance and shunning the popular political issues.

Such a strategy has yet to be applied but it does not have dozens of examples of failure hanging round its neck - it is perhaps the last hope of humanity. Readers will have to make their choice in this matter and act accordingly.

### Part Two, The Gazetteer

We now turn to an outline of the specific subsequent history of workers councils in various countries. Reading references for one book, generally, follow this. The order is alphabetical, not chronological. Names given to council are listed

#### Algeria

The former French North African colony was the scene of a bitter and bloody anti imperialist war, and the new regime under socialist Ben Bella allowed workers to take over deserted workplaces. The workers councils were based on the German supervisory councils model and inspired by the official Yugoslav state run councils. They were known as conseil de travailleurs. They flourished only briefly in 1962-66 within a state capitalist society, before the Army repressed them and their patron. Clegg, Ian: *Workers Self Management in Algeria* [1971, 249 pp];

#### Argentina

Argentina's explosive revolt in 2001, at one level, building on the Peronista gains of fifty years previous but at another rejecting outright the authoritarian nature of the precedents [Sitrin] Financial collapse under ruinous international interest charges prompted popular revolt. Working class organisations, veterans in the fight against authoritarian regimes,

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were supplemented by more prosperous citizens as banks froze personal accounts. The previously small piqueteros with their road blocks, joined to make a formidable movement. Neighbourhood assemblies spread over the main cities and a federated national structure was established.

Dozens of abandoned workplaces were taken over. Some became co-ops and got state funding but other such as Zanon Ceramics, after a decade of bitter struggle, were occupied and resumed production as outright examples of alternative production. A small wave of worker run institutions, including co-ops, aided by unemployed piqueteros and their blockades, have made up the resistance since then. It remains as a possible model for future episodes of social transformation. See [Jordan], Jordan, John and Jennifer Whitney: *Argentina's Popular Uprising - an eye witness account of the financial meltdown and ongoing grassroots rebellion* [2004, 58 pp];

### Austria

At the end of world war one in 1918, German workers resistance, aided by a more militant section of the labour party, SDP, prompted the establishment of workers, soldiers and peasants councils. There was little progress towards alternative politics and the councils were gradually incorporated, unlike the more violence fate of their German equivalents. Gedy, G E R: *Fallen Bastions* [1939, 519 pp];

### Bavaria

Another German province saw the late development of a Workers Republic based on workplace councils, and some peasant committees in 1919. Both marxist and anarchist members were involved. The regime did not last the month. German mercenary troops, directed by an alliance of SDP and the ruling class, broke the Republic and massacred thousands to establish traditional law and order. Carsten, F. L.: *Revolution in Central Europe 1918 - 1919*, [1972, 360 pp]; Gustav Landauer: *For Socialism* [1911 Germany & 1978 USA, 150pp], main volume of life long socialist and martyr of the Bavarian revolutionary government;

### Bolivia

Bolivia with its strikes, councils and militias of the 1950s, and neighbourhood councils which inspired the mass movements from 1993, is an ongoing situation. The strength of the councils here, and their resilience against the political leadership of Evo Morales, is an inspiration [Crabtree]; This is unfinished business as the old vested interests are currently campaigning around "autonomy" by which they mean retaining old powers within selected regions of the country. Watch this space!

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### Britain

Syndicalist inspired shop stewards, plus an imaginative marxist Socialist Labour Party, built a movement opposing the government's war policies during world war one. It prevaricated over the war itself, which was supported by the official trade unions and labour party. The end of hostilities saw the employers and State revenge, watched passively by official union leaders. Victimisation and unemployment broke the Shop Stewards and Workers Committee movement in 1919 and the rump joined the communist party and ran the organisations of the unemployed until 1940. War created full employment and a revival of workplace organisation that lasted for decades. This was characterised, optimistically, as socialism in the workplace. Challinor, Ray: *Origins of British Bolshevism* [1977, 290 pp], and James, CLR as JR Johnson, Grace C Lee and Pierre Chaulieu (Cornelius Castoriadis): *Facing Reality: the new society, where to look for it, how to bring it closer*, [1958 USA (listed under Lee ?), 174 pp];

### Chile

Capitalist market economics created a crisis leading to the election of the reformist President Allende in 1972. Workers committees soon formed in the industrial areas of cities, and in the neighbourhoods, cordon industriales. US interests conspired with the military, and a coup by Pinochet killed the timid Allende but also thousands of workers after 1974. Pointblank; *Strange Defeat - the Chilean revolution 1973* [2005?, Black Flag 223, 4pp]; or Zimbalist Andrew and James Petras: *Workers' Control in Allende's Chile* [1975?, 9 pp] Gonzales, Mike: *Chile 1972-3* [40 pp] in Colin Barker: *Revolutionary Rehearsals* [1987, 270 pp]

### China

Nationalist, anarchist and communist forces combined to oppose the traditional war lord leaders in the 1920s. Workers took control of cities when a joint liberatarionary army advanced from the south. Nationalists then turned on the communists and massacred them and the workers council leaders in 1927. Stalin, fighting Trotsky, manipulated the situation, sacrificing more workers in a further hopeless insurrection, but promoting Trotsky's defeat in Russia. The communists retired into internal exile and under Mao Tse Tung fought a long guerrilla war until military victory resulted in a state capitalist regime in 1949. This has repeatedly crushed opposition, most notably at Tianamen Square in 1990. Capitalist economics have stimulated a large expansion but under a non socialist regime.

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Jean Chesneaux: *The Chinese Labour Movement 1919-27* [1968, 574 pp]  
French communist document ; Dirlik Arif : *Anarchism in the Chinese Revolution* [1991 USA, 326 pp] ;

### Czechoslovakia

East European workers resisting Stalin's military occupation, rebelled under the liberal President Alexander Dubcek and quickly established workplace councils in factories in 1968. Dubcek was deposed and the councils disbanded by Russian troops comparatively easily.

Fisera, Vladimir, editor : *Workers Councils in Czechoslovakia: documents and essays*. [1978, 199 pp] ;

### France

Three major episodes of workers insurrection occurred in 1871, 1936 and 1968 respectively. The first was centred on the Commune in Paris, opposing German troop but massacred by French soldiers. A parliamentary regime, underpinned by the revolutionary National Guard, went down. Secondly a massive general strike and widespread occupation of the factories in 1936 resulted in a communist party led government that progressively sold away all the gains and refused to help revolutionary Spain.

The entirely unexpected worker and student revolt in the late 1960s suffered much the same fate due to communist treachery but provoked a revival in the revolutionary movement around the world. Periodic smaller revolts have followed. French union organisation has inspired syndicalism during the century, to become the third section of the workers movement, beside labourism and communism, on an international scale.

Edwards, Stewart : *The Paris Commune 1871*. [1971, 471 pp] ;

Danos, Jacques and Marcel Gibelin : *June '36* [1986, 272 pp] ;

Cohn-Bendit, Daniel and Gabriel : *Obsolete Communism - the left wing alternative* [1969, 256 pp] ;

### Germany

Military defeat in November 1918. resulted in a colossal wave of workers, soldiers and peasants councils that effectively controlled the country. Sadly the small revolutionary movement was overwhelmed and the reformist labour party, SDP, was allowed to form a political alliance that organised military repression of workers. Communists members split, some organising revolt but others following Lenin's growing conservatism.

A majority formed the German Workers Communist Party in 1921 based on workers councils while the minority adopted orthodox strategies. Either way, were either arbeiterrate -workers councils- or betreibsrate - shop

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stewards councils. Both wings were smashed by Hitler in 1933, who was aided by the party chauvinism of both communists and labour party. Council communist ideas survived and form the core of modern workers' socialism - an industrial council base supported by a non dominant revolutionary party.

Oscar Hippe: . *And Red is the Colour of Our Flag* [1991, 310p],

F. L Carsten: *Revolution in Central Europe 1918 - 1919*, [1972, 360 pp]

### Hungary

The most significant revolt against the Russians occupying the country when workers in 1956 mounted an insurrection. This was characterised by a re birth of workers councils, and liberatory socialism. Organised military resistance held back the Russian soldiers for days before the tank warfare led to defeat but not the disbandment of the councils. The aftermath split the world communist movement and it never fully recovered. Modern revolutionary movements date from 1956, promoted initially by writers like CLR James.

Anderson, Andy : *Hungary '56* [1964, 120p] ;

Jones R M /Scorcher publications : *The Hungarian Revolution 1956*, Council Communist pamphlet no 1 [1984, 24 pp] ;

### Indonesia

1945-46 . One of the best articles in this collection covers the little known workers councils in Java in 1945 to 46. It illustrates all the salient points :

- the emergence of councils as the existing order fails ;
- immediate suspicion of the nationalists and socialists in government that this is a threat to their power ;
- the adoption of the classic marxist techniques , language and perspectives so well known since Lenin's first use in 1918 post revolutionary Russia to repress the councils .

The account is throughout characterised by an independent and straightforward approach quite different to the rest of the contents and their propagandism. Jafar Suryomenggolo, in Ness, below

### Iran

The ruling Shah, corrupt and controlled by the USA, was overthrown by workers shoras and neighbourhood committees. Sadly the revolution was hijacked by muslim fundamentalists who massacred and repressed in the old style. Saddam Hussein fought an internationally backed war from Iraq against the new regime anyway, when he was the darling of USA and Britain despite the killings. There are still occasional shora revolts., but these are lost in the USA/UK war against Hussein and the subsequent civil war

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Payanonnis, Maya, on Iran in Colin Barker - *Revolutionary Rehearsals* [1987, 27 pp] ; Bayat, Assef : *Workers and Revolution in Iran* [1987, 227 pp] recommended general text with traditional approach ;

### Ireland

Workers revolutionary syndicalism was a strong component in the nationalist forces that defeated the British troops 1920-22. Industrial action proved as powerful as armed revolt, with over 100 workplaces occupied, known incorrectly as soviets. Once again, the new regime in the south and the old one in the north used violence and religious ideology to disperse the movement.

Kostick, Conor : *Revolution in Ireland - popular militancy 1917 to 1923* [1996, 239 pp] ; excellent analysis of workers and military power in particular ;

### Italy

A strong syndicalist movement, aided by Antonio Gramsci's marxist group, *Ordine Nuovo*, pushed reformist union leaders into backing extensive factory occupations, firstly in Turin and later nationally. Shop committees delegates elected their own committees called internal commissions. Italian Labour Party action, both within the revolt and in parliament, diverted the struggle, isolating the shop stewards in 1921. The Labour Party subsequently split, many going into the communists. Fascism was adopted by the ruling class, and all the left was crushed. Italian workers have exploded into street revolts and action committees after 1945 and 1969 but the legacy of communism precluded united action.

Daniel Guerin : *Anarchism - from theory to practice* [1970, 166pp] ;

Donny Gluckstein: *The Western Soviets : Workers Councils Versus Parliament 1915 to 1920* [1985, 270pp] ;

Quentin Hoare, ed. : *Antonio Gramsci - Selections from Political Writings 1910-1920*, [1977, 393 pp].reproduces much ON stuff ;

Gwyne A Williams : *Proletarian Order - Antonio Gramsci, factory councils and the origins of Italian communism 1911-21* [1975, 370pp],

### Israel

For a brief period around 1935, workers co-ops, or kibbutzim, coalesced around a form of collective socialism. Nationalism quickly dominated the anti imperialist struggle and began its own form of oppression of the native Arabs, despite the lessons of the Holocaust. The rest is history, with Zionism triumphant, favoured by US aid, legitimising authoritarian Arab rulers and separately victimising Palestinians. Nothing socialist remains, beyond courageous individuals against a terror State.

Akiva Orr in Solidarity 7/2 journal

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### North America

Of all the countries, the USA has seen an absence of a movement of workers councils - probably due to the vast geography, the sharp repression and the regularity of economic failure. Political hegemony or domination has no doubt been very effective also. But individual examples are very constructive and significant. So the situation is that we have a working class noted for its enthusiasm and energy, extremely active in co-operation and workplace union organization but unable to expand this into councils of the conventional kind. We must make the best of this situation and look to the explosive events connected to general strikes in cities and regions, like Remington's, and workplace occupations, for details of working class activity.

See the end list for :

General Strike Committee [History Committee] , Harvey O'Connor , Farrell Dobbs. Stanley Weir , Walter/George Linder, David Montgomery, Ken Weller, John Curl,

### Poland

With a long history of Jewish anarchism and workers' revolt, the Polish labour movement was prominent against Russian occupation from 1956. By 1980, workplace organisation, aided by crude religious ideology, launched a big move against the Red Army, a puppet Polish government, and phoney workers councils. Solidarnosc, or Solidarity, set up their own structures but political organisation did not measure up to its industrial counterpart. The repression delayed retribution by less than a decade, but any hope of workers' socialism after of the mass revolt of 1980 has been smothered by burgeoning capitalism and the EC.

Colin Barker: *Festival of the Oppressed* [1986, 192 pp] ; and Henri Simon : *Poland 1980-82- class struggle and the crisis of capital* [1985 Canada, 144 pp],

### Portugal

A quite unexpected rebellion by Army conscripts against a corrupt semi fascist regime in 1974 was used by workers to liberate their workplaces, estates and neighbourhoods. Despite some rapid independent growth, the dominant communist politics was eventually replaced by a predictable labour party and curiously non violent counter revolution. Indigenous syndicalism was encouraged by the liberation, but reformisms won.

Phil Mailer: *Portugal, the impossible revolution*, [1977, 399 pp] ;

### Russia

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Three revolutions - in 1905, 1917 and 1921 - had different results. The first, also the birth of mass workers power, was crudely repressed. However workers councils were formed on a large scale and soviets - politically dominated area bodies - formed a raw people government that was to prove effective in the next decade. The second, initially victorious, was instantly hijacked by the Party Communism of Lenin and Trotsky, etc. Capitalist military intervention subsequently weakened the political resources and consolidated opposition, Anarchist resistance remained.

By 1921, continued war communism polarised opinion and industrial unrest around the demand for 'soviets without bolsheviks' was widespread. General strikes, peasant uprisings and the Kronstadt insurrection among revolutionary sailors, were militarily repressed and this was reflected in internal party opposition. Lenin, Trotsky, and later Stalin, trampled on them all as revolutionary socialism was replaced by state capitalism. Trotsky's belated left opposition joined the victims during midnight in the century. Russia joined the repressors of liberty, where it suited their national interest, around the world. See Maurice Brinton

Oscar Anweiler: *The soviets - the Russian worker's, peasant's, and soldier's councils 1905 to 21* [1974 USA, 337 pp] ;

Smith, Steven A. : *Red Petrograd - revolution in the factories 1917-18*, [1983, 347pp] ;

Aves, Jonathan : *Workers Against Lenin - labour protests and the Bolshevik dictatorship* [1996 220 pp]

### Spain

The traditional rulers, threatened by popular revolt, were rescued by a fascist military mutiny which was itself immediately suppressed by a workers insurrection in half the country in July 1936. Anarcho-syndicalists were organised in the union CNT and its political counterpart the FAI. Both faced a choice of joining other groups (reformists), which was not within their ideological framework, or running their own social revolution.

At ground level, anarchist organisation plus more moderate socialist workers formed collectives to run industrial and rural workplaces, within a socialised economic and political structure. These had various titles but many were just comites. Welfare services were also transformed in this longest and most extensive revolution on record. The chosen parliamentary leadership plus nominal anarchists was gradually subverted by the reformist communists, boosted by Russian arms. Curiously a dissident group emerged named the Friends of Durruti which advocated council communist policies. They were attacked by the leadership but defended by the rank and file.

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The social revolution was abandoned but the fascists, with German and Italian militaries, finally won in 1939. The Spanish revolution which prefigured the second world war, brought disaster to anarchism but remains as a shining example of working class ability to run their society for some years.

Christie, Stuart : *We, the anarchists ! - a study of the FAI 1927-37* [2000, 127pp] ; Sam Dolgoff editor : *The Spanish Collectives - workers management in the Spanish Revolution 1936-39* [1990 Canada, 194 pp]

Alan Woodward's book celebrating the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Spanish Revolution looks mainly at workers control.

### Ukraine:

The resistance from 1905 lasted for some years but eventually various leaders were caught and executed, Makhno was imprisoned from 1908 where he was influenced by Arshinov politically. After 1917, he returned to his base and organised to eject the German troops. Later the Ukrainians set up many communes on the land and in industry, and also got rid of the old Czarist forces as well. The Bolshevik leadership now turned ruthlessly on their erstwhile allies, dispersed the partisans, broke up the collectives as they had done in Russia and forced Makhno and co into exile. [Arshinov] A reform movement in anarchism, The Platform, which called for a central institution, was set up by Arshinov. Makhno and co campaigned on for their version of anarchism. Their writing survived them and have been revived by [Skirda] and also

Peter Arshinov: *History of the Makhnovist Movement 1918 -21*, [1923 & 1987, 284 pp] ;

### Venezuela

where the ex Army colonel Hugo Chavez has been in power for a decade and is gradually introducing some radical features. This situation shows one of those curious south American specialities, in the form of an idiosyncratic military leaders whose reforms actually benefited the working class. Colonel Peron in Argentina has already been mentioned and the career of Colonel Hugo Chavez in Venezuela shows amazing parallels with this [McCaughan]; Chavez is using the vast oil revenues to introduce a welfare state, blocking the protesting reactionary elements whatever methods that choose, including an attempted military coup.

Workplace organisation has been slow to develop and has been partly state sponsored in Venezuela, raising the issue of the workers councils in Yugoslav, which came from similar

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sponsorship. A realist picture of Chavez as benevolent populist dictator is in Rafael Uzcategui: *Venezuela - revolution as spectacle* : [2010, 232 pp] translated by Chaz Bufo. He asks *as revolution or tradition?*

### West Bengal

A small scale outbreaks of councils by textile workers spreading over a decade in India's communist run state, Summarised by Arup Kumar Sen in Immanuel Ness and Dario Azzellini, eds : *Ours to Master and to Own - workers control from the commune to the present* [2011, 443 pp] . Aided in a small way by state aided funding but otherwise subject to the normal attacks by politicians, Parties and trade union leaders, Indian mill workers battled on for years in a prime example of hidden history. The account is written in marxist/ leninist language.

### Yugoslavia

Tito's communist partisans fought off the German NAZIs but quickly fell out with Stalin's grand plans for a Russian empire, post 1945. The resulting Russian boycott was met with plans for a revival of workers councils, run officially, both to boost production and consolidate nationalism. Even so this experiment has provided useful information, institutions and inspiration internationally for all but card carrying communists. It was the first defeat for Stalinism. Over three decades, the institutes for worker participation - or basic organisations of associated labour - were absorbed piecemeal into the regime's market socialism, before post Tito nationalism destroyed the hard won unity. The resulting war was as disastrous as any.

Singleton, Fred : *Workers self management and the role of trade unions in Yugoslavia*, in Coates, above 1970;

### Part three

#### Reading references for further info on workers control

- Jan Appel: *The Fundamental Principles of Communist Production and Distribution* [1930 Berlin & 1990 translation, 589 pp] privately published: economic proposals for the period after evolution. It is also autobiographical, and formed basis of educational work of Dutch councilists, GIK, in 1930s.
- Colin Barker: *Revolutionary Rehearsals* [1987, 270 pp]. summary of episodes albeit from a marxist/leninist perspective,
- Colin Barker : *Festival of the Oppressed* [1986, 192pp] ;
- Assef Bayat: *Workers and Revolution in Iran* [1987, 227pp] recommended general text with traditional approach ;
- Janet Biehl, editor : *The Murray Bookchin Reader*, [1997, 244 pp], excellent reader but excludes final books,
- Murray Bookchin: *Anarchism, Marxism and the future of the Left - interviews and essays* 1993-1998 [1999, 352 pp], maintained most of his marble but not all at the end,

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- Maurice Brinton ( *Chris Pallis* ) : *The Bolsheviks and Workers Control*, 1917-21 [1970, 86 pp] see also Goodway, David, absolutely essential reading on the performance of the bolshevik regime, very detailed, very accurate, and still unanswered masterpiece,
- F. L. Carsten: *Revolution in Central Europe 1918 - 1919*, [1972, 360pp]
- Ian Clegg: *Workers Self Management in Algeria* [1971, 249 pp], standard account of little known experiment of workers control in post war situation
- Tony Cliff: aka Ygael Gluckstein : *Rosa Luxemburg*, [1959 First, un-amended, edition, 90pp] ; ; where he states a preference for RL over Lenin, avoid subsequent reprints where it is reversed.
- Ken Coates and Tony Topham, eds : *Industrial Democracy in Britain* [1968] later *Workers Control - a book of readings and witnesses for workers control* [1970, 464p],
- Daniel and Gabriel Cohn-Bendit : *Obsolete Communism* - the left wing alternative [1969, 256 pp] ;
- Terry Coleman : *The Railway Navvies - a history of the men who made the railways* [1965, '68, 265pp] butty system p 57 ;
- John Crabtree : *Patterns of Protest - politics and social movements in Bolivia* [2005, 118 pp] , excellent summary now a little out of date ,
- John Curl : *For All the People* ,
- Arif Dirlik : *Anarchism in the Chinese Revolution* [1991 USA, 326pp],
- Farrell Dobbs: *Teamster Rebellion* , [1972, USA, 185pp], *Teamster Power* [1973, USA, 255pp] *Teamster Politics* [1975, USA, 257pp] *Teamster Bureaucracy* [1977, USA, 304pp] ;
- Sam Dolgoff, editor : *The Spanish Collectives - workers management in the Spanish Revolution 1936-39* [1990 Canada, 194 pp] ;
- Vladimir Fisera editor : *Workers Councils in Czechoslovakia: documents and essays*. [1978, 199pp] ;
- Peter Fryer : *Hungarian Tragedy* [ 1956 & 1986, 80p] , classic text,
- G.E. R. Gedy : *Fallen Bastions* [1939, 519pp] ; Austrian councils, old book but useful information ;
- General Strike Committee [History Committee] : *The Seattle General Strike* ( 1919, 66pp) in Root and Branch (editors) : *Root and Branch - the rise of the workers movements* [1975 USA, 544p] (Peter Rachleff) ;
- Donny Gluckstein: *The Western Soviets : Workers Councils Versus Parliament 1915 to 1920* [1985, 270pp] ;
- Richard Gombin: *The Radical Tradition - a study in modern revolutionary thought* [1978, 153 pp] ; useful round up of ideas, many very relevant,
- David Goodway, editor : *For Workers' Power - the selected writings of Maurice Brinton* [2004, 379 pp] which includes useful accounts of debate over original publications, plus reprints of his three main works,
- Herman Gorter: *An Open Letter to Comrade Lenin* [1921, 1995, 41 pp] , demolition of the leninist claim to socialism ;
- Daniel Guerin : *Anarchism - from theory to practice* [1970, 166pp] excellent introductory account by an ex marxist who attempts to relate the two ideologies and provides an comprehensive introduction to Spanish council movement as well as the Russian and Italian ones as well ; sound judgement, in contrast to

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- marxist hysteria and half truths, though short of independent libertarian analysis.
- ❑ CLR James as JR Johnson, Grace C Lee and Pierre Chaulieu ( Cornelius Castoriadis) : *Facing Reality : the new society, where to look for it, how to bring it closer* , [1958 USA (listed under Lee ?), 174 pp]., perhaps the best book for the council idea,
  - ❑ R.M: Jones *The Experience of the Factory Committees in the Russian Revolution, Council Communist pamphlet no 2* [1984, 28pp] ;
  - ❑ John Jordan and Jennifer Whitney : *Argentina's Popular Uprising - an eye witness account of the financial meltdown and ongoing grassroots rebellion* [2004, 58 pp], libertarian volume , quickly published but still valuable
  - ❑ Conor Kostick : *Revolution in Ireland - popular militancy 1917 to 1923* [1996, 239 pp] ;
  - ❑ Gustav Landauer : *For Socialism* [ 1911 Germany & 1978 USA , 150pp], main volume of life long socialist and martyr of the Bavarian revolutionary government;
  - ❑ Carl Levy: *Gramsci and the Anarchists* [1999, 272 pp] ;
  - ❑ Walter Linder: *The Great Flint Sit-Down Strike against GM 1936-37 Solidarity* booklet [1967 USA & 1969, 38 pp] ,, one of a series of militant union action for union recognition.
  - ❑ Phil Mailer: *Portugal, the impossible revolution*, [1977, 399pp] ; model volume on recent workers councils ;
  - ❑ David Montgomery: *Workers Control in America*, [1979 USA, 189 pp] ;
  - ❑ Ronaldo Munck, Ricardo Falcon and Bernardo Galitelli : *Argentina from Anarchism to Peronism - workers, unions and politics , 1855-1985* [1987, 261 pp], standard history of the tumultuous years, brilliant but not unflawed account of much of the early years ,
  - ❑ Paul Mason.: *Live working or Die Fighting - how the working class went global* [2008, 304 pp] exciting and exuberant selection of episodes in history , and twinned with events today. Journalist style but readable introduction and best single source for our concerns ;
  - ❑ Paul Mattick: *Anti Bolshevik Communism - collected articles* [1978, 231pp],
  - ❑ Michael McCaughan: *The Battle of Venezuela* [2004, 166pp] ;
  - ❑ JT (Jack) Murphy : *The Workers' Committee - an outline of its principles and structure* [1917 & 72, 26 pp],  
Harvey O'Connor : *Revolution in Seattle - a memoir* [1981 , 300pp]
  - ❑ Immanuel Ness and Dario Azzellini, eds : *Ours to Master and to Own - workers control from the commune to the present* [2011, 443 pp] ; marxist document on selected aspects ;  
Anton Pannekoek : *Workers Councils* [1947 & 2002, 219 pp] ,
  - ❑ Maya, Payanonnis in Colin Barker - *Revolutionary Rehearsals* [1987, 27 pp], reasonable account,
  - ❑ Pointblank : *Strange Defeat - the Chilean revolution 1973* in Black Flag 223 , [2003, 4 pp], informative , if short summary , of the general events ,
  - ❑ Dwight Rayton [a k a Reg Wright] ; *Shop Floor Democracy in Action* [1972, 31pp] longer version of Reg Wright – of Coventry shop stewards in control of

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- car and engineering factories. Industrial Common Ownership Movement publication .
- ❑ Arup Kumar Sen ; *Workers control in West Bengal* [ 2011 20 pp] in Immanuel Ness
  - ❑ Henri Simon : *Poland 1980-82- class struggle and the crisis of capital* [1985 Canada, 144 pp],
  - ❑ Fred Singleton: *Workers self management and the role of trade unions in Yugoslavia* in Coates , 1970,
  - ❑ Marina Sitrin, editor : *Horizontalism - voices of popular power in Argentina* [2006, 256 pp] ;
  - ❑ Alexandre Skirda: *Nestor Makhno , Anarchy's Cossack - the struggle for free soviets in the Ukraine 1917-1921* [2004, 415pp]
  - ❑ Jafar Suryomenggolo : *Workers councils in Java, Indonesia 1945-46* [2011, 20pp ] in Immanuel Ness
  - ❑ Noel Thompson: *The Real Rights of Man - political economies for the working class 1775 - 1850* [1998, 198 pp], post Paine but pre Marx, an undervalued volume ,
  - ❑ Rafael Uzcategui : *Venezuela - revolution as spectacle* [2010, 232 pp] translated by Chaz Bufe.
  - ❑ Hilary Wainwright and Dave Elliot : *The Lucas Plan - a new trade unionism in the making* [1982, 280pp] ;
  - ❑ Stanley Weir : *West Coast Longshoreman and Informal Workers Control* [19pp] in *Singlejack Solidarity* [2004 USA, 384pp] ; the San Francisco based longshoremen (dockers) and their massive action to replace casual labour with union controlled practice from 1934 to 1966;
  - ❑ Ken Weller : *The Lordstown Struggle and the real crisis in production*, Solidarity pamphlet 45 [ 1972 ? , 12 pp]; another car workers strike which was a very significant event in 1972. ;
  - ❑ Gwyne A Williams.: *Proletarian Order - Antonio Gramsci, factory councils and the origins of Italian communism 1911-21* [1975, 370 pp], better than your average book on Italy,
  - ❑ Alan Woodward: *The New World , perspectives on workers control in revolutionary Spain 1936-39* [2011, 84 pp] ;
  - ❑ Alan Woodward: *As We See It Now* [ 2008, 8 pp] modern council socialist manifesto,
  - ❑ Alan Woodward : *The Deeper Meaning of the Struggle - an outline history of the international shop stewards movement and socialism* [ 2009, 64 pp], much needed perspective on workplace organisation and its politics ;
  - ❑ Reg Wright : *The Gang System in Coventry* [ 7 pp] in *Anarchy* 2 , 1961, reprinted in Ward , Colin ed , : *A decade of Anarchy 1961-70* [1987 , 283 pp], detailed and often quoted , workers control in car factories . based on the traditional 'butty' system ; See also Coleman and Rayton
  - ❑ *Zanon Ceramics Factory - a year of occupation*, author unknown, [2002 Argentina , 13 pp], together with the many films and videos this is an unmissable story.
  - ❑ Andrew Zimbalist and James Petras : *Workers' Control in Allende's Chile* [1975 ? , 9 pp]

### Appendix The Remington Events .

from David Montgomery 's *Workers Control in America*

The Remington Arms and Ammunition Company had been set up in a hurry in 1915 as the world war, and the demand for arms, expanded. It's Board was headed by Percy Rockefeller and had members from across a range of banking and industrial enterprises. Contracts came in, including some from Russia and business grew rapidly. The central factory Remington Arms, which had 15,000 employees itself in 21 buildings , subcontracted increasing amounts of work out to more than 120 companies, in this traditional centre of engineering and manufacturing. Aided by its excellent harbour and strategic position within the NE industrial area , the old factories quickly adjusted to the new trade.

The aggressive management style based on Taylorism took on the unions confidently. One aspect of its programme was the individualised pay packages to circumvent unions like the Association of Machinists. Managers were up grading the non skilled labourers into machine minders and some were transformed into tool makers , technically a skilled trade. All this at individual pay rates of course. The union response was to demand some structure to the chaotic pay structures and it prepared pay grades or classifications. What was known as 'dilution' in the UK went beyond the examples mentioned above into female employees, held in some disdain by the crafts-men. The hours issue was also much debated and the union had managed to introduce the 8 hour day in 1916 for its central members as such. The AFL policy of wartime industrial truce and no strikes was not always followed.

#### Crisis

By 1917 , the pace of events was heating up. The previous pattern of strikes in the periphery of the Remington empire was now replaced by rising conflict in the central factories. A dispute in the polishers of the American Gramophone Co. was being proposed for sympathy or secondary action, despite the national truce and the IAM loyalty to it. In the period of rising militancy, local union elections resulted in the success of Edwin O'Connell and the experienced agitator Sam Lavit as president and business agent respectively. The latter was fresh out of prison for strike leading at the Paterson silk workers dispute .

Events moved quickly. Lavit used his IWW experience to consolidate his position, editing the Bridgeport *Labor Leader* for example. In July, the workers at the central factories came out to support the AGC polishers, and

ignored the agreed Procedure to do so. Management cuts and retaliatory strikes took place in the autumn. By January 1918, workers were reeling under the draconic use of militarisation and the spiralling dilution. Lavit cleverly used the *Labor Leader* to support the war effort and pre-empt allegations of supporting the other side but uproar broke out again when workers in the factory over Easter found they were getting only standard rates . By now union activity was frantic and numerous strike meetings were hammering out an alternative structure to Taylorism for industry - and society. In May and June both central and subcontracted workers were on the picket line together.

#### State intervention

The government stepped in to calm things. The Labor Adjustment Committee of the Ordnance Department accepted union demand about pay grades, a total of six, but little else, and it was only the National War Labor Board's intervention that got work resumed in July. A plan for shop committees, sponsored by the state - which interestingly resembled the Russian government's ill founded plan which resulted in the establishment of shop organisation in that that countries cities - and also a city wide arbitration committee, were proposed. A more devious tactic was to offer increases to non unionised, non skilled, workers to outflank the IAM ranks.

However both plan fell. At a Labor Day rally in September, despite threats from the IAM leaders, but with encouragement from militants like Ella Reeve Bloor , the strike escalated and 5,000 were out. Elections for the planned 6 man City Arbitration Committee resulted in Lavit and O'Connell dominating it . Eventually a heavy threat from the US President of a permanent employment ban led to a return to work less than two weeks.

Nothing daunted, the union continued. The workers in Bridgeport had distilled their own counter plan to Taylorism. This was constructed by many strike meeting, and was summarised as "a collective participation of the workers in the control of industry". It was based on the 8 hour day, standard job classifications , and union members own shop committees. They adopted a title for an "Autonomous Industrial Republic" from De Leon's Socialist Labor Party. This not only angered the national IAM trade union leaders but was rejected by the local Bridgeport Central Labor Union - a trades council type body - which was solidly Socialist Party in orientation . This unanimity suggests an obvious conclusion about socialist groups and capitalist crisis.

Lavit and co pressed on. Support from rank and file bodies in the region came in, Ella Reeve Bloor mobilised her 'communists ' and Louise Bryant