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## The Autonomous Negative: On the Constituent Potential of Workerism's Political Philosophy

While a form of strong structuralism, as advocated by Louis Althusser and his *rupture épistémologique*, was dominating French Marxism, an area of Italian Marxism (which came to be known as 'operaismo') developed a more political conception of class conflict by focussing on the importance of autonomous processes of subjectivation. Its methodological innovations were groundbreaking and they impacted on the epistemology of class consciousness and knowledge of society (in particular with the so-called 'participated inquiry'). In this intervention, I will tackle with the key philosophical intuition behind the Workerist movement, which was originally indebted to young Marx's criticism of Hegel's philosophy of law. I will focus in particular on Della Volpe's critique of the dialectic method and his interpretation of Marx as an anti-Hegelian thinker. This engages directly with the question of necessity because Della Volpe denied any historical determination in class formation and development, opening up a space for political action in the relation between classes. On this foundational intuition, Antonio Negri and Mario Tronti developed the idea of the working class as the engine of capitalist development. According to this view, the negative moment in the dialectic of conflict is actually the determining force of historical development. By assuming the autonomy of this negative moment (i.e., its not being determined by the positive), Workerists offered a new and challenging take on constituent power. For this reason, it is worth reconstructing and assessing its philosophical basis.