

International Institute of Social History Amsterdam

**Anton Pannekoek
and the Socialism of Workers'
Self-Emancipation, 1873-1960**

John Gerber



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by

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INTRODUCTION

Anton Pannekoek (1873–1960) has remained until recent years a largely neglected and unknown figure in the history of socialist thought.¹ The partial eclipse of Pannekoek that began in the 1920's and the almost total eclipse later do not mean that he can be regarded as a purely ephemeral and negligible tendency in Marxist thought. On the contrary, his work can be viewed as one of the most thorough, consistent, and intelligent attempts yet made to develop Marxism as a theory of revolutionary practice, and the neglect he has suffered might be considered less the result of a reasoned intellectual judgment than the consequence of a concurrence of unfavorable historical events.

Pannekoek's long life and political career spanned several epochs of socialist history. His political maturity coincided with the rise of social democracy; his last years of political life witnessed the first stirrings of the New Left. His writings left their imprint on both movements. During the intervening years he was an international figure active in both the Dutch and German socialist movements. Prior to 1914 he collaborated with Karl Kautsky on the *Neue Zeit*, taught in the SPD party schools, and along with Rosa Luxemburg emerged as one of the leaders of the left wing of German social democracy. Pannekoek was one of the first in Europe to understand the fundamental weakness of the social democratic movement and to anticipate its eventual collapse. Following the outbreak of the First World War, he was the first to call for the formation of a new International and later became a prominent figure in the Zimmerwald anti-war movement. Although he played a pivotal role in the initial formation of European communism and was a leader of the Comintern's Western European Bureau, Pannekoek was among the first to break with authoritarian communism. As the preeminent theoretician of the German 'left' communist KAPD in 1920, Pannekoek articulated an alternative West European conception of communism and a powerful critique of Leninist orthodoxy, which earned him Lenin's denunciation in *Left-Wing Communism, an Infantile Disorder*. From 1927 until his death in 1960, he remained active as the intellectual mentor of the quasi-syndicalist 'council communist' movement.

On a theoretical level, Pannekoek can be situated within a definite period of European Marxist development spanning roughly the years 1900–1930. He belongs to a remarkably able generation of Marxist intellectuals whose concerns were defined by the disintegration of a politically and intellectually debilitating Marxist orthodoxy and the search for new revolutionary alternatives. In his bold and sweeping critique of the Marxism of both the Second and Third Internationals, Pannekoek grasped – perhaps more lucidly than any Marxist of his generation – the authoritarian tendencies in the political movements inspired by Marxism and sought to develop new anti-bureaucratic models of revolutionary transformation. His extensive theoretical reflections, which posed questions that were virtually unique within Marxism at the time, strikingly anticipated many of the most essential contributions made by other thinkers of the Western Marxist tradition.² Like Lukács, he articulated the centrality of ideas and consciousness to historical development and emphasized the organic link between class consciousness and class organization. Like Gramsci, he sought to develop Marxism as a philosophy of praxis and stressed the importance of combatting bourgeois ideological domination by developing an independent proletarian hegemony. Like Korsch, he attempted to strip Marxism of its concern with metaphysics, highlight its importance as a critical method, and when necessary use the Marxist conception of history to analyze the history of the Marxist movement itself.

Pannekoek's scientific accomplishments are no less prodigious. A pioneer in the development of modern astrophysics, Pannekoek began his studies at the age of fifteen as an amateur astronomer fascinated by the Milky Way. In 1891 he entered the University of Leiden. After completing his study of astronomy in 1895, he became a geodesist at the Geodetic Survey and in 1898 was appointed observer at the Leiden Observatory. He received his doctorate in 1902 and shortly afterwards began a detailed investigation, which extended over fifty years, of stellar distribution and the structure of the galactic system. Among his many discoveries were the groups of early stars that were later called associations. Upon leaving his observatory post for Germany in 1906, he began a lengthy study of Babylonian astronomy and published several articles on the subject. Returning to Holland after the outbreak of the First World War, he found no vacancies in astronomy and was compelled to teach at the high school level. In 1919 he finally secured an appointment at the University of Amsterdam where in 1921 he founded an astronomical institute that now bears his name. It was here that Pannekoek undertook his ground-breaking work in astrophysics. During this period, he was one of the first to study ionization and line intensities in stellar atmosphere. He also developed a method of determining distances to dark

nebulae and applied modern photometric methods to study the sun's atmosphere during solar eclipses. In addition to his other research concerns, Pannekoek also maintained a lifelong interest in the history of astronomy, which culminated in his influential work, *A History of Astronomy*, an excellent and original study emphasizing the interrelation between the evolution of astronomy and society. Among his many awards was the gold medal of the Royal Astronomical Society, the highest honor in his profession. When Harvard University selected 72 of the world's most distinguished scientists and scholars to honor with honorary doctorates at its tercentenary celebration in 1936, Pannekoek was one of the four recipients in astronomy.³

Despite the broad contours of his thought, Pannekoek's social theorizing in the later decades of his life often seemed out of tune with the times, a romantic and utopian holdover from an earlier phase of the socialist movement. Following Lenin's judgment in *Left-Wing Communism*, communists and social democrats alike vilified him for what they considered his extreme radicalism and rigid stands. Until recently, much scholarly treatment followed a similar pattern, which was often reinforced by the inaccessibility of key documents. When evaluated positively, Pannekoek often merited no more than a footnote. The resurgence of conflict among students and workers in the 1960's, however, led to a renewed interest in issues of democratic participation and workers' self-management and a search for an anti-authoritarian Marxism, which occasioned a rediscovery of Pannekoek and his main concerns. What resulted was a flood of anthologies, reprints, and translations of his writings in at least eight languages and several accounts of his work.⁴ While a necessary corrective to the earlier view of Pannekoek, much of this work was marred by its uncritical and partisan character. Still others delved into particular phases of his career, in isolation from the other phases.⁵ In spite of this renewed interest, no published treatment of Pannekoek has appeared which is at once comprehensive and free of partisanship.⁶

In a sense, one of the aims of the present study is to fill this gap by providing a comprehensive and critical exposition of Pannekoek's contribution to socialist and democratic thought. But at the same time, this work aspires to be much more. What I have also sought to do is reconstruct the historical circumstances in which Pannekoek's theoretical development took place. To fully understand Pannekoek's Marxism, it is necessary to critically examine the social movements in which he was involved, the intellectual and political traditions which shaped his concerns, the experiences and learning process by which he came to his ideas, and the means by which he sought to test and implement these ideas. Examined in such a manner, Pannekoek's political career provides a privileged perspective from which to explore the possibilities and limitations of revolutionary Marxism in Western Europe

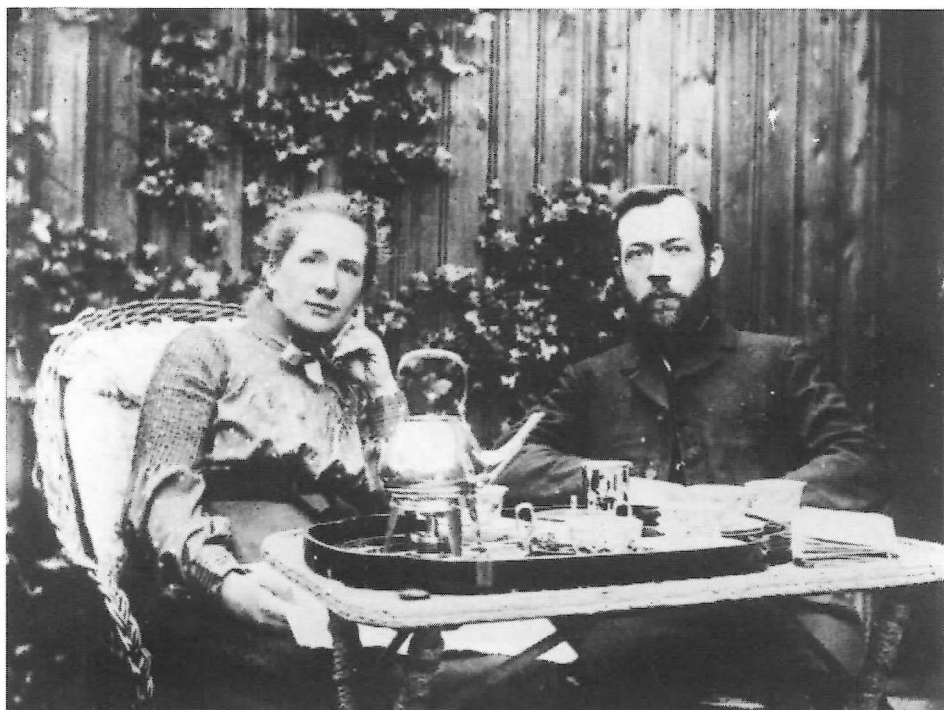
during the first half of the twentieth century. In particular, a consideration of Pannekoek's activities raises complex questions about the role of theory as it intersects with social movements and popular struggles. Consequently, one of the underlying aims of this study is to examine the extent to which Pannekoek's theoretical conceptions were grounded in social reality, the extent to which these ideas played a role in shaping reality, and the extent to which they were ultimately circumscribed by the reality he sought to transform. It is hoped that by looking at Pannekoek's long effort to develop a Marxism that was both revolutionary and democratic, and the difficulties he encountered in this task, we may be better able to understand why revolutionary Marxism took the forms it did after 1920.



1. Anton Pannekoek in his Berlin years (1906–1910).



2. Marriage of Anton Pannekoek and Anna Nassau Noordewier, 15 July 1903. First and third to the left Herman Gorter and Henriette Roland Holst.



3. Anton Pannekoek and his wife Anna Nassau Noordewier (c. 1905).

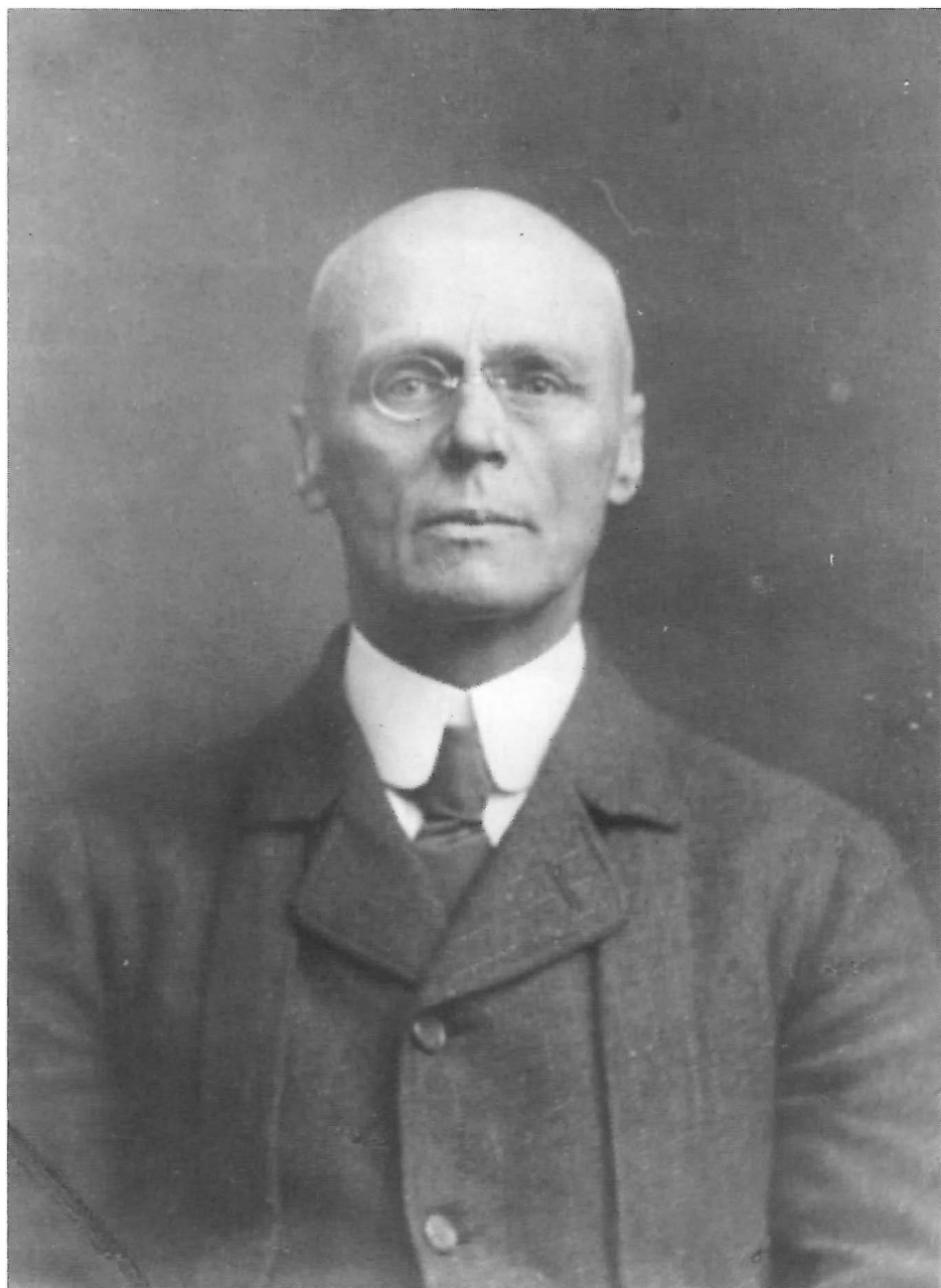
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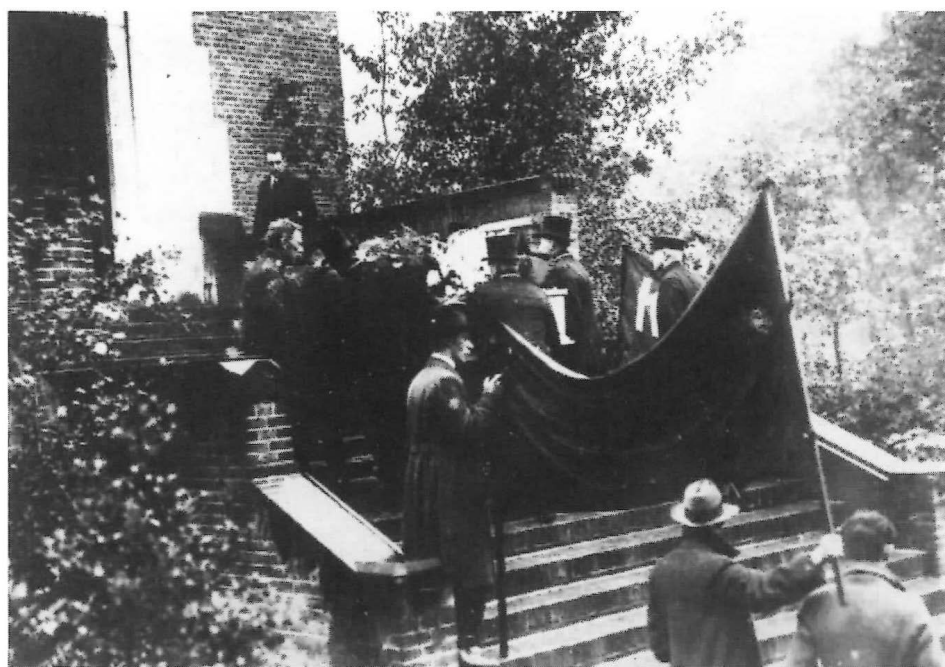
4. Anton Pannekoek with friends (probably Georg Ledebour and his wife).



5. Anton Pannekoek (1952).



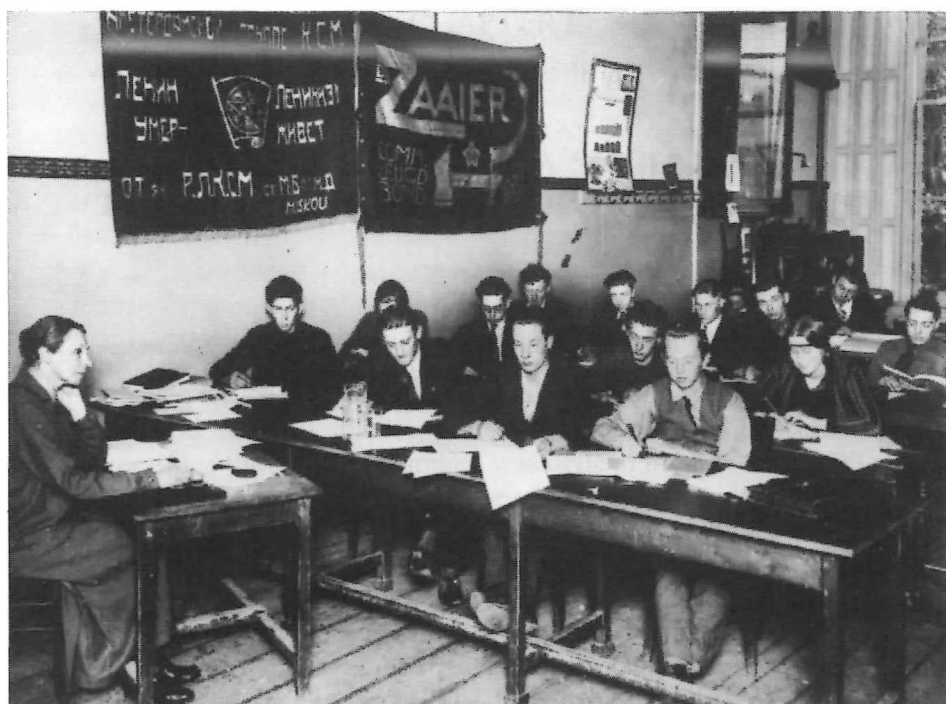
6. Herman Gorter (1923).



7. Herman Gorter's funeral (1927).



8. *Henriette Roland Holst (1921).*



9. Henriette Roland Holst teaching young Dutch communists (1926).

CHAPTER I

**THE MAKING OF A SOCIALIST:
THE MILIEU OF PANNEKOEK'S MARXISM***The Historical Context: Society and Social Democracy in the Netherlands*

The milieu in which Anton Pannekoek came to political maturity had a deep and profound effect in shaping both his initial political concerns and the character of his thought. This milieu was defined by the relative absence of an independent, mass-based, class-conscious, working class movement of any significant dimensions. Due to several features of Dutch socio-economic development, the context in which Dutch social democracy struggled to gain a foothold was markedly different from elsewhere in Western Europe.

Among the most prominent factors shaping working class political culture in the Netherlands was the structure of the Dutch economy itself. Until at least the first decade of the twentieth century, labor-intensive agriculture remained the dominant sector of the economy. In the absence of coal and mineral resources the Netherlands lacked the ingredients for the first phase of heavy industrialization. Compared to the rest of Western Europe, industrialization came relatively late, gaining momentum only in the last decades of the nineteenth century as an effect of the opening of the East Indies to private exploitation and the spillover of German economic growth. Even as it became irreversible, the process of industrialization and modernization developed only gradually and lagged far behind Great Britain, Belgium, and Germany. Factory production methods and technical and organizational innovations were accepted only slowly in a country characterized by a strong spirit of traditionalism and lethargy, which had its roots in the prolonged cultural and economic decline which began in the last quarter of the seventeenth century.

Until well into the twentieth century, the non-agricultural sector of the Dutch economy was still dominated by the commercial and shipping legacy of an earlier era. Within the urban centers, the labor-intensive craft trades and small-scale retail sector predominated. Of those workers subject to impersonal wage structures, the overwhelming majority were employed in the transportation sector – predominantly as railway and dock workers. Lacking mineral resources, the Netherlands was unable to generate the mining,

iron, and steel complexes found elsewhere in Western Europe. What little factory organization that existed consisted of small productive units which were widely dispersed throughout the country. Only the complex of textile mills in the Twente district presented an exception to this pattern. As a consequence, the large and socially cohesive working class concentrations common to the rest of Western Europe which formed a base for socialist organization were late in evolving.¹

The effects of these structural features were further intensified by the passive and demoralized character of the Dutch work force. For over a century prior to the coming of industrialization, the underdeveloped nature of the economy and a subsistence-level poor law system combined to create a large class of semi-paupers. Long accustomed to poverty and being passive beneficiaries of paternalism, the Dutch working class was reluctant to attribute their misery to the emerging industrial capitalism, since they experienced neither the rupture of a pre-industrial way of life, nor a contrast in material circumstances, which might have served to inspire revolutionary resistance.

An equally formidable barrier to the emergence of a class-conscious work force was the historical division in Dutch society between Catholics and Calvinists. Far more than a simple religious division, this cleavage was expressed in separate and distinct subcultures with long-standing historic grievances which extended into every layer of Dutch society. The worker's religious-cultural identification, which integrated him into a strong network of ecclesiastical and political organizations, was at least as important as social class as a factor in determining his social identity.² It was not surprising, then, that by the turn of the century, competing parallel trade union movements had developed in both the Catholic and Calvinist subcultures.³

Lacking clear lines of class identification, the Dutch working class was slow to develop independent organizations to further their class interests. Although trade unions first appeared in the 1860's, they were often weak and unstable organizations which had little impact on the development of the Dutch working class. A viable national labor federation did not develop until after the turn of the century.⁴

In these circumstances, socialism took root in the Netherlands only slowly and painfully. Although a small and impotent Dutch section of the First International existed briefly in 1869, a national socialist organization was not formed until 1881, when three local socialist clubs joined to form the *Sociaal-Democratische Bond* (SDB – Social Democratic Union).⁵ From its inception, the SDB was dominated by the charismatic and powerful figure of Domela Nieuwenhuis.⁶ A former Lutheran pastor, Nieuwenhuis had developed a sympathy for the poor while preaching in the province of Friesland – the

most backward and underdeveloped province in the Netherlands – during the 1870's. In 1879 he left the church and founded the socialist newspaper *Recht voor Allen*. Although he corresponded with both Marx and Engels and translated an abridged version of Marx's *Capital*, Nieuwenhuis was never a Marxist. At the outset, he was hardly more than a humanitarian social reformer whose eclectic writings and speeches combined ideas of an ethical, utopian, and eschatological character.

During the early years of its existence, the SDB devoted most of its efforts to waging a militant agitational campaign for universal suffrage. This tactic, however, succeeded only in arousing the fears of the authorities, who launched a campaign of repression against the SDB, which culminated in the arrest and imprisonment of Nieuwenhuis in 1886. Defeated in its efforts to achieve suffrage reform and decimated by government repression, the SDB began to increasingly question its commitment to parliamentary tactics. This mood was reinforced by Nieuwenhuis' own bitter and solitary experiences in parliament after his election from a Friesland constituency in 1888. Ostracized by his bourgeois opponents, Nieuwenhuis began to move closer and closer to anarchism. After his defeat in 1891, he repudiated parliamentarianism altogether and declared that only revolutionary action could emancipate the working class.

While Domela Nieuwenhuis was reassessing his commitment to parliamentary tactics, a new tendency began to emerge within the SDB which favored a Marxist party based on the German model. Two individuals played a key role in shaping this movement: Frank van der Goes and Pieter Jelles Troelstra.

A gifted literary intellectual of aristocratic temperament, Frank van der Goes was motivated by an almost aesthetic sense of social idealism. Throughout much of the 1880's he was active as a social reformer and prominent member of the Liberal Party, but by the late 1880's he became convinced that only socialism could revitalize Dutch society. Upon joining the SDB in 1890 he embarked upon a systematic study of German Marxism and swiftly emerged as the leading intellectual proponent of Marxian socialism in the Netherlands. Through his countless articles, translations and personal contacts, Van der Goes was almost single-handedly responsible for introducing a whole generation of Dutch intellectuals and militants to Marxism.⁷

Although far less knowledgeable than Van der Goes in theoretical matters, Pieter Jelles Troelstra complemented him well by virtue of his superior abilities as an agitator and organizer. Troelstra began his career as a young lawyer in Friesland, where his work defending impoverished agricultural laborers eventually led him to socialism.⁸ Troelstra's first activity as a socialist, however, was in the Peoples' Party of Friesland, which has been de-

scribed as 'a curious amalgamation of socialists, populists, and proponents of land nationalization, a movement half and sometimes entirely bourgeois'.⁹ Troelstra initially tried, and failed, to transform the Peoples' Party into a social democratic party. In 1891 he joined the SDB, where he was introduced to Marxist theory by Van der Goes.

Van der Goes and Troelstra first clashed openly with Nieuwenhuis at the 1891 SDB Congress of Amsterdam over the question of parliamentarianism. Thoroughly chastised, they began to organize a pro-parliamentary and Marxist faction within the SDB. Organizational and financial support for their efforts was soon forthcoming from the German social democrats and from Henri Polak and the predominantly Jewish *Algemeene Nederlandsche Diamantwerkers Bond* (ANDB – General Dutch Diamond Workers' Federation), which at the time was the largest and most cohesive trade union in the country.¹⁰ A crucial turning point came when the 1893 Congress of Groningen overwhelmingly rejected all forms of electoral activity and expelled Van der Goes. At this point, a major dispute developed between Troelstra and Van der Goes. Troelstra, less firmly committed to the German model of socialism, felt that a split should be avoided. Van der Goes, however, favored the formation of a completely new Marxist party and set up several local organizing committees.¹¹ On August 24, 1894, these groups met to form the *Sociaal-Democratische Arbeiders Partij* (SDAP – Social Democratic Labor Party). Its program, drawn up by Van der Goes, was largely a carbon copy of the 1891 German Erfurt program.¹²

Apart from establishing a new line of strategic and tactical demarcation, the SDAP had little immediate impact on the small politically conscious sector of the Dutch working class which still remained firmly committed to the direct action tactics of the SDB. Except for the diamond cutters, who constituted nearly three-quarters of the Amsterdam membership, the party had almost no base in the urban working class.¹³ Paradoxically, the main organizational base of the SDAP was among the tenant farmers and landless laborers of rural Friesland who had been politicized during the prolonged economic crisis of the 1880's. As late as 1899, the SDAP was still considered predominantly a Friesland movement.

Freed of its parliamentary faction, the SDB continued its development toward a form of anarcho-syndicalism. Within a few years, Nieuwenhuis and his followers – disdaining party organization entirely – dissolved the SDB to regroup in the *Nationaal Arbeids-Secretariaat* (NAS – National Labor Secretariat), which the SDB had organized in 1893 as a national trade union federation.¹⁴ Through agitation within the NAS-affiliated unions, they attempted to pursue a policy of direct industrial action. For the next two decades, they were to remain the most militant and class-conscious sector of

the Dutch working class and the main working-class competitor of the SDAP.

Struggling with Ideas: Pannekoek's Conversion to Marxism

Although Marxian socialism had little appeal to the Dutch working class during the latter part of the nineteenth century, it did leave a lasting imprint on an entire generation of Dutch intellectuals, among them Anton Pannekoek. Born to Johannes Pannekoek and Wilhelmina Dorothea Beins on January 2, 1873, the second of four children, in the small village of Vaassen, located in the poor and backward agricultural province of Gelderland, Pannekoek spent a relatively happy childhood in a rural milieu. Like many other Marxist intellectuals, he came from a family upwardly mobile from the lower middle class. By hard work and a self-acquired education, his father rose from a farming background to become a manager of a small foundry. His father, a Calvinist turned free-thinker and a supporter of the Liberal Party, was also a man of advanced ideas who made considerable sacrifices to educate his four children. From his family, Pannekoek inherited a strong work ethic and a serious devotion to occupation that help account for his incredible productivity in two separate spheres. Like most middle class Dutch youth of this period, Pannekoek was not of a particularly rebellious nature and no serious conflicts marked his early years. Only a lame leg acquired in an accident marred an otherwise tranquil childhood and created in him a predisposition toward solitude and intellectual activity. When he was twelve years old, Pannekoek began to develop a strong interest in nature, particularly in astronomy and botany. He had a particular fondness for collecting and classifying wild plants. In high school his interest in astronomy was further stimulated by his science teacher, J.M. Smit, who helped him to become an accomplished amateur astronomer. As a result of Smit's encouragement, Pannekoek decided to pursue a career in astronomy at the University of Leiden rather than become a high school teacher as he had initially planned.¹⁵

The composite picture that emerges of the young Pannekoek is of a modest, sensitive, rather private person, excelling in the sciences, quick at languages, and at the immense task of disciplining himself for self-imposed studies. Even in his youth, the main traits of his intellectual work were present. His reflective and highly rationalistic personality, a capacity for clear writing which rarely needed correction, and a virtually photographic memory made him a theorist almost by disposition who could hardly handle isolated facts without knitting them into a theory. When he looked at the world he saw only unity and structure. His entire career, in both politics and

astronomy, was to be an effort toward synthesis and system building, which he often carried to extreme limits to achieve internal coherence. 'He potters around with a little stick in the drainpipe of theory', his friend Willem van Ravesteyn later noted.¹⁶

Following a long courtship, Pannekoek married Johanna Nassau Noordewier in 1903. A talented musician and a teacher of Dutch literature from a family with deep roots in Dutch intellectual life, Johanna Nassau Noordewier had been one of the first women in the Netherlands to receive a doctorate and was already a convinced socialist by the time she met Pannekoek. Through her, Pannekoek gained entry to literary and artistic circles. In his marriage, which produced two children and lasted over fifty years, Pannekoek found a relationship that was at once intellectually, emotionally, and politically satisfying.

In his personal life, Pannekoek's revolutionary Marxism was never translated into a commitment against bourgeois society. He valued highly the comforts and tranquility of a middle class home.¹⁷ His life followed an orderly, well-regulated pattern with regular time periods carefully allotted to various intellectual projects. Like most intellectuals of the Second International, his cultural tastes were conservative and classical. He liked essentially the same music, art, and literature as any other fin de siècle intellectual. His chief form of recreation involved long, solitary walks in the woods – an activity he pursued with great vigor until the end of his life. Throughout his political and scientific career, he always combined his visits to distant cities for congresses and lectures with long excursions into the surrounding countryside.

Until he was 26, Pannekoek conformed successfully to middle class norms and expectations. At the time, the future seemed to hold for him a secure and perhaps distinguished scientific career. Having experienced almost no personal hardship or frustration, he had little in the way of a personal sense of alienation. By his own admission, he found the middle class lifestyle and career opportunities that astronomy offered completely fulfilling and saw little need to look beyond them.¹⁸ His only political activity was as a member of the Liberal Party and chairman of a student debating society.¹⁹ Although he was first introduced to the ideas of the left by his high school science teacher J.M. Smit, a friend of Domela Nieuwenhuis who was later expelled from his teaching position for speaking at a suffrage rally, these ideas had no immediate impact on him. His whole pre-Marxian world view was built upon his faith in science as the primary instrument for the liberation of humanity and the source of all progress.

Pannekoek arrived at the socialist convictions only after an intense intellectual odyssey, or what he termed a 'struggle of ideas'.²⁰ Although his con-

version to socialism clearly did not derive from personal contact with the hardships of the workers, it was conditioned in part by a growing political awareness in Dutch intellectual circles about the problems and inequities in Dutch society during a time of rapid and disruptive social and economic change. For Pannekoek, the road to Marxism began unexpectedly in January, 1899, when he encountered, in the reading room of the local Liberal Club, the Leiden tulip grower and ardent socialist, Willem de Graaff who engaged him in a heated argument over the question of socialism.²¹ Shortly afterwards, De Graaff gave him a number of books to read on the subject. For the first time, Pannekoek began to grapple intellectually with major social problems, which prompted him to ask: 'Why is it that I cannot participate and find a place in the struggle? While others are actively striving to improve the world, I sit reducing meridian plates. Science can only remain living when it changes men and conditions. It must help prepare a better future [...] to enable humanity to become free and happy.'²²

The direction in which Pannekoek was moving became apparent in early April, when he and his older brother Adolf, a career army officer, began to draw up a plan for a utopian community based on the writings of Louis Blanc.²³ Shortly afterwards, Pannekoek noted that he felt 'drawn' to the doctrines of a number of largely idealist and utopian thinkers such as Tolstoy, Kropotkin, Lao-tse, Thomas à Kempis, the elder Arnold Toynbee, and the Persian Bahiaists. His feeling at the time was that, like science, each of these doctrines strived, in their own way, for a better life. 'Why is it,' he asked, 'that scientific beliefs are considered clearer, higher, and more correct than other beliefs?'²⁴

While each of these doctrines had a side that appealed to Pannekoek, none satisfied him completely. For this reason, he felt convinced that he was being 'driven by fate' toward social democracy, although he admitted it was not clear why. His main objection to social democracy at this point centered around his belief that it fostered a 'party spirit' and 'party hatred'.²⁵ The critical turning point in Pannekoek's political development came in early June, 1899, when De Graaff gave him a copy of Edward Bellamy's novel *Equality*. The effect of this American utopian novel, he later noted, 'was as if a blindfold had been removed [...]. For the first time it dawned on me that all theories have a social basis and significance and develop in response to real material interests rather than abstract reasoning'.²⁶

In Bellamy's *Equality*, Pannekoek found many of the themes that would come to dominate his Marxism. Bellamy, in the course of describing a hypothetical egalitarian society, sought at the same time to identify the main obstacles to its realization. He argued that the fundamental cause of class domination was the continued predominance of the 'false teachings' of the

dominant class and the lack of class consciousness on the part of the masses. He felt, therefore, that the primary task of a revolutionary movement was to assault the doctrines of the old order by a 'diffusion of knowledge among the masses'.²⁷ Before a revolution could begin, Bellamy argued, it 'must accumulate a tremendous moral force, an overwhelming weight of justification'.²⁸

Following his reading of Bellamy, Pannekoek declared that his entire outlook had been 'totally changed': 'Now I know for the first time what the social democrats want and predict. Their beliefs are my beliefs, their aspirations my aspirations.'²⁹ Although Marxism provided Pannekoek with a new explanation of social reality, it did not mesh well with either his career in astronomy or his standing among the Leiden middle class. For this reason, he was at first reluctant to make his newly found socialist convictions known publicly. During the July, 1899 municipal elections he continued to work for the Liberal Party. Following several further months of hesitation, he finally announced his changed political perspective in mid-November at a Liberal-sponsored meeting on educational legislation when – to the surprise and disapproval of audience – he gave an address favorable to the socialist viewpoint.³⁰

Once begun, Pannekoek's political development was rapid and purposeful. Under De Graaff's tutelage, he began to digest the socialist classics.³¹ Within a few weeks, Pannekoek felt confident enough in his understanding of Marxism to write a short article enunciating the issue that was to predominate his theoretical work for the next sixty years: the relationship of ideas and thought to social development.³² Several months later, he wrote another short article adding his comments to a lengthy debate that had been going on in the independent leftist review *De Kroniek* between Frank van der Goes and P.L. Tak over the nature of surplus value.³³ Pannekoek's theoretical ability immediately caught the attention of Van der Goes who suggested that he join him in an extended study of Marxist economics.³⁴ Through his collaboration with Van der Goes, Pannekoek established regular contact with most of the leading figures of Dutch social democracy and acquired many of the intellectual skills necessary for his own emergence as a major theoretician of Dutch Marxism.

Rank-and-File Militant: Pannekoek and the SDAP in Leiden

Although he came to socialism by an intellectual route, Pannekoek was not content to confine himself solely to theoretical activity. From 1899 until his departure for Germany in 1906, Pannekoek was totally immersed in the socialist movement in Leiden and these experiences provided a critical refer-

ence point for his thought. His activities during these years were not unlike those of many other working class militants involved in the daily life of social democracy.

Shortly after he announced his conversion to socialism, Pannekoek joined De Graaff in an attempt to organize a SDAP section in Leiden. Despite an extensive propaganda campaign at Pannekoek's and De Graaff's expense, only 20 persons were present for the initial meeting in a room designed for 150. Of these, less than a half-dozen decided to affiliate with the SDAP.³⁵ Like the SDAP itself, the Leiden section took root only slowly and precariously. Although a modest industrial city of 55,000 and a textile center since the Middle Ages, Leiden was characterized by an outmoded and declining industrial base, and a work force that was impoverished and demoralized even by Dutch standards.³⁶ These conditions were reflected, at least in part, in the absence of a trade union movement of any sizable dimensions. In these circumstances, only a handful of Leiden's workers affiliated with the SDAP. In 1900, after a year of intense organizing, membership stood at only 13;³⁷ by 1901 it had increased to 21;³⁸ and by 1903, to 29.³⁹ Of these members, the overwhelming majority were artisans and small tradesmen.⁴⁰

Despite a full-time commitment to astronomy, Pannekoek made his presence felt in virtually all sectors of party activity; indeed, it might be said that he was the moving force within the small Leiden section. At various times, he served as chairman, secretary, treasurer, editor of the local weekly, *De Wekker*, and was a frequent delegate to national congresses. Pannekoek's influence within the Leiden SDAP rested in part on the trust the members extended to him for his hard work in keeping the section alive, and in part on the qualities of his own personality – his equanimity, honesty, lack of desire for power, and intense dedication. He enjoyed the sense of camaraderie that the section provided and relished the long, informal discussions. His ability to speak to the workers on their own level made him personally popular with both the party rank-and-file and the local working class.

Over the next few years, Pannekoek participated in a variety of political, economic, and educational activities intended to strengthen the power of the local working class, which honed his skills as an organizer. Shortly after Pannekoek was elected chairman in February, 1900, the Leiden SDAP established, as a first step toward politicizing the working class, a League for Universal Suffrage with Pannekoek as general secretary.⁴¹ A more important achievement came a month later when the party created (on Pannekoek's initiative) a steering committee to coordinate local working class trade union, political, cultural, and economic activities.⁴² Under the chairmanship of Pannekoek, this committee played a vital role in building a permanent trade union movement in Leiden and in organizing support activity

for local strikes of textile and metal workers.⁴³ In his activity on this committee, Pannekoek's overriding concern was with creating a new type of trade union publication, which would seek to develop socialist consciousness within the working class by providing a forum for the workers to write about conditions in the local factories. He felt that by providing a means for the workers to articulate, and attempt to understand, their most immediate experiences, such a publication could help to foster a long, slow conceptual process of development that would ultimately culminate in a socialist consciousness.⁴⁴ On an economic level, the SDAP sought, at Pannekoek's behest, to practice a form of anti-capitalist economics by establishing a cooperative bakery. Once again, Pannekoek played a central role by serving on the board of directors, advancing a substantial loan, and on many occasions working late nights in the bakery.⁴⁵

Although soft spoken and lacking in histrionic gifts, Pannekoek also distinguished himself as a lively polemicist and orator by championing the cause of Marxism in Leiden in numerous public forums, courses, and debates. In this activity, Pannekoek's constant preoccupation was with developing a Marxist pedagogy grounded in the praxis of everyday life. He sought to experiment with a variety of educational techniques intended to make Marxist theory comprehensible to the workers in such a way that they could use it to gain a conscious understanding of their actions. Education, from Pannekoek's standpoint, was conceived of as a means of initiating a mass transformation of consciousness by elaborating and transforming basic concepts perceived in the daily lives of the workers. He saw it as a process leading from simple common sense to systematic and coherent thought. Pannekoek began his educational work in the fall of 1899 with a popularized course on Marxist theory and soon expanded it to other courses. Several years later, his courses became the nucleus of a 'development club' which aimed at bridging the gap between theory and practice by studies centered around various types of practical activities.⁴⁶ Pannekoek's educational work was supplemented by a library and cultural center he organized to help raise the cultural level of the local working class. To help combat what he felt was one of the leading barriers to class consciousness and moral development, Pannekoek also initiated a propaganda campaign against alcohol abuse.⁴⁷

For Pannekoek, the early years of socialist militancy in Leiden were not easy. His intensive efforts made virtually no headway in radicalizing the local working class. The handful of individuals who composed the small section found themselves either repudiated or ignored by the workers. But for the future development of Pannekoek's thought, however, these experiences provided one of the key prisms through which he was to view the main problems of socialist transformation. It meant that during his most

formative period, Pannekoek's Marxism was nurtured in a setting where historical conditions placed the questions of class consciousness and ideological development uppermost in his mind. As he noted in an analysis of the situation in Leiden at the time: 'The future belongs to the workers, but most of them still do not know it.'⁴⁸

CHAPTER II

**MIND AND REALITY: PANNEKOEK'S
METHODOLOGY***Pannekoek and Dietzgen: The Dialectics of Distinction*

Pannekoek's early years in Leiden also coincided with his rapid emergence as a prominent theoretician of Dutch Marxism. Shortly after becoming a Marxist in 1899, Pannekoek began a prolonged theoretical inquiry into the nature of Marxism as a method of human social transformation. His first major project was an extensive study of Marxist economics made in collaboration with Frank van der Goes. Dissatisfied with what he perceived to be the determinism inherent in Marxist economics and hoping to develop a scientific framework for analyzing the relationship of human consciousness and action to the material world, Pannekoek went on in 1900 to a systematic study of the philosophical basis of Marxism, starting with an examination of the relationship between Marxism and Kantianism. Shortly afterwards, Pannekoek discovered the writings of the German 'worker-philosopher' Joseph Dietzgen, which marked the decisive turning point in his theoretical development.¹ Through his study of Dietzgen, Pannekoek developed the key philosophical and scientific concepts upon which he built his Marxism, and which he retained with only slight revision and reformation throughout the different phases of his political career.

Like Pannekoek, Joseph Dietzgen (1828–1888) has remained a largely neglected theorist, who was once widely known and respected. A tanner and autodidact with little more than an elementary school education, Dietzgen had been active in the socialist movement in both Europe and the United States.² At the The Hague Congress of the First International, Marx introduced Dietzgen as 'our philosopher'.³ Although critical of certain aspects of Dietzgen's work, Marx pronounced it 'excellent and – as the independent product of a working man – admirable'.⁴ Engels, in *Ludwig Feuerbach*, subsequently credited Dietzgen – somewhat loosely in view of their different conceptions – with the independent discovery of the materialist dialectic.⁵ In his extensive efforts to elaborate a specifically 'proletarian philosophy', Dietzgen's writings were deeply infused with the spirit of working class autodidacticism, in which the enthusiasm for ideas was often combined with a

reluctance to develop them in a systematic manner.⁶ It was this aspect of Dietzgen's work, coupled with his often rough, abrupt, and repetitive language, which accounted for the skepticism and indifference his ideas met in intellectual circles. This indifference, however, was partly offset by the popular vogue his writings later enjoyed among many rank-and-file working class militants during the first two decades of the twentieth century.⁷

Dietzgen considered himself essentially a philosopher of science and sought to develop an inductive methodology for attaining a comprehensive view of the world for the purpose of prediction and control. From a philosophical standpoint, Dietzgen's main aim was to bridge the dualism of thought and reality, a task inherited from the German classical tradition and specifically from Feuerbach, of whom Dietzgen was initially a disciple and correspondent. Dietzgen held that this duality could only be bridged by a philosophy that was inductive and identified with natural science. In keeping with this aim, Dietzgen rejected the greater part of the Hegelian system on the basis of its non-inductive character. On the most general level, Dietzgen sought to establish: (1) the objective reality and unity of both the natural and social processes; (2) the relative and tentative validity of all knowledge obtained about these processes; and (3) the unity of human activity (particularly thought activity) with the natural and social environment and its importance as a factor conditioning it. From this point of departure, Dietzgen developed his system along five main lines: a theory of knowledge and cognition; a theory of philosophy and its dissolution; a theory of science and its formation; a theory of 'proletarian logic'; and a theory of 'practical ethics'.

The most original characteristic of Dietzgen's philosophy was his attempt to develop a scientific and materialistic theory of understanding. The human thought process, he felt, was as accessible to scientific analysis and elaboration as any other natural or social process: 'If we could place this general work of thinking on a scientific basis, [...] if we could develop a method by which truth is produced scientifically, then we should acquire for science in general and for our individual faculty of judgment the same certainty of success which we already possess in special fields of science.'⁸ From a political standpoint, Dietzgen envisioned his theory of understanding as an active element in the continuous transformation of mind and matter and an indispensable intellectual tool for proletarian self-emancipation.

Dietzgen's first and best known study, *The Nature of Human Brain Work* (1869), represents his most systematic effort to formulate an inductive theory of cognition. Starting from a detailed critique of Kantian dualism and its separation of the material world from the world of thought, Dietzgen attempted to affirm the unity and dynamic interconnection of all things material and non-material. In Dietzgen's conception, the world was viewed as a

process of continuous formation, conflict, and interaction. From his perspective, all forms of natural and human phenomena were organized into complex systems of circular causality with multiple and interlocking relationships, each part of which could be explained only as a product of its relations with the other parts. What this meant for Dietzgen's theory of understanding was that the 'real world' was composed of an infinite and continuously changing number of sense-perceptible qualities whose interdependence unites them into an integrated totality. The human mind, he felt, in its interaction with its environment, attempts to generalize particular combinations of sense perceptions into mental concepts. A concept of thought, like everything else in the universe, is therefore composed of many different parts. It arises from the relation between a thinking brain and the object about which the brain thinks and is as much a product of the object as it is of the thinking process.

The key element in the formation of conceptual thought, Dietzgen insisted, was the process by which the mind abstracts the particular qualities from the general qualities in various objects of thought and attempts to classify them into different systems. According to Dietzgen, the senses perceive an endless stream of phenomena and the role of the mind, as the organ of human understanding, is to make sense of this data by distinguishing and naming parts of it. What actually occurs in this division and classification process is the construction of units of a particular type on the basis of similar characteristics which are then labelled with a name. Explaining this principle, Dietzgen noted that a table, for instance, does not have an independent existence of its own, but is simply a name given by the mind to a recurring type of phenomena perceived by the senses. It is an abstraction, a mental construct that becomes separate from the whole only by the act of conceptualization. Dietzgen, at the same time, resolutely maintained that these conceptualizations were not purely mental constructs in the idealist sense, but were, in fact, abstractions derived from perceptions of an objectively existing external reality. The mind was not so much constructing the external world as reconstructing an image of it. In attempting to draw out the implications of this for human activity, Dietzgen argued that conceptualization defines the precise categories by which the world is viewed and acted upon. In the process described by Dietzgen, the world is seen as a continuous flow of events in which individuals play an integral part by utilizing their minds to sort out these events, distinguish among them, generalize from them, and act on the basis of their conclusions.

Dietzgen considered this classification and abstraction process to be dialectical in the way that it mediates distinctions and differences in a particular object of thought. As a dialectical process, thought recognizes that all things

simultaneously form parts of other things and at the same time change into other things which require different names or descriptions. For Dietzgen, dialectical did not necessarily mean absolute opposites or contradictions. In his view, contradictions exist only through the mental separation of the component parts of a particular object of thought. Without this mental act there could be no contradiction. The mind merely constructs them and makes them equal as part of the classification and systematization process. Dietzgen treated it as axiomatic that no form of knowledge can ever be regarded as absolute, but only as a tentative approximation of reality subject to revision on the basis of further experience. All truths, as parts of the world, were only partial truths. Truth and error flow into each other dialectically: 'Truths are valid only under certain conditions, and under certain conditions errors may be true'.⁹ In Dietzgen's view, a perfect truth could only be one which was based on a recognition of imperfection.

In defining the relation of thought to the material world, Dietzgen stressed repeatedly that there was no such thing as a rigid distinction between mind and matter. In his view, they were merely names to distinguish between two different things, but since the names were abstractions derived from phenomena they were not identical with the things. For Dietzgen, the point to be emphasized was that mind and matter represented two key aspects of nature artificially separated by mental classification, only because no name had been developed to cover both terms. Dietzgen expanded this analysis into a critique of what he termed 'mechanical materialism' – the view that the world is composed of tiny particles of matter and that thought is the product of the movement of these particles. Such a narrow conception of materialism, he argued, wholly misunderstands the nature of the problem. It fails to take into consideration the fact that parts of the world do not exist separately, but only as interconnected parts of the whole. Matter in the sense of tangible material does not possess the slightest preferential right to be considered more important and more distinct than any other phenomena of nature. To isolate one part of the universe and make it the basis of all other parts, Dietzgen felt, was to ascribe an independent existence to what is essentially an abstraction. Only the complete world of phenomena itself – the universe in its entirety – has a separate, independent existence of its own. Dietzgen, however, made it clear that his hypothesis did not rule out a scientific explanation of the world based on the movement of atoms. In a passage that broadly anticipated the theoretical course of modern physics, he noted: 'Atoms are groups. As smallest parts they exist only in our thoughts and thus give excellent service in chemistry. The consciousness that they are not tangible, but only mental things, does not detract from their usefulness, but heightens it still more.'¹⁰

Although Dietzgen's system, like Marx's, aimed at understanding and transforming the world on the basis of the social division of labor, he never managed to work out the political and social implications of his theories. The task of establishing the relationship between Marx and Dietzgen thus fell upon Pannekoek. For Pannekoek, the discovery of Dietzgen provided a critical link between Marxism and his professional role as a natural scientist: 'Here I found for the first time everything that I had been looking for: a clear, systematic elaboration of a theory of knowledge and an analysis of the nature of concepts and abstractions. [...] Through this reading I was able to completely clarify my conception of the mutual relationship between Marxism and a theory of knowledge and develop it into a unified whole.'¹¹ Dietzgen's theory of understanding, Pannekoek felt, had the potential to serve as the philosophical basis of not only Marxism, but also of the natural sciences.¹²

Following an intensive study of Dietzgen's writings, Pannekoek embarked on a lengthy effort to integrate Dietzgen's doctrines into the theory and practice of the socialist movement. Pannekoek began this effort in 1901 with his first major work as a Marxist, an essay on Kant's Philosophy and Marxism,¹³ in which he counterposed Dietzgen's 'proletarian philosophy' to the neo-Kantian philosophy of the revisionists. This analysis was broadened the following year when Pannekoek made contact with Dietzgen's son Eugen and journeyed to Germany to discuss with him ways of popularizing the elder Dietzgen's ideas. At Eugen Dietzgen's request, Pannekoek agreed to write an introduction to a collection of Joseph Dietzgen's writings.¹⁴ Two goals dominated Pannekoek's thinking in these early reflections on Dietzgen. On one hand, he sought to establish Dietzgen's place in the history of philosophy and socialist thought and show the practical significance of his dialectics for proletarian emancipation; on the other, he sought to give Marxism a firmer methodological grounding as a counterweight to meta-physical ideologies.

In Pannekoek's view, Marx had elaborated only on the nature of the social process of production and its fundamental significance for social development without really concerning himself with the question of the human 'spirit' (*Geist*),* other than to show that it derived its content from the material world. The question thus remained open: what was the exact content of human consciousness and what was its real relation to the material world? This gap in Marxian theory, Pannekoek felt, coupled with the tradi-

* Although the word 'geistig' might best translate as 'mental', Pannekoek in his own English writings specifically chose the term 'spiritual'. By spiritual, he meant a combination of subjective, mental, intellectual, psychological, and moral qualities.

tional influence exercised by bourgeois thought, was one of the main reasons for the erroneous understanding of Marxism by anti-Marxists and revisionists alike. Dietzgen, by making the human mind the special subject of his investigation, and attempting to show the exact content of the process of human consciousness, had made a major contribution toward filling this gap. Pannekoek declared that, for this reason, Dietzgen's theory of understanding constituted 'the essence of foundation of [Marx's] theory of society and man'.¹⁵ By constructing out of philosophy a 'science of the human spirit', Dietzgen 'raised philosophy to the position of a natural science, the same as Marx did with history'.¹⁶ For this achievement, Dietzgen could be ranked 'third among the founders of "socialist science", next to Marx and Engels'.¹⁷ As a result, Pannekoek contended that 'a thorough study of Dietzgen's writings is an immediate necessity for anyone desiring to learn the philosophical fundamentals of Marxism and the proletarian outlook on life'.¹⁸

To lend additional credence to his assessment of Dietzgen, Pannekoek also attempted to render a critical and dynamic account of the development of 'proletarian philosophy' itself, using both Dietzgenian and Marxist categories of analysis. The first stage in this process, he maintained, began with Kant. The significance of Kantian philosophy was twofold. It was at once 'the purest expression of bourgeois thought' and a precursor of modern socialist philosophy.¹⁹ Since 'freedom' of production, competition, and exploitation were all at the heart of the developing capitalism of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century, Kant's emphasis on 'freedom' and 'free will' corresponded to the needs and aspirations of a rising bourgeoisie. By challenging the mechanistic materialism of the French rationalists, Kant also provided a firmer foundation for religious belief, clearing the way for a revised form of faith and freedom of the will. Yet in focusing on sensory experience and on the organization of the human mind, Kant made the first valuable contribution to a scientific theory of understanding and human causation, which was a necessary component of any proletarian philosophy.

Pannekoek argued that a second stage in the development of a scientific theory of understanding came with Hegel. In strictly social terms, Hegel's thought was the product of the reaction against both bourgeois society and bourgeois philosophy that developed after the French Revolution. Historically, Hegel's attempt to develop a practical critique of bourgeois philosophy as but one part of a larger intellectual effort to provide a theoretical justification of the Restoration. Stripped of its social origins and transcendental character, the real significance of Hegelian philosophy lay in the fact that it provided an excellent theory of the human mind and its working methods: 'The vicissitudes of the absolute spirit in the course of its self-development are but a fantastical description of the process which the real

human mind experiences in its acquaintance with the world and its active participation in life. Instead of the evolution of the absolute idea, the dialectics henceforth becomes the sole correct method of thought to be employed by the real human mind in the study of the actual world and for the purpose of understanding social development.²⁰ This quality of Hegel's work, however, could not be fully appreciated until Dietzgen had created the basis for a dialectical and materialist theory of understanding. Like Dietzgen, Pannekoek was quick to reject Hegel's doctrine of knowledge and absolute truth and to question the direct applicability of Hegelian methodology to Marxism. 'The Hegelian garb in which Marx and Engels clothed their philosophical ideas,' he charged, 'makes it very difficult for modern people to grasp the underlying principles' of Marxism.²¹

The conclusion that Pannekoek drew from this analysis was that 'the idealist philosophical systems from Kant to Hegel which consist chiefly of the development of the dialectical method, must be regarded as the indispensable pioneers and precursors of Dietzgen's proletarian philosophy'.²² The previous systems, far from being useless speculations, were ascending stages of understanding characterized by increasing truth and decreasing error. As an intellectual process, Dietzgen's system represented the 'scientific continuation of former philosophies, just as astronomy is the continuation of astrology and of the Pythagorean fantasies, and chemistry the continuation of alchemy'.²³ Dietzgen, therefore, 'completed the work of Kant, just as Marx completed the work of Adam Smith'.²⁴ Dietzgen's philosophy, moreover, was neither 'his' philosophy nor a new system of philosophy, but merely one of the more systematic intellectual components of the historical mode of abstraction of a rising working class. Although Dietzgen's 'proletarian philosophy' was a direct and logical successor to previous bourgeois philosophical systems, it differed fundamentally from them in the sense that it sought to be less. Whereas earlier philosophical systems pretended to give absolute truth, Dietzgen offered only a finite and temporary realization of truth which could be further perfected only through the course of social development. Dietzgen's methodology, Pannekoek felt, signified 'the completion and conclusion of philosophy, which is equivalent to saying that philosophy as such passes out of existence, while its place is taken by the science of the human mind, a part of natural science'.²⁵

Theory and Social Development: The Class Basis of Science

Following his intensive study of Dietzgen, Pannekoek began a new period of inquiry into the relationship between Marxism and science, which he hoped would help establish a more authentically scientific basis for Marxism. His

starting point was a detailed examination of the role of science in social development. Pannekoek directed his inquiry on two levels: an examination of the methods, meanings, and objects of inquiry behind scientific knowledge; and an analysis of the origins and position of science in human social and mental activity.

Taking as his point of departure Dietzgen's theory of understanding, Pannekoek argued that scientific thought was characterized by a process of systematization, conceptualization, and practice. From this standpoint, the goal of science is to find the knowledge that explains existing relationships in such a way as to enable one to predict, change, and control them. While facts represent the basis of science, facts alone do not form a science. Science is the systematization of facts into general conceptions and rules within a world structure suitable for the computation and prediction of future events. In a conception which bears many similarities to the later 'scientific realism' of Roy Bhaskar and others, Pannekoek argued that the basis of science was found in human social life and practical activity.²⁶ As an element in the general process of social development, science originated not so much from an abstract urge for truth and knowledge, but as a spontaneous practice born of social needs. Science, Pannekoek felt, was only one among many social activities arising from society and developing – as other social activities do – in part autonomously and in part as a component of the overall structure of society. Although primitive societies are characterized by various forms of theoretical knowledge, science in the real sense of the word can arise only at a higher stage of civilization, with the invention of script, which enables practical knowledge to be transformed into scientific knowledge by establishing relationships between concepts. Through script, conceptions acquire an independent existence of their own, which allows them to be handled, stored, compared, and connected with each other.²⁷

As conceptualized by Pannekoek, science was not only a special form of human thought activity, but also an integral part of the general social and economic process of a particular epoch. Within the framework of social development, science 'stands as a mental tool next to the material tools and, itself a productive power, constitutes the basis of technology and so is an essential part of the productive apparatus'.²⁸ Approached from this point of view, science represents a response to socially produced motivations and purposes and is based on socially stimulated modes of inquiry and explanation. As part of a larger mode of abstraction, science has always reflected a particular epoch in its subject matter, its laws, its metaphysical propositions and in its embedded values. The new scientific 'truths' that evolve out of each epoch represent an important and indispensable source of 'spiritual power', both for the development of new technologies and the new social

relationships that arise out of them. Consequently, the emergence of a particular form of scientific consciousness or structure of ideas cannot be separated from the social conflicts of its era: 'A new rising ruling class is able to understand through its particular class situation new truths that serve its interests. These new truths then become a powerful weapon in the struggle against the rulers of the declining social order, who have neither interest in, nor understanding of, the new doctrines and perceive them only as a threat [...]. So it was with the natural science that accompanied the rise of the bourgeoisie; so too is it with political economy, which is a science of the proletariat.'²⁹

Pannekoek treated it as axiomatic that the emergence of new forms of scientific consciousness entailed an intense process of 'spiritual struggle' in which new views are both counterposed to the old views and at the same time evolve out of them. The development of natural science in the nineteenth century, for instance, represented an expression of the growing historical self-understanding of an emerging bourgeoisie and a necessary precondition for industrial expansion. 'Under the impulse of technical requirements of capitalism, the evolution of the natural sciences became a triumphal march of the human mind. Nature was subjugated first through the discovery of its laws by the human mind, and then by the material subordination of the known forces of nature to the human will in the service of our main object', of commodity production.³⁰ He felt that for these reasons the natural sciences could be considered 'the spiritual base of capitalism'.³¹

While stressing the class origins of science, Pannekoek rejected the view that every class maintains its own special set of scientific doctrines. For Pannekoek the point to be emphasized was that a certain form of science can be both an object of and a weapon of class struggle, and that a class has an interest only in the investigation and diffusion of those truths which directly advance its own living conditions. Scientific ideas are therefore both classless and class-defined. Thus, while the natural sciences of the nineteenth century could be termed 'bourgeois' on the basis of their objects and interests, they were objective in their cognitive achievements. Scientific objectivity corresponded to the class interests of the bourgeoisie and represented a powerful social norm. But for this same ruling class, Marx's doctrine of capitalist development represented a dangerous threat to their interests, and self-preservation compelled them to struggle against it and ignore its validity. For the proletariat, on the other hand, belief in the scientific validity of Marxism gives them greater power to struggle, and for this reason Marxism can also be seen as a norm of self-preservation. Both forms of science, therefore, aim for objectivity within their respective class frameworks. For the physical sciences, this meant that there could be no such thing as a 'bourgeois science'

to be replaced by a 'proletarian science'. The question of a specifically proletarian science, he felt, was one of an entirely different form of historical consciousness.

What a Marxist critique of science must be directed against, Pannekoek argued, is the class-determined ideological interpretation and class-determined practical utilization of science whenever it conflicts with the needs of humanity. By the same token, the methodology of the natural sciences cannot be used to criticize and improve Marxism. The real task is to use Marxism to criticize the role of the sciences in capitalist society. By this criterion, a sociological understanding of the origins and development of scientific ideas is part of a true appreciation of science. To the extent that socialism implies the further growth of productive forces, it also implies a corresponding growth of science. The science and technology of the hypothetical socialist future – no matter how altered – can only be based on all previous scientific and social accomplishments. To the principle of scientific objectivity, however, would be added that of social responsibility.³²

Social Knowledge of a New Kind: Pannekoek's Conception of Historical Materialism

Pannekoek's synthesis of Marx and Dietzgen provided him with the intellectual tools to develop a conception of Marxism which was unique on the theoretical spectrum of the Second International. In Dietzgen, he found a major source of critical inspiration and an intellectual counterweight to the mechanistic Marxism that permeated the Second International. In theorizing his own conception of Marxism, Pannekoek's immediate aim was to develop a theory of knowledge and transformation which could be applied to the foundations of society. To achieve this, he sought to incorporate into Marxism a new monistic outlook which would reconcile scientific materialism with the volitional qualities of human consciousness. At the most basic level, he felt this meant: 'History is nothing less than the deeds and actions of men; but these deeds and actions must be willed; [...] Marxism [...] attempts to address itself to the origins of this will.'³³

As initially conceived by Marx, the materialistic conception of history was meant to be an anti-metaphysical theory based on the evidence of human sense data, to be examined 'in the manner of the natural sciences'. While the later writings of Marx reflected an increasingly positivistic trend, it was primarily Engels, in his *Anti-Dühring*, and later his spiritual heir, Karl Kautsky, who generalized the historical materialism advanced by Marx into what came to be considered an extension of natural science. At the core of this methodology, which defined the Marxism of both the Second and Third

Internationals, was a conception of the dialectic as the 'supreme science' governing the general laws of movement and development for nature, human society, and thought. Through this methodology, Marxism was increasingly transformed into a cosmogony, a total scientific synthesis of universal validity for all questions of social, historical, and natural development.

While remaining firmly committed to the basic evolutionary premises of the classical Marxist paradigm, Pannekoek challenged the mechanistic and determinist form it had taken, by attempting to retrieve the subjective and active elements in Marxism. In broad historical terms, Pannekoek felt that the 'new spiritual science' of Marxism (Pannekoek uses the terms Marxism, spiritual science, social science, and historical materialism interchangeably) was both a 'theoretical expression' of a new stage of social development and one aspect of the 'spiritual culture' of a new ascendent class.³⁴ As the systematizers of the ideas and experiences of a rising working class movement, Marx and Engels were the first to transcend the limitations of bourgeois thought and, for this reason, could be viewed as 'the first class scientists of the proletariat'.³⁵ At the same time, Pannekoek maintained that the set of doctrines collectively termed Marxism were themselves the outcome of a long process of active 'spiritual development', in which new ideas arise from conflicts with old ideas. Since 'every thinker can only work with the existing conceptual materials of his era', Marx's ideas arose directly out of the intellectual doctrines of the bourgeoisie. Marx's economic theories, for instance, were firmly grounded in the work of bourgeois economists such as Ricardo and Adam Smith and his philosophical doctrines were largely a continuation of the revolutionary philosophy of the bourgeoisie.³⁶

In attempting to pinpoint the theoretical and cognitive possibilities of Marxism, Pannekoek argued that since all actions occur through the intervention of human consciousness, Marxism, as a true 'science of human action', could only be based on a 'science of the human spirit', which Dietzgen had provided in his dialectics of distinction. Like the methodology of science in general, Marxist methodology must be based on a careful process of conceptual synthesis and clarification, in which existing conceptions are constantly dissected, compared, improved, rejected, and molded into new ones in a continuous search for greater unity and wider differentiation.³⁷ In keeping with this view, Pannekoek maintained that the dialectic was neither a law of motion nor a special scientific theory in itself, but simply a method of comprehending reality which finds expression only in the forms of conceptualization constructed by the mind. In this knowledge of properties lies the basis of prediction. For Marxism, this meant that social predictions must be based strictly on knowledge about the nature and development of capital-

ism.³⁸ As early as 1904, Pannekoek specifically rejected Engels' three laws of materialist dialectics – transformation of quantity, interpenetration of opposites, and negation of the negation – and declared that it was Dietzgen rather than Engels who developed the framework for a real Marxian dialectic.³⁹

On the basis of his fundamental distinction between social and natural science, Pannekoek ruled out any direct connection between Marxism and physical theory: 'The spiritual sciences differ from the natural sciences not so much in their object as well as in their method, their notion of science. While the purpose of the natural sciences is to formulate, by way of abstraction from reality, a system of laws and formulas, in which the universal is expressed, the purpose of spiritual science is to describe a given series of realities in such a way, that the particularity and individuality of each reality is adequately expressed.'⁴⁰ For Pannekoek, there were no doubts that Marxism was a science, but a science founded on the new theoretical object of social practice. There could be no such thing as deriving social theory either from, or by analogy with, physical processes, or conversely, by reading social laws of development into nature. Nor was there any similarity between theory and practice in historical materialism and hypothesis and experiment in the physical sciences. Theory functioned not to unravel the laws of nature or the mystery of the universe, but to provide new levels of historical consciousness for a developing revolutionary workers' movement.⁴¹

In the same vein, Pannekoek insisted that Marxism could never be considered a theory of physical materialism. What distinguished physical materialism (or what Pannekoek chose to call 'bourgeois materialism') from historical materialism, he maintained, was its conceptual focus. For historical materialism, matter was essentially 'an abstraction, a concept by the spirit out of phenomena which our sensations construct'.⁴² From a methodological standpoint, this meant that:

'Historical materialism sees the results of science, concepts, substances, natural laws and forces, although formed by nature, as first of all the products of the mental work of humanity. Bourgeois materialism, on the other hand, from the point of view of natural science sees all this as belonging to nature which has been discovered and brought to light only by science. Natural scientists consider the immutable substances, matter, energy, electricity, gravity, ether, the law of gravitation, the law of entropy, etc., as the basic elements of the world itself, as reality, that which has to be discovered. Form the viewpoint of historical materialism, however, these are products which creative mental activity forms out of the substance of natural phenomena.'⁴³

Pannekoek attributed the fact that Marxism had become identified with a theory of physical materialism to a fundamental misinterpretation of Marx's

doctrines. What was most critical for Marx, he felt, was not the division between matter and spirit, but that between reality and fantasy.⁴⁴

Probing further into the scientific character of Marxism, Pannekoek moved to a specific examination of the nature of laws and predictions in Marxism. Pannekoek took the position that all science consists of doctrines and hypotheses which rest on differing degrees of certainty. All 'scientific truth' is therefore relative; it is considered the best truth of the moment, and it is part of a process of continuing development. It contrasts with 'dogmatic truth' which is based on 'primitive experiences' and is viewed with complete certainty as the final truth.⁴⁵ On this basis, Pannekoek felt that it stood to reason that an even more tentative causal relationship between laws and predictions existed for the social sciences: 'Through the immense complication of social relations "laws" of society are much more difficult to discern, and they cannot be put into the form of exact formulas. Still more than in nature they may be said to express not the future but our expectations about the future. It is already a great thing that, whereas former thinkers were groping in the dark, now some main lines of development have been discovered.'⁴⁶

Indeed, Pannekoek had contended as early as 1901 that it mattered very little whether or not Marx's theories, or even his basic methodology, were completely valid, but that they produced results through practice just as the natural sciences had continually produced significant findings with wrong methods.⁴⁷ Thus, just as the history of astronomy, for example, was 'full of predictions that did not come true, of disagreements that alarmed the scientists and had to be explained by new unforeseen circumstances', so too would be the new 'class science' of Marxism.⁴⁸ To speak, therefore, of Marxism as a set of absolute doctrines and predictions would be 'a half-defeat, a laying down of one's arms'.⁴⁹

Marxism, in Pannekoek's view, was a science to the extent that the social development and revolutionary activity which it reflects and seeks to explain requires the comprehension of its own subject matter, methodological concepts, and procedures. The conditional validity of its propositions depends both on the state of its external subject matter and the internal articulation and development of its own conceptual categories. From such a perspective, no statement about Marxism could ever be considered final. Marx's theories, and the social practice on which they are based, do not stand outside the course of social evolution, but undergo a constant process of transformation, development, and regression. In a broader historical sense, it was not the ideas of Marx *per se* that had the greater significance, but the fact that these ideas represented the first systematic formulation of the ideology of a rising revolutionary working class movement. His theories sprang from the

recognition of an actually existing social movement opposed to the prevailing conditions, and they were expected to help this movement realize its own potentialities. The theoretical and philosophical formulation of ideas was, from this standpoint, not the basis of, but just the transitory ideological form of the revolutionary class struggle. A Marxism ossified in the doctrines of Marx and Engels, Pannekoek felt, not only was not, but could never be, a theory of proletarian revolution.⁵⁰

In a cognitive sense, Pannekoek felt that the scientific categories of Marxism could only arise with and be understood by the proletariat since it is the only class that has an interest in discovering the inner laws of society and can look at society in an unbiased manner. Marxism, therefore, was a science which allows the working class to see through the mask of bourgeois ideology and develop an understanding of its own revolutionary possibilities. Pannekoek insisted that what distinguished Marxism from all other past theoretical and scientific systems was the fact that it represented the first authentically popular form of scientific consciousness. Whereas for the bourgeoisie, science represents a system of abstract ideas and concepts to be used by intellectuals, historical materialism constitutes an integral part of the worker's own life experiences. For Pannekoek, what was to be stressed was that for the workers Marxism represented merely a form of 'ordered knowledge, a short summary of reality' based on their productive experiences, which both explains and clarifies these experiences as a guide to daily praxis: 'It is very unlikely that many of the socialist workers have ever read Kant or Hegel, and perhaps not even Marx, Engels or Dietzgen. But they have something entirely different: life itself. [...] it is their own life experiences which represent the study form which gives them certain convictions.'⁵¹ From the standpoint of its cognitive possibilities in the realm of daily life, Marxism represented a 'revolution in science' for which it would take at least a generation to fully comprehend.⁵²

Pannekoek's most sustained effort to apply his conception of science and Marxism can be found in his treatment of the question of Darwinism. Few questions had more centrality to the ideology of the Second International than that of the relationship between Marxism and Darwinism. The inextricable link between Marx and Darwin had been given the firm imprimatur of Engels. In the works of semi-official philosophers like Kautsky – who, in fact, had initially come to socialism through his interpretation of Darwinist evolutionary doctrine – Marxism was interpreted as an extension of Darwinist evolutionism applied to human history.⁵³ Unlike most Marxists of the Second International, Pannekoek resolutely opposed all attempts to integrate Darwinism into Marxist doctrine. Pannekoek first addressed himself systematically to this question in his 1912 brochure, *Marxism and Darwinism*,

a work he considered to be among his best. His immediate practical aim was to combat, on the one hand, the 'bourgeois Darwinists' who sought to use Darwinism as an intellectual justification for capitalism, and the orthodox Marxist, on the other, who saw it as 'natural proof' of the inevitability of socialism. The basis of Pannekoek's analysis was outlined in his earlier distinction between natural and social science. 'The scientific importance of Marxism as well as of Darwinism,' he wrote, 'consists in their following out the theory of evolution, the one upon the domain of the organic world [...]; the other, upon the domain of society.'⁵⁴ What this meant was that Marxism and Darwinism were completely independent of each other and should remain in their own domains. To carry a theory from one domain to another where different laws are applicable would necessarily entail wrong conclusions. This did not mean that they were opposed to each other, but that they supplement each other in the sense that according to the Darwinian theory of evolution the animal world develops up to the stage of man, and from then on the Marxian theory of evolution applies. What was important in Darwin's work was the recognition that under certain circumstances some animal kinds will develop into other animal kinds through a mechanism of natural law. The fact that this natural law became identified with a struggle for existence analogous to capitalist development did not affect the validity of his theory, nor, conversely, did it make capitalist competition a 'natural law'. The differences between Marx and Darwin were just as significant as their similarities and the failure of Marxists to recognize them was a major weakness of their scientific position.

In drawing out the political implications of his analysis, Pannekoek argued that Darwinism, like all scientific formulations, was not mere abstract thought but an integral part of the class struggles of its epoch. In this instance, Darwinism functioned as a 'tool of the bourgeoisie' in its struggle against both the remnants of feudalism and the proletariat. By undermining the entire foundation of orthodox Christian dogma, Darwin's theory destroyed the main ideological prop of the opponents of bourgeois rule. But Darwinism worked equally well for the bourgeoisie as a weapon against the proletariat. By seeming to offer 'scientific' proof of inequality and teaching that struggle is unavoidable, Darwinism served as a powerful counterweight to the socialist doctrines of equality and cooperation. What Marx and Darwin really had in common, Pannekoek felt, was to shatter an old, rigid, immobile world view. For socialists, therefore, the real significance of Darwinism lay in the fact that it represented a precondition for understanding historical materialism rather than a doctrine directly related to it in any way.

In attempting to establish a more authentically scientific basis for Marxism, Pannekoek stressed repeatedly that his effort represented more than a

purely intellectual inquiry. From Pannekoek's standpoint, Marxism, although clearly an objective science, was not intended to be above values, but had an obligation to serve the practical aims of the class struggle. Like science in general, the goal of Marxism was explanation in practice; the doctrine was only a medium to this end. Marx's aim, Pannekoek argued, was not to proclaim doctrines about social organization, but to clarify social events as a prelude to action. Theory for Marx was above all partisan, and had meaning only as an indivisible and essential part of social transformation. His theories sprang from the recognition of an actually existing social movement opposed to the prevailing social order, and they were expected to help this movement realize its full potentialities.⁵⁵

Pannekoek's early efforts to restore the active and conscious dimension in Marxism represented an advanced and insightful early critique of the mechanistic and fatalistic tendencies in orthodox Marxism. Perhaps more than any other Marxist theorist of the years before 1914, Pannekoek recognized the failure of Marxist orthodoxy and set out to establish the conditions under which an authentically scientific and transformative Marxism could be realized. But at the same time, this effort was seriously weakened by the ambiguous and even contradictory nature of many of his insights. For example, in attempting to specify how scientific knowledge about society might be obtained and applied by the socialist movement, Pannekoek remained at a high level of generality. In many cases, the terms, concepts, and premises that he employed to analyze the main components of Marxism were either exceedingly vague or lacking in clear application to the extent that their practical effect was often reduced to the level of platitude. He constantly assumed as correct – without examining or proving – key assumptions which were central to his analysis. There is, for instance, nowhere to be found in his work even the slightest questioning of the scientific validity of Marxism. On the contrary, he always went out of his way to defend Marxism as a 'scientific weapon' of the working class. Left with these shortcomings and ambiguities, Pannekoek was often compelled to revert to many of the very tendencies he sought to reject. For all his emphasis on the relative and tentative validity of all forms of knowledge, Pannekoek's Marxism, with its conclusive 'scientific truths' and laws of development, had a powerful sense of finality, of having discovered truth or at least the way to truth. The result was that his attempt to revitalize Marxism as a theory of transformation ultimately floundered.

CHAPTER III

DUTCH LEFT MARXISM IN FORMATION: THE *NIEUWE TIJD* LEFT, 1899–1906

From Romanticism to Marxism: The Origins of the Nieuwe Tijd Group

In his early reflections on philosophy and Marxism, Pannekoek sought to provide a new conceptual scheme in which social developments might be comprehended by the workers as a prelude and stimulus to more conscious forms of action. Pannekoek first attempted to apply this methodology to specific questions of socialist strategy in the context of a general ideological and political crisis of Dutch and European social democracy.

Like the socialist movement elsewhere in Europe, the SDAP experienced, in the years following the turn of the century, a rapid process of political differentiation between Marxists and revisionists, although the circumstances and nature of this conflict took a specifically Dutch form.¹ During its early phases, the history of this struggle is in large part a history of a small circle of intellectuals centered around the party's theoretical review, *De Nieuwe Tijd*. The origins of this group are directly traceable to a series of developments in Dutch intellectual life which led to the radicalization of a group of Holland's most prominent intellectuals.

Although the closing decades of the nineteenth century were a difficult time for the nascent Dutch socialist movement, they marked a period of renaissance for Dutch cultural and intellectual life. A prevailing feeling of general optimism, which coincided with the growing momentum of industrial development, generated great intellectual ferment and propelled a cultural revival in all areas: literature, art, music, architecture, science, and philosophy. Within this context, there developed, in the 1880's, a group of young poets, writers, literary critics, and artists, informally known as the '*Tachtigers*' ('Eightyers'), who wanted to renew Dutch culture and restore it to a position comparable to what it had been in the seventeenth century. Although the '*Tachtigers*' initial critique of Dutch society was based on romanticism and individualism, the movement laid the foundations for the emergence of a Marxist movement in literary circles after 1890.²

The '*Tachtigers*' movement was first given specific form in 1885 when Frank van der Goes and several other liberal intellectuals founded the literary

review, *De Nieuwe Gids*. Iconoclastic in its orientation, the *Nieuwe Gids* was in touch with everything new and unconventional in Dutch social and intellectual life. Although its prime concern was with literary matters, the *Nieuwe Gids* sought at the same time to be the focal point for an intense intellectual self-questioning in matters of art, politics, and science. Under Van der Goes' editorship, the *Nieuwe Gids* became the essential point of reference for a generation of Dutch intellectuals and introduced important themes which were later developed and extended in Dutch Marxism.³

Throughout the late 1880's the political focus of the *Nieuwe Gids* shifted steadily to the left, echoing the evolving views of Van der Goes and his close collaborator, the journalist Pieter Lodewijk Tak.⁴ This shift was closely connected to the larger interplay of social forces in Dutch society. The prolonged economic crisis which began in the mid-1880's generated widespread unemployment and poverty which received public attention in a series of well-publicized parliamentary inquests. Throughout the country, the socialists held numerous public meetings and demonstrations at which scathing criticisms were leveled at the economic structure of society. These were also the years of the great public orations of Domela Nieuwenhuis, in which he incessantly called upon the Dutch people to begin a new life. For Van der Goes and many other young Dutch intellectuals, these events represented their first exposure to a systematic social critique of Dutch society.

As events pushed his political development forward, Van der Goes moved from publishing short political and social essays sympathetic to the working class to an attempt to develop an aesthetic theory justifying the unity of art and social commitment. In 1889, he initiated a prolonged debate on Marxism and literature which was gradually transformed into a debate over the merits of socialism versus individualism. As a result, the '*Tachtigers*' soon split into two hostile wings, with one group gravitating toward individualism and mysticism and the other toward Marxism.⁵

From the group of young Marxist writers which first crystallized in the mid-1890's, two individuals soon came to prominence: Herman Gorter and Henriette Roland Holst.

Born the son of a Calvinist pastor, Herman Gorter (1864–1927) was by the 1890's the foremost poet in the Dutch language. For Gorter, the transition to socialism came out of his incessant probing into the meaning of life. Prior to becoming a Marxist, the dominant influence on his thought had been Spinoza's philosophical writings, to which he was attracted by the emphasis on interconnectedness and the unity of physical and metaphysical forces. Like many other Dutch intellectuals, Gorter was first exposed to socialism through the essays of Van der Goes (who was also his cousin by marriage). Gorter's acceptance of socialism arose from his conviction that

only the working class was capable of creating a new cultural and moral order.⁶ At Van der Goes' urging, Gorter began a systematic study of *Capital*, followed by an intensive study of Kautsky, of whom he later became a friend and fervent admirer. Like his poetry, Gorter's socialism bore the imprint of an intense moral idealism and a search for unity coupled with a passionate commitment to action. Whereas his early verses combined a pansexualist inspiration with a vision of transcendental beauty, his later Marxist poems moved toward a lyricism celebrating the unification of mankind with the cosmos, in which a socialist universe was depicted as the final goal of humanity.⁷ The theme that united his poetry with his politics was his belief that poetry, as an 'expression of the emotional and spiritual life of an era', must be a representation of the feelings evoked in the struggles of the era. For this reason, Gorter felt poets had the duty to merge with the working classes in order to participate in 'the currents of the future'.⁸ A powerful orator and an impassioned defender of the underdog, Gorter came to incarnate Marxian socialism for many Dutch workers.

In the theoretical development of Dutch Marxism, Gorter played a role second only to Pannekoek. It would be difficult to imagine a man more temperamentally different from Pannekoek than Gorter, yet together the two men decisively shaped the character of Dutch left Marxism, giving it its distinctive ideas and style. Whereas Pannekoek's personality was serene and analytical, Gorter's was an unstable compound of deeply contradictory elements: gentleness and softness competing with a volatile temper, impulsiveness and exuberance followed by long periods of silence and reflection. Throughout nearly three decades of close friendship and political collaboration, Pannekoek and Gorter, complemented each other admirably. Pannekoek, often absorbed in arduous theoretical problems, frequently ignored details of practical application, while Gorter often directed his energies to practical matters and questions of organization and propaganda. In Pannekoek's political insights, Gorter placed 'unlimited trust'.⁹

Like Gorter, Henriette Roland Holst (1869–1952) was also a talented poet and writer with passionate and wide-ranging intellectual interests who came to socialism largely from 'ethical-aesthetic motives'.¹⁰ Of patrician origins, her manifold talents later made her the *doyenne* of Dutch literature for nearly a generation. Beneath her brilliant, subtle mind and boundless zest for action lay a undercurrent of mysticism, which surfaced only in her poetry, and often made her Marxist polemics in reality a struggle with herself.¹¹ Although influenced by Van der Goes' essays, her socialism developed largely from her friendship with Gorter.¹² Shortly after meeting Gorter in 1893, she immersed herself, at his suggestion, in a systematic study of Spinoza and Dante, which served as a major source of inspiration for both her literary and

political work. When Gorter began his study of *Capital* with Van der Goes, she joined him. An equally important source of influence on her socialism came from William Morris, whom her husband had known, and whose work she began to translate. From Morris, she acquired the vision of a world organized on the basis of human fellowship and fulfillment in creative labor. For Roland Holst, socialism signified a 're-unification of the ideal and social reality', the coming of a new era in which 'thought, contemplation, action, and life are brought to unity in the existence of the individual' through a new organizing principle of society.¹³

In April, 1897, at the urging of Van der Goes, both Gorter and Roland Holst joined the SDAP at the Congress of Arnhem. Almost immediately, the focal point of their activity became the party's theoretical review, *De Nieuwe Tijd*. The *Nieuwe Tijd* had been founded a year earlier by Van der Goes and was intended as a Dutch equivalent of the *Neue Zeit*. Over the course of the next few years, the editorial board was expanded to include—in addition to Van der Goes, Gorter, and Roland Holst—Pannekoek, the essayist and pharmacist Pieter Wiedijk (pseudonym J. Saks), the patrician businessman and journalist F.M. Wibaut, and the historian Willem van Ravesteijn. Because of its private financing (largely by Van der Goes), the *Nieuwe Tijd* remained outside party control, which enabled it to develop from the beginning the critical, independent, interrogative spirit that helped give Dutch Marxism its unique character.

During the early years of its existence, the *Nieuwe Tijd* group was, to a large extent, still intellectually dependent upon German Marxism, particularly upon the works of Karl Kautsky. This influence was particularly pronounced in the economic essays of Van der Goes, who often attempted to give the basic conceptions of German Marxism a more voluntaristic interpretation. But by the turn of the century, a more independent outlook began to emerge among the *Nieuwe Tijd*ists in which much of the emphasis of Marxism was shifted away from economics toward psychological and cultural factors.

Ideologically, the *Nieuwe Tijd*ists took as their point of departure the ethical and subjective idealism which had initially inspired their transition to socialism. In their search for an alternative to the degradation of the human spirit under industrial capitalism, the *Nieuwe Tijd*ists were motivated by the vision of a rational socialist community, born out of a fundamental transformation of life. Their vision promised a new man in a new world and called upon individuals to look beyond their immediate interests and seek, both within society and themselves, a new moral, cultural, and intellectual order. The basis of this new society, they felt, lay in the working class solidarity, self-activity, and revolutionary energy that arose out of the class struggle.

To help integrate their subjective idealism into revolutionary Marxism, the *Nieuwe Tijds*ists appropriated the philosophical writings of Joseph Dietzgen, which they often gave varying interpretations. Pannekoek, for instance, emphasized the methodological and scientific aspects of Dietzgen's system, while Gorter and Roland Holst were attracted to the sublime, quasi-religious, and visionary foundations which they felt Dietzgen gave to socialism.¹⁴ Pannekoek later contended that it was precisely this emphasis on Dietzgen that prevented Dutch Marxism from degenerating into 'mechanism' and reformism.¹⁵

Although most of the editorial board was well-versed in all areas of Marxist thought, a limited form of specialization soon developed. Philosophy and science were handled by Pannekoek; theory by Pannekoek, Gorter, and Roland Holst; economics by Van der Goes, Wiedijk, and Wibaut; aesthetics by Gorter and Roland Holst; and sociology by Roland Holst. From this complex interplay of personalities and ideas, the *Nieuwe Tijd* emerged as a beacon of critical Marxist thought which rivaled Kautsky's *Neue Zeit* in its richness and complexity. During the first two decades of the twentieth century, this 'school' of Marxism exercised – through countless articles, books, pamphlets, speeches, and political contacts – an influence on European social democracy that extended well beyond the boundaries of Holland. As events in the SDAP pushed the *Nieuwe Tijds*ists' political development forward, this rich theoretical inquiry formed the basis of an increasingly integrated theory of revolutionary Marxism.

'First Life, Then Theory': The Trade Union, Agrarian, and School Debates

The factional struggle in the SDAP developed slowly, almost unconsciously, before suddenly bursting forth into open political conflict in the spring of 1901. During the SDAP's formative years – when it was numerically little more than a sect – all sections of the party were concerned primarily with organization and growth.¹⁶ Yet beneath this apparent harmony, the embryonic outlines of factional groupings were already present by the turn of the century.

The Marxist intellectuals grouped around the *Nieuwe Tijd* were almost immediately forced to confront an entrenched reformist wing centered around the typographer Willem Vliegen, the painter J.H. Schaper, and the engineer Henri van Kol. Unlike their German counterparts, the Dutch revisionists had little interest in theory and would not admit to supporting revisionism. Only Vliegen would speak openly of the 'close bonds of sympathy' he had for Bernstein.¹⁷ The sentiment of the majority of party activists was perhaps symbolized by Troelstra, the titular head of the party, who consid-

ered himself a Marxist and follower of Kautsky. While not ruling out the possibility of revolutionary action, Troelstra's admitted main concern was to develop the party into a 'great power' by parliamentary means.¹⁸ In approaching questions of strategy, the centrist group around Troelstra was fully aware of the relative weakness of the industrial working class sector in the Netherlands and was prepared to appeal to non-proletarian elements in building the party's strength. During the intra-party debates, the Troelstra faction usually formed a common voting bloc with the revisionists, with whom they had few differences over policy and strategy.

Although open factional struggle did not develop until the spring of 1901, the first shadows of conflict were cast as early as 1899 over the question of trade union policy. The immediate issue was what type of policy to pursue in regard to the anarcho-syndicalist followers of Domela Nieuwenhuis, who had regrouped within the NAS labor federation. The NAS had been formed in 1892 by the SDB in response to a call by the Second International for the formation of social democratic labor secretariats. Although the NAS was organizationally independent of the SDB, its leadership and much of its membership had come out of the SDB. Like the French revolutionary syndicalists, with whom it maintained close contact, the NAS defined its mission in revolutionary terms. It rejected parliamentary action and centralized leadership and sought to psychologically prepare the workers for revolution by direct industrial action.¹⁹ In key areas such as Amsterdam and Rotterdam, the NAS unions served as a formidable barrier to the development of a social democratic base in the working class.

By the late 1890's, a powerful ideological and organizational challenge to the NAS was rapidly developing in the form of the General Dutch Diamond Workers Federation (ANDB). Led by the diamond cutter Henri Polak, the ANDB was modeled on the British trade unions, with which Polak had become familiar while living in London.²⁰ Unlike the NAS, the ANDB stressed the importance of compulsory dues, salaried officials, a large treasury, centralized leadership, and a disciplined rank-and-file. Starting in 1898, Polak began to campaign for a social democratic trade union federation modeled on the ANDB.

As the SDAP began to wrestle with the problem of what type of trade union policy to pursue, it became increasingly clear that a major difference in outlook separated the *Nieuwe Tijds* from the party leadership. Troelstra, concerned mainly with building a labor movement willing to cooperate with the SDAP and augment its power, vigorously opposed any form of cooperation with the NAS unions. The *Nieuwe Tijds*, on the other hand, maintained a more benevolent attitude toward the NAS unions and stressed their fighting qualities. Gorter argued at the 1899 party congress that the

SDAP should actively support the NAS unions and proposed the creation of a 'mechanism for common struggle' between the party and the unions.²¹ In late 1900, Troelstra presented a detailed proposal for the formation of a new social democratic trade union federation modeled on the ANDB.²² Gorter openly challenged this view and argued that the real task was to make conciliatory ouvertures to the NAS.²³ Gorter followed this up by introducing a resolution at the 1901 party congress calling for financial support for the NAS unions.²⁴ In the end, neither Gorter's nor Troelstra's position prevailed. By this point, however, the trade union question had been superseded by a larger debate over agrarian policy.

In contrast to the brief debate over trade union policy, the agrarian debate was particularly sharp and established for the first time the clear lines of factional cleavage.²⁵ The roots of this debate are traceable to the weakness of the SDAP in the urban sector and its strength in the rural provinces of the north where much of the agrarian population had been radicalized by the prolonged economic crisis of the mid-1880's. The immediate issue involved a clause in the party's agrarian program which provided for the leasing of municipal lands to small tenant farmers who were then free to employ wage labor to work it.

In the spring of 1901, Gorter came to the conclusion that this clause – which had initially been put into the agrarian program at Troelstra's request – represented a fundamental deviation from Marxist principles. In order to initiate a discussion on this question, he placed an 1895 article by Engels in the *Nieuwe Tijd* and buttressed it with a short article by his friend Karl Kautsky criticizing the Dutch program on orthodox Marxist grounds. Troelstra immediately defended the clause on the grounds that it was responsive to rural needs and accused Gorter of substituting an 'appeal to authority' for his lack of knowledge.²⁶ Gorter, hoping to strengthen his position for the upcoming party congress, responded with a blistering attack entitled 'Troelstra tegen Kautsky', in which he accused Troelstra of attempting to turn the SDAP into a reformist party defending the interest of 'fanatical small property owners'.²⁷ More fuel was added to the fire when Troelstra suggested that the party had more important things to do than simply pursue the class struggle and promote socialism. In his view, the fundamental issue at stake was quite simple: 'First life, then theory.'²⁸

The debate over agrarian policy dominated the entire proceedings of the April, 1901 Congress of Utrecht, with the discussion largely a re-echoing of the earlier polemics. After heated debate, a compromise was finally reached which authorized the executive to appoint a special commission to examine the entire program. When the commission finally reported in 1905, the agrarian question had long since been dwarfed by more important issues.

Unlike others of the *Nieuwe Tijd* group, Pannekoek – disdaining controversy and preoccupied with theoretical and organizational work – remained deliberately aloof from the factional struggle. Indeed, when the agrarian debate first erupted, Troelstra invited Pannekoek to visit him in Haarlem in the hopes of enlisting him in the struggle against Gorter.²⁹ At Utrecht, Pannekoek entered the debate only reluctantly and chose to focus on the subjective aspects of the agrarian question. He warned that the leasing of municipal lands would create an attitude of competitiveness and envy among the tenant farmers and agricultural laborers at a time when they were beginning to develop feelings of solidarity. The principal task of the party in the rural areas, he maintained, was to build a socialist consciousness by explaining and analyzing the causes of rural poverty.³⁰

While the battle over agrarian policy raged, a parallel, but more complicated, cleavage was slowly developing over educational policy.³¹ Like the agrarian debate, this dispute had its roots in the SDAP's early dependence on a non-proletarian constituency in the north. In February, 1901, Troelstra, concerned about the growing appeal of Abraham Kuypers's Calvinist Anti-Revolutionary Party to the SDAP's agrarian and lower middle class electoral supporters, proposed that the SDAP endorse state aid to confessional schools.³² Throughout 1901, a discussion on this question continued without leading to factional strife within the SDAP. Indeed, Van der Goes defended a policy similar to Troelstra's, which maintained that the working class had a right to determine where to educate their children.³³ Pannekoek seconded this argument by noting that both public and confessional schools were equally tied to the apparatus of bourgeois ideological domination. To oppose state subsidies, he felt, would only create a needless conflict between believing and non-believing workers.³⁴

The school issue became a source of conflict only in December, 1901, when the Amsterdam section of the *Sociaal Democratische Opvoeders Bond* (SDOV – Social Democratic Educators Union) passed a resolution calling upon the SDAP to oppose any form of state subsidies to confessional schools. The leader of this move was Jan Ceton, the SDOV's national secretary, who was close to the *Nieuwe Tijd* group. Troelstra quickly responded with an editorial in *Het Volk* which condemned the motion as 'reactionary' on the grounds that it would greatly hinder the activity of the party.³⁵ Gorter and Roland Holst immediately drafted a joint letter affirming a preference for state schools and opposing the extension of subsidies for confessional schools.³⁶

Throughout the first three months of 1902, the debate raged almost daily in the columns of *Het Volk*. On one side was Troelstra and the party leadership; on the other, Ceton, Gorter, Roland Holst, and Wiedijk; while Pan-

nekoek and Van der Goes remained neutral. The issue raised here was once again one of Marxist principle. Ceton, Gorter, and Roland Holst argued that the defined policy of the Second International favored free, compulsory secular public education and that any form of support for confessional schools would be a serious deviation from accepted Marxist principles. Troelstra defended his position by contending that, while the German-developed doctrines were correct, they had to be applied in a Dutch context. An even more vehement debate followed at the Congress of Groningen in March, 1902, which finally culminated in a compromise resolution affirming the desirability of placing all education under state supervision, but at the same time supporting state subsidies to confessional schools on a parity with the public schools. Like the agrarian debate, the school debate had little immediate impact on party policy, and its principal effect was largely to poison personal relations between the party leadership and the *Nieuwe Tijd* group.

Deepening of the Split: The Dutch Mass Strike Wave of 1903 and its Aftermath

The year 1903 marked a critical turning point in the history of the left opposition. Prior to this time, the factional struggle had revolved around specific questions of policy. With the great Dutch mass strike wave of 1903, this debate entered a broader strategic phase. What was at stake now was nothing less than the nature of the SDAP, its leadership, strategy, and commitment to revolutionary principles. For Pannekoek, the events of 1903 also marked an important juncture, both for the development of his thought and for his commitment to the factional struggle. Whereas Pannekoek had earlier sought to avoid factional strife, he was now thrust directly into the limelight as the main spokesman of the opposition.

The mass strike wave of 1903 – which still represents the greatest labor dispute in the history of the Netherlands – took place against a backdrop of rapid trade union organizational growth and militancy. During 1902, a series of escalating labor disputes occurred among the Amsterdam diamond workers, the Amsterdam building trades, and the textile workers of the Twente district, which had a powerful impact on the consciousness of the working class. The strike wave itself began in early January, 1903, as a series of spontaneous work stoppages in the port of Amsterdam in response to an attempt by the shipping companies to enforce a wage cut by hiring non-union workers.³⁷ When the employers refused to negotiate and discharged the striking workers, the NAS unions responded with a series of strikes which led to a two-week *de facto* general strike in the harbor. Almost immediately, the syndicalist strike actions spread to the railway workers in Amsterdam, who transformed what had begun as a sympathy strike into a

parallel railway strike for higher wages. At a meeting of over 2,000 railway workers in The Hague on January 22, a resolution calling for a national transport strike was overwhelmingly approved despite strong opposition from the union's social democratic leadership.³⁸ The crisis reached a new height when other NAS unions throughout Holland threatened to join any national strike movement that might develop. Confronted with this situation, the railroad companies and harbor firms quickly capitulated on January 31, giving the strikers virtually a total victory.

Among the *Nieuwe Tijd* group, the mood was one of exaltation. Pannekoek spoke of the strike wave as a 'glowing fireball descending from the sky' brightly illuminating the path to proletarian liberation.³⁹ In their great enthusiasm, the *Nieuwe Tijd*ists believed that class solidarity and action would bridge the gap between the party and the trade union movement and allow the workers to rise above parochial interests under the inspiration of socialism.⁴⁰ Speaking jointly at a public demonstration with Domela Nieuwenhuis, Gorter declared to tumultuous applause: 'Let us now forget everything that divides us and unite ourselves against capitalism.'⁴¹

This triumph of class solidarity, however, was soon met by a counteroffensive by the employers. The clear lines of a major national class confrontation were drawn in February, when the Kuyper government began to draft a package of anti-strike legislation prohibiting strikes in the railroads and public sector. In an attempt to head off such legislation, a Resistance Committee was organized, composed of the SDAP, the NAS, and various independent trade unions. Over the course of the next few weeks, the committee began to organize a series of mass meetings and demonstrations in an attempt to exert extra-parliamentary pressure on the government. During this period, a protracted debate began in the Resistance Committee over the question of proclaiming a general strike, with the anarcho-syndicalists in favor, and the socialists and non-NAS trade union leaders hesitant. What finally emerged was a compromise tactic in which the committee was allowed to call a railway and dockworkers' strike at an opportune time in the parliamentary debate, but could expand it into a general strike only if it was necessary to assure the strike's success.

Despite the objections of the SDAP leaders Troelstra and Vliegen and the railway union's socialist leader Jan Oudegeest, the Resistance Committee proclaimed a railway and dockworkers' strike for April 6. Several days earlier a number of spontaneous strikes had already broken out in certain small industries in Amsterdam. In contrast to January, the railway and harbor firms were now well organized, able to draw from a pool of strikebreakers, and in a much better position to intimidate their employees. Sensing a major confrontation, the government also brought large numbers of troops to

Amsterdam and positioned them throughout the city. At the same time, the Resistance Committee had undertaken no serious efforts to organize the strike, and, in fact, delegated this task to leaders such as Oudegeest, who had opposed the strike from the beginning. In this circumstances, the railway and dockworkers' strike was poorly supported except in the port of Amsterdam. Nonetheless, on Wednesday evening, April 8, the committee proclaimed the general strike for the following day. Bakers, metalworkers, construction workers, municipal employees, cigarmakers, and diamond workers followed the call, but the threats of the employers kept enough workers on the job to keep the industries running. Consequently, the committee had little choice but to call the strike off the same day it began, despite the protests of many of the anarcho-syndicalist workers.

The failure of the April strike had far reaching consequences for the Dutch working class. On the most general level, it destroyed the fighting capacity of the trade union movement for nearly a decade. From the railroads alone, 2,000 of the most militant workers were dismissed; throughout the country as a whole, perhaps as many as 4,000 workers lost their jobs.⁴² From a political standpoint, this defeat also widened and made permanent the schism between the anarcho-syndicalists and the socialists. The anarcho-syndicalists accused the socialists of defeatism and betrayal, while the socialists charged that the anarcho-syndicalists were irresponsible and adventurist. In the aftermath of these events, the SDAP moved toward the creation of a social democratic trade union federation, which culminated in the formation of the *Nederlandsch Verbond van Vakvereeningen* (NVV – Netherlands Federation of Trade Unions) in 1905.⁴³

But for Pannekoek and the *Nieuwe Tijd*ists, the brief and abortive strike wave left an indelible double legacy: it established for the first time the legitimacy of the mass political strike as an instrument of socialist strategy; and it confirmed the primacy of the masses, rather than the organization, as the key agent of socialist transformation. Pannekoek boldly predicted that out of actions such as the strike wave of 1903, there would develop both a new movement and a new level of theoretical consciousness.⁴⁴

Within the SDAP, the failure of the April strike led to both a renewed attack on Troelstra's leadership and a prolonged theoretical debate over the question of the general strike. Throughout February, Troelstra, in contrast to other SDAP leaders such as Vliegen and Oudegeest, had shared much of the *Nieuwe Tijd* group's enthusiasm for a general strike, in the belief that it would be useful as a pressure instrument for gaining universal suffrage. On March 17, however, Troelstra suddenly reversed himself and launched an editorial attack on the impending strike.⁴⁵

Troelstra's editorial, which had been completely unauthorized by the

party, unleashed a storm of protest from the *Nieuwe Tijd* group. Pannekoek, leading the assault, responded with a caustic letter accusing Troelstra of weakening the determination of the workers and destroying their hard-won unity.⁴⁶ Troelstra countered by accusing Pannekoek of 'unbounded superficiality' and of attempting to drag the party on an 'anarchist adventure'.⁴⁷ Pannekoek responded with uncharacteristic invective, charging that Troelstra had 'betrayed' the movement.⁴⁸ Troelstra, however, refused to print the article on the grounds that it lacked 'consideration, honesty, and good faith'.⁴⁹ Pannekoek subsequently drafted still another article which Troelstra once again refused to print. After a bitter exchange of correspondence, Pannekoek announced his intention to bring the matter up at the upcoming party congress.⁵⁰ Pannekoek was soon joined in his attacks on Troelstra's leadership by Gorter and Roland Holst, although their criticisms were more temperate in tone.

At this point, the *Nieuwe Tijds* began to direct their efforts at securing Troelstra's removal as editor of *Het Volk*. As early as 1901, Pannekoek had privately criticized Troelstra for failing to use *Het Volk* to develop Marxist insights within the party.⁵¹ Although Pannekoek joined with Van der Goes in an abortive attempt to remove Troelstra as editor in 1902, this question did not assume major importance until the appearance of Troelstra's 1903 strike editorials and his refusal to print Pannekoek's articles. By then, *Nieuwe Tijds* considered it of vital importance to have unrestricted access to the columns of *Het Volk* since it was the only medium through which their views could be disseminated to the SDAP rank-and-file. The *Nieuwe Tijds* mounted an aggressive campaign to remove Troelstra as editor throughout 1903. Troelstra, irritated by the attacks on him, finally announced his resignation in September, 1903, and was replaced by the Fabian socialist P.L. Tak. Although not of the left, Tak was trusted by them and was considered an acceptable compromise candidate.

Beyond the immediate question of Troelstra's leadership, there lay the more fundamental question of the legitimacy of the general strike as an instrument of socialist strategy. As early as 1902, a minor debate on this issue had arisen within the SDAP as an outgrowth of the national suffrage strike in Belgium. When, in 1903, the question assumed immediate practical significance during the debates in the Resistance Committee, Roland Holst took the lead in formulating a political strike strategy, first setting forth her arguments in the March 24 issue of *Het Volk*.⁵² In the months that followed, Roland Holst expanded her ideas into a major theoretical work on the general strike and social democracy,⁵³ which was widely circulated throughout Europe.

The *Nieuwe Tijds* first attempted to carry the mass strike debate into

the ranks of the party at the Congress of Enschede in May, 1903, when Gorter introduced a resolution calling for the SDAP's participation in future general strikes. Despite a spirited defense of their position, the *Nieuwe Tijd*-ists were forced to yield to a compromise resolution proposed by P.L. Tak which approved the general strike in vague terms, but pronounced the goal of universal suffrage more desirable.⁵⁴ Undeterred by this rebuff, the *Nieuwe Tijd*-ists almost immediately began to focus their energies on changing party policy at the congress the following year.

In order to give their case a more solid foundation, the *Nieuwe Tijd*-ists selected Pannekoek to draft a report to be presented at the 1904 congress stipulating the conditions under which the mass political strike could be used as a tactic of social democracy. Although Pannekoek explicitly posed the mass political strike as a 'new form of struggle', he stopped short of advocating its use as a tactical end in itself. He argued that the mass strike was a necessary and useful supplement to other tactics which could be effective in achieving certain limited ends or resisting reactionary attacks on the workers. At the same time, Pannekoek warned that because the use of the mass strike would, in almost all cases, lead to a confrontation with the capitalist state, it was a 'very dangerous medium' which must be used with extreme caution.⁵⁵ A modified version of this report, which was more critical of the anarcho-syndicalists, was accepted by the party executive and was introduced at the 1904 congress. After a heated exchange with the party right led by Vliegen, the report was ratified by a narrow four-vote margin, due in large part to support from the Troelstra faction.⁵⁶ Although the *Nieuwe Tijd*-ists claimed this decision as a victory, it remained unclear as to whether the resolution was passed as an affirmation of an executive bureau decision or as an endorsement of the *Nieuwe Tijd* group's formulations.

The *Nieuwe Tijd*-ists' developing strategic views underwent a further radicalization as a result of the Russian Revolution of 1905. Under the impetus of the Russian mass strikes, the *Nieuwe Tijd*-ists became convinced that an era of revolution was near at hand and that the mission of the party was to prepare the Dutch working class for a revolutionary crisis by instilling a Marxist sense of class struggle. As in 1903, their mood was one of exaltation. In Pannekoek's opinion, the Russian Revolution signified the end of a thirty-year period of peaceful parliamentary struggle and the beginning of a new epoch of 'stormy revolutionary struggle'. The events in Russia, he felt, would lead to a radicalization of the Dutch suffrage movement, first by way of Germany, where a powerful revolutionary suffrage movement was already beginning to stir.⁵⁷

The Russian events helped give a special sense of urgency to a new dis-

pute that developed in the summer of 1905, over the question of supporting non-socialist candidates on the second ballot. Prior to the 1905 elections, a coalition had been formed to unseat the Anti-Revolutionary Party of Abraham Kuyper. For the Dutch working class, this question was of paramount importance since Kuyper was identified with the anti-strike legislation and repression of 1903 and was an irreconcilable opponent of universal suffrage. At the 1905 party congress, the SDAP accepted, in the interests of party harmony, a joint Pannekoek-Troelstra resolution which specifically rejected a strategy of supporting *en bloc* all anti-Kuyper candidates on the second ballot, except for those who publicly declared themselves in favor of universal suffrage. This situation changed suddenly when the anti-Kuyper coalition gained a larger than expected vote on the first ballot, which opened up the possibility of a second ballot victory. Since it was believed that the anti-Kuyper forces would attract a sizeable amount of working class support, the party executive and the editorial board of *Het Volk* both publicly reinterpreted the congress decision to mean that individuals were free to vote their conscience.

This unilateral decision triggered a sharp response from the left, with Pannekoek leading the assault. By now Pannekoek's role in the factional struggle was such that the *Nieuwe Tijds* were often informally referred to as 'Pannekoekers'.⁵⁸ Writing first in *Het Volk* on July 1, 1905, Pannekoek accused the party leadership of having reversed the congress decision by a 'cunning exegesis'. He charged that instead of presenting the run-off to the rank-and-file in terms of the antithesis capitalism-socialism, the party leadership had presented it as a struggle against the Kuyper regime, thereby weakening the political consciousness of the workers, destroying party discipline, and promoting 'a spirit of disorganization and political corruption in the party'.⁵⁹ What was at stake, Pannekoek insisted, was not the Kuyper government – which was merely the particular manner in which the general policy of a class was conducted – but the ideological preparation of the working class for the revolutionary suffrage struggles that might develop as an outgrowth of the Russian Revolution.⁶⁰

Troelstra, charging that the left's distrust of the leadership had become a 'mania', responded to these accusations by requesting that the next party congress formally condemn the *Nieuwe Tijd* group.⁶¹ The stage was set for a major confrontation when a special commission was created to examine Troelstra's accusations and issue a report for the upcoming congress.

The 1906 Congress of Utrecht turned into a debacle for the *Nieuwe Tijd* group. After examining Troelstra's accusations, the special commission concluded that the *Nieuwe Tijds* had been guilty of a 'misuse of the free-

dom of criticism' and 'undermined the unity of the party'. After a heated debate, the report was approved overwhelmingly.⁶² Badly chastized, the *Nieuwe Tijds* countered with a boycott of all party activities.

In the aftermath of Utrecht, it was no longer possible to escape the fact that the factional differences in the SDAP were growing steadily wider and could no longer be reconciled. A strong radical tendency had managed to develop and consolidate itself within Dutch social democracy and had no intention of yielding to the party leadership. From a romantic rebellion against bourgeois society and culture, the *Nieuwe Tijd* group had moved to a militant, activist conception of revolutionary Marxism which stressed the importance of class, the necessity of revolution, and the creation of a new social, moral, cultural, and intellectual order. In attempting to develop their revolutionary practice, they firmly rejected theoretical revisionism and practical reformism, maintained a deep mistrust of parliamentarianism, and advocated an active strategy of confrontation with the state and capital. At the same time, their strategic orientation revealed, even at this early date, a number of the fundamental flaws in Dutch Marxism. Although their subjectively oriented Marxism introduced new and unique categories to Marxist analysis, the *Nieuwe Tijds*' desire for a fundamental revolutionary transformation was not matched by a clear conception of the social and economic reality they sought to transform. In formulating their strategic analyses, Pannekoek and the *Nieuwe Tijds* often preferred to argue by explication and in terms of general and abstract categories of universal validity rather than attempt a systematic and empirical analysis of Dutch social and economic development. In the domain of practice, the *Nieuwe Tijds* were limited by their inability to generate either a mass following or a grassroots cadre to translate their views into action. For all their stature, the *Nieuwe Tijds*' influence in the party remained scattered and confined largely to their intellectual and propaganda activities. But in the final analysis, the *Nieuwe Tijds*' lack of support in the SDAP was less a consequence of their shortcomings than a reflection of the special features of the party's development. Formed initially as a reaction to the revolutionary doctrines of Domela Nieuwenhuis, cut off from the revolutionary sector of the working class, and dependent on a rural and middle class constituency, the SDAP was conditioned almost from its inception as a middle class reform party dependent on parliamentary tactics.

CHAPTER IV

**BRINGING SOCIALIST INSIGHT TO THE MASSES,
1906–1909***The Berlin Years: Theoretical and Propaganda Work for the SPD*

Although his own political development had progressed considerably within the framework of the SDAP, Pannekoek had become more and more frustrated by the time-consuming squabbles of the Dutch socialist movement and by his isolation from any major center of socialist activity. He yearned to break out of his barren, provincial milieu and plunge into the center of the international socialist movement in Germany, where he felt his theoretical abilities could be more effectively used. This aim was realized in 1906 when Pannekoek was offered a teaching position at the newly-formed SPD central party school in Berlin.

The SPD's offer was in large part an outgrowth of a close personal relationship Pannekoek had established with Karl Kautsky. Pannekoek's first contact with Kautsky came in 1900, when he attended a lecture by Kautsky's in Amsterdam, sitting, as he later noted, below the podium 'at the feet of the master'.¹ Regular contact was established a year later, when Pannekoek wrote Kautsky to inquire about correspondence between Marx and Dietzgen in the SPD archives and to initiate a discussion with Kautsky about the importance of Dietzgen for Marxist theory.² Kautsky, by now fully aware of Pannekoek's theoretical abilities, responded by asking him to contribute articles to the *Neue Zeit*. This relationship was deepened during the course of the next few years through extensive correspondence and collaboration on a variety of theoretical projects. Through Kautsky, Pannekoek also developed contacts with others of the German anti-revisionist left, such as Franz Mehring, who persuaded him to write regularly for the *Leipziger Volkszeitung*. Pannekoek's political views during this time were still firmly situated within the orthodox Marxism elaborated by Kautsky, which he sought to supplement with Dietzgen's theory of understanding. Praising his mentor Kautsky, Pannekoek declared that he 'toward [Kautsky's] work [feels] only as your pupil'. Kautsky's theorizing, he contended, 'so greatly fills me with new thoughts, deep insights, and excellent instruction that I am unable to spot any possible faults'.³

In his correspondence with Kautsky, Pannekoek constantly underscored the importance of developing a broad, popular understanding of Marxism as a necessary precondition for any further advances by the workers' movement. Starting in 1903, Pannekoek made it known to Kautsky that he was interested in moving to Germany to perform full-time theoretical and educational work for the SPD. Such work, he maintained, was far more compatible with his personality than his role as a political activist and organizer: 'I do not possess much in the way of a fighting nature; my inclinations are more those of a school master. Continually debating and seeking to win enough support and influence for our side is not my vocation. What interests me is to teach, learn, explain, and enlighten whenever anyone is willing to listen.'⁴

Like Pannekoek, many others of the German left had also become convinced that the spread of revisionist ideology within the SPD could be checked only by intensive theoretical education. In early 1906, the SPD executive approved a resolution calling for the formation of a central party school in Berlin for the purpose of raising the ideological level of the party by bringing select party functionaries and journalists to Berlin for six months of intensive courses in political theory, economics, history, law and journalism.⁵

Once offered a teaching position, however, Pannekoek was hesitant about accepting it. His hesitation was only one of the first of a series of lifelong conflicts over his preference for the orderly, comfortable life of a successful intellectual and his commitment to an activist, revolutionary Marxism. Although Pannekoek noted to Kautsky that his thoughts were becoming 'increasingly bound up with Marxism and less with astronomy', he was still reluctant to give up the security of his observatory position.⁶ Following a trip by Pannekoek and Gorter to Berlin to discuss the matter, Kautsky managed to obtain for Pannekoek a salary offer of 3,600 marks per year, which was a 600 mark increase over his observatory position.⁷ This offer – which was nearly double the average wage of a worker – drew opposition from a number of trade union functionaries. Bebel, for instance, observed to Kautsky that many workers regarded it as an attempt by an intellectual to gain 'an extra wurst'.⁸ In the end, Pannekoek accepted the position partly out of a sense of optimism about the revolutionary prospects of social democracy in Germany, and partly out of his growing dissatisfaction with the outdated meridian work being performed at the Leiden Observatory.⁹

Throughout the summer of 1906, Pannekoek corresponded extensively with Kautsky, Mehring, and Bebel about the exact nature of the party school and its relationship to the intellectual development of the socialist move-

ment. Drawing on his experiences with popularized Marxist education in Leiden, Pannekoek called for a form of instruction based on a conceptual process which teaches the workers to distinguish and clarify the basic elements of socialism in their daily lives. Without providing specifics, he stressed that instead of being allowed to degenerate into a passive form of indoctrination, theoretical education must become an active process of self-education and clarification of reality with clear practical goals. He warned that without a proper understanding of both the material and spiritual elements of capitalism, only external and immediate factors would be taken into consideration and tactics would be governed either by established tradition or by a superficial empiricism.¹⁰ This analysis was bound up with his belief that the party school and the *Neue Zeit* might together serve as the 'spiritual center' of the international socialist movement.¹¹

Pannekoek arrived in Berlin in early November, 1906, and stayed as a guest in the Kautsky household¹² before finding permanent quarters in the suburb of Zehlendorf. On December 16, he began teaching a course entitled 'Historical Materialism and Social Theory', which heavily emphasized the subjective factors in human development.¹³ Pannekoek's teaching career, however, ended abruptly in September, 1907, when the police barred him and the Austrian Rudolf Hilferding from teaching on the grounds of non-citizenship. Shortly afterwards, the SPD executive replaced Pannekoek with Rosa Luxemburg and Hilferding with Heinrich Cunow.

Except for six months severance pay from the SPD, Pannekoek was left with no regular source of income. Through Kautsky's efforts, Pannekoek obtained a temporary position organizing the Motteler archives in Leipzig. At about the same time, Wilhelm Pieck, secretary of the SPD in Bremen, offered him a position in a proposed local party educational program. Pannekoek, however, declined on the grounds that to move from a national position to a local position would be a 'step backwards' and that, in any case, he preferred to remain in Berlin to continue his close collaboration with Kautsky.¹⁴

Pannekoek's financial problems were finally resolved when Mehring suggested that he write a weekly newspaper column to be sent to subscribing German socialist news papers. Mehring's suggestion also provided Pannekoek with an opportunity to resolve in practice some of his longstanding criticisms about the inability of the socialist press to fulfill basic educational tasks.

Pannekoek began his 'correspondence articles' in February, 1908, and continued them on a weekly basis until the outbreak of the First World War. By charging five marks an article to the small circulation papers and up to twenty marks to the larger papers, he earned a regular monthly income of

between 200 and 300 marks.¹⁵ At the outbreak of the war, Pannekoek had 26 subscribing papers, along with a number of individuals, among them V.I. Lenin. As in his educational work, Pannekoek sought to use his articles to deepen the theoretical knowledge of the working class by clarifying and amplifying their basic life experiences. He constructed each article to illustrate the application of Marxist methodology to analyzing day-to-day social, political, and theoretical questions. Like all of his writings, they were characterized by their clear, concise, and analytical prose and by an attempt to draw out the practical consequences for action.

Pannekoek's journalistic work was supplemented by a variety of other activities. Through Kautsky, he obtained a part-time position as book editor of the *Neue Zeit*. He also served as a frequent and popular travelling lecturer for the SPD, which provided him with many opportunities to establish relationships with left groups throughout Germany. In close contact with most of the leading theoreticians of German Marxism and freed from the constraints of organizational work and factional struggle, Pannekoek during his three and a half years in Berlin was able to devote his full attention to the theoretical work that helped establish him as a Marxist theorist of international stature.

Intransigent Marxism on the Offensive: The Tribunist Left

Throughout his prolonged stay in Germany, Pannekoek continued to play a prominent role as a theoretician of the Dutch left opposition, and the experiences of this group remained an essential point of reference for his thought. For Pannekoek and others of the Dutch left, the censure at the Congress of Utrecht had clearly demonstrated that the gap separating them from the SDAP leadership had widened into a chasm. Faced with the prospect of losing their influence in both the party administrative structure and press, the Dutch left gradually began to realize the need to move beyond the traditional intellectual channels of the *Nieuwe Tijd* and develop a vehicle for disseminating their views within the party. This realization provided the initial impulse for the emergence of a new and more militant left opposition group, which ultimately grouped itself around the weekly newspaper, *De Tribune*. While the older *Nieuwe Tijd* group still continued to function as an active opposition and the main center of theoretical analysis, the *Tribunist* left began to steadily displace it as the driving force of the revolutionary left within the SDAP.¹⁶

Three individuals provided the leadership for this new group of young activists: David Wijnkoop, Willem van Ravesteijn, and Jan Ceton. Foremost among the three was David Wijnkoop (1876-1941). The son of Amsterdam's head rabbi, Wijnkoop became a socialist while still a youth after at-

tending a speech by Domela Nieuwenhuis.¹⁷ Following activity in the student socialist movement, Wijnkoop joined the SDAP in 1898, and, despite his youth and emotional temperament, began a steady rise to prominence. Owing to his superior oratorical and organizational skills, he was elected chairman of the powerful and prestigious Amsterdam III section in 1902. Wijnkoop's most formative experience, however, was as a salaried propagandist in the Twente textile district during the strike wave of 1903. His existing dissatisfaction with the party leadership was exacerbated when Troelstra blocked his request to be placed in the position permanently. Like Wijnkoop, Jan Ceton (1875–1943) also came out of the Amsterdam III section, where he served as secretary. A biology teacher by profession and head of the SDAP teacher's federation, Ceton had helped initiate the school debate in 1902. Although a skilled organizer and administrator, Ceton soon gained a reputation as the most militant and uncompromising of the three young activists.¹⁸ Unlike Wijnkoop and Ceton, Willem van Ravesteyn (1876–1970) was a scholar and theoretician by temperament. The first Marxist to receive a doctorate in the history in the Netherlands, Van Ravesteyn joined the Leiden branch of the SDAP in 1899 and almost immediately became a friend and protégé of Pannekoek.¹⁹

In the aftermath of the Utrecht defeat, Wijnkoop, Ceton, and Van Ravesteyn began to lay the groundwork for a separate Marxist weekly newspaper of the left. The idea of such a newspaper had been a long-standing concern of many oppositionists who felt that the *Nieuwe Tijd* reached only a small intellectual audience. As early as 1903, Wijnkoop, while a propagandist in Twente, had proposed – with Pannekoek and Gorter's support – the creation of a regional weekly newspaper modeled on the *Leipziger Volkszeitung*. When this project was rejected, Wijnkoop wrote bitterly to Van Ravesteyn: 'I think that something has been lost in Twente, as well as the entire nation, for the propagation of a real, proletarian socialism.'²⁰ Two years later, Wijnkoop proposed a weekly supplement to *Het Volk* to help bring Marxism to the working class, but this proposal was also rejected by the party leadership.²¹ Finally, in June, 1906, the triumvirate began to seek supporters and contributors throughout the country for an independent newspaper of the left aimed at instilling a Marxist sense of class consciousness in the working class.²²

This task acquired added urgency following the Congress of Haarlem in 1907, which culminated in the full-scale capitulation of the *Nieuwe Tijd* group. Seeking to stimulate a spirit of reconciliation, Henriette Roland Holst declared in the name of the *Nieuwe Tijds* that their return to active participation in party activities was no longer dependent on withdrawal of the Utrecht condemnation.²³ But for Wijnkoop, Ceton, and Van Ravesteyn, as well as for Pannekoek and Gorter, the decision to capitulate was a deep

disappointment. The conclusion they drew from this was that the left had no choice but to attempt to mobilize both the party's rank-and-file and the workers outside the party. In Pannekoek's opinion, the creation of a newspaper to aid this effort was now an 'absolute necessity'.²⁴

By July, 1907, most of the necessary financial support for an independent radical newspaper had been secured (much of it coming from Gorter), and publication was set for the fall.²⁵ Pannekoek, for his part, agreed to write a regular 'Berlin letter' column discussing various theoretical and practical questions.²⁶ At this point, the group had only three main bases of support in the party: the Amsterdam III section, Gorter's Bussum section, and Pannekoek's Leiden section.

Following a number of delays, the first issue of the *Tribune* finally appeared on October 19, 1907. In the initial manifesto, the 'Tribunists' declared that it was their intention to provide an internationally oriented weekly for the purpose of clarifying, improving, and enlarging socialist insights.²⁷ In this spirit, the *Tribune* editors stressed the importance of accomplishing what the *Nieuwe Tijd* had never done: carrying the struggle for a militant Marxist policy directly into the ranks of the party and the working class. To help build the publication and translate their views into action, Wijnkoop and Ceton began to use their extensive trade union and party contacts to organize 'clubs' of supporters in the various sections of the party.

The Tribunists' strategy was premised on the belief that the Russian Revolution of 1905 and the intensification of the Prussian suffrage campaign signified the beginning of a new and potentially revolutionary phase of the class struggle. Indeed, the *Tribune's* emergence coincided with a period of economic crisis, unemployment, strike activity, and rapid trade union growth in the Netherlands. In these circumstances, the Tribunists felt that an open rebellion against the party leadership, if not imminent, was at least a major possibility. This perspective was partially confirmed by the support that the *Tribune* received during the early months of its existence from a broad spectrum of men not usually associated with the left such as Henri Polak, Joseph Loopuit, A.S. de Levita, and F.M. Wibaut.

In their long struggle against the party leadership, the Tribunists accepted the German SPD as the model of a proper Marxist policy and formulated their basic ideological conceptions according to the orthodox Marxism of Karl Kautsky. At the same time, their revolutionary activist practice remained firmly anchored to a larger tradition of what might loosely be termed intransigent Marxism. More an attitude than a conscious tendency, it was a Marxism which stressed a militant opposition to the capitalist state in all its forms and an unrelenting proletarian struggle for its abolition.

Pannekoek provided one of the Tribunists' first detailed theoretical statements in December, 1907, in the form of a four-part installment analyzing the nature of the SDAP. Pannekoek's analysis was formulated in response to a major article by Troelstra, which argued that social democracy would eventually have to come to terms with parliamentary democracy.²⁸ In replying to Troelstra, Pannekoek developed in great detail the argument that Troelstra was no longer developing tactics on the basis of the class struggle, but was openly preparing the party for a future integration into the bourgeois political system.²⁹ Wijnkoop expanded upon these criticisms by arguing that the party's slow membership growth was a direct consequence of its failure to pursue an active course of agitation in the urban areas.³⁰

The Tribunists adopted similar criticisms in regard to the SDAP-dominated trade unions affiliated with the NVV. In December, 1907, Wijnkoop contrasted the aggressive militancy of the Russian unions with the passivity of the NVV unions.³¹ Ceton, the *Tribune's* trade union specialist, formulated what was to be the Tribunists' basic position when he argued that the SDAP had actively fostered revisionism in the trade union movement. The growth of a union bureaucracy, the failure to support strikes not organized by the NVV, the lack of socialist consciousness in the trade union press, the NVV's shift of support from the eight-hour day to the ten-hour day, and its passive attitude toward the suffrage movement were all cited by Ceton as the consequences of revisionist policies.³² Not content to confine themselves solely to intellectual analyses, the Tribunists also attempted to support and encourage spontaneous strike activity, which often brought them into conflict with the NVV leadership.

The key to the Tribunists' strategy, however, was their belief that a militant suffrage struggle might serve as a catalyst for the radicalization of the Dutch working class. Starting in January, 1908, Pannekoek began to put the suffrage question in sharp theoretical focus with his reporting on the Prussian suffrage demonstrations. For Pannekoek, the demonstrations only confirmed his belief that Germany was entering a new and potentially revolutionary period in which the power of the state was breaking down while that of the working class was increasing. He fervently believed that the suffrage movement had the potential to awaken a great, irresistible wave of socialist militancy that would sweep away the old order.³³ In Holland, the Tribunists focused their energies on demanding that the SDAP withdraw from the Liberal-dominated Committee for Universal Suffrage and conduct an independent class-based agitational campaign modeled on the Prussian movement.

During the first few months of the *Tribune's* existence, the party leader-

ship chose largely to ignore it. This situation, however, changed suddenly following the publication of Henriette Roland Holst's stirring essay, 'Turn of the Tide', in March, 1908. In her essay, Roland Holst divided the history of European social democracy into three periods. Prior to 1892, she argued, European socialism experienced a heroic period characterized by a militant struggle against capitalism. This was followed by a 'high tide' of revisionism and reformism from 1892 to 1903, which had its origins in capitalist economic growth. The period which began in 1903, however, was defined by a slowly developing world economic crisis which would lead to a polarization of class relations and open up the possibility for the emergence of a new revolutionary movement. In these circumstances, she felt, the party's task was clear: 'The party is *compelled* to act on the basis of a Marxist standpoint; it is *compelled* to push the masses to victory through pure socialist propaganda, to mobilize them by emphasizing the revolutionary character of our demand for suffrage, by pursuing pure class tactics. [...] Struggle, rising struggle, is the atmosphere in which a social democrat breathes most freely.'³⁴

In response, the party leadership launched on April 1, 1908, a six-installment attack against the *Tribune* in *Het Volk*, aimed at laying the groundwork for a more concerted offensive against the left at the upcoming Congress of Arnhem.³⁵ At Troelstra's request, the party executive met on April 4, and voted to present a motion at the congress requiring party members to consult with the executive before publishing a private newspaper.³⁶ Shortly before the opening of the congress, the Tribunists counterattacked by passing a resolution in the Amsterdam III section condemning the party leadership for not utilizing the economic crisis to arouse class consciousness and declaring the editors of *Het Volk* to be unfit for their position.³⁷

The question of the *Tribune*'s relationship to the SDAP dominated the entire proceedings of the Congress of Arnhem. The issues raised, for the most part, had been debated repeatedly throughout the course of the previous several years. When the executive's resolution was finally approved by the congress, the Tribunists claimed it as a minor victory since it avoided a direct condemnation of their publication. In the months following the congress, the struggle continued to intensify. Sensing that a final confrontation was unavoidable, the Tribunists focused their energies on strengthening their position at the local level. The most bitter field of conflict soon came to be the Amsterdam Federation of SDAP Organizations, where the Tribunists, working from their stronghold in the Amsterdam III section, came close to winning a majority.³⁸

The conflict began to enter a decisive phase after a parliamentary interpellation of the government by Troelstra on the unemployment question in October, 1908. Wijnkoop immediately attacked the speech, contending that

instead of conveying a socialist viewpoint, Troelstra had argued from a capitalist perspective, which made him unfit to lead the SDAP in parliament.³⁹ The struggle intensified in mid-November when Wijnkoop and Ceton sent Troelstra curt note inquiring about his candidacy for the Amsterdam III seat.⁴⁰ It was at this point that Troelstra, fearing an attempt to undermine his candidacy, decided to take action to have the *Tribune* editors expelled from the party.

With this intention in mind, Tribunists sent a long letter to the party executive requesting that a meeting be convoked for December 5, 1908, to consider the 'Tribune question'. The Tribunists, he charged, were 'an insignificant little club of dogmatically inclined propagandists', whose actions were demoralizing the party and jeopardizing its chances in the upcoming elections.⁴¹

In response to Troelstra's request, the executive called for a meeting with the *Tribune* editors on December 12, 1908. Sensing the imminence of a split, Van Ravesteyn made a special trip to Berlin in an attempt, with Pannekoek's help, to enlist the support of Kautsky and Rosa Luxemburg. Both, however, chose to remain neutral.⁴² During the course of the December 12 meeting, the Tribunists were accused of having violated the Utrecht and Haarlem resolutions and were asked to state what their behavior would be during the elections. Gorter, speaking for the Tribunists, declared that they were willing to stop their assaults on the leadership on the assumption that this act would be reciprocal. A dispute then developed over whether this was a firm enough assurance, and the meeting subsequently decided to reconvene on December 19 to resolve the matter. At the next meeting, a new dispute developed when the Tribunists changed their position and demanded that the executive also provide assurances that all attacks against them would cease. In reply, Schaper and Vliegen demanded that a special party congress be convoked to consider the Tribunists' expulsion. When this motion was defeated four to three, Schaper, Vliegen, and Helsdingen withdrew from the executive and announced their intention to take their case to the party. After further debate, a compromise was finally reached which called for a referendum on whether to convoke an extraordinary congress.⁴³

In the aftermath of this decision, events began to unfold in rapid succession. On December 20, a group of leading Marxists not connected with the *Tribune* met to draft a manifesto calling for party unity and opposing any action against the *Tribune*. The manifesto was subsequently signed by 48 prominent Marxists and appeared in the January 7, 1909 issue of *Het Volk*. Throughout January, this group made a determined effort to mediate the conflict. On January 31, a special conference, consisting of the executive, the parliamentary faction, and the editors of *Het Volk* and the *Nieuwe Tijd*, was

convoked in a last-minute effort to resolve the dispute. The *Tribune* editors did not attend, since Troelstra had threatened to walk out of the meeting if they were present. At the meeting, Troelstra presented a plan to publish a weekly supplement to *Het Volk*, to be edited by two Marxists, which he saw as a replacement for the *Tribune*. This proposal was ratified by the executive at its February 5 meeting and Roland Holst and F.M. Wibaut subsequently agreed to serve as editors.⁴⁴

These measures, however, did not blunt the edge of the opposition. Wijnkoop set the tone on January 9, when he questioned the idea of maintaining unity for the sake of unity.⁴⁵ Throughout January and February, the *Tribune* maintained an increasingly belligerent attitude toward the party leadership. On February 7, the Tribunists and their supporters held a meeting of their own, at which it was voted 75 to one to maintain the *Tribune* even in the event of expulsion. In the meantime, the referendum had approved the call for an extraordinary congress by an overwhelming margin of 3,268 to 1,719.⁴⁶

The Congress of Deventer opened on February 13, 1909 with the expulsion of the Tribunists already a foregone conclusion. Van Ravesteijn, writing to Pannekoek, noted: 'In Amsterdam, Rotterdam, and in other places, we in fact stood already outside the party.'⁴⁷ The heated showdown that followed was largely a re-echoing of the now-familiar accusations and counter-accusations that had characterized the past few years. Troelstra charged the Tribunists with seeking to allow 'vague ideologies' to dominate the party and attempting to turn it into an 'anarchist debating club'.⁴⁸ Gorter responded by accusing Troelstra of having turned the party into a 'Roman Catholic church'.⁴⁹ Wijnkoop, leading the debate for the Tribunists, concluded with a warning: 'It is an easy thing to expel us, the real, struggling Marxists, from the party and destroy them, but we will be compelled to go to the workers, to call upon their judgment, and form the proletarian party you were never able to develop'.⁵⁰ This task was imposed upon the Tribunists when Troelstra's proposal for expulsion passed 290 to 88, with 15 abstentions. Shortly thereafter, another party referendum ratified this decision by a vote of 3,712 to 1,340.⁵¹

Throughout all these events and developments, a deepening split had been taking form within the Marxist left between the loose groups centered around the *Tribune* and the *Nieuwe Tijd*. This split was to play an important role in strengthening the position of the party leadership and – as he later noted – was a conscious part of Troelstra's strategy.⁵² For the predominantly younger and more activist 'pure Marxists' grouped around the *Tribune*, the impulse to withdraw from the SDAP was not a new one. As Wijnkoop later noted: 'We "pure Marxists" wanted the split as early as 1907, and in 1909, we were prepared not to shrink from the consequences.'⁵³ Opposing the 'pure

Marxists' were the so-called 'peace Marxists' centered around the *Nieuwe Tijd*, and led by Frank van der Goes, F.M. Wibaut, and Pieter Wiedijk.

For Van der Goes, the 'spiritual father of the SDAP', the decision not to actively support the Tribunists arose from a conviction that a split in the SDAP would destroy his life work and that in a new party, he would be little more than a 'satellite' of Wijnkoop.⁵⁴ Van der Goes summed up the basic position of the 'peace Marxists' when he chastised Troelstra for expelling the Tribunists, but called upon the Tribunists to abolish the *Tribune*.⁵⁵ Wijnkoop's rejoinder to Van der Goes captured the basic difference in outlook between the two groups. The *Nieuwe Tijd*ists, he contended, 'speak in a manner that the workers often cannot understand. We of the *Tribune* speak clearly, which is just what they mind about us. [...] But now we come to our teachers and say: as you must know, your language is the language of people like us, intellectuals and propagandists, while ours is the language that the workers understand. We shall continue with this language, either inside or outside the party'.⁵⁶

For Henriette Roland Holst, the decision over which side to support was an agonizing one. Temperamentally and politically, her sympathies were with the Tribunists, with whom she had worked closely during the past two years. Her reluctance to side with them arose from a fear of cutting herself off from the organized socialist workers and from a deep-seated personal antipathy toward Wijnkoop and Van Ravesteijn.⁵⁷ In January, 1909, Roland Holst made a special trip back from London to attend the January 31 conference, where she agreed to serve as co-editor of the proposed weekly supplement to *Het Volk*. Her rationale for this decision was based on her belief that the left had disintegrated as a cohesive force and that the new publication might serve as a potential rallying point for left regroupment.⁵⁸

Although his political and personal activity was considered almost inseparable from the *Tribune*, Herman Gorter's position was also characterized by a fundamental ambiguity. In public, he was one of the foremost supporters of the Tribunists, but in private, he expressed doubt about their tactics and counseled caution and restraint. To Kautsky, he noted: 'Time and again I have advised the *Tribune* editorial board as follows: we must do everything possible to bring others to our side, but if that fails, and after we have fought to the end and all of our attempts have failed, then we must give in.'⁵⁹ Gorter had earlier raised the possibility to Van Ravesteijn that if an insignificant number left the party, 'it might be better if I remained inside'.⁶⁰ During the February 7 meeting of *Tribune* supporters, Gorter spoke in favor of abolishing the *Tribune* if the ultimatum motion passed. Behind his caution lay the fear that, in the event of a split, Marxism in the Netherlands, both inside and outside the SDAP, would be rendered powerless.⁶¹

Pannekoek, although in Germany, adopted a position similar to Gorter's

and sought to use his influence with both groups to avoid a split within the Marxist left. To Wijnkoop, he wrote: 'Remain as a unified Marxist group and accept the ban on the *Tribune*. That way you will certainly be able to achieve the same goals in another form.'⁶² Pannekoek's advice was based on his belief that a small Marxist party had few prospects for success.⁶³ At the same time, Pannekoek admitted to being caught off guard by the rapid course of events and the harshness of Troelstra's attack and was therefore 'not surprised' when the Tribunists failed to follow his advice.⁶⁴ To Van der Goes, whom he felt alone had the power to prevent a split in the Marxist left, Pannekoek made a long appeal to back the Tribunists. In it, he voiced strong criticisms of both groups. While condemning the Tribunist leadership as 'young, impetuous elements', Pannekoek saved his harshest criticism for the *Nieuwe Tijds*ists:

'You were esteemed propagandists who were deferred to with politeness, but were without support [...]. You were a general staff without an army [...]. Numerous persons maintained a vague respect for you, but you had no workers beside you who understood things and stood behind you with heart and soul. The minority was one of delegates, a head without a body. What the *Tribune*, which arose from the small masses of Marxist-inclined workers, sought to do was to organize this group behind you. [...] From the *Tribune* circle – which is much more than the editors – there could have come the officers and non-commissioned officers which might have brought your solitary general staff a reliable, conscious force; but this was not to be.'⁶⁵

A week after the Congress of Deventer, on February 21, 1909, 200 supporters of the *Tribune* gathered in Amsterdam and voted almost unanimously to form a new party. Only Gorter expressed a note of caution. A nine-member commission was then created to prepare for the foundation congress, which was scheduled for March 21, 1909.⁶⁶ With this decision to split from official social democracy and create an activist party of revolutionary Marxism, the Dutch left embarked on a course fundamentally different from any other socialist movement in Western Europe.

CHAPTER V

CONSCIOUSNESS AND WORKERS' SELF-EMANCIPATION: PANNEKOEK'S POLITICAL THOUGHT PRIOR TO 1910

Consciousness and Socio-Economic Reality: Pannekoek's Theory of Ideological Hegemony

Prior to 1910, Pannekoek's political views were still comparatively consistent with the orthodox Marxism of the Second International, as defined by thinkers such as Kautsky, Bebel, and Plekhanov. But Pannekoek's early intellectual investigations and his theoretical reflections on the historical events of 1903, 1905, and 1908, and on the process of political differentiation within the international socialist movement were gradually leading him to elaborate the outlines of a new revolutionary tactic, which would be developed and extended in his thought in the years after 1910.

What differentiated Pannekoek's political theorizing from the mainstream of social democracy during the first decade of the twentieth century was his attempt to apply his basic Marx-Dietzgen synthesis directly to the question of revolutionary strategy. Although he remained a convinced materialist, the major question which absorbed all of his attention and intruded itself into all aspects of his thought was the question of *Geist*, or more precisely the role of subjective ('spiritual') factors in human development. Pannekoek's interest in this question arose partly from his concern as a scientist with the relationship between theory and reality and partly from the prevailing consensus in Dutch intellectual circles about the necessity of a new moral and cultural order.

In attempting to define the role of collective consciousness in social transformation, Pannekoek sought to fill a major gap in Marxist theory and tackle what he regarded as the ultimate political question. Marx had never addressed himself to the problem of consciousness in a systematic manner other than in generalized statements scattered throughout his writings. His views were governed by two fundamental assumptions: (1) that all consciousness is determined solely by social existence, and (2) that mental conceptions can be changed on a mass scale only through social praxis. Beyond these rather generalized assumptions, consciousness was implicitly seen as

the natural outgrowth of the changing internal dynamic of capitalist development, with socialism the inevitable consequence.¹ As a result of this theoretical preoccupation with the mode of production as the determining factor in historical development, classical Marxism failed to adequately explain, let alone confront, the problem of developing a mass revolutionary consciousness.

In grappling with this problem, Pannekoek sought to answer two primary questions: how do individuals and groups perceive the world and their relationship to it? Under what conditions can these perceptions change? From his Dietzgenian starting point, Pannekoek attempted to situate consciousness in the realm of everyday thought and life. According to this perspective, consciousness, in its broadest sense, is a perception or 'spiritual image' of the world, formed through interaction with that world and by the limitations and possibilities which determine this interaction. Human thought is, above all, practical: it is a tool for understanding and coping with the natural and social environment by the evaluation of the efficacy of various courses of action. Consciousness is 'determined', only in the sense that it is circumscribed by the possibilities and limitations inherent in a given natural and social environment. Like Dietzgen, Pannekoek felt that the human mind perceives the world as a continuous flow of events and attempts to categorize and distinguish among these events as a precondition for action. The actions that arise from these perceptions constitute experiences, which in turn serve as a basis for future actions and perceptions. If a certain action or pattern of behavior is continuously successful over a long time span, it will become habitual and the view of the world in which it is rooted will also become habitual or traditional. In this manner, traditional patterns of thought and action are preserved spiritually – in literature, science, art, religion, and philosophy – as culture.²

Pannekoek's investigation of the relationship of philosophy to economic and social reality led him, in 1901, to view the material world and the world of consciousness as constituting an inseparable entity in which each reciprocally conditions the other. Without changing the structure of society, one could not change the structure of consciousness. But the converse also held true: a revolutionary upheaval in the economic and social structure of society was impossible without a revolution in the forms of consciousness. Proletarian revolution must develop simultaneously in both the economic and 'spiritual' spheres: 'As never since the first advent of production of commodities there has been such a fundamental revolution, it must necessarily be accompanied by an equally fundame[n]tal spiritual revolution. [...] The new understanding [...] gains ground step by step, waging a relentless battle against the traditional ideas to which the ruling classes are clinging. This

struggle is the mental companion of the social class struggle.³ Without denying the primacy of material factors, Pannekoek envisioned the revolutionary struggle as an ideological process shaped by the gradual and diffuse flow of ideas and life experiences. He argued that a socialist revolution must begin with the workers striving to overturn the barriers to proletarian thinking in their daily lives: men must think change before they can accomplish change.

Pannekoek stressed that while the outcome of a proletarian revolution would ultimately be determined by the physical power of the working class, it was not this power alone that was decisive but the 'spiritual power' which precedes it and determines its use. In an analysis which strikingly anticipated many of the themes in the later theory of ideological hegemony made famous by Antonio Gramsci,⁴ Pannekoek noted: 'The material power, which the proletariat possesses through numbers and importance for the process of production, would be of little value for him, when his *spiritual superiority* above his capitalistic opponents did not come to it. [...] *our power lies in the deep understanding of the laborers for every detail of capitalism, in other words in the Socialistic knowledge, in the theory of Socialism.*'⁵ This amounted above all to the belief that: 'Spiritual emancipation, self-thought is the precondition for material liberation, for self-action.'⁶ Revolution, from Pannekoek's standpoint, represented a victory of the mind, of historical understanding and revolutionary will. The consciousness of the proletariat was as much a factor affecting historical evolution as the material factors from which it arises. The class struggle, while corresponding to the material structure of society, was, in the final analysis, a struggle of consciousness.

Pannekoek's belief that the subjugation of the working class was not entirely due to economics and force alone, was not solely the result of intellectual investigation. The problem which had most troubled him as a young socialist in Leiden was the widening gap between the expectations of Marxism and the actual beliefs of the workers. The apparent apathy and indifference of the masses to the appeals of the socialists expressed for Pannekoek the fact of their subordination, not only to the force of the state, but also to the 'spiritual superiority of the ruling minority' which 'presides over all spiritual development, all science'. Through its control over institutions such as the schools, the church, and the press, the minority 'contaminates ever larger numbers of the proletarian masses with its conceptions'. Pannekoek regarded this 'spiritual dependence of the proletariat on the bourgeoisie' as the 'main cause of the weakness of the proletariat'.⁷ The proletariat is totally dependent intellectually and culturally on the bourgeoisie and acquiesces in its own enslavement.

Pannekoek contended that if the proletariat is to assert its own ideological hegemony, it must create its own culture as an essential part of the revolu-

tionary struggle. In words that could almost be taken from Gramsci, he noted: 'These crude, tattered, uneducated, and despised proletarians, they are in reality the *bearers of a higher culture*. [...] Socialist culture is distinguished from bourgeois culture not only by the fact that it is much broader, but also by the fact that its inner content is completely different. This culture is one which will place men in a completely different relationship to nature, the external conditions of life, and other men.'⁸ From this standpoint, Pannekoek argued that the real significance of socialism lay not just in its ability to create a new mode of production, but in its capacity for a fundamental cultural transformation.⁹ This emphasis on the creative, constructive aspect of proletarian revolution, as opposed to the destructive aspect of overthrowing capitalism, was to remain a constant theme in Pannekoek's Marxism.

Given the 'spiritual superiority' of the ruling class and the need for a 'spiritual revolution' of the working class, the corollary question arises: What is the precise nature of this proletarian consciousness and how is it developed? Proletarian class consciousness, according to Pannekoek's conception, was not an abstract realm of thought identified with a particular set of doctrinal beliefs, but a socio-historical mode of abstraction closely connected to a complex combination of ideas, beliefs, feelings, and sentiments that are integral to the concrete daily life experiences of the working class and are a defining characteristic of its political action. Proletarian thought, for Pannekoek, assumed a number of varying and interacting forms, all of which were 'abstract, generalized expressions of [...] reality'.¹⁰ Two such 'thought forms' were of particular importance: ideology and theory (science). Ideology constitutes 'a system of ideas, conceptions, and plans, a spiritual expression of the conditions of material life and class interest'.¹¹ It arises when a specific class universalizes in consciousness what is particular to their economic needs. Since ideology arises directly from the daily practice of work and life, much of it rests on unconscious feelings, perceptions, and drives, which often do not correspond to the reality of their context. For this reason, Pannekoek felt, ideology forms the basis of, but not the total content of, revolutionary class consciousness. Theory, on the other hand, represents the highest expression of developed class consciousness because it 'turns blind, instinctive social actions into conscious well-thought-out social actions' by separating the particular, short term, individual interests from the general and long term interests of the class.¹² Theory, in this capacity, enables men to 'rise from unconscious drives to fully conscious, purpose-minded men' capable of building and sustaining the new society.¹³

Pannekoek maintained that out of the continuous interaction between theory and ideology there emerges a special set of 'categories of understand-

ing', which define the proletarian conception of reality and are unique to proletarian thought. These categories differ fundamentally from bourgeois categories of understanding, which are static and consider only the present. But Pannekoek was far from clear on how these categories arise and precisely what they meant in practice. He noted only that they involve antagonistic notions that teach the proletariat to view social development as a unified process of interaction – notions such as revolution and evolution, theory and practice, final goal and movement.¹⁴

In seeking answers as to how latent class consciousness could be transformed into revolutionary consciousness, Pannekoek argued that this process begins with knowledge about the nature of capitalist exploitation. This knowledge is obtained through the day-to-day proletarian work and life experiences within the capitalist order which run counter to the dominant bourgeois ideology. Revolutionary consciousness, the realization by the workers that they are capable of managing society and production on their own, develops from this foundation. It involves, above all else, the construction of a 'social ideal' or 'mental picture' of a new social order: 'Men must continually adapt their ideas and views about the possible and appropriate arrangement and organization of society to the progress of production, continuously creating new social ideals. [...] Since everything which man does must first exist in his mind as purpose and will, every new social order before it becomes a reality must necessarily first lead a spiritual existence as a more or less relevant ideal of a coming society.' As a historical illustration of this principle, Pannekoek cited the cases of the invention of the steam engine and spinning machine, which were tied to the social ideal of the 'unlimited possibilities of industrial development' and the 'unlimited freedom of private enterprise' under capitalism.¹⁵

From this point of departure, Pannekoek conceived of revolutionary consciousness as arising organically out of the interplay between socio-economic development and working class self-activity. Since concepts and modes of behavior are based on perceived experiences of social reality, they are continually changing as the social reality underlying them changes. What was primary, he felt, was the impact of capitalist development on the mental experiences of the working class: 'The development of modern giant industry destroys ancient traditions, throws down old customs, and makes a *tabula rasa* of minds, which then become capable of accepting absolutely new ideas'.¹⁶ The new relationships and experiences under capitalism show the workers the possibility and necessity of a socialist order, and give them at the same time confidence in their own growing power and ability to conquer and rule society. But the real activating element of revolutionary consciousness, Pannekoek stressed, was 'continuous struggle'. Clear knowl-

edge about the nature of capitalism, the state, society, and the bourgeoisie could be grasped practically and theoretically only by a fighting and politically organized proletariat engaged in the tedious day-to-day process of breaking down, differentiating among, and finally identifying the unity of the contradictory forces which define particular phases of social development. Through this continuous process of conceptualization and reconceptualization, each new struggle of the working class, each new confrontation with the bourgeoisie, becomes part of a progressive awakening that will ultimately lead the proletariat to victory.¹⁷

This process, Pannekoek felt, could be consciously accelerated by an organized socialist movement through its educational and propaganda activities. Propaganda, in this context, however, was viewed by Pannekoek as an 'amplification and explanation' of what the workers already see, and perceive in their daily life and work, rather than something directed at them.¹⁸ The consciousness of the working class would not change in response to propaganda alone, whatever its content. Revolutionary class consciousness was not something that could be infused from outside the working class, because the workers would perceive it as irrelevant to their basic experiences: 'Every class can shape its own ideas only on the elements of reality it knows directly; it does not understand, and therefore ignores, whatever is foreign to its own experience.'¹⁹ In contrast to Kautsky, Lenin, and others, Pannekoek constantly deemphasized the role of bourgeois intellectuals in educating the proletariat for socialism. He argued that while the intellectuals articulate class concepts and strategy in their role as theorists, they do not become the final repository of social knowledge. Revolutionary class consciousness belongs exclusively to the workers, who gradually expand their potential for systematic and critical thinking in the very process of transforming society. From Pannekoek's perspective, there could be no political thinking outside the framework of the class struggle that was not in some way bourgeois. For those middle class intellectuals active in the socialist movement, the real significance of their acceptance of Marxism lay in the fact that it enabled them to shed their role as ideological defenders of capitalism.²⁰

In his analysis of the factors which impeded the development of revolutionary class consciousness, Pannekoek emphasized in particular the role of traditional ideas left over from the thought systems of the past. According to Pannekoek, the time lag between the emergence of new material structures and the new modes of consciousness that correspond to them was likely to be extremely long, particularly in areas of limited capitalist development, such as Holland. For this reason, Pannekoek felt that many of the prevailing

ideas in the workers' movement still bore the stamp of their bourgeois origins. This was particularly true, he argued, for the two main working class ideological and tactical divergences from Marxism: anarchism and revisionism.

Pannekoek attributed the ideological basis of both anarchism and revisionism to the heterogeneous character of the workers' movement. He maintained that because of the uneven character of social development, the workers' movement had initially developed as a coalition of different social groups adversely affected by capitalism. United only by a common opposition to the status quo, each of these groups have their own distinct, and often differing, interests, and a mental outlook shaped by the reality of their own daily experiences, which together define their approach to tactics. Using such reasoning, Pannekoek argued that the nominal tactical opposites of anarchism and revisionism were both, in fact, an expression of a petit bourgeois mental outlook. Historically, the petit bourgeoisie has been a class of malcontents predisposed to oppose the existing social order, whose lack of social cohesiveness causes them to plunge from one extreme to another: 'Sometimes it is intoxicated with revolutionary slogans and tries to seize power by means of putsches; sometimes it crawls shamelessly at the feet of the upper classes and tries to wheedle reforms from them by cunning and deceit. *Anarchism is petit bourgeois ideology gone mad; revisionism is the same ideology with its teeth drawn.*'²¹ What anarchism and revisionism have in common is a bourgeois view of the world combined with proletarian sentiments. While espousing the proletarian cause, they borrow their concepts and patterns of thought from the bourgeois world and do not seek the radical changes in mental attitudes that are a prerequisite for proletarian emancipation.

From Pannekoek's standpoint, anarchism represented the ideology of a declassed petit bourgeoisie, whose ideas were merely a continuation of petit bourgeois individualism and the outdated tradition of bourgeois revolution. Despite the revolutionary nature of their doctrines, the anarchists could not perceive the need for a new mode of production; their vision of a new society was based entirely on nostalgia and fantasy. Revisionism, on the other hand, had its socio-economic base in an alliance between the petit-bourgeoisie and a 'labor aristocracy' within the working class which had achieved high wages through strong organization and a strategic economic position.²² Rather than a new proletarian world view, their peaceful evolutionary socialism was merely a framework for achieving limited practical goals, while the earlier bourgeois goals continued to co-exist. But what was most critical for Pannekoek was the subjective impact of revisionism on the working

class. Revisionism, he stressed, ruins the class consciousness, solidarity, and moral strength of the workers and induces them to expect more from bourgeois good will than from enlightenment by their own efforts.

In his theorizing on the spiritual and ideological dimension of proletarian revolution, Pannekoek clearly distinguished himself in the years prior to 1910 as the first Marxist to articulate the centrality of ideas and consciousness to historical development. But for all the importance and originality of his insights, Pannekoek's formulations on consciousness and hegemony contain definite limitations and lacunae which seriously impaired the effectiveness of his theoretical work. Although the concept of ideological hegemony lay at the center of his strategic perspective, Pannekoek – unlike Gramsci – failed to develop an in-depth institutional and historical analysis of precisely how it functioned in practice. His inclination was to view hegemony less as a sociological category and more as an ideological symbol. Moreover, quite apart from the absence of any discussion of the institutions for the transmission of bourgeois ideology, there is also a drastic simplification of the ideologies transmitted. For Pannekoek, the dominant ideology in a social formation is always a pure manifestation of the ideology of the dominant class, which in turn is a pure reflection of the life conditions and world outlook of that class. There are only two classes which can aspire to ideological domination – the bourgeoisie and the proletariat. Internal political or social differentiation within these classes was explained by Pannekoek as simply failures to achieve full class consciousness. The contamination of pristine class ideological conceptions by elements derived from the ideologies of other classes is thus an automatic sign of political error.

Pannekoek's efforts to counter the reality of bourgeois ideological domination were also marked by a serious lack of balance between the importance he attached to developing an independent proletarian spiritual and cultural outlook and the strategic perspective he offered the workers' movement to attain it. While recognizing the tenacity of traditional attitudes and the difficulty of developing a revolutionary class consciousness, Pannekoek's analysis did not encourage serious inquiry into the actual psychology of the workers or a systematic consideration of the relationship between economic attitudes and inherited attitudes. Divorced from any concrete analysis of how bourgeois ideology might be penetrated, Pannekoek's theory of consciousness becomes little more than an assigned historical mission of the proletariat. In effect, he was forced to retreat to the comfort of a highly fatalistic analysis which implied that a fundamental revolution in consciousness would occur as an outgrowth of social development. Like most Marxists of the Second International, Pannekoek remained firmly convinced that the rise of the proletariat could not be halted precisely because of the role it

occupied in the industrial system of production. This tension between the voluntarist and determinist elements of his Marxism would permeate the entire corpus of his theoretical writings.

Organization and Ideological Development: Pannekoek's Conception of Revolutionary Praxis

In the domain of practice, Pannekoek's concern with the question of consciousness led him to construct a revolutionary strategy based on the consciousness-raising capacity of various forms of proletarian action. This conception was rooted in his twin assumptions that conscious political action by the proletariat was indispensable to the creation of socialism and that the fundamental mode of creating class consciousness was through proletarian self-activity. Although Pannekoek began to formulate his strategic views in response to specific issues from 1901 onwards, the earliest full exposition of a comprehensive revolutionary strategy came in his 1906 article 'Theorie en beginsel in de arbeidersbeweging' (Theory and Principle in the Labor Movement),²³ which was later expanded into his 1909 work, *Die taktischen Differenzen in der Arbeiterbewegung* (The Tactical Differences in the Labor Movement).²⁴

Pannekoek's conception of the revolutionary process was rooted directly in the fundamental assumptions of the Erfurt program, the leading programmatic document of the Marxism of the Second International, which sought to synthesize day-to-day reform activity within the capitalist order with the broader revolutionary goal of socialism. While Pannekoek nowhere explicitly challenged the prevailing strategy of the Second International prior to 1910, he did seek to refine it and shift its main focus. What Pannekoek stressed was the subjective factors within the objective process of revolution and the direct link between the maturation of these factors and the development of the forms of working class organization and self-activity.

Pannekoek's conception of proletarian revolution revolved around what he termed the three basic 'power instruments' of the proletariat: its size and economic importance, its class consciousness and knowledge, and its organization and discipline. The immediate objective of the class struggle, he felt, must be to increase the social power of the proletariat by strengthening its power instruments. The proletariat was faced with two key tasks: developing consciousness and building an organization to challenge the state. Unlike the purely objective factors such as the size of the proletariat, consciousness and organization were dependent upon human will and allowed choice and decision.²⁵

Pannekoek remained generally committed to the basic orthodox Marxist

premise that proletarian organization – in both its party and trade union forms – was a necessary counterweight to capitalist organization and the social corollary of economic development. He took it for granted that 'a strong, tightly disciplined, compact body animated by a single will' was necessary to counter the main power instruments of the bourgeoisie: the state and the army.²⁶ But in addition to their role as fighting instruments against the organizations of the bourgeoisie, proletarian organizations also represented an essential component of the new society. Writing in the aftermath of the Dutch mass strike wave of 1903, Pannekoek noted: 'The disorganization of capitalism cannot be achieved without an organ. But desiring the disorganization of the old forms does not mean complete disorganization. *It means the organization of the new.* The trade unions, political parties and cooperatives are the instruments for achieving this. They create new organs within the old organism in the same manner that the trusts and large-scale industries grew up inside the old body of capitalism.'²⁷ Through its organizational forms, the proletariat acquires the necessary strength and unity to act as a self-conscious class: 'Organization binds them together, unites their diverse wills into a single will, behind which rests the collective power of the masses.'²⁸ From this standpoint, revolutionary organization was conceived by Pannekoek in the Dietzgenian sense as a process of interaction. Organization, consciousness, and struggle were not independent factors mechanically separated from each other, but were, in fact, different facets of the same process.

In theorizing the role of the proletarian organization, Pannekoek's primary concern was with the impact of organization on the inner character of the working class. What most sharply distinguished proletarian organization from bourgeois organization, he argued, was its internal or subjective qualities. Proletarian organization was a means by which the workers developed the solidarity and discipline necessary for their everyday struggles, and the conviction that the collective interest must prevail over personal interests. Through their participation in proletarian organizations, the workers are transformed into new men with new habits and new modes of thought. From their organizations, the workers acquire a unity and sense of purpose that transcends formal statutes and organizational structures: 'The real unity, of which the organizational unity is only an expression, is spiritual in nature; it lives in the hearts and minds of the proletariat, in both conscious knowledge of the intellect and spontaneous feelings of the heart. This form of proletarian unity, which consists of both insight and warm feelings, has a dual content and significance. It arises from both a feeling of opposition to the other classes and from a sense of belonging to their own class.'²⁹

Pannekoek felt that the connecting link between the subjective and objec-

tive aspects of proletarian organization was discipline, which represents 'the spiritual mortar which unites scattered individuals into a hard, powerful collectivity'.³⁰ Unlike the compulsory discipline of a bourgeois army, however, proletarian discipline is freely granted and for this reason represents an integral part of proletarian consciousness and morality.

Pannekoek maintained that these internal qualities of proletarian organization would be the most decisive in the class struggle. Writing shortly after the Russian Revolution of 1905, he declared:

'No blows can destroy knowledge, insight, and class consciousness; on the contrary, every attempt at repression only aids in the natural growth of a spirit of resistance until it acquires the higher character of an irresistible revolutionary energy. Although the external form of the existing organizations might disappear, the organizational character, the discipline, and the willingness to subordinate personal egotism and mood to a great class interest that has been inculcated by so many years of struggle, will never disappear, but will be realized in spontaneous mass actions.'³¹

Taking up the question of the role of the party, Pannekoek argued that the task of the social democratic party was two-fold: it was both the primary class instrument for waging broad political struggles and a catalyst for 'spiritual education'. As an instrument of class struggle, the social democratic party unites diverse sections of the working class and allows them to rise above parochial interests by throwing them into a struggle against the capitalist system in its entirety. But, for Pannekoek, what was most critical was the radicalization of consciousness and the socialization of knowledge that comes from the party's theoretical and practical activities. Through its use of Marxism as a 'spiritual science', the party serves as an instrument of clarification by ordering and systematizing experiences so that the working class can fully comprehend reality and can act to change it.³² Pannekoek's conception of the relationship between party and class, as it emerged from these formulations, was noteworthy for the limited role he assigned to the party. Although Pannekoek acknowledged the party's primary role – both politically and theoretically – he held its function to be a subordinate one, once the masses were not the passive tool of the party, but the reverse: the party was the tool of conscious class action.

Like most European socialists, Pannekoek accepted the 'twin pillar' theory of organization which divided the workers' movement into separate political and economic wings. Within the framework of this analysis, he viewed the trade unions as the 'natural form of proletarian organization' which had the function of uniting the workers on the limited basis of craft or trade. But at the same time, Pannekoek – anticipating Gramsci's later critique of trade unionism – departed from this position by arguing that the

unions, instead of being adversaries of capitalism, were 'venders of labor power' that 'operate on the same territory' as capitalism. To the extent that they help secure a standard of living sufficient enough to preserve the vitality of the working class for future exploitation and prevent revolts which might disrupt production, the unions serve as a 'conservative force consolidating capitalism'.³³ Nonetheless, Pannekoek was still convinced during this period that the unions had a potentially revolutionary role to play as well. The critical factor, he felt, was the changing reality of capitalism which had the potential to turn the unions into 'organs of revolutionary transformation'. Since capitalism was constantly required to maximize its profits by intensifying exploitation of the workers, the unions would be equally compelled to fight to defend the workers' interests. During these struggles, the unions would help awaken class consciousness, instill a sense of combat, break down old illusions, and generate discipline and feelings of solidarity.³⁴ The 'gigantic moral elevation' that occurs in these struggles, Pannekoek insisted, was a necessary precondition 'for transforming the weak worker into a conqueror of capitalism'.³⁵

From these formulations, it becomes clear that for Pannekoek socialist revolution was conceived of as a slow and laborious conquest of political and economic power, through an incessant revolutionary struggle waged by a large, militant, well-organized, and class-conscious working class, to be achieved not by the imposition from above of the dictatorship of the proletariat and the socialization of the means of production, but by the consolidation of a new society from below, fighting step by step all the elements of the old society. In the process hypothesized by Pannekoek, the key element in the dialectical interaction between organization and consciousness was constant struggle: 'The practice which gives the best knowledge of capitalism, the state, and society, is continuous struggle; the practice which encourages the growth of organization and discipline, is struggle. The improved insights and strengthened feelings of power that result from these struggles lead in turn to new struggles which further clarify and bind men closer to their organizations.'³⁶

During this period, Pannekoek took it for granted that socialist parliamentary activity was an indispensable form of struggle for the working class. In assessing the historical possibilities and limitations of parliamentary tactics, Pannekoek argued that the electoral arena had a dual character: it was both the 'normal form of domination by the bourgeoisie', and 'the best way to increase the strength of the working class'.³⁷ In parliament, class relationships appear in their true form. Socialist parliamentarians are compelled to struggle over the practical day-to-day questions in a way that places these questions in their proper relationship to both the capitalist system and an

alternative socialist conception of life. By arousing a sense of purpose and belonging, parliamentary conflict increases feelings of proletarian solidarity and morality and strengthens working class organization. Revolutionary parliamentarianism, when properly conducted, represents a powerful mechanism for waging a relentless spiritual struggle against the traditional ideas of the ruling class. While the parliamentary struggle is not the class struggle itself, it does, in a sense, constitute the 'essence of the class struggle'. In the speeches of the small numbers of socialist deputies, the interests and ideas of the masses are expressed in condensed form. Pannekoek's reasoning reflected his conviction that instead of maintaining the 'illusion that the voting-paper can guide our ship through calm waters to the harbor of the future state', the historical task of socialist parliamentarianism was to help transform the working class into 'a self-aware and organized class ready for combat'.³⁸

Yet throughout Pannekoek's writings on this question, there is a continual equivocation and an acute awareness of the debilitating aspects of parliamentary strategy on revolutionary activity. As early as 1902, he criticized the SDAP for its over-reliance on electoral methods and for building its organizational structure exclusively on electoral lines. His deep concern was that the party was developing into a 'gigantic election club' at the expense of its revolutionary mission.³⁹

Pannekoek attempted to resolve this ambiguity by arguing that what threatened the party was a specific 'bourgeois conception' of parliamentarianism. This conception, he maintained, views the parliamentary struggle as the struggle for power itself and seeks to substitute the actions of a small handful of representatives for the actions of an entire class. Under these conditions, the party deputies 'take up a special position; they become a special class, the "guides"'.⁴⁰ Because of their personal skills, their technical knowledge, and their familiarity with political intrigues, they regard themselves as superior to non-parliamentarians. To use parliamentarianism in this manner, Pannekoek argued, was to erode the very foundations of working class organization. Once persuaded that their deputies will make all decisions for them, the workers will no longer have any reason to form autonomous organizations and will confine their mental efforts to voting in election years.

The Russian Revolution of 1905 not only inspired Pannekoek with new hopes for revolution in Europe, but it also raised important questions in his mind about the prevailing social democratic tactics. Although Pannekoek continued to assign a primary role to the party, trade unions, and parliamentary activity until 1910, a growing disenchantment with these methods began to surface in his writings after 1905. The Russian events, he wrote, had

'pushed the masses into the foreground as instruments of war' and made it imperative to consider 'new methods of tactical warfare'.⁴¹ These feelings were reinforced and intensified by the Prussian suffrage demonstrations of January, 1908. Pannekoek immediately pronounced the demonstrations 'a medium of struggle of the first rank which we must adopt'.⁴² Noting that Dietzgen had spoken of the 'natural inclination of men not to see the limitations of what they perceive as truth', Pannekoek cautioned in regard to the traditional tactics: 'This truth is not absolute; it has its limitations. At the same time as the workers' movement grows as a result of parliamentarianism the flaws of this method become clear; it seems impossible to attain our goals through these methods alone. A revolutionary struggle by the masses themselves with other, more powerful, mediums is necessary.'⁴³

For Pannekoek, the events of 1905 and 1908 had made it clear that the 'age of splendid parliamentarianism' was coming to an end. He argued that the parliamentary phase of the class struggle began after the failure of the Paris Commune had taught the workers the futility of using armed resistance alone. To counter the enormous spiritual and material power of the bourgeoisie, the workers were forced to use bourgeois institutions to strengthen their power and adapt their tactics to the prevailing bourgeois hegemony. Under these conditions, parliamentary and trade union tactics began to assume an independent existence of their own and many considered the idea of shifting to another mode of struggle a 'romantic illusion'. But at the same time, Pannekoek saw a steady erosion of the bourgeoisie's ideological and moral hegemony, which was forcing them to rely more and more on their 'material instruments of power'. Confronted with this new situation, the masses would have no choice but to mobilize their own power and struggle directly against the power instruments of the bourgeoisie. In the impending epoch of extra-parliamentary action envisioned by Pannekoek the workers' own insights and mass organizations would become the determining power factors rather than their leadership. In these circumstances, conflicts between the 'high statesmen perspective' of the leaders and the 'clear proletarian consciousness' of the masses would become unavoidable.⁴⁴ During this phase of the class struggle, political action and trade union action would merge into a united mass struggle: 'The organized masses are now entering into the fray, endowed with class consciousness, discipline, and the strength gained in previous conflicts; their organization: the trade unions, their political knowledge, socialism.'⁴⁵ But these themes were as yet only fragments and outlines for the future. A more precisely articulated theory of mass action had to await the political and strategic debate that developed in German social democracy following the Prussian suffrage demonstrations of 1910.

Moral Consciousness and Social Transformation: Pannekoek's Conception of Proletarian Ethics

In attempting to develop a unified theory of social transformation, Pannekoek attached particular importance to the role of ethics in social practice. Pannekoek's immediate goal was to formulate a specifically Marxist conception of ethics to counter the Kantian ethics of the revisionists, which he felt was an ideological effort by a part of the bourgeoisie to develop an ethical capitalist alternative to socialism. He vigorously challenged their belief that Marxism needed to be supplemented with a normative ethic and sought at the same time to integrate ethics into a non-deterministic conception of social science. In a broader sense, Pannekoek also considered the question of defining a proletarian conception of ethics an important element of the struggle for proletarian hegemony. Although Pannekoek's treatment of the question of ethics was more popularized and less systematically developed than other aspects of his thought, his analysis nonetheless demonstrated originality and insight on a number of points.

Pannekoek regarded his efforts in this area as an extension of the ethical system worked out earlier by Dietzgen. On the basis of his theory of knowledge, Dietzgen had sought to develop a 'scientific' or 'inductive' theory of morals which avoided any pure speculation or *a priori* thinking. Dietzgen felt that moral reasoning, like all other forms of thinking, must rest on given, concrete materials or objects, which in this case are socially experienced needs and interests. Just as knowledge in general is derived from the demarcation of given sense objects to be classified and explained, moral reasoning works upon given needs and interests to distinguish the general from the particular, the essential from the transitory. Moral reasoning arrives at these distinctions by determining what is generally useful or appropriate to achieving a given objective, expressing the needs and interests of a particular group in particular circumstances. In this way, it distinguishes good needs from bad needs, true interests from assumed interests, and essential wants from accidental appetites.⁴⁶

From his Dietzgenian starting point, Pannekoek viewed ethics, or moral consciousness as an essential part of human mental activity, in other words, as 'the spiritual element of social labor and human existence'.⁴⁷ Morality, in this case, meant the totality of principles of human conduct which regulates the behavior of individuals and groups in society. According to Pannekoek, moral ideas, beliefs, and sentiments serve as functional ideologies and are an integral part of social practice. As such, they represent one of the foremost causes of human action. In defining the relationship of ethics to social practice, Pannekoek stressed that the key element in the formation of ethical

conceptions was social class. Each class, he argued, fashions its own distinct moral truths out of its own life experiences, aspirations, and practical needs. For the system as a whole, the moral truths of the dominant class have the primary function of sanctioning existing social and productive relationships.

As an illustration of the differences in class morality, Pannekoek cited the Dutch mass strikes of 1903. For the bourgeoisie, the strikes represented a 'criminal' act which was greeted with horror and indignation. Crime, in their view, was defined as anything which disturbed order in society, which in reality meant any disruption of the conditions of peaceful profiteering. The workers, on the other hand, applauded the strikers as courageous men who had sacrificed their own interests to class solidarity. Pannekoek made it clear at the same time that although moral concepts arise out of class interests, the two were not always synonymous. During the 1903 strikes, for instance, the Dutch workers were faced with a choice between a solidarity strike which jeopardized their organizations and a neutrality which made them in effect strike-breakers. By choosing the solidarity strike, the workers effectively destroyed their organizations. Taking up the question of why an action which was so harmful to the workers' interests was considered a highly moral act, Pannekoek argued that it was because as a general rule solidarity is useful to the working class and without it victory is impossible. What this meant was that a moral act might not always be a useful act, a rational act, or a worthy act, but it must be an act that is carefully analyzed for its long term consequences. From this standpoint, the difference between class interests and ethics represented a difference between two types of interest: the temporary, short-term, particular interest, and the permanent, long-range, general interest. These distinctions, Pannekoek held, could only be made by a mode of thinking which was scientific and inductive.⁴⁸

In an analysis similar to that later developed by Georg Lukács, Pannekoek located the ethic of the proletariat in its class consciousness. For Pannekoek, this ethic could come to fruition only through the dialectical interaction between the proletariat and its self-activity. Through its self-activating struggle for survival within the capitalist system, the proletariat is constantly forced to develop new moral motivations and virtues. These new moral motivations and virtues, in turn, enable each member of the working class to rise above his own personal interests and lift his mind to what is required by his class and society as a whole. Without this new proletarian moral power, the struggle for socialism would be impossible. Chief among these new proletarian virtues, he felt, were the workers' capacity for solidarity, subordination to the collectivity, self-imposed discipline, and self-sacrifice for the class interest. Pannekoek counterposed this 'new proletarian morality' to bourgeois morality, which was characterized by its wide gap between moral

ideals and actual actions and by its increasing lack of connection to any form of social praxis.⁴⁹

In stressing the relationship between ethics and social practice, Pannekoek explicitly disavowed the revisionist view that Marxism arose simply as a form of moral outrage against the miseries of capitalist exploitation. He argued that it was the exploited position of the working class within the capitalist mode of production that forced them to challenge the system. As Pannekoek put it: 'It is the cry of indignation of the victims and the oppressed themselves, the cry of hatred and of menace against the torturer; it is the shout of the fighter calling on his comrades, still drowsy and crushed with anguish, to join with him, reminding them of the torments they are enduring. And this cry of indignation, this rousing battle cry, has as little to do with ethics as has the anguished cry of a tortured animal or the excited shouts of men fighting for their freedom.'⁵⁰ The tactical conclusion Pannekoek drew from this was that socialist propaganda should not rest on moral objections to the abuses of capitalism, but on a clear scientific knowledge of the inherent tendencies of capitalist development. To do otherwise would lead only to being 'pulverized by the enormous power of Capital'. The question was not, therefore, simply one of saying that capitalism must be abolished and replaced by a better order because it is bad and unjust, but the reverse: because capitalism can be abolished and replaced by a better social order it is bad and unjust. Rather than ethics being the basis of Marxism, it is Marxism which provides a materialistic interpretation of ethics. This line of argument led Pannekoek to the conclusion that Marxism, by providing a scientific framework for shifting the dominant mode of reasoning away from conceptions based solely in terms of profit and individual gain toward thinking in terms of self-conscious control of the productive process itself, had its 'greatest implications in the area of ethics'.⁵¹

CHAPTER VI

STRUGGLING MARXISM IN PRACTICE, 1910–1914*Break with the Marxist Center: Pannekoek Against Kautsky*

For Pannekoek, the years 1910–1914 were extraordinary ones of intense practical activity at the base of German social democracy, which by a painful process, brought him into opposition to official social democracy. Although his influence in the SPD was at its zenith, Pannekoek by 1909 was becoming increasingly disenchanted with his activities at the summit of German social democracy. Living in the middle class suburb of Zehlendorf, where he was deprived of a local party section in which to participate, Pannekoek found his contacts confined to the heads and functionaries of the party and began to feel increasingly isolated from the active life of the movement. He felt that his theoretical work often had an abstract and sterile character because it was not rooted in any living reality. Writing later of this period in his life, Pannekoek spoke of it as 'a life among the gods' in a 'world apart that was completely different from the real world'. Pannekoek went on to draw the conclusion that the leadership of German social democracy was little more than an 'interest group of their own', completely detached from the base of the party. These growing doubts about his work in Berlin were compounded by the considerable financial uncertainties that his journalistic work carried with it. He compared his difficulties in finding subscribers to his correspondence articles to the experiences of a small grocer who continually sees his customers leave and envies the stable salaried man who has a fixed income to count on.¹

By 1909, deep fissures were also gradually emerging in Pannekoek's relationship with Kautsky. Although Pannekoek continued to be a regular Sunday dinner guest at the Kautsky household, the close harmony that characterized the early years of their relationship was no longer present. In early 1909, Kautsky expressed major reservations about Pannekoek's view of Marxism and Darwinism. Kautsky also felt Pannekoek's basic Dietzgenian methodology and his emphasis on the 'spiritual' factors in social development were incompatible with a Marxist perspective.² But the issue that evoked Pannekoek's wrath was Kautsky's refusal to support the Tribunists when they faced expulsion from the SDAP. Pannekoek accused Kautsky of

having 'deserted' Marxism and suggested that Kautsky's intervention could have prevented the Tribunists' expulsion.³

These emerging differences between Pannekoek and Kautsky, however, were overshadowed by a more fundamental process of political differentiation which had been developing within German social democracy since 1905. What had hitherto been confined to latent theoretical differences crystallized suddenly into divergent strategic perspectives in the spring of 1910. These events began on February 4, when the Bethmann-Hollweg government released the draft of its long-awaited suffrage reform bill, which proposed almost no changes. Demonstrations broke out almost immediately in Berlin and the larger Prussian towns and continued throughout February and March. The high point of this movement came with the Berlin demonstration of March 6, which drew 150,000 persons despite a police ban.⁴ This mood of militancy and unrest received additional reinforcement from a set of parallel large-scale strikes in the economic sector, which involved nearly 370,000 workers during the course of 1910.⁵ From March onwards, the suffrage and strike movements began increasingly to overlap, leading many to see the long-awaited merging of political and economic forms of struggle.

The first major tactical confrontation came in late February, when Rosa Luxemburg drafted a long article entitled, 'What Further?' calling for intensification of the suffrage movement. When both *Vörrwärts* and the *Neue Zeit* refused to print the article, she began a two-month speaking tour of Germany in order to bring the question directly to the rank-and-file.

In order to justify the position of the executive, Kautsky launched the first of a series of verbal assaults on Rosa Luxemburg and the left with a serialized *Neue Zeit* article entitled 'Was nun?' (What now?), in which he defended a return to parliamentary tactics. Kautsky argued that the excitement of the masses was not nearly sufficient for such an 'extreme course' as the mass strike and advocated instead a 'strategy of attrition' (*Ermattungsstrategie*). For Kautsky, the real task of the party was to organize the proletariat for the Reichstag elections two years away. A victory in these elections, he felt, would create the conditions for a final 'strategy of overthrow' (*Niederwerfungsstrategie*). To insure this victory, the party had the 'duty' to 'utilize the organization to prevent all attempts at a premature mass strike'.⁶

At Rosa Luxemburg's request, Pannekoek entered the debate in April, 1910, with a series of articles defending her position. Pannekoek declared openly that the key issue confronting the movement was the contradiction between the will to struggle of the masses and the inability of the party leadership to give expression to that will. Against Kautsky's 'strategy of attrition', Pannekoek reasserted the need for an offensive strategy aimed

ultimately at destroying the foundation of the capitalist state through intensification of mass movements.⁷

Pannekoek's position was premised on his belief that the mass struggles of the spring of 1910 were fundamentally different from all previous forms of mass action since for the first time the proletariat possessed a conscious knowledge of both its situation and its mission. He felt that this 'new revolutionary disposition of the masses' represented a critical turning point in the history of the socialist movement. In his view, the mass strike debate was only the outward theoretical expression of a fundamental struggle between opposing forces within the socialist movement. In seeking to locate both the material and spiritual sources of these opposing forces, Pannekoek argued that the continuing commitment to parliamentary and trade union tactics by Kautsky and others was rooted in the very structure of the social democratic movement itself, in its 'bloated bureaucratic apparatus' and representative leaders, whose positions and power were directly tied to the old doctrines and tactics. But Pannekoek felt that during periods of social upheaval the power of this group would dissipate rapidly as perceptions change swiftly and the 'constraining power of tradition' loses its force: 'During a revolutionary epoch, when relationships are in constant flux, there arise completely new experiences which bring new thoughts to the mind, which then begin to clarify what have hitherto been only hazy presentiments. From these new experiences the conclusions that are to be employed at the following struggles may be drawn.'⁸ Pannekoek maintained that, in these circumstances, only the masses could feel the compelling necessity of the new situation since their position and perceptions were the least tied to the old doctrines and tactics.

The tactical debate was brought to a new pitch of intensity the following year when Kautsky launched another offensive against the left radicals in the form of a serialized *Neue Zeit* article entitled 'Die Aktion der Masse' (Action by the Masses).⁹ Kautsky's aim was to provide a more comprehensive theoretical justification for his position by grounding it in a broad and detailed social and historical analysis of the role of mass actions in social development. While admitting that spontaneous street actions by the masses had often been a decisive revolutionary factor throughout history, Kautsky pointed out that such actions often served reactionary ends as well. In any case, Kautsky felt these forms of intervention had been largely superseded by the newer and more highly developed forms of activity embodied in the party and trade unions.

It was at this point that Pannekoek – following an extended critique of Kautsky's position in his correspondence articles – proposed to Kautsky that they detail their different conceptions in a comprehensive and systematic

manner in the *Neue Zeit* as a means of theoretical clarification. What inspired Pannekoek was his belief that the *Neue Zeit* was failing in its mission of clarifying issues and deepening and improving insights. His deep concern was that the socialist movement develop a proper understanding of the new phenomena of mass action and imperialism as a prelude to a major strategic and 'spiritual' reorientation. In order not to give Kautsky a pretext for rejecting the proposal, Pannekoek suggested that the debate take place after the elections.¹⁰ Even before the debate could begin, however, the theoretical-tactical controversy became interwoven with a conflict of a more personal nature which threatened to destroy the remaining bonds of friendship between Pannekoek and Kautsky. During the winter of 1911, the secretary of the editorial board of the *Neue Zeit*, Gustav Eckstein, rejected one of Pannekoek's regular book review columns on the grounds that it could be used by the opponents of the party in the elections. Pannekoek, mindful of the similar effort to censor Rosa Luxemburg two years earlier, suspected that Kautsky might have been involved in the decision and wrote him a blistering letter threatening to cease his collaboration on the *Neue Zeit*.¹¹ This incident, he charged, was 'not accidental', but 'a symptom that on important basic questions we are now completely opposed to each other'.¹²

The Pannekoek-Kautsky debate itself began in July, 1912, with the publication of Pannekoek's essay, 'Massenaktion und Revolution' (Mass Action and Revolution) which was intended as a reply to Kautsky's 'Die Aktion der Masse'. In the course of his essay, Pannekoek outlined the basic components of his newly developed theory of mass action. What Pannekoek envisioned was a continuous and expanding series of mass actions ranging from ordinary street demonstrations to the general strike. These actions would serve to educate, collectivize, and strengthen the proletariat for the coming struggle for power while simultaneously weakening the foundations of the capitalist state. In Pannekoek's view, the main rationale for these actions lay not in their objective aims, but in their subjective impact on the consciousness of the working class. The end of this process, he felt, would be 'nothing less than the complete transformation of the proletarian mentality'.¹³

In emphasizing the internal dynamic of mass mobilization against Kautsky's attitude of 'passive expectation', Pannekoek argued explicitly that, given the aggressive character of imperialism, the proletariat had no choice but to defend itself by a direct assault on the power instruments of capitalism. Once again, Pannekoek stressed as he had in 1910, the necessity of the ultimate destruction of the capitalist state by the power instruments of the proletariat: 'It must be beaten, *its power must be broken*'.¹⁴ It was precisely this emphasis that later prompted Lenin, in 1917, to devote a major portion of *State and Revolution* to the Pannekoek-Kautsky controversy.¹⁵

Kautsky responded to Pannekoek's criticisms with an article entitled 'Die neue Taktik' (The New Tactic) in which he reproached Pannekoek for 'simplifying Marxism' and 'spiritualizing organization'. Pannekoek's claim that the essence of proletarian organization lay in its subjective and spiritual qualities, Kautsky contended, was 'a master stroke of social alchemy'. Kautsky took special pains to attack Pannekoek's call for the destruction of state power, maintaining that it was not based on an analysis of 'concrete relationships and real states', but on simplistic speculations about abstractions'. The real task of the proletariat, Kautsky maintained, was to form a government responsive to its needs and interests by winning a majority in parliament. Kautsky felt that mass action could be justified 'only in occasional, extreme instances when the masses no longer can be held back'. Pannekoek, he charged, in extolling the dynamic of mass struggles, failed to understand that the goal of the workers' movement was not struggle in itself, but specific results. The indiscriminate use of struggle would not lead to ever greater strength, but to exhaustion and decomposition of the movement. Kautsky, noting that Marx once used the term 'parliamentary cretinism' to denigrate over-reliance on parliamentarianism, concluded his remarks by suggesting that the terms 'mass action cretinism' might well be applied to Pannekoek's over-emphasis on mass action.¹⁶

Pannekoek, hoping to influence the upcoming party congress first took up Kautsky's arguments in a series of articles in the *Bremer Bürger-Zeitung* and *Leipziger Volkszeitung*,¹⁷ and expanded upon these thoughts several weeks later in a *Neue Zeit* article entitled 'Marxist Theory and Revolutionary Tactics'. In this essay, Pannekoek placed the question of Kautsky's methodology squarely in the forefront of the discussion, when he accused him of using 'un-Marxist reasoning' to conclude that the masses were unstable and unpredictable. But Pannekoek went a step further and attempted to pinpoint the social and cognitive source of this error rather than attribute it to personal failure or dishonesty on Kautsky's part. He attributed his differences with Kautsky to a difference in perception based on different experiences in different stages of the workers' movement. Pannekoek's point of departure was his belief that Marxism was composed of both determinist and activist elements, each of which had received different degrees of emphasis in different historical periods. During the early phase of industrialization, when socialists were confronted with the task of organizing the proletariat and preventing premature putsches, Marxism took on a predominantly historico-economic character as a means of giving the movement self-confidence and a long range justification. But as the proletariat became better organized and more capable of active intervention in social life, Marxism was increasingly seen as a theory of proletarian action. The conclusion Pannekoek

drew from this was that Kautsky's perspective was derived from conceptions formed during the early stages of the worker's movement, which accounted for his fear of defeat and emphasis on self-restraint. Pannekoek felt that his own position reflected the sentiments of a younger generation of workers, whose conceptions had been forged during the mass struggles of the preceding decade.¹⁸

Kautsky, less reserved in his judgments, responded by accusing Pannekoek of advocating 'syndicalist conceptions'. His sharpest reaction, however, was reserved for Pannekoek's emphasis on the destruction of the capitalist state. 'Up 'til now,' he wrote, 'the difference between social democrats and anarchists has consisted in the fact that the former wanted to conquer state power while the latter wanted to destroy it. Pannekoek wants to do both.' Kautsky continued by citing numerous quotations from Marx and Engels to prove his point that state power was as much a mechanism for dispossession of ruling classes as it was one of class domination. To this argument, he added: 'Perhaps Pannekoek wants to abolish the state function of the officials? But we cannot do without officials even in the party and trade union organizations, much less in the state administration. Our program demands, not abolition of state officials, but their election by the people.' As a final rebuke, he suggested: 'I strongly suspect that Pannekoek is gathering material for a book whose title could be: "Mass Action by Isolated Men".'¹⁹

The debate was brought to a close with a short rejoinder by Pannekoek in which he accused Kautsky of substituting name-calling for discussion of the issues. To Kautsky's charges of syndicalism, Pannekoek retorted: 'If he is correct that these views are syndicalist then so much the better for syndicalism.' Beyond this, Pannekoek pointed out that Kautsky's extensive use of quotations from Marx and Engels revealed the basic contrast between their methodologies: 'I have used almost no citations of Marx and Engels because those who have completely absorbed this new science which they brought to us do not need to continually prove that they are following in their footsteps with citations from their work. [...] There is nothing better he could have done to highlight the differences in our method and views.' Such an approach, he felt, was the 'direct opposite' of Marxism.²⁰

Militants Against the Apparatus: The Bremen Left

Pannekoek's break with the theory and practice of official social democracy corresponded to, and was greatly reinforced by, his move to the heavily industrialized city of Bremen in the spring of 1910 to organize and teach in a local SPD school. In contrast to his years in Berlin, Pannekoek was fully

immersed in the active life of the party as a teacher, propagandist, and leader. During this period, Pannekoek was probably more intimately involved in the everyday life of the workers than at any other time in his political life. His four years within the organizational framework of Bremen social democracy provided a fertile ground for the elaboration of his own thought and were among the most vital and productive of his life. In Bremen, Pannekoek found himself within a bastion of the German left, to whose inchoate radicalism he helped give a coherent structure. During the years which followed, Pannekoek was to exercise, through his contact with both the membership and the functionaries, a decisive influence on the development of Bremen social democracy. As a result of Pannekoek's extensive organizational and ideological work, the Bremen left emerged as 'the best anchored grouping of the extreme left wing of the Social Democratic Party'.²¹

The nature of the local economy had a powerful conditioning effect upon the development of a left wing social democratic movement in Bremen. During the period 1890–1910, Bremen experienced a rapid process of industrialization and urban growth which transformed the city from a commercial center into a stormy industrial metropolis. Between 1888 and 1907, the number of industrial workers increased fourfold: from 8,463 to 33,825. Economic growth from the mid-1890s onwards was concentrated largely in the technologically advanced and highly concentrated shipbuilding industry, which swiftly became the mainstay of the city's economy. In 1895, this sector of the economy ranked seventh with 849 workers; by 1907 it had reached second place with 5,633 workers, a rise of 563.5 per cent. Only the building trades, which owed much of their prosperity to the rise of this industry, counted more workers. The growth of the shipbuilding industry acted as a further stimulus to growth in several other advanced industries. Between 1888 and 1907, the number of workers employed in metal processing rose from 2,381 to 3,465 (or 45.5 per cent); in textiles, from 1,304 to 2,073 (or 58.9 per cent); in the printing trades from 748 to 1,059 (or 41.6 per cent). Economic growth was also reflected in the highly concentrated nature of capitalist enterprises in Bremen. In 1907, 66.3 per cent of the work force in the shipbuilding and machinebuilding industries worked in shops with more than 200 workers; 13.1 per cent in shops with 51 to 200 workers; 12.1 per cent in shops with 11 to 50 workers; and only 8.5 per cent in shops with less than 10 workers. Two shipyards alone accounted for 3,830 workers. The working class itself was dominated largely by semi-skilled male workers, most of whom had migrated to Bremen from elsewhere and had little in the way of a craft union tradition to draw upon. By 1907, 57.5 per cent of the work force had been born elsewhere. A further factor defining the socio-economic character of Bremen was the low standard of living of its working

class. In 1906, the aggregate income of the Bremen working class, which constituted two-thirds of the population, was twenty million marks less than the aggregate income of the wealthiest 2.6 per cent of the population.²² Taken together, these socio-economic factors combined to create an unintegrated, volatile, and permanently aggrieved work force, whose inchoate radicalism profoundly shaped the course of Bremen social democracy.

Until 1903, the socialist movement in Bremen was dominated by a reformist group led by Friedrich Ebert, which had its base in the craft unions. Throughout 1903 and 1904, internal tensions within the party built up rapidly, resulting in the crystallization of separate reformist and radical Marxist factions. This train of developments began in October, 1902, when Heinrich Schulz became editor-in-chief of the *Bremer Bürger-Zeitung*, which gave the left a powerful mechanism for defining the political direction of the movement. A former teacher, whose Marxism was shaped largely by ethical and humanitarian considerations, Schulz had been a longstanding opponent of the traditional line of Bremen social democracy. Schulz's principal collaborator on the *Bürger-Zeitung* was Alfred Henke, a genial former cigar-maker who personified the self-educated worker-intellectual of the turn of the century. Through his weekly 'From the Factory' column, Henke sought to inculcate a radical Marxist spirit within the membership.²³

Schulz's first opportunity to promote a radical Marxist tactic came during the 1903 Reichstag elections, when he campaigned in the *Bürger-Zeitung* against a proposed SPD alliance with the Liberals. When the election unexpectedly resulted in the victory of the SPD candidate, it greatly strengthened his position. A second issue of demarcation arose in the fall of 1903 over the question of how to locally implement the condemnation of revisionism that had been pronounced at the Congress of Dresden. By January, 1905, it was becoming clear that the radicals were gaining the upper hand when the reformists suffered a major defeat over the question of continued SPD participation in a Liberal educational society, the *Goethebund*, following a long campaign against it by Schulz in the *Bürger-Zeitung*. It was this defeat which prompted Ebert to leave for Berlin to work in the party secretariat. These issues, however, were dwarfed by the mass strike debate of the summer of 1905, in which the left's position prevailed completely.

While these controversies were significant in defining the radical position, they were not decisive in the consolidation of a radical majority. What was crucial was the left's growing influence in a number of key institutions of Bremen social democracy. Next to their control of the *Bürger-Zeitung*, the left's main source of influence was in a local secretariat which had been created in May, 1906 to administer the day-to-day affairs of the party. Under the control of the radical carpenter Wilhelm Pieck, the secretariat played a

critical role in undermining the influence of the craft union leadership in the party. An indefatigable organizer who combined the qualities of a bureaucrat and an agitator, Pieck almost singlehandedly built up a strong base for the radicals in the industrial districts of Bremen. Within a few weeks of taking office, Pieck had increased party membership from 3,912 to 5,610.²⁴ In the ensuing tactical debates, Pieck's organizational skills played an indispensable role in confirming the line of the radicals among the rank-and-file. A third source of radical influence lay in the local SPD's extensive educational program, which the left had developed to radicalize rank-and-file trade union militants. This program began in the fall of 1905 with the formation of a worker's educational committee which sponsored a series of forums and lectures. To a large extent, this committee was an outgrowth of the debate earlier that year over participation in the Liberal *Goethebund*, which led many to see the need for a form of workers' education separate from bourgeois education. A proposal to establish a more formalized structure with a paid permanent instructor, however, was vetoed for the time being by the trade union leadership. The impetus for much of this emphasis on education came from a group of socialist educators organized within the Teachers' Society, who were among the most prominent and influential activists of the left.²⁵

In firm control of the *Bürger-Zeitung*, the secretariat, and the party's local educational program, the left was by 1906 in a position to disseminate its radical conception of Marxism to the rapidly growing membership. Their position was also greatly enhanced by the longstanding practice of holding regular general membership meetings of all the local sections at which major political questions were discussed and debated. It was these forums, above all else, which insured that the radicals retained the confidence of the membership. The first major opportunity to translate their views into action came in March, 1908, when spontaneous street demonstrations over the suffrage question erupted in Bremen for the first time. During the course of the next few months, the radicals pursued a long and intense agitational campaign in the *Bürger-Zeitung* and in mass membership meetings for the use of the mass strike and other extra-parliamentary methods. Throughout 1908 and 1909, this issue became interwoven with a growing criticism of the national SPD leadership. By September, 1909, the *Bürger-Zeitung* was prepared to assert that only the 'energy of the masses' and the elan of a revolutionary mass movement could animate social democracy with the 'new spirit' necessary for its revitalization.²⁶ On the basis of this perspective, it was clear by the fall of 1909 that the majority of the Bremen movement was already in what would later be termed the left radical camp.

Sensing the imminence of a new epoch of revolutionary struggles, the left

resurrected its longstanding plan for a permanent, joint educational program with the trade unions. When this proposal was proved in late 1909, Wilhelm Pieck conveyed to Pannekoek an offer to organize the program and serve as 'scientific instructor'.²⁷ Although Pannekoek had turned down a similar offer in 1907, his growing dissatisfaction with his work in Berlin now led him to readily accept. For Pannekoek, this appointment marked the culmination of a long informal relationship with Bremen social democracy. His first contact with the movement came in September, 1905, when at Schulz's invitation, he came to lecture on religion and socialism. This relationship was deepened the following year when he taught with Schulz in the SPD central party school. During the course of the next few years, the *Bürger-Zeitung* became one of the most regular outlets for his theoretical writings, which in turn played a critical role in defining the political perspective of Bremen social democracy.

Pannekoek's appointment provoked heated opposition from the trade union functionaries, who feared it would strengthen the position of the radicals. Since the unions were responsible for 1,500 marks of Pannekoek's 4,000 mark salary, their support was essential. The issue was finally resolved, however, only by taking it directly to the trade union membership. Twenty-three unions and 12,844 members voted to confirm Pannekoek as opposed to twelve unions and 8,362 members against his appointment.²⁸

In setting up the party school, Pannekoek emphasized the importance of developing a radical pedagogy as part of the process of 'spiritual liberation' required by the new epoch of mass actions. A properly conducted proletarian education, he felt, would help lay the groundwork for the emergence of a new type of party and trade union official who would no longer be tied to a 'corrupt and bureaucratic system'. In structuring his coursework, which was centered around social theory and the history of the worker's movement, Pannekoek attempted to develop a more popularized version of the material he had used in the central party school. This task was not without its difficulties. 'Everything must be newly developed, built up and sustained', he complained to Pieck, 'without textbooks, models or methods, or extracted from abstract scientific works and popularized.'²⁹ Because of the elementary nature of much of the material, he felt 'more like a schoolmaster than a scientist'.³⁰ Pannekoek's courses, which were always coordinated with a variety of practical activities, were held at night to audiences of rank-and-file trade unionists.³¹ During the turbulent political struggles of the next decade, this group of several hundred former students played a key role in defining the political direction of the Marxist left in Bremen.

In the formulation of the basic strategic perspective of the Bremen left, Pannekoek was joined by two other key activists: Karl Radek and Johann

Knief. Karl Radek, who played a role second only to Pannekoek's in the theoretical development of Bremen left radicalism, was a Polish-born activist who had a long career in the Russian, Polish, and German social democratic parties. Thin, small, and nervous, with an often vitriolic temperament, Radek combined broad knowledge with a sarcastic wit. Radek's special talents lay in journalism, which found expression in countless articles for the *Bürger-Zeitung*. His contacts with the left elsewhere in Germany and abroad were to play a crucial role in cementing a network of the left.³²

Johann Knief, by contrast, had been a long-standing activist within Bremen social democracy. A teacher from a working class background and a talented musician, Knief, combined an introverted, and at times melancholy, temperament with qualities of absolute sincerity and firm dedication to principles. Knief's earliest activities were in the Teacher's Society where he emerged in 1909 as the leader of the social democratic faction. During that same year, he attempted to develop a 'Section for Scientific Socialism' within the Society in order to further an understanding of socialism among Bremen teachers. Knief's original intention had been to recruit Pannekoek to organize and direct this program, but his project failed to materialize.³³ Knief first began to write for the *Bürger-Zeitung* as a music critic in 1910 and within a year rose to political editor. Of all Pannekoek's friendships in Bremen, none was more important or closer than his relationship with Johann Knief. During Pannekoek's four years in Bremen, Knief was a regular dinner guest at the Pannekoek household, where he often joined Pannekoek's wife Anna in playing duets on the piano. Politically, Pannekoek and Knief maintained a 'teacher-pupil' relationship; Knief later acknowledged that Pannekoek had been the major political influence on his life.³⁴

The significance of Pannekoek, Knief, and Radek for the theoretical development of the Bremen left became readily apparent in the political controversies which occurred after 1910. In the months prior to Pannekoek's arrival in April, 1910, the Bremen movement was caught up in the excitement generated by the Prussian suffrage demonstrations. The *Bürger-Zeitung* set the tone by proclaiming the demonstrations the 'beginning of the German Revolution' in a front page editorial.³⁵ The suffrage question, however, soon became interwoven with a local issue involving the dismissal of a socialist teacher who was also a leader of the Teacher's Society. The Bremen SPD responded swiftly by organizing mass demonstrations which continued throughout March and April, on occasion ending in clashes with the police. The largest of these was held on March 14 and involved 12,000 persons.³⁶

These actions were followed by a lengthy discussion of the question of mass action in the *Bürger-Zeitung* and in membership meetings throughout

the spring and summer of 1910, with Pannekoek's evolving formulations defining the parameters of the debate. By the time of the Congress of Magdeburg in September, 1910, the Bremen SPD had developed into the leading proponent of mass action within the SPD. Shortly before the congress opened, the Bremen delegates took the initiative and organized a caucus of the left which found expression in a resolution drafted by Pannekoek and Rosa Luxemburg, and later signed by 62 delegates, calling for 'bold and thorough mass action of the working population, using every means available, including the mass strike'.³⁷

The growing antipathy of Pannekoek and the Bremen left toward the traditional forms of working class organization was heightened by a prolonged dispute with both the national and local trade union leadership. Pannekoek defined the parameters of this conflict shortly before he arrived in Bremen in an article entitled 'Unteroffiziere' (Noncommissioned Officers), which he characterized the struggle between leaders and rank-and-file in the trade union movement as an 'irreconcilable opposition between revolution and authority, between subversion and order'. Drawing upon military metaphors, Pannekoek advanced the proposition that the trade union bureaucracy represented a key consolidating agent of capitalism: 'There is a contrast between the masses and their leaders. [...] The social democratic noncommissioned officers do what the Prussian noncommissioned officers cannot do; they quiet the unruly masses, accustom them to discipline and divert them from revolution.' Pannekoek argued that this 'corruption of the movement' represented the 'main hope' of the bourgeoisie.³⁸

Pannekoek's accusations unleashed a storm of protest in the trade union movement. The main point of contention involved Pannekoek's use of the phrase 'noncommissioned officers' – a term that was particularly insulting in working class circles since many workers, while in the army, had been subjected to abuse by noncommissioned officers. In the end, Pannekoek was forced to back down and admit that the phrase was ill-chosen.³⁹

Pannekoek's critique of the trade union bureaucracy was given added credence by a series of events which occurred during the course of bitter three-month-long dock and shipyard workers' strike in the fall of 1910. The strike itself began as a response to a lock-out in Hamburg, but its origins were traceable to several years of progressively deteriorating work conditions in the shipyards involving wage cuts, lengthening of the work day, and speed-ups, which were a response to growing foreign competition in the shipbuilding industry.⁴⁰ Although the Bremen trade union leadership tried in vain to prevent the strike from spreading to Bremen, the pent up resentment of the workers could not be held in check and strike fever spread rapidly throughout the shipyards. Almost immediately, a major conflict de-

veloped between the leadership and the rank-and-file over how vigorously to pursue the strike.

The aggressive militancy of the rank-and-file, however, failed to affect the union leadership's conduct of the strike. Following three months of hard struggle, the executive of the metal workers' union moved to end the strike on terms unfavorable to the workers. This decision unleashed a storm of protest from the rank-and-file. In Bremen, a mass meeting of the metal workers' union held to vote on the agreement turned into a violent confrontation between strikers and union officials, forcing the leadership to call an abrupt halt to the proceedings. When another meeting was held several days later, the agreement was rejected by a vote of 1,748 to 1,177.⁴¹ Although the agreement was eventually pushed through by the executive, it left discontent smouldering in the rank-and-file. From a political standpoint, the strike experiences both helped solidify the ties between the radical SPD leadership and the local working class and continued to serve as a special ideological reference point for the organizational politics of Bremen left radicalism.

When the executive of the metal workers' union later attempted to defend their policies at a public forum by charging that the rank-and-file were 'capricious, unreliable, and incapable of making important decisions',⁴² Pannekoek responded with another prominent article entitled 'Gewerkschaftliche Demokratie' (Trade Union Democracy). He now argued that the trade unions had taken on the characteristics of the capitalist structures to which they were nominally opposed – they had become large-scale, hierarchical, highly organized, and rigidly disciplined bodies with their own character, mentality and traditions. In terms of income, status, lifestyle, and modes of reasoning, the union executives often had more in common with the capitalist managers than with the rank-and-file workers. They had become a body with a will to live and fight for their own interests, which were separate from those of the workers. Pannekoek felt that because of this the trade union bureaucracy induced a psychology of passivity and deference to authority among the workers. Instead of instilling class consciousness, the union leaders perpetuated a form of consciousness that bound the workers to the capitalist order. This line of argument drove Pannekoek to the conclusion that cleavages of the type which had emerged between leaders and rank-and-file during the shipyard strike were both 'inevitable and necessary'.⁴³ To help democratize the movement, Pannekoek drafted a proposal calling for the formation of independent shopfloor organizations chosen directly from the workers themselves, which would be able to convey the mood and will of the masses and 'form the ideal organs to lead and build the political mass strikes'.⁴⁴ Although Pannekoek did not, at this

point, use the term 'workers' councils', the main elements of council organization were clearly present in embryonic form in this proposal.

Once again Pannekoek's comments aroused the wrath of the German trade union leadership, who responded with a series of blistering personal attacks. Typical were the remarks in the official publication of the General Commission of German Trade Unions, charging him with living in an 'aristocratic quarter' of Bremen under circumstances which no worker could ever hope to attain.⁴⁵ The high point of this controversy came in March, 1911, when Pannekoek debated the German trade union leader Karl Legien before an audience of 3,000 - 4,000 in Hamburg.⁴⁶ Pannekoek followed this up with a speaking tour of various parts of Germany to defend his position before trade union audiences.

In Bremen, Pannekoek's conflict with the trade union leadership became tied to a direct clash of organizational power when the local trade union leaders attempted to organize a boycott of his courses and deny union funding of his salary. Throughout March and April, 1911, the Bremen left and the trade union leaders held a series of public discussions in an attempt to resolve their differences. These meetings, however, turned out to be more tumultuous than conciliatory, often, as Henke noted, taking on the character of 'a cockfight between Pannekoek and some of the trade union representatives'.⁴⁷ The conflict was temporarily defused when Pannekoek agreed to have his course load reduced in return for a withdrawal of union financing.⁴⁸

The issues posed by this controversy were revived with even greater intensity during the course of a second shipyard workers' strike in July and August of 1913.⁴⁹ In contrast to the earlier strike, this one was a wildcat strike, organized and conducted expressly against the wishes of union leadership. Once again, the strike was precipitated by events in Hamburg, where 18,000 shipyard workers spontaneously walked off their jobs to protest their employers' refusal to negotiate.⁵⁰ Almost immediately, the strike spread to Bremen, where 3,000 shipyard workers walked off their jobs without authorization from their organizations and held a mass meeting demanding that the strike be officially sanctioned. The strikers were soon joined by the local woodworkers' union and within a few days over 9,000 workers were on strike in Bremen.⁵¹ The trade union leadership, however, continued to deny the strike official recognition, leaving the strikers to the mercy of the employers' strike breaking tactics. When the union leaders began to invoke disciplinary measures against the strikers, they had little choice but to yield. The final result was that several thousand of the most militant workers were blacklisted from their jobs.

While these events were in progress, Pannekoek set himself the task of providing a more solid theoretical justification for the strike actions. In his

opinion, the wildcat strike tactic represented a 'small-scale revolution' and the essence of proletarian struggle in the epoch of imperialism.⁵² The tactical conclusion that Pannekoek drew from the strike was that traditional trade union discipline could only be used to limit the mass struggles of the future. The conditions for victory, on the other hand, required the very qualities that the leaders sought to suppress in the masses: their revolutionary energy, solidarity, and willingness for self-sacrifice.⁵³

Although the tide of events turned against the strikers, their experiences only confirmed for many Bremen workers the organizational critique which Pannekoek and the left radicals had been articulating since at least 1908. The prevailing view of many was summed up by a resolution which was overwhelmingly accepted by a vote of 432 to 45 at a membership meeting of the Bremen woodworkers' union, the last of the striking unions to return to work: 'It is not our belief that the strike is lost that has compelled us to take this action [return to work], but the callow bureaucratization of our executive, which has defeated every effort of support. We strikers are of the opinion that if the executive had been willing to aid the struggle, our opponents would have been defeated. It was not our opponents who defeated us, but our own organization and the shortsightedness of our executive.'⁵⁴ Paul Dittman, one of the strike leaders in Hamburg, bitterly noted that the day would come when the workers would 'settle with the central bureaucracy'.⁵⁵

As events pushed their theoretical development forward, Pannekoek and the Bremen left began to increasingly turn their attention to influencing national party policy. Throughout the spring and summer of 1912, the Bremen left focused much of their energies on developing a comprehensive policy of organizational reform for the SPD to be presented at the Congress of Chemnitz. In July, a proposal by Pannekoek was approved, which called for the formation of two advisory bodies independent of the party leadership. One, a purely theoretical body, was to be composed of the 'best political minds of the party', who would devote their time to analyzing the major political questions of the day. This body was to be supplemented by an organizational council composed of representatives from the large cities and industrial districts, who would advise the executive on the mood of the masses.⁵⁶

At Chemnitz, Pannekoek's proposal for party reform became closely linked to resolutions on imperialism and armaments limitations. As the main spokesman of the Bremen left, Pannekoek defended with relentless efficiency the left radical position that imperialism and armaments production would inevitably lead to war and could be effectively combatted only by revolutionary mass actions. He argued that it would be a grave error for the SPD to attempt to ally with hypothetical anti-imperialist tendencies among certain sectors of the bourgeoisie.⁵⁷ In the end, the left suffered another de-

feat when the congress overwhelmingly approved a resolution submitted by the executive declaring that the dangerous effects of imperialism could be mitigated only through arms accords and free trade.

For Pannekoek, the events of Chemnitz only confirmed his view that the Marxist center was abandoning Marxist tactics and uniting with the revisionists to form 'a gigantic kind of reformism'. Chemnitz, he argued, marked only the preliminary stage of a 'deep spiritual struggle' which would eventually be paralleled by a direct struggle against the party apparatus.⁵⁸ Strengthened by the decisions of Chemnitz and by the emergence of a new centrist faction in Bremen, the local reformists took the opportunity to mount a two-month long offensive against the left. Since Pannekoek had emerged as the leading spokesman of the left, the reformists attacked him with particular vehemence, terming him a 'syndicalist', and a 'great worshipper of the masses'. A campaign to have him expelled, however, drew virtually no support.⁵⁹

The debate over armaments and imperialism resumed with new fervor at the Congress of Jena in September, 1913. At the congress, Pannekoek and the Bremen delegation joined forces with Rosa Luxemburg and other left groups to present sharply worded resolutions opposing the party's recent support for the military budget and reaffirming the use of the mass strike and other offensive tactics.⁶⁰ In contrast to Chemnitz, however, this congress was marked by significant gains for the left radicals, who managed to obtain about 30 per cent of the vote.⁶¹ Pannekoek, in his post-congress summary of the events at Jena, now felt optimistic enough to assert that the left radicals had become a decisive minority 'bringing to expression the driving spirit of the masses'.⁶²

By the eve of the First World War it was clear that Pannekoek and the Bremen left radicals had embarked on a course markedly different from that of the SPD majority. The intersection of Pannekoek's theoretical reflections with the concrete political experiences and active political struggles of the Bremen left radicals and the local working class had combined to create a distinctive radical consciousness and movement. The radicalism of the Bremen left stressed that the limits of the traditional parliamentary and trade union tactics could be transcended only by radical tactics, by the use of the mass strike, reliance on rank-and-file initiative, and by the formation of new structures of proletarian power. The strength of the left radicals lay not in their numbers, but in the effectiveness of their political leadership, the clarity of their political analysis and goals, and in the intense dedication of an activist cadre. Their agitation helped galvanize the aggressively dissatisfied part of the working class, whose actions seemed to confirm the left's radical political perspective. Knief summed up this situation when he observed that

'our threads to the organization are becoming looser and looser... and our connection with the motherbody increasingly lost'.⁶³

'Sect or Party?' The Dutch SDP

While these developments were unfolding within German social democracy, a similar process of political differentiation was already well underway in Holland. Pannekoek, although in Germany, continued to be closely connected to these events and played a major role in placing them in theoretical focus. Forced out of the SDAP by the events at Deventer, the Tribunist opposition gathered in Amsterdam on March 14, 1909, to formally proclaim the *Sociaal Democratische Partij* (SDP – Social Democratic Party). The prevailing mood was one of exuberant optimism. The shared assumption was that the workers of the large industrial centers – Amsterdam, Rotterdam, and the Twente textile district – would rally to them on the basis of their intransigent Marxist propaganda. Jan Ceton captured this buoyant sense of a new beginning when he observed: 'The workers await us. [...] If we delay, they will no longer listen to us.'⁶⁴ As a theoretical starting point, the SDP adopted an orthodox Marxist program identical to that of the SDAP, which they claimed the Troelstra leadership had violated. Gorter declared in a passionate address that whereas the SDAP was like 'a ship without a rudder', the SDP would remain 'firm and unshakeable, convinced of the truth of our principles'.⁶⁵ The actual number affiliating with the SDP, however, fell far short of expectations. Only about 400 persons (about 5 per cent of the total membership) left the SDAP to join the new party. These included 160 from Amsterdam, 65 from Rotterdam, 56 from Leiden, and 25 from Utrecht.⁶⁶

The optimism of its leaders notwithstanding, the SDP emerged from its first congress under conditions of considerable uncertainty and confusion. For several months, the split was far from definitive as groups in both parties continued to work for reunification. These efforts were led primarily by members of the now-divided *Nieuwe Tijd* group. Of this group, Pannekoek, Gorter, and Wiedijk affiliated with the new party, while Roland Holst, Van der Goes, and Wibaut remained in the SDAP. Henriette Roland Holst's support for the SDAP, however, was still highly qualified at this point. In early March, she addressed a letter to the SDAP executive which noted her 'inner agreement' with the new party and warned that in the event of any further attempts to restrict freedom of expression she too would withdraw.⁶⁷ Roland Holst followed this up with a lengthy appeal in the *Nieuwe Tijd* – which was unaffected by the split – for both parties to attempt to work out their differences.⁶⁸

The first significant step toward a compromise was taken when Roland

Holst and Wibaut appealed to the International Socialist Bureau (ISB) to mediate the dispute. On March 10, 1909, Gorter and Wijnkoop met in Brussels with the Belgian leaders of the ISB, Vandervelde, Anseele, and Huysmans. The Belgians formulated a three point proposal which called for the abolition of the *Tribune*, a guarantee of freedom of expression for the Marxist minority, and the addition of an editor from the *Tribune* to the new weekly Marxist supplement to *Het Volk*. While the SDAP agreed to accept the proposal, the SDP rejected it. Within the SDP executive, Gorter and Mendels favored accepting the proposal, while Wijnkoop, Ceton, Van Ravesteyn, and two others were opposed. This decision was subsequently ratified by the membership by a vote of 257 to 135.⁶⁹ In protest, Mendels resigned to rejoin the SDAP, while Gorter seriously considered doing so.⁷⁰ Gorter delineated his own reservations sharply when he noted to Pannekoek: 'Wijnkoop and Van Ravesteyn did not want a compromise; they were so absorbed in the thoughts of their own party with themselves as leaders, that they no longer wanted to remain in the old organization. [...] Wijnkoop is someone who sees two ways to reach a goal, a right way and a wrong way, and always chooses the wrong way because he doesn't trust the right way.'⁷¹

The new party began life on the defensive, the product as much of expulsion as the search for an independent path. During the first year of its existence, the SDP was guided largely by the principles which had characterized the *Tribune* from its inception, those of a militant, intransigent, activist Marxism. Although the day-to-day leadership of the new party rested with Wijnkoop, Van Ravesteyn, and Ceton, Pannekoek and Gorter played a prominent role in the initial formulation and dissemination of the SDP's ideology. Despite their initial hesitation, both Gorter and Pannekoek soon began to support the new party with full enthusiasm. Pannekoek summed up his new attitude in a letter to Roland Holst: 'What we earlier saw as a defeat [...], we now see differently. Now that everything is behind us, it appears as something completely natural and logical that could have developed in no other way. What we once perceived as a disaster and which brought with it suffering and struggle, now represents liberation.'⁷² At Gorter's request, Pannekoek journeyed to Bussum to help draft brochures and other documents for the new party. Following his return to Germany, Pannekoek began a campaign to promote the Tribunists' cause within German social democracy.

The first test of the SDP's strength came in the June, 1909 election. In the three districts – Amsterdam, Rotterdam, and Leiden – where the party ran legislative candidates the result was a stunning defeat. Despite an extensive propaganda campaign, the SDP received a combined total of only 542 votes,

or about 1.5 per cent of the total vote in each district.⁷³ Even before the electoral campaign got underway, the SDP suffered a major loss when the majority of the Utrecht section and about ten members of the Amsterdam section left to rejoin the SDAP.⁷⁴ In assessing this defeat, Gorter attributed it to the average worker's lack of knowledge about socialism: 'He thinks too much in terms of bourgeois type politics. He thinks too little of his own politics, of his own power.' For this, Gorter's proposed remedy was only 'propaganda and more propaganda'.⁷⁵ Henriette Roland Holst, noting that the SDAP had drawn 8,200 votes in the same districts (up from 6,500 in the previous elections), viewed it as an argument for SDP members to return to the SDAP.⁷⁶

With its membership base weak and its electoral prospects limited, the SDP's flagging optimism was sustained largely by the wave of mass actions which characterized the last years of the pre-war period. In the wake of the Prussian suffrage demonstrations of February 1910, Pannekoek's writings on mass action began to appear regularly in the *Tribune*, so that under his influence the theory of mass action swiftly became the strategic cornerstone of Dutch left radicalism.

The SDP's first attempt to intervene in a mass struggle came during a four-month-long strike of Amsterdam construction workers in early 1910. Since the strikers were affiliated with the syndicalist NAS, both the SDAP and the NVV refused to support the strike. The SDP, however, immediately offered active material and moral support to the strikers and accused the SDAP and NVV of collusion with the employers. The strike also provoked a lengthy discussion in the SDP over what type of policy to maintain toward the trade union movement. Ceton summed up what later became the SDP's official policy, when he argued that the SDAP had been captured by the trade union bureaucracy of the NVV and transformed into an organization concerned only with securing minor reforms beneficial to the trade unions. Only the NAS unions, he felt, were acting on the basis of the class struggle.⁷⁷

What was increasingly becoming a *de facto* alliance between the SDP and the syndicalists was further cemented in the summer of 1911 when a bitter dockworkers' strike broke out in the Amsterdam and Rotterdam harbors. The Amsterdam unions were affiliated with the NAS while the Rotterdam unions were affiliated with the NVV. The Rotterdam unions, however, quickly voted to accept the employers' offer and left the Amsterdam unions to continue the strike on their own. Several days later, the SDAP executive – over the objections of the remaining 'peace Marxists' – voted to discontinue all support for the strike. As in the case of the construction workers' strike, the SDP immediately threw its full weight behind the strike. By now, the

SDP leaders were willing to appear jointly with the syndicalist leaders at strike support meetings. When the strike was finally broken – following several bloody confrontations – by government-protected strike-breakers, the SDP accused the SDAP of sabotaging it.⁷⁸

Within the SDAP these events triggered a renewed internal crisis, which appeared to offer new prospects for the SDP. At the 1912 SDAP congress, the ‘peace Marxists’ attempted to censure the executive for refusing to support the striking syndicalist workers. When the censure motion failed, Henriette Roland Holst and Henk Sneevliet, chairman of the Dutch Union of Railway and Tram Personnel, resigned from the SDAP. Roland Holst, still harboring doubts about Wijnkoop’s personality and methods, again refrained from joining the SDP. Sneevliet, although sharing many of her reservations, nonetheless joined, becoming the first trade union leader of any consequence to affiliate with the new party.⁷⁹

The SDP’s alliance with the syndicalists was formalized as a cornerstone of party policy at the 1911 Congress of Rotterdam. Wijnkoop, calling for a ‘unity of struggle’, declared: ‘Not only the SDP, but also the syndicalists [...] must become stronger, because the cooperation that is a necessary precondition for any meaningful kind of unity, arises only out of strength, when there is no longer a possibility of being destroyed.’ In justifying this alliance, he argued that the syndicalist unions were qualitatively different from the ‘bourgeois’ unions of the NVV because of their willingness to struggle.⁸⁰ For many in the SDP, this alliance was viewed as the party’s first major breakthrough. As Van Ravesteyn later noted, it ‘raised to a considerable extent the self-consciousness of the membership and the feeling of the indispensability of their organization, and earned them a certain name and reputation among the undoubtedly socialist-inclined, struggling workers, who were adverse to politics but found their reference point in the syndicalist trade unions’.⁸¹

The SDP’s first attempt to use this alliance as a means of developing a base in the working class came in late 1911, when it joined with the syndicalists to form a National Agitation Committee against the High Cost of Living. From a strategic standpoint, the SDP viewed this organization as a mechanism for channeling discontent over rising inflation into a mass movement.⁸² This committee, which was open to all organizations ‘willing to act from the standpoint of the class struggle’, was composed of representatives from the SDP and about a dozen anarchist and syndicalist organizations and unions. The committee’s main function was to organize a series of local demonstrations leading up to a national demonstration on April 12, 1912.⁸³ The results of these efforts, however, were unusually meager. Despite an intensive propaganda campaign, only about 400 persons participated in the national demonstration.⁸⁴

As the SDP continued to confront the realities of Dutch society, the bright hopes which had sustained morale through the formative period increasingly gave way to an undercurrent of pessimism and self-doubt. A year after its formation, the SDP's membership had risen to only 505 and the new party was forced to admit that it still remained 'totally unknown' to the working class.⁸⁵ By 1911, this figure stood at a mere 575 and the bitter reality was clear: 'Our small sections throughout the country have a difficult struggle ahead of them.'⁸⁶ A year later, the number had dropped to 511 and the party could only note: 'Struggle, struggle, and still more struggle – that must be our watchword.'⁸⁷ In 1913, the figure was 533;⁸⁸ in 1914, 525.⁸⁹ In 1913 alone over one hundred members left the party, many to rejoin the SDAP.⁹⁰ More troubling still was the low circulation of the *Tribune*, which had attained only 1,266 subscribers by 1914.⁹¹ Nor did the SDP show any improvement in the electoral arena. In the 1913 elections, the party drew only 1,340 votes in 18 districts, in contrast to 144,000 for the SDAP.⁹² Even Gorter fared poorly, obtaining only 196 votes as opposed to 5,325 for the SDAP candidate.⁹³ These weaknesses were further compounded by the party's low proportion of working class members. Although the SDP's social composition remains difficult to gauge, it is clear that the 'pure proletarian' element represented a minority. A survey made by the party in 1911 revealed that 56 per cent of the members were either self-employed or white-collar workers, predominantly teachers and office workers.⁹⁴ Only in the former Amsterdam III section was there a sizable core of working class supporters.

While the SDP floundered, both the SDAP and the NVV experienced a rapid process of growth. In the year after the split, the SDAP picked up 1,000 new members – over twice what it had lost to the SDP. Starting with 9,500 members at the time of the split,⁹⁵ the SDAP increased to 15,667 by 1913;⁹⁶ a year later, following a spectacular rate of growth, it had reached 25,708.⁹⁷ During the year of 1913, the party's sections grew phenomenally, from 284 to 389, and the circulation of *Het Volk* from 23,519 to 30,149.⁹⁸ By the eve of the war, the SDAP had become a full-fledged mass party of the Dutch working class. Significantly, much of this growth was concentrated in the large urban industrial centers – the very areas where the Tribunists had placed their highest hopes. A similar pattern of growth characterized the NVV, which grew from 40,628 members in 1910 to 84,434 in 1914.⁹⁹

The contrast between the SDP's small membership base and the high hopes and expectations of its founders led to a continuing internal debate over the nature of the party and its relationship to the working class. For many, the disparity between the party's proclaimed mission of rallying the Dutch working class and its actual strength was so serious as to undermine the party's credibility. The SDP's small numbers, lack of concrete achieve-

ments, intransigence in practical matters, and the chiliastic nature of its propaganda, all contributed to the impression that the party was little more than a sect. Sneevliet spoke for this group when he left the SDP to rejoin the SDAP on the grounds that the SDP's emphasis on disseminating Marxist principles had made it little more than 'a kind of Marxist Fabian Society'.¹⁰⁰

Among the party leadership, the prevailing view was that the SDP was in a transitional stage similar to that of the SDAP during the period 1890–1897, when the old socialist movement had lost its strength and the new one had not yet fully matured. This maturation, they felt, would come only in the course of the turbulent new struggles of the future. Gorter summed up what he felt was the key issue in a major article entitled, 'Sekte of Partij?' (Sect or Party?). While warning of the dangers of isolation by doctrinal purity, Gorter argued that what distinguished a party from a sect was not its numbers, but its relationship to the future course of social development: 'Whenever a group, no matter how small, bases its actions on the development of society, then it is a party, yes, *the* party [...]. [S]cience, theory and the tactics which flow from it are what make a workers' party, not the number of members. Conversely, a workers' party whose actions are not based on the knowledge of society is not a real party even if it has a hundred thousand supporters. It is only a crowd, masses of people gathered around a troop of demagogues.' Gorter made it clear that he felt that whatever its shortcomings, the SDP's existence was now completely justified by the fact that the SDAP had become a 'confirmed state party' with the objective function of integrating the working class into the capitalist state.¹⁰¹

The failure of the SDP to move beyond its initial membership or to make the party a political vehicle of any significant sector of the Dutch working class was rooted in both the organizational deficiencies of the party and in several factors affecting the development of the Dutch working class after 1909. The economic recovery which followed the economic crisis of 1908–1909 raised expectations within the working class of a major improvement in living conditions. But the workers anticipated that these improvements would be secured through the traditional trade union and parliamentary channels. With the SDAP and the NVV able to provide an alternative more suited to the immediate needs of the workers, the SDP was unable to penetrate the socialist-inclined sector of the working class. The hopes of radicalizing the Dutch working class were further checked when, starting in 1910, the SDAP initiated a series of highly successful extra-parliamentary actions on behalf of universal suffrage. Powerless to pursue a revolutionary tactic, the SDP was largely confined to evangelical activity. Only at the level of ideas was it able to offer a serious challenge to the SDAP.

But despite its inability to generate a mass working class following, the

SDP managed to develop during the first five years of its existence a clear profile that set it apart from the SDAP and enabled it to sink roots sufficiently deep enough to sustain it in the difficult years ahead. The tenacity of the new party derived in part from the nature of its theoretical concepts, but it was also sustained by a small band of organizers and propagandists, who succeeded in giving the rank-and-file of the party a belief not only in a higher socialist mission, but also a conviction of the invincibility of their cause. Pannekoek, in an article commemorating the foundation of the *Tribune*, attempted to place the party's existence in historical perspective. The SDP, he was now prepared to assert, was part of a larger current of 'international struggling Marxism', which was a political tendency coming 'increasingly to the forefront'. The split within Dutch social democracy, he felt, was only 'an earlier and sharper form' of political differences that were beginning to emerge on an international scale.¹⁰²

CHAPTER VII

MASS ACTION AND REVOLUTION: PANNEKOEK'S POLITICAL THOUGHT, 1910-1914

Revolution and Class Transformation: Pannekoek's Theory of Mass Action

Pannekoek's whole theoretical and political outlook underwent a dramatic reformulation in the wake of the Prussian suffrage demonstrations of 1910. In the aftermath of these events, Pannekoek gave explicit form to many of the fundamental conceptions which had formerly been only implicit in his writings. Whereas he had previously viewed extra-parliamentary mass action and parliamentarianism as different aspects of the same process of revolutionary development and defended them as equal in importance, he now began to denigrate the value of parliamentary activity altogether, posing it as a historically superseded form of struggle.

In shifting the main terrain of struggle from parliament to extra-parliamentary action, Pannekoek made use of the term 'mass action' in such a way that he transformed what had been largely a vague expression into an all-embracing slogan and an increasingly integrated revolutionary strategy. Defining mass action as 'an extra-parliamentary political act of the organized working class, by which it operates directly and not through the medium of delegates', Pannekoek conceived of this new form of struggle less as a tactic, or even a series of tactics, but more as a total orientation toward revolutionary activity, based on a new process of interaction between the class, its power instruments, and political action. The unity of all these factors, he felt, was realized in the masses, in whom lies the power, the economic discontent, and the accumulated feeling of rebellion necessary to wage a decisive struggle for power.¹ The central assumption underlying his conception was that the complex of militant actions generically termed 'mass action' were both a product and a symptom of the new developments within European capitalism. In the process described by Pannekoek, mass action was viewed as defensive in the sense that it was the only viable proletarian response to the ruling class offensive known as imperialism, and offensive in the sense that it was a mechanism of direct revolutionary struggle and an indication of the rising strength and self-confidence of the proletariat.²

What Pannekoek envisioned was a prolonged epoch of confrontation between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie, characterized by a succession of graduated mass movements and struggles. These actions would serve to educate, collectivize, and strengthen the proletariat for the coming struggle for power, while simultaneously weakening the foundations of the capitalist state: 'Each assault by the proletariat upon the individual effects of capitalism means a weakening of the power of capital, a strengthening of our own power and a step further in the process of revolution.'³ Pannekoek made it clear that a central aspect of this process involved the destruction of the moral authority of the bourgeoisie – its main source of power – so that all that remained were the 'material instruments of force'. The final phases of the revolution, he felt, would be characterized by a direct struggle between the instruments of force of both classes until 'one of the two opposing sides in struggle lies vanquished, its power annihilated, and political rule falls into the hands of the victor'. Compared to this conflict, the previous parliamentary struggles were but 'skirmishes for forward position' during which the main power instruments remained in reserve.⁴

Although Pannekoek considered the mass strike to be the most important of the various forms of mass action, he viewed it as just one weapon in the social democratic arsenal, and definitely not the final act in the overturn of society. This tactic, he felt, was as multi-faceted as the class struggle itself and could not be adapted the same way each time like a pre-set mechanism or recipe. The mass strike was no more a 'wonder medium' than parliamentarianism.⁵ Although the mass strike allowed the full expression of proletarian power in a way that was possible with no other medium, it could never be used as a substitute for that power. In itself, the mass strike was a 'dead mechanism', without 'the will, the feeling of power, and the revolutionary energy of the masses' which precedes it and determines its use. What was decisive were not the objective consequences of the strike, but the mood, enthusiasm, and self-confidence of the men who choose to use it.⁶

At an even deeper level, Pannekoek felt that mass action and its dialectical opposite, imperialism, were both part of 'a revolution in thought and feeling, a new orientation of the spirit' that corresponded to a certain stage of social and economic development.⁷ In the practice of mass action, Pannekoek saw a continuous dialectic of consciousness and activity which would ultimately shape a new society. Pannekoek located the starting point of this process of transformation in what he termed 'the revolutionary instincts of the masses'. According to Pannekoek, these 'social instincts' differ from the natural inborn instincts of animals in the sense that they evolve from the basic day-to-day perceptions embodied in working class life experiences and relationships. Through their work, the workers perceive that

they are exploited by capital and are aroused by this misery and exploitation to rebel. In these social instincts of the class struggle, he felt, reside the force which drives the masses forward in great social struggles.⁸

But what was most important, indeed theoretically decisive, in Pannekoek's formula, was his concept of the 'organizational spirit' (*Organisationsgeist*). According to this conception, the real nature of proletarian organization comes not from the external organizational forms, but from the inner lives of the workers themselves, which generates feelings of solidarity, collectivity, commitment, self-sacrifice, sense of purpose, and class identity. This spirit, he felt, was the real activating element of the workers' movement:

'The organizational spirit is the living soul of the labor movement which gives power and capability for action to the body. But, unlike the soul of Christian theology, this immortal soul does not float around lifeless in the sky, but remains, in fact, always grounded in an organizational body, living in the common organized actions of those it joins together. This spirit is not something abstract or imaginary, put forward in contrast to the "real, concrete organization" of the existing organizational forms, but it is, in fact, something *just as real and concrete* as these forms. It binds its element, the individuals, just as firmly together as any statute could ever do so that even if their external bond of statutes were severed these individuals would no longer be loose atoms competing against each other.'⁹

It was this spirit which creates the capacity to struggle, dissipates the fear of the state, and receives its fullest expression in mass actions. To ignore this principle was to ignore what distinguished proletarian organization from any other form of organization.

The conclusion Pannekoek drew from this was that socialism could never be achieved by the gradual attainment of a parliamentary majority, but only by the steady erosion of the bourgeois state and the simultaneous creation of a proletarian counter-state through the process of mass action: 'As the organization of state power degenerates and its strength ebbs away, so the new form of social organization, the self-created democratic organization of proletarian struggle, develops into a greater and greater power in society, taking over the functions intrinsic to the general regulation of production.'¹⁰ Pannekoek fervently believed that within the new proletarian organizational forms there would develop completely new values and human relationships which would prefigure a new type of society. With this suggestion that the new working class institutional forms would supplant existing institutional forms in the course of the revolutionary struggle and provide the framework for the future socialist state, Pannekoek broke new ground in Marxist theory. For the first time a Marxist theorist was prepared to assert that the es-

sence of socialism lay not in the future state but in the process of socialist transformation itself.

These fundamental themes were built on a substratum of ideas about the role and limitations of traditional working class organizations and the relationship between leaders and masses. It was a corollary of Pannekoek's analysis that the existing working class organizational forms were incapable of accomplishing the task of social transformation since they still reflected to a considerable extent the stability of capitalist society. He argued that because of the bureaucratic nature of the traditional working class organizations, the leaders were far less radical in terms of basic revolutionary perceptions and insights than the masses of workers. Unlike the workers, whose thoughts were derived from perceptions of collectivity, the party and trade union functionaries could think only in terms of themselves.¹¹ For these reasons, Pannekoek's concern was increasingly focused on the masses as the direct instrument of social transformation: 'As long as they continue to look to their leaders and wait for the word, the movement can never take its proper course. Only when the masses themselves seize the initiative, lead their organizations along new paths, and press the authorities forward, only then is a strong revival of our struggle possible.'¹² For the workers, the first task was to 'liberate themselves from the old view that their leaders will do everything for them at the correct time'.¹³

At the same time, Pannekoek was careful not to advocate a general theory of spontaneity. He continued to assign the party a central role in preparing the workers for revolutionary mass actions. Pannekoek repeatedly made it clear that the party had the initial political task of unifying the previously fragmented masses and 'molding them into an entity with a conscious purpose and with power in its own right'.¹⁴ Quite clearly, at this stage, Pannekoek still saw the party as synonymous with the masses, since it was the party which was assigned the task of channeling the 'revolutionary energy of the masses' into constructive action and leading the assault on the state. He insisted that the party must never limit itself to a passive, restraining role, but must become an active catalyst of revolution once it determines that conditions are ripe for mass struggles. It was this organized and conscious element of mass action, Pannekoek maintained, that would most sharply distinguish the German Revolution from the Russian Revolution of 1905.¹⁵

It followed from Pannekoek's analysis that the party exercises a leadership function only in the sense that it pursues an active socialist politics which shapes and leads the struggle of consciousness to its ultimate goal. A politics of this kind, he felt, requires a creative leadership capable of responding directly to the nuances of every revolutionary situation, stimulating and broadening the struggle, widening its goals, generating new tactics, all in the

continuous dialectic of consciousness and activity which lies at the heart of the relationship between party and class. Such a leadership, however, cannot create the conditions of struggle, for these conditions are an elemental feature of the evolution of capitalism itself. Nor can it direct the struggle along lines predetermined by the leadership, for the revolution is a complex process spanning years or even decades, rather than a fixed-piece military engagement between the forces of labor and capital. While the party serves as a vital expression of the 'developing thought' and 'revolutionary spirit' of the workers, the workers can gain the necessary insights into their historical mission only through the direct practice of mass action.¹⁶ In contrast to the theories of Kautsky, Lenin, and others, which viewed the party as the agent which stimulates the inert, unconscious – or 'trade union conscious' – class into revolutionary struggle, Pannekoek reasserted what he felt was the central insight of Marx's historical project: that the proletariat develops its own awareness of itself in the course of a struggle rooted in the logic of capitalism.

Pannekoek's theory of mass action possessed a sweeping power and originality, but it was ultimately flawed by its vagueness. Throughout his writings on mass action, Pannekoek seldom went beyond the general and the rhetorical. Although his ideas were based on a variety of different experiences of mass action in the pre-war period, Pannekoek deliberately avoided specifying the precise organizational and institutional forms which the struggling workers were likely to develop and utilize. This task he left instead to the creative capacities of the masses actually involved in the struggles of the future, since it was their character and forms of organization that would be transformed in the process. 'Is it not obvious,' he asked, 'that a proletariat which has succeeded in building such exemplary organizations, in the face of every obstacle and despite the fiercest repression, will find it a simple matter to have an apparatus capable of directing and administering public life within forty-eight hours?'¹⁷ In grappling with the complex question of how the capitalist state and its power instruments were to be destroyed, Pannekoek left unanswered key questions which his entire analysis by its very nature posed. What weapons and what type of military strategy would the workers' movement use? What would happen if imperialism attacked the workers' movement before it reached full maturity? His approach was marked by a constant overestimation of the factors which would render social democracy irresistible and an underestimation of the forces of capitalist domination. Although he acknowledged that violence would be initiated by the repressive forces of the state, Pannekoek conceived of the revolution largely as a non-violent process based on working class consciousness and stressed that armed force represented the 'weak side of proletarian power'.¹⁸

But as to what would actually happen when the capitalist state deployed its forces, Pannekoek could only hold out the possibility that in a phase of accelerating workers' power the rank-and-file soldiers of working class origin would refuse to fire on their class comrades.

Economics and Social Development: Pannekoek's Theory of Imperialism

Pannekoek's theory of mass action was closely linked to his theoretical assessment of imperialism. Like most Marxists of the Second International, Pannekoek felt that the increasingly powerful and aggressive nature of the capitalist states, the ideologies of militarism and nationalism, growing competition and heightened international tensions, were all tied to a fundamental change in the nature of capitalism, which was termed imperialism.¹⁹

Pannekoek's unique theory of imperialism evolved directly out of his conception of the relationship between economics and social transformation. As early as 1900, Pannekoek, in a letter to Frank van der Goes, outlined the basic elements of this conception. In attempting to define the role of economics in social transformation, Pannekoek argued that while economic factors are undoubtedly primary, they are but one of many interrelated parts of the totality of the human environment. All human actions, no matter how independent they may appear, are 'equal products' of this total process of development which is mediated through the minds of men. Since he felt that it was the process of interaction itself that was critical, Pannekoek ruled out a sharp distinction between evolution and revolution, arguing that it was only their external appearances that gave them separate designations. What this meant for Pannekoek's theory of social development was that the critical link between economics and revolution was not economic crisis or collapse, but the understanding and active intervention of the revolutionary class, which translates changes in the economic structure into 'social reality' through conscious political action.²⁰

It was on this basis that Pannekoek chose to emphasize the non-economic aspects of imperialism. Unlike Lenin, Rosa Luxemburg, and others, Pannekoek did not regard imperialism as the 'final phase of capitalism' resulting from intrinsic economic and structural changes, but as the outcome of an 'active striving' on the part of the bourgeoisie.²¹ As he defined the problem, imperialism was not simply a form of interest politics for the bourgeoisie or a defense mechanism against the proletariat – although both elements were present – but a full-fledged system of capitalist rule. Pannekoek insisted that like all forms of social rule, the main source of imperialism's strength was spiritual. What was critical was the ability of imperialism to project a powerful social ideal: '[...] to the bourgeoisie as a whole is given a new world ideal,

the vision of its own nation standing dominant among all the peoples of the earth. And this vision, it is hoped, will do something to inspire those who have found themselves powerless in the path of the overpowering ideals of humanity and world brotherhood represented by the Social Democracy.²²

These themes were brought into sharp focus in the course of a lengthy controversy with Rosa Luxemburg. Although Pannekoek had little interest in establishing a precise economic definition of imperialism, he accepted for the most part the theoretical framework of his collaborator Karl Radek, which located the main dynamic of imperialism in capital export. This view stood in sharp contrast to Rosa Luxemburg's conception, which viewed imperialism as the inevitable consequence of the constant expansion of capitalist production and the need to establish new market outlets to absorb it. Since this question had important implications for revolutionary strategy, Pannekoek undertook a detailed and penetrating critique of Luxemburg's position. Although he built his conception on the basis of a highly technical criticism of her analysis of capitalist reproduction, Pannekoek's overwhelming preoccupation was with the social, historical, and ideological aspects of imperialism. In challenging Luxemburg's belief that imperialism was an economic 'necessity' of capitalism and a prelude to its inevitable collapse, Pannekoek began by rejecting what he termed 'mechanical necessity' in the laws of capitalist reproduction. What Rosa Luxemburg viewed as an unavoidable economic drive toward imperialism, he felt, was in reality only 'a part of imperialism, but not imperialism itself'. The history of capitalism, Pannekoek argued, had been characterized by various and continuous forms of expansion, much of which involved competition for world markets. Imperialism was only an intensification of this tendency and simply 'the particular form of expansion for the era'.

Having made it clear that imperialism did not arise as an economic imperative ('mechanical necessity'), Pannekoek went on to argue that it emerged out of specific social needs ('social necessity'). By 'social necessity' Pannekoek meant the ability of a group to consciously choose and carry out the long-range course of action that was most appropriate to their general needs within defined historical circumstances. Pannekoek considered 'social necessity' to be neither a predetermined course of action nor pure voluntarism, but a form of active understanding and intervention which serves as a key connecting link between economics and the actions and desires of men. From this standpoint, imperialism was a 'necessity' for capitalist development only in the sense that it was something which the capitalist class understood as useful and desirable and had the capacity to attain. Imperialism emerged at this particular period because it corresponded to the needs and wishes of the newly dominant banking and monopoly sector of the bour-

geoisie, which through its technological, ideological, and organizational power, had gained superiority over the other sectors within the capitalist class, and was, therefore, free to pursue its policies at will. From this perspective, it is clear that, for Pannekoek, imperialism implied a totality of interaction, in which a unity of politics, ideology, economics, and action come together as a conscious act of capitalist society.

Pannekoek felt that the manner in which imperialism had developed as a manifestation of the will of the bourgeoisie provided an analogy for the emergence of socialism: socialism would come only when the working class understands that socialism is necessary and desirable, wills its creation, and has the power capability to establish it. For these reasons, capitalism could never be expected to end by some 'great, fantastic final crisis', although temporary crises would instill in the workers the will to struggle and compel them to strengthen their forces.²³

On these grounds, Pannekoek charged that the emphasis on economic necessity and the inevitability of capitalist collapse in Rosa Luxemburg's analysis of imperialism 'obfuscates more than it clarifies, the particular features of the world politics of capital'.²⁴ Taken strictly, such a position, he felt, would amount to nothing less than the abolition of the need for theoretical work, for propaganda and agitation, for organization, and for the preparation for the conquest of political power.

In theorizing imperialism as a total ideological, social, political, and economic process, Pannekoek attached particular importance to its unified world-wide character. From this, he derived another element of revolutionary strategy. The world-wide capitalist chain, he felt, might be broken at its weakest links, in the colonial and semi-colonial lands. A series of anti-colonial revolutions in Asia and Africa, he maintained, would 'give the signal to the European proletariat for their struggle for freedom'.²⁵ 'The political revolution in Asia, the insurrection in India, the rebellion within the Arab world, are imposing a decisive obstacle against the expansion of capitalism in Europe. [...] bloody clashes are becoming more and more inevitable. There is a link between the Asian wars of independence and colonialism and the world war among European nations.'²⁶ Although Pannekoek, with these formulations, was among the first to argue the importance of colonial liberation movements as a stimulus to revolution in Europe, this theme remained only a fragmentary and undeveloped part of his theory of revolution, due in large part to his inability to reconcile this belief with his views on the national question.

Class Struggle and Nation: Pannekoek and the National Question

A third major component of Pannekoek's 1910–1914 theoretical-strategic paradigm centered around his conception of the role of the nation and nationalism in socialist theory and practice. For Pannekoek, the problem of developing a correct Marxist approach to the question of nationality was significant both as a major reference point in the debate over reform or revolution and as part of the tactical imperative of countering nationalistic imperialism and its drive toward war.

Although the question of the nation and nationalism impinged on the life of the socialist movement at numerous points, the movement had no firm attitude toward these questions, due in part to an ambiguous legacy in socialist theory. Marx and Engels gave neither a systematic theory of nationality nor a precise definition of the concept of the nation. Their writings on nationality were for the most part unsystematic and largely *ad hoc* political positions on specific strategic questions. In their early writings, both showed considerable enthusiasm for large-scale political units, believing that small states were an impediment to economic development. While admitting that the bourgeois nation state had served an historically progressive function, they contended that it was a transitory phenomenon which bore the seeds of its own destruction. The extension and internationalization of the capitalist market, they felt, would lead to a rapidly growing similarity between nations at the expense of national identity. As early as the *Communist Manifesto*, Marx and Engels had posed the internationalism of the proletariat as the agency of the nation state's destruction, with the famous slogan: 'The working men have no country'. In their later writings, however, both men – forced to confront the political realities of their era – showed much more hospitable consideration to the claims of small and oppressed nationalities, such as the Poles, Irish, and Hungarians.²⁷

Due to the fundamental ambiguity and equivocation in their formulations, the writings of Marx and Engels could give no clear answer to the problem of the nation state as it presented itself to social democrats in Europe in the years before the war. Several major attempts were made to come to terms with this question theoretically. Among the first to deal with this question in a systematic manner was Karl Kautsky, who argued that the modern idea of nationality arose with the bourgeoisie and corresponded to their economic needs. The most critical factor in the formation of nations, he maintained, was a national language, which was essential to social production, and which probably emerged from idioms used by traders. For this reason, he considered the mono-national state to be superior to the multinational state. Kautsky was evasive when faced with the question of the

workers' relationship to the nation. While rejecting bourgeois nationalism, he maintained that the proletariat was the guardian of the genuine interests of the nation and suggested that the removal of class antagonisms would solidify national unity.²⁸

The most sustained attempt to develop a Marxist theory of nationality, however, came with the Austrian theorist Otto Bauer's *Die Nationalitätenfrage und die Sozialdemokratie* (The National Question and Social Democracy), a work that remains the major Marxist treatise in the field. Bauer's intended aim was to provide a theoretical justification for the nationalities program adopted by the Austrian social democrats. Unlike other orthodox Marxists, Bauer did not regard the nation as a transitory mode of organization peculiar to bourgeois society. Nor did he accept Kautsky's view that language was a decisive factor for defining a nation. Bauer defined the nation as a totality of people 'molded by a common destiny into a common type', so that they possess a common national character.²⁹ By a 'common destiny', Bauer meant primarily a historical community sharing the same culture. While believing that the origins of the nation were linked to certain relationships of economics, politics, and social development, Bauer felt that the nation eventually became independent of these factors: 'The national community exists, even if the state should collapse, for it is itself living in each and every individual.'³⁰ At the same time, Bauer emphatically rejected the notion that national ties would merge in the course of economic development and argued that national differences would continue to exist even under socialism. As a substitute for the bourgeois principle of nationality, with its tendencies toward war, he offered an alternative socialist principle which stressed the democratization and full development of nationhood and the national culture under socialism. Carried to its logical conclusion, this meant that the class struggle was at the same time a parallel struggle for national emancipation and possession of the national culture.

Pannekoek's contribution to this discussion took the form of a lengthy brochure entitled, *Klassenkampf und Nation* (Class Struggle and Nation). Pannekoek was motivated to enter this discussion largely on the basis of his belief that the type of nationalist sentiment embodied in Bauer's writings represented a powerful obstacle to the development of the self-contained proletarian hegemony that would be necessary to confront international capital in the epoch of imperialism.³¹ Bauer's principal error, Pannekoek insisted, was his failure to employ a Marxist methodology. Instead of viewing nations as the product of social evolution subject to rapid and constant future development, Bauer had relied on static bourgeois categories which viewed national diversity as arbitrarily defined by nature, an expression of the innate differences between men based on race, origins, and language.

In setting up his own definition of what constitutes a nation, Pannekoek argued that the determining factor in nation-building was neither language nor common destiny, but the process of political and economic development. Although language was the most important attribute of a nation, the two were not identical, as the cases of the United States and England with their similar languages, and Switzerland with its multi-languages, clearly illustrated. Pannekoek's principal thesis, however, was that through incessant mutations based on labor and economic life, historical development had produced a variety of different forms of social organization, of which the nation was only one. Among these were tribal organizations, empires, communal villages, regions, and religious orders. All of these, he felt, embodied the two key characteristics of Bauer's definition: a common destiny and a common character. As an even more pertinent example, Pannekoek cited the case of the medieval church, which with its sense of community and culture, its common history and vast administrative structure, its own intelligentsia and language, constituted almost a nation in its own right. Like Marx, Pannekoek viewed the modern nation state as a transitory form of social organization peculiar to bourgeois society. The modern nation, he argued, was completely different from the earlier peasant nation. What distinguishes it is the institution of the state – 'the combat organization of the bourgeoisie'.³² While the nation represents an important community of interest for the bourgeoisie, the state is the real, solid instrument for protecting its interests.

Pannekoek enlarged upon this definition by criticizing Bauer's use of the category 'community of destiny'. While accepting the legitimacy of the category, Pannekoek felt that the forms constituting a particular 'community of destiny' were different for each class due to the different experiences of social labor. From this standpoint, the peasants, for instance, of China, India, and Egypt had more in common with each other than with different classes within their own nation. For the proletariat, this meant that their 'community of destiny' could never be defined by specific national characteristics and boundaries, but only by a common community of labor and struggle. In this context, the nation state signified little more than a form of 'foreign domination' over the character and destiny of the proletariat.

Pannekoek extended this analysis into a critique of Bauer's category 'community of culture'. Culture, he contended, begins in the continuous restructuring of concepts that goes on inside the mind and evolves into a 'community of ideas' or 'forms of thought which have become historical'.³³ In other words, what can be considered a nation's culture is simply an abstract rendering of common experiences transmitted by a common language. There could, therefore, be no common 'community of culture' be-

tween the bourgeoisie and the proletariat except in the most transitory sense, since the foundations of their thought and their vision of the world are so completely dissimilar. What often appears to be a commonly shared culture is in reality only a spiritual tradition of the past, which will disappear with the intensification of the class struggle.

In these circumstances, Pannekoek felt that the acceptance of bourgeois culture could only obscure class consciousness and weaken the self-confidence of the workers: 'Our objective requires a new, bold type of human being, fully conscious of its role, and audacious in both thought and action. For this reason, the struggle requires that the workers be liberated from the paralyzing effects of bourgeois culture.'³⁴ Pannekoek emphasized that the proletariat had the duty to pursue its own cultural destiny, which could become a living reality only in the context of the class struggle. The struggle for socialism, he felt, stimulates the spirit of the workers to create their own values and forms of social and mental life, which are opposed at all points to bourgeois culture. Since the workers' 'community of struggle' is international in character and their aspirations and shared experiences are similar, both the destiny and culture of the proletariat would be world-wide in scope. What superficially appears to be a separate nationality and culture will disappear with the bourgeois society to which it is connected. As an organizational alternative to the nation state, Pannekoek envisioned a future transnational community of organization, production, and culture encompassing the whole of humanity.

The tactical conclusion Pannekoek drew from his analysis was that 'the concept of the nation can play no role in the theory and practice of social democracy'.³⁵ Acceptance of the idea of the nation in any form by socialists would lead only to the unification of fundamentally different class interests and the preservation of the status quo. Nationalism, Pannekoek was prepared to assert, represents 'the most powerful of bourgeois ideologies'.³⁶ Pannekoek made it clear that while nationalism represented a major source of bourgeois ideological hegemony, it was not simply an artificial doctrine imposed by the rulers upon the masses. Like every system of thought and feeling, nationalism arises spontaneously out of the depths of society and proceeds on the basis of economic realities and necessities. The bourgeoisie, however, attempts to intensify these spontaneous feelings by artificial means. Pannekoek stressed that while the conceptual structure of nationalism was based on ideas and traditions of the past, it did not belong to those outdated ideologies which were gradually being extinguished by modern conditions. It was, on the contrary, a living ideology, drawing its force ever anew from fertile economic soil, and standing in the center of the class struggle. Translated into practical terms, this meant that demands for national

autonomy, or for the reestablishment of former nation states such as Poland, could have no place in socialist propaganda and tactics. National objectives and slogans, Pannekoek felt, would only deter the proletariat from its real objective by dividing them into different nationalities and allowing class consciousness to degenerate into national hatred.³⁷ But to counter nationalist ideology, Pannekoek could offer nothing beyond a more-or-less routine call for programs and propaganda stressing class over nationality. He took it for granted that nationalist sentiment would disappear as one of the side effects of the radicalization of consciousness that occurs through mass action. Pannekoek's rigorous internationalism was tempered only by his acknowledgment (in a position close to Bauer's) of the right of national minorities to autonomy in administrative and judicial matters and by his belief that national parties must continue to exist, in order to conduct propaganda and educational activities in different languages.

Although Pannekoek's prescription for dealing with the problem of the nation was rather ambiguous, he left no doubt about the immediate political relevance of this question. The growing accommodation to nationalism, he felt, was only one aspect of a more general malaise affecting the socialist movement. Posed in its broadest terms, the historical choice, for the socialist movement and for the future of humanity, was becoming increasingly clear: either a fundamental transformation of the existing social order through mass action and internationalism, or nationalism and war.³⁸

CHAPTER VIII

WAR AND REVOLUTION, 1914–1919*War Against War: Pannekoek and the Zimmerwald Left*

The activities of Pannekoek during the years 1914–1919 must be seen against a background of dramatic world events. In pre-1914 Europe, revolution had been largely a doctrine and a dream to which small groups of determined men dedicated their lives. By 1919, a revolutionary mood pervaded all of Europe. The Bolshevik Revolution of 1917 and the German Revolution of 1918 seemed at long last to mark the beginning of the world-wide proletarian revolution to which Pannekoek had dedicated the past twenty years of his life.

Although Pannekoek was perhaps the most perceptive Marxist analyst of the crisis of social democracy prior to 1914, he, like most others of the Marxist left, was caught completely off guard by the sudden capitulation of the movement to nationalism at the outbreak of the war. Forced back to Holland by the war, Pannekoek immediately began the painful task of analyzing and pinpointing the crucial characteristics of social democracy which had disarmed it at its moment of supreme challenge. In a major article entitled, 'The Downfall of the International', which was widely circulated in German, English, Dutch, and Russian versions, Pannekoek took the position that the war was a clear indication of both the weakness of social democracy and the gigantic power of imperialism. The capitulation of the Second International to nationalism, he felt, was due to the fundamental spiritual weakness of the movement which had its roots in the appropriation of initiative from the masses by a growing bureaucratic apparatus. The whole course of development of the movement had been directed for a long time toward an accommodation with capitalism and a reconciliation with a part of the bourgeoisie. The war had only accelerated what would otherwise have been a slow process of transformation. Unlike other left leaders such as Lenin and Trotsky, Pannekoek chose to stress the objective factors conditioning this process of capitulation rather than to attribute it to treacherous leadership. Explaining why the workers had displayed so little revolutionary energy and allowed themselves to be so easily misled by the bourgeoisie, Pannekoek for the first

time began to speak of prosperity as the underlying cause of the deradicalization of the workers' movement.

From this analysis, it was only a small step to the conclusion that the pre-war socialist movement was dead. The war crisis, Pannekoek felt, posed directly the question of revolution and the old movement with its passive bureaucratized structure was incapable of playing a revolutionary role. In the course of his remarks, Pannekoek became the first Marxist theoretician to signal the downfall of the Second International and to raise the demand for the formation of a Third:

'The Second International is dead. But this ignoble death is no accident; like the downfall of the first International, the collapse of the second is an indication of the fact that its usefulness is at an end. It represents, in fact, the downfall of the old fighting methods of the epoch. [...] And out of these new conditions a new International of Labor will grow, more firmly founded, more strongly organized, more powerful and more Socialistic than the one that perished. Looking beyond this terrible world-fire, we revolutionary Socialists boldly erect upon the ruins the standard of the new, the coming of Internationalism.'¹

Of this assessment, Lenin noted several weeks later: 'The only one who had told the workers the truth – although not loudly enough, and sometimes not quite skilfully – is Pannekoek [...]. His words [...] are the *only* socialist words. They are the *truth*. Bitter, but the truth.'²

As Pannekoek began the task of analyzing the failure of socialist internationalism, he was forced to confront an equally uncertain situation in his own life. From a personal standpoint, the war years were to be among the most difficult years Pannekoek would experience – years of economic uncertainty and wandering. Like many others, he initially expected the war to be of short duration and planned on being able to resume his work in Bremen within a few months. During the first year of the war, Pannekoek lived with his in-laws in Arnhem and attempted to support himself as a journalist. His first job was writing articles for a British newspaper. Conflicts with the editors soon arose when they requested that Pannekoek provide details about personalities rather than theoretical interpretations, and after several weeks, he resigned. He next found a part-time job writing on foreign policy for the *Nieuwe Amsterdammer*. In the spring of 1915, aware that the war would be of long duration and that there were no vacancies in astronomy, Pannekoek accepted a job teaching high school science, first in Helmond, and later that summer in Hoorn. This was supplemented by a once-a-week unpaid lectureship on the history of astronomy at the University of Leiden, which he hoped to use to re-establish himself in astronomy after having

maintained only peripheral contact with the field since 1906. In 1917 he moved to another high school position in Bussum, where Gorter and several other leftist intellectuals lived. These positions were always precarious; Pannekoek has noted that he felt a constant pressure to avoid public talks or any type of activity that might be reported in the local press.³

Pannekoek's political activity in the aftermath of August, 1914 was directly linked to a broader process of left regroupment within the international socialist movement. This process of regroupment derived its chief impetus from Lenin and the Bolsheviks and had its organizational base in what later became known as the Zimmerwald movement.⁴ Lenin's first foray at left regroupment came at a conference of Italian and Swiss socialists at Lugano, Switzerland, on September 27, 1914, at which he presented his September 5 theses on turning an imperialist war between nations into a civil war between classes. At this gathering a major division of opinion emerged between the revolutionaries, who felt the main task was to use the war as a catalyst for socialist revolution, and the pacifists, who felt the primary duty was to end the war. When the Italian and Swiss socialists called for an international conference of all socialists opposed to the war, Lenin began to focus his energies on building a strong revolutionary presence at the conference.

A key element of Lenin's strategy of revolutionary regroupment was his desire for an alliance between the Bolsheviks and the Dutch SDP, which he regarded as among the best of the revolutionary groupings. To facilitate this alliance, Lenin wrote Wijnkoop proposing that the two parties formulate a joint declaration and requesting that the SDP send representatives to the upcoming conference.⁵ Wijnkoop and others in the SDP leadership, however, rejected Lenin's proposal on the grounds that the conference was opportunistic in character and would not be a gathering of revolutionaries.⁶ Lenin, however, persisted and again wrote to Wijnkoop, warning of the 'great danger' for the movement if his plan for an international declaration by the Marxist left failed to materialize.⁷ When this attempt proved equally fruitless, he wrote to Radek requesting that he arrange for Pannekoek – who was a strong supporter of the proposed conference – to play a mediating role.⁸ When Pannekoek failed to make headway, Radek sent Pannekoek a telegram on the eve of the conference requesting that he come on his own and offering to pay his way. Pannekoek, however, declined on the grounds that only Wijnkoop could represent the SDP.⁹

The international conference which met in the Swiss mountain village of Zimmerwald from September 5 to 8, 1915, marked both the complete and clear segregation of minority and majority socialists into separate camps and the general consolidation of a distinct left current within the anti-war minority. Of the Dutch, only Henriette Roland Holst was present.¹⁰ During the

proceedings, Lenin once again offered a resolution calling for a direct revolutionary struggle against capitalism and the formation of a new International. Although Lenin's resolution managed to gain the votes of only about one third of the delegates, this was regarded as a minor victory by the left.¹¹ More encouraging for the left was the creation of an International Socialist Commission in Berne to coordinate future activities, which Lenin saw as the potential nucleus of a new International.

In order to influence this body and to disseminate their own views, the left established a coordinating bureau of their own. In the fall of 1915, this bureau, at the initiative of Karl Radek, began to lay the groundwork for the creation of a separate international publication of the left. Pannekoek had first broached the idea of such a publication in the spring of 1915, arguing that it might serve as a spiritual counterweight to Kautsky's *Neue Zeit* and an instrument of theoretical clarification.¹² Following consultation with Lenin, Radek suggested in October to Pannekoek and Roland Holst that a German-language review be started in Holland. Radek proposed as well that Pannekoek and Roland Holst serve as co-editors, although it was understood that he was to be the real source of power. The initial editorial board envisioned by Radek was to consist of himself, Pannekoek, Roland Holst, Lenin, Trotsky, Mehring, Borchardt, and perhaps Grimm, Zetkin and Frania. For Lenin, Pannekoek's cooperation was extremely crucial; one of his conditions for supporting the publication was that Pannekoek, 'whom we see as our representative' [of the Zimmerwald left], be placed on the editorial board.¹³

Pannekoek's willingness to edit the new publication was based in part on his desire to articulate his own conception of revolutionary regroupment. Although closely allied with Lenin on the Zimmerwald left, Pannekoek's strategic analysis diverged from Lenin's at several key points. At the most basic level, Pannekoek made it clear that his fundamental concern was with advancing a strategy based on political consciousness and mass action, rather than, as he felt Lenin advocated, one based on splitting the existing socialist movement and a continuation of the traditional tactics.¹⁴ A regrouping of the socialist left, Pannekoek argued, was possible only on the basis of an 'internationalism of deed' founded upon incessant opposition to the ruling classes in every country.¹⁵ To attempt to build a new international movement on the basis of conferences and delegates alone would lead to 'nothing more than an International of Leaders'.¹⁶

The projected international review became reality in January, 1916, under the name *Vorbote*. In the introduction, Pannekoek defined the main aim of the publication as one of providing theoretical support for the struggle against imperialism. Pannekoek made it clear that this task involved, in the first instance, a 'merciless analysis of the inadequacies of the old revisionist

and radical socialism' as a prelude to a full-scale organizational break with social democracy. What was needed was a completely new spiritual orientation which could only arise out of a long hard process of theoretical clarification and struggle:

'Now is the time to gather together everything in the way of new ideas, new slogans, new propositions, to inspect them, to test them, *to clarify them by means of discussion* and thus to make them of service to the new struggle. [...] But this struggle is only made possible by an uncompromising struggle against all the elements of the former social democracy, which would bind the proletariat to the chariot of imperialism; against open imperialists who became ordinary agents of the bourgeoisie as well as social patriots of all tinges who seek to reconcile incompatible antagonisms and to keep the proletariat from struggling against imperialism by the most acute methods. *The formation of the Third International* will be possible only after a resolute break with social patriotism.'¹⁷

Despite the high hopes of Pannekoek and others, *Vorbote* was plagued by a series of factional controversies almost from the moment of its inception. Following the appearance of Pannekoek's introduction, Lenin charged that Pannekoek had transformed the review into a personal organ and was evading his responsibilities as a representative of the Zimmerwald left.¹⁸ These differences were compounded by an even deeper conflict between Lenin and Radek over the question of national self-determination. Lenin also felt that Radek was guilty of 'intrigues' against him and was attempting to remove his supporters from the editorial board. Lenin added to this the accusation that both Pannekoek and Radek were 'incorrect' in their approach to the struggle against Kautskyism.¹⁹ Criticism from another quarter came from Trotsky, who felt that 'the Russian and Dutch extremists' were attempting to build their own International. Trotsky also felt that the idea of using the publication to organize the workers and build a broad movement of the left was a 'pure Leninist utopia'.²⁰ Due in part to the inability of the left to resolve these differences, *Vorbote* ceased publication with the second issue.

While Pannekoek's influence diminished after the failure of *Vorbote*, this failure had little impact on the development of the Zimmerwald left itself. By the time of the second conference of the Zimmerwald movement at Kienthal, Switzerland, in April, 1916, it was clear that the left had established a momentum which could not be broken. Although the left was still a minority, it, nonetheless, had a significant impact on the resolutions which were approved by the conference. For the left, Kienthal brought to the surface a new spirit of self-confidence and gave eloquent testimony to what was becoming a deepening fissure within European social democracy.²¹

From Sect to Party: The SDP and the New Internationalism

Although personal circumstances limited his active participation in the international movement, Pannekoek's theoretical work found fertile soil in the intransigent internationalist setting of the Dutch SDP and continued to play a vital role in the party's political development. Despite Holland's neutrality, the war opened a new epoch for the SDP, which both tested the party's commitment to left radicalism and offered new possibilities for realizing its goals and strategies. Drawing heavily from Pannekoek's conceptions, the SDP, during these years, attempted to assemble and guide a coalition of syndicalists, pacifists, and Christian socialists for the purpose of turning rising dissatisfaction engendered by the war into revolutionary mass action.²²

When confronted with the threat of war in late July, 1914, the SDP left no doubts about its continuing commitment to revolutionary internationalism. Through its *de facto* alliance with the syndicalists, the party was able to avoid total isolation and act in a swift and unequivocal manner. Within the span of a few days, an SDP-sponsored *ad hoc* organization known as the *Samenwerkende Arbeidersvereenigingen* (SAV – Society for Labor Cooperation), which was originally set up to combat a proposed anti-labor act, began to shift its focus to anti-war action. On August 1, the SAV – which consisted of the SDP, the NAS, the *Internationale Anti-Militaristische Vereeniging* (Anti-Militarist Action Society), and the national unions of ship and dock workers, building workers, cigar makers, metal workers, and municipal workers – issued a manifesto calling for 'war against war' to mark the start of an aggressive agitational campaign. During the next few days, the SAV distributed over 100,000 copies of the manifesto and held street demonstrations which drew as many as 7,000 persons.²³ By contrast, the SDAP, during this same period, took a position fully supporting military mobilization.

In the turbulent days that followed the outbreak of the war, the *Tribune* steadfastly affirmed the SDP's apocalyptic conviction that the war presaged the 'bloody dawn of the communist society'.²⁴ Almost immediately, the SDP formulated a series of agitational demands against the economic austerity measures imposed by the Dutch government. But the focal point of the SDP's agitational work centered around its call for military demobilization. To pursue this demand, the SDP directed its efforts toward building a popular coalition of left groups outside the SDAP.

The most important alliance the SDP developed was with the *Bond van Christen-Socialisten* (BCS – Union of Christian Socialists). Originally formed in 1910 as part of the Dutch peace movement, the BCS, through the appeal of its evangelical, biblically-based anti-militarism, had developed

into a force of considerable significance.²⁵ In late 1915, the SDP and the BCS agreed to run a joint electoral bloc of Christians and Marxists in the spring elections. This electoral campaign was complemented by an aggressive joint anti-conscription campaign which centered around encouraging individuals to refuse military service. In justifying this alliance, the SDP argued that the main antagonism was no longer between Marxists and non-Marxists, but between reformists and revolutionaries, nationalists and internationalists. Any action that brings revolutionary cooperation in actions against imperialism, they felt, had 'more value than a dozen programs'. The election itself marked a significant gain for the SDP. In comparison to a total of only 1,340 votes for the SDP in the 1913 election, the joint bloc drew 21,408.²⁶

This alliance provided the basis for a larger and more intensive anti-militarism campaign during the spring of 1916, which received its vital impetus from the steady deterioration of living conditions in the Dutch urban centers. The catalyst for this campaign came in late March, 1916, when the torpedoing of the 'Tubantia' brought a renewed threat of Dutch entry into the war. On April 2, the SDP and its syndicalist, pacifist, and Christian socialist allies issued a joint manifesto denouncing both the threat of war and the deterioration of living conditions. This was followed by a large well-attended conference in Amsterdam chaired by Wijnkoop on April 24, which marked the start of a mass agitational campaign. Within ten days, four demonstrations against unemployment and food shortages were held in Amsterdam, which drew large numbers of women and the unemployed. For the first time, the propaganda of the SDP began to have an echo within the Dutch working class. The high point of this campaign came with a national demonstration in Amsterdam on June 21, which drew 25,000 persons. 'At last!' Wijnkoop shouted from the podium.²⁷

The prospects of the SDP received a further boost in May, 1916 when the party amalgamated with the 200 member *Revolutionair Socialistisch Verbond* (RSV – Revolutionary Socialist Society). The RSV had been formed in early 1915 on the initiative of Henriette Roland Holst and was composed largely of young left wing members of the SDAP who were disenchanted with that party's pro-mobilization policies.²⁸ Although minor political differences existed between the SDP and the RSV, the principal dividing point involved the long-standing personal animosity between Roland Holst and Van Ravesteijn and Wijnkoop. The rapprochement between the two groups began when Karl Radek – arguing that 'two sects are no better than one' – persuaded Pannekoek to play a mediating role.²⁹ Pannekoek's first success came when he persuaded Roland Holst to help maneuver the *Nieuwe Tijd* – which had hitherto occupied an uneasy middle ground between the SDP and the SDAP – directly into the SDP camp. Formal unification came at the SDP

congress in May and brought the party's total membership up to 700 and provided it with a new infusion of talent.³⁰

The SDP's achievements during the spring of 1916 gave for the first time some plausibility to the party's ambition to become a political vehicle of the Dutch working class. The immobility that had plagued the party since its foundation seemed finally to have been overcome. As the war progressed, the SDP continued to draw new strength and vitality from a growing radicalization of the Dutch working class. Although Holland never experienced a revolutionary upheaval, the years 1917 and 1918 were marked by rising discontent and unrest, which took the form of food riots, demonstrations against scarcity, and a growing mood of militancy among many garrisoned soldiers (to which the SDP catered with a semi-legal paper, the *Soldaten-Tribune*). In the belief that the Dutch revolution would develop as an outgrowth of revolution in Germany, the SDP also devoted considerable energy to aiding the German left through the network of ties originally developed by Pannekoek. These efforts involved a variety of clandestine activities such as surreptitiously smuggling literature into Germany, aiding German deserters, and publishing a German-language newspaper.³¹

The SDP's prestige in the Dutch working class was also greatly strengthened by the impact of the Bolshevik Revolution. In the months following the Bolshevik seizure of power, the SDP swiftly gained the reputation as the 'official outpost' of the Russian Revolution in Western Europe.³² To keep the membership informed of events in Russia, the *Tribune* provided a regular Russian supplement. At the Congress of Leiden in May, 1918, the SDP changed its name to the *Communistische Partij van Holland* (CPH – Communist Party of Holland), which gave it the distinction of being the first party in Western Europe to use the designation communist.

From the beginning of the Russian events in February, 1917, Pannekoek attempted to follow the course of the revolution through garbled newspaper accounts and analyze its significance for European socialism. Pannekoek's commentary on the Russian Revolution was marked by his ardent and enthusiastic support of Lenin and the Bolsheviks. He expressed few doubts or reservations about the character of the revolution: it was, in his view, a popular transformation based on the new institution of democratic self-administration, the soviet. Unlike other left radicals such as Rosa Luxemburg, Pannekoek during this period was either unaware of, or more likely, chose to minimize Lenin's actual views on party organization. His confidence in the Bolsheviks was based in large part on what he perceived to be their uncompromising commitment to wage a revolutionary class struggle. He stressed repeatedly that the Bolsheviks' strength lay not in their organizational structure, but in their aggressive militancy and firm commitment to

Marxist principles. It was precisely these qualities, he felt, that had enabled them to channel spontaneous protests over hunger into a powerful revolutionary mass movement. The Bolsheviks fully understood that the 'ripeness' of a society for socialism is determined to a considerable extent by the 'ripeness of the proletariat for struggle and power'.³³

Although he felt that the Russian Revolution captured the essence of the new socialism that was slowly emerging throughout Europe, Pannekoek, even at this early date, felt the need to stress the different conditions under which the proletariat was fighting in the West. In Russia, he argued, the key factors were the opposition of the bourgeoisie to the czar and the discontent of the peasantry. In Germany and the rest of Western Europe, the revolution would have a completely proletarian character, but the workers would first have to 'free themselves spiritually' from a long and debilitating legacy of parliamentary and trade-union struggle.³⁴

Like Pannekoek, most members of the CPH interpreted Russian Bolshevism primarily through the prism of their own experiences and traditions, which, in fact, had little in common with Bolshevik theory and practice. Along with Pannekoek's extensive writings, the CPH's main ideological reference points during the years 1917 and 1918 were Gorter's *World Revolution* and Henriette Roland Holst's *Mass Action and Revolution*. Both of these works were largely popularized versions of Pannekoek's theoretical formulations, which stressed the imminence of the world revolution and the centrality of the workers' councils, mass actions, and internationalism in the revolutionary process. These were also the years during which the party 'paid special attention to the IWW as a new and original form of militant trade unionism'.³⁵ This attention was due in no small measure to the activities of the Dutch engineer S.J. Rutgers, who had come under the influence of the IWW while living in the United States during the war years. In his reports to Dutch readers, Rutgers stressed that the IWW was completely distinct from syndicalism and maintained that its main conceptions 'are certainly no less than the concepts most of us have developed over the past few years'.³⁶

Through its alliances, its extensive propaganda, its intransigent internationalism, its connection to the Russian Revolution, and its militant campaign against the war economy, the SDP became during the period 1917–1918 what it had not been at the beginning of the war: a party with a growing presence in the Dutch working class. But at the same time, the SDP's successes illustrated the limitations of their strategy. The Tribunistes excelled at *ad hoc* protest and radical propaganda, but they were unable to find a strategy for radicalizing the Dutch working class, let alone make a

social revolution, and they still could not overcome the dominance of the SDAP in the working class.

Militants Against the Current: The Bremen Left and the Formation of German Communism

For the Bremen left, the First World War marked a new stage of political development in which they moved rapidly from being radicals within the social democratic tradition to being revolutionaries outside of it and against it.³⁷ Although events forced him to remain in Holland during the war years, Pannekoek continued to exert, through his writings and personal contacts – in particular through his close friend Johann Knief – a decisive influence on the political development of the Bremen left. Drawing heavily on Pannekoek's analyses, the Bremen left developed, during the war years, into one of the two opposing poles around which the early German communist movement gravitated.

From the earliest days of the war, Pannekoek saw Bremen as a potential model for the new type of revolutionary movement that he felt would arise out of the war. Shortly after returning to Holland, he began to devise plans to bypass the German censors so that his articles could continue to appear regularly in the *Bremer Bürger-Zeitung*. By October, he was ready to outline a strategy for the future. Pannekoek's prognosis for the future was based on his belief that the principal task confronting the left was to overcome the 'old awe' of the SPD. But Pannekoek stopped short of advocating an immediate break with the party. He counselled that for the moment nothing could be done except to prepare the workers ideologically for an eventual break with the SPD and for the formation of a completely new type of workers' movement. His only concrete suggestion for the present was to urge the Bremen left to take the initiative and create an independent left radical publication aimed directly at the workers.³⁸

For the Bremen left, the first year of the war was a year of confusion and despair. In the immediate aftermath of the war, the left lost its most prominent leaders: Pannekoek returned to Holland; Knief was mobilized and sent to the front; Radek was forced to leave for Switzerland. At the same time, many of their working class supporters were drafted. As a consequence, the left swiftly lost many of their positions of influence in the party and trade unions. Disorganized and under conditions of severe repression, the left could do little more during the winter and spring of 1914–15 than distribute an occasional clandestine anti-war leaflet.

The first step in building an organized anti-war opposition came in Janu-

ary, 1915, with the creation of a discussion circle for selected activists within the Bremen SPD. To help develop a praxis for the anti-war movement, the circle immediately embarked on a systematic study of Pannekoek's theoretical writings.³⁹ The circle received a major boost in the fall of 1915 when Knief was able to resume his political activity after being discharged from the army for shell shock. In the upcoming months, Knief's leadership was to be crucial for the organizational and ideological regroupment of the left in Bremen. Almost immediately, Knief began to rebuild the left's extensive network of shop-floor militants in order to lay the groundwork for mass actions against the war.

Despite these gains, systematic anti-war activity remained confined to the small circle of activists throughout most of 1915. The tense truce that had prevailed in Bremen in late 1914 began to unravel only during the winter of 1915-16. As signs of disaffection began to slowly surface, the left gained renewed confidence, and by the late fall of 1915, felt strong enough to start disseminating their views in broader circles.

These developments were only one element of a larger process of left regroupment going on in Germany at the time. Throughout 1915, the ranks of the anti-war opposition grew steadily. By the end of the year, left radical opposition groups held positions of power in Berlin, Hamburg, Leipzig, Stuttgart, and Brunswick. In Berlin, Rosa Luxemburg and her collaborators came out in April, 1915, with the publication, *Die Internationale*, and later that year began to issue the so-called *Spartakus* letters.⁴⁰

As the opposition movement continued to gain momentum, the Bremen left began to develop an extensive network of national and international contacts which helped make them a vital force within the European revolutionary left. Through Radek, close ties were forged with both the Zimmerwald left, and Lenin and the Bolsheviks. In Germany, a particularly close relationship was established with Julian Borchardt and his publication *Lichtstrahlen*, which served as a major outlet for the writings of Pannekoek, Knief, and Radek. The most important ties, however, were with the Hamburg group of left radicals led by Laufenberg and Wolffheim, whom Knief had spent a year bringing to a Pannekoekian position.⁴¹ Relations with the Spartacist group in Berlin, by contrast, were strained due to a combination of pre-war animosities and deep-seated strategic differences. The principal dividing point involved the Spartacists' unwillingness to break with the centrist opposition grouped around Kautsky, Bernstein, and Haase and attempt to build a new type of revolutionary organization.⁴²

The year 1916 stands as a major turning point in the development of the anti-war opposition. As that year progressed, the movement grew from one of small, isolated groups of militants to a movement of mass proportions.

The first signs of mass discontent began to arise over purely domestic questions such as the decline in rations and real wages. This mood of discontent began to assume an increasingly political form following the arrest and sentencing of Karl Liebknecht for statements he made at an illegal May Day demonstration. In Bremen, Knief launched a major agitational campaign, beginning with a demonstration of socialist women against the rising cost of living on June 22. Several days later, 400-500 persons marched through the city center in solidarity with Liebknecht. Following Liebknecht's sentencing on June 29, several thousand workers took to the streets for several days shouting anti-war and anti-government slogans. On July 4 – partly on the initiative of the left – 4,000 shipyard workers of the Weser firm went on a wildcat strike for higher wages and declared their solidarity with Liebknecht.⁴³

The growing sense of strength and self-confidence of the Bremen left led them to create – following extensive consultation with Pannekoek – the review *Arbeiterpolitik* in June, 1916.⁴⁴ The defined aim of *Arbeiterpolitik* was to provide the workers with a new 'spiritual orientation' and liberate them from the 'stultifying power of the organizational bureaucracy of official social democracy'. Its main themes were clearly Pannekoekian in character. It stressed repeatedly that the SDP, through its bureaucracy and base in the labor aristocracy, had become a new 'social imperialist' party fully integrated into the capitalist system. Unlike the Spartacists, they felt that the vital question was not one of reforming the SDP, but one of drawing sharp new lines of demarcation for the coming epoch of workers' power.⁴⁵ Under the editorship of Knief and Paul Frölich, and with major intellectual contributions from Pannekoek and Radek, *Arbeiterpolitik* swiftly emerged as the leading theoretical organ of the German revolutionary left.

Starting in the fall of 1916, the Bremen left began to lay the groundwork for the formation of a new party of the left. This task became particularly urgent when the entire anti-war opposition – both left and center – was expelled from the SPD in January, 1917. In the hope of uniting the left, Knief invited the Spartacists to write for *Arbeiterpolitik* and journeyed to Berlin for discussions with their leaders. But these overtures failed to blunt the mutual hostility and suspicion between the two groups. Shortly before the second national conference of the opposition at Gotha in April, 1917, the Bremen left organized a caucus of the left in a final attempt to reach agreement on a common strategy. The Bremen group and its Hamburg allies, along with the Borchardt group and Spartacist supporters in various cities, favored a new party of the left, but were opposed by the majority of Spartacists and the Dresden left.⁴⁶ When the majority of Spartacists joined with the centrists to form the *Unabhängige Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschland* (USPD – In-

dependent Social Democratic Party of Germany), the Bremen left accused them of attempting to restore the 'old leader politics' and withdrew to continue their efforts to form a separate anti-bureaucratic revolutionary party of the left.⁴⁷ Although their conception of the new revolutionary movement was as yet undefined, the Bremen left, on the eve of the great revolutionary upheavals of 1917–1918, had clearly differentiated themselves from both the Spartacists and USPD on two key points: they demanded an organization built on completely different lines than the old forms being reproduced in the USPD; and, to make the break from pre-war social democracy complete, they wanted an action-oriented organization arising out of the struggle itself.

The events at Gotha gave a powerful impetus to a discussion within the Bremen left during the spring of 1917 over the precise form of organization to adopt for the future. From their Pannekoekian perspective, the Bremen left maintained that the old forms of party and trade union were unsuitable for the revolutionary upheavals expected in the future and called for new direct class instruments of revolutionary struggle. The model they envisioned was inspired in part by the American Industrial Workers of the World (IWW). Familiarity with the IWW came from the Hamburg left radical leader Fritz Wolffheim, who had edited an IWW publication in the United States, and from the activities of American IWW sailors in the ports of Hamburg and Bremen. In March, 1917, Wolffheim published a proposal for a new type of 'unitary organization' (*Einheitsorganisation*) combining the functions of party and trade union. His underlying assumption was that the centralizing and cartelizing tendencies of imperialist capitalism could be combatted effectively only by a loose, class-wide network of autonomous factory-level organizations.⁴⁸ This view was immediately adopted by Knief who journeyed to Hamburg for extensive discussions with Wolffheim on how to develop the new organization.

The Bremen left's search for a new organizational structure coincided with, and received powerful reinforcement from, a spontaneous strike wave which broke out throughout Germany in April, 1917. While the strikes were primarily a response to the deterioration of living conditions, a marked revolutionary temperament began to show itself in many areas. In Leipzig, a workers' council was formed to coordinate the strike, which represented the first appearance of this institution on German soil. Although the strike movement has commonly been termed the Shop Stewards Movement, in fact, it went much deeper in terms of the self-organization and participation of the working class. To circumvent the trade union leadership's ban on strikes, the workers organized an extensive network of factory delegate committees (*Betriebsräte*), which provided the embryonic structure for the workers' councils which arose throughout Germany the following year.

In Bremen, the political character of this movement was determined largely by the left. During the course of over a decade of political struggles, the left had developed an extensive network of shop-floor militants in the great shipyards and large industrial plants, which would play a pivotal role in the struggles of 1917–1919. While the left could not mobilize the workers at will, they could, however, focus their discontent on particular issues and give it a political form, turning, in many cases, elemental expressions of unrest into impressive demonstrations of strength.

Encouraged by the April strikes, the Bremen left helped launch another wave of strikes and demonstrations throughout June and July, 1917. When the government responded by mobilizing its forces against the left, Knief was forced to go underground to avoid arrest. Intending at first to go to Holland to collaborate with Pannekoek, Knief changed his mind shortly before reaching the border and decided he could be more effective in Berlin.⁴⁹

Upon reaching Berlin, Knief resumed his efforts to form a new left radical organization. By July, he had managed to form an action committee out of a number of local groups from throughout Germany which issued a formal call for the formation of a new organization that was 'not a new leader party', but an instrument for 'bringing into being a new form of political life'. In response to this call, thirteen delegates gathered illegally in Berlin on August 26, 1917, for the foundation congress of what was officially termed the *Internationale Sozialisten Deutschlands* (ISD – International Socialists of Germany).

Despite the high hopes of Knief, this action was more a gesture of intent than an act of organization. Although the ISD was proclaimed a 'unitary organization', its exact structure was deliberately left vague on the assumption that its precise form would develop organically out of the struggles of the future.⁵⁰

The ISD's belief in an impending revolutionary upheaval received additional reinforcement when a second national strike wave broke out in January, 1918. These events began with the walkout of 400,000 metal workers in Berlin on January 28. Within a few days, the strike had grown to encompass over a million workers and was the largest manifestation of popular discontent in Germany up to that time.⁵¹ In Bremen, the ISD played a prominent role in helping coordinate a strike of several thousand shipyard workers, which was put down only through a two-week military occupation on the docks.⁵²

These strikes clearly indicated that, among the German working class, radical anti-war tendencies were gaining ground and that the mood of political unity which permeated the country at the beginning of the war was rapidly disappearing. Although eight months went by without a serious

outbreak of working-class action, both economic conditions and the military situation continued to deteriorate. Following major defeats in mid-September and early October, the worsening military situation could no longer be concealed from the public, and the atmosphere of the country appeared to change overnight.⁵³

The revolution itself began with a naval mutiny at Kiel on November 4, 1918, and spread like an avalanche throughout Germany. The initial course of events seemed to confirm the perspective of Pannekoek and the German left. The form of the German Revolution was almost exactly as they had predicted: spontaneous mass actions and mass strikes, which found institutional form in the workers' and soldiers' councils. During the first days of November, over 10,000 such councils were elected in virtually all workplaces and garrisons, and power was temporarily in their hands. While it is clear that the example of the councils (soviets) in the Russian Revolution played an essential role in propagating the idea of the council as an organizational form, this example was of less importance than the experiences of the German workers themselves during the preceding two years. Due in part to the role of the SPD, which almost immediately became the dominant force in the councils and the government, both the collapse of the old state and the development of a proletarian council system were a less radical process in Germany than in Russia.⁵⁴

In Bremen, the revolution began on November 4, 1918, with a strike of several thousand dock and shipyard workers. It was completed two days later, when revolutionary sailors arrived from Kiel to disarm the local military garrison.⁵⁵ Although the ISD – which became the *Internationale Kommunisten Deutschlands* (IKD – International Communists of Germany) in late November – played only a limited role in the revolution, the party was prepared to move decisively in the days which followed. Through its control of the former SPD organization, its extensive network of factory militants, its long experience of political struggle, its outstanding agitational and theoretical leadership, and its rapport with the local working class, the IKD was well-placed to seize the revolutionary initiative.⁵⁶

Although not a direct participant in the German Revolution, Pannekoek, nonetheless, played a central role in the elaboration of the IKD's strategic perspective. During the critical weeks of November and December, his theoretical analyses appeared regularly in *Arbeitspolitik* and, in fact, outnumbered those of all other contributors. Pannekoek's evaluation of the situation turned on his assumption that the November revolution was a bourgeois revolution in which proletarian mediums had been used to accomplish bourgeois ends while the old institutions of state power still remained intact. On this point he bluntly stated: 'The proletariat has no cause to be proud [...].

Only the smallest part of its task has been accomplished.' He concluded that a transition from the bourgeois to the proletarian stage of the revolution was possible only if an active minority of the working class discarded the pre-war forms of organization and attempted to act within the framework of the councils to radicalize the class as a whole. Pannekoek, at the same time, cautioned against relying uncritically on the councils on the grounds that they were not yet pure proletarian institutions. What was essential was to insure that the councils serve as instruments of proletarian clarification and consciousness as a prelude to a full-scale struggle for socialism.⁵⁷

Despite the strength of the IKD, the first weeks of the revolution had few radical effects in Bremen. The former city administrative structure still continued to function under the supervision of the central workers' council. Officers were expelled from the soldiers' councils, but opposition from the troops prevented the formation of a Red Guard. The councils were active and purposeful in their daily work, but it was largely in their mood rather than their actions that they differed from councils elsewhere in Germany during the early weeks of the revolution.

Under Knief's leadership, the IKD launched a campaign of agitation and organization to help radicalize the revolution. This campaign began on November 29, when Knief led a crowd of 20,000 demonstrators to present a series of radical demands to a session of the central workers' council.⁵⁸ Throughout December, the pace of events continued to gain momentum. On December 12, the central council arrested bourgeois hostages only to release them a day later. On December 24, the council voted not to support the national assembly elections and reaffirmed its support for the council system. Five days later it began to distribute arms to members of the IKD and the USPD. The first trial of strength came two days later with the return of the Seventy-Fifth Infantry Regiment to Bremen. Fearing that it might serve as a *Freikorps* formation, a coalition of armed workers and revolutionary soldiers surrounded and disarmed the regiment.⁵⁹

While these developments were taking place in Bremen, the German Revolution was becoming increasingly polarized into two hostile camps. This conflict, which found symbolic expression in the opposing slogans – national assembly or council system – was a struggle based on two fundamentally different interpretations of the German Revolution. Almost immediately after assuming power, the SPD-dominated provisional government led by Friedrich Ebert allied itself with the apparatus of the old regime and moved quickly to undermine the power of the councils and disperse the forces which desired to drive the revolution to the left. The future course of the revolution was made clear when the provisional government began to make preparations to convene a constituent national assembly to determine

the final political form of the state. The left, convinced that this would have the effect of placing the governmental structure in the hands of the non-proletarian social classes, continued to demand a government based solely on the council system. By the time of the national conference of workers' and soldiers' councils on December 16, it was clear that the remaining power of the councils existed in name only.

In the chaotic first weeks of the revolution the lack of unity between the IKD and the Spartacists weighed heavily upon the left and darkened their future prospects. By late December the fear of an anti-revolutionary tendency consolidating itself was strong enough to galvanize the IKD and the Spartacists to put aside their differences and unite to form the *Kommunistische Partei Deutschlands* (KPD – Communist Party of Germany). But the proceedings of the unification congress held in Berlin from December 30 to January 1 clearly revealed that the fundamental differences in outlook between the two main currents of German communism still had not been resolved. The principal dividing point involved the nature of the new organization itself. The Spartacists favored a centralized organization capable of responding uniformly to any type of revolutionary situation, while the IKD called for a loose federation of local groups united only by a kind of 'spiritual unity'. This question merged into the related question of whether to continue to work within the existing trade union federations or attempt to form new 'unitary organization'. In order to head off a controversy, Rosa Luxemburg intervened to have both questions referred to a special commission. The most controversial debate, however, involved the question of whether to participate in the upcoming national assembly elections. This time neither Rosa Luxemburg nor Karl Liebknecht were able to sway the membership and the motion against participation passed by a lopsided vote of 62 to 23.⁶⁰

The KPD's first test of strength came within days of its formation, in the abortive revolt that has gone down in history as the Spartacist uprising. In Bremen, events took a different course when a council republic seized and held power for three weeks. This action was in part a tragic misunderstanding based on the assumption that the events in Berlin marked the beginning of the second revolution. But behind this seizure of power lay weeks of propagandizing by the left on the need to proclaim a form of council power. Although Knief, who was slowly dying from complications following an appendectomy, advised against a seizure of power, the momentum established earlier could not be reversed.⁶¹ This ill-planned action began on January 10 with a KPD-led occupation of the local trade union offices, which swiftly broadened into an armed demonstration in front of the city hall at which the Socialist Republic of Bremen was boldly proclaimed. To head the

new council republic, a Council of Peoples' Commissars was created, consisting of representatives of the KPD, USPD, and the soldiers' councils.⁶²

The council republic's existence was precarious from the start. Its three weeks of tenuous rule were marked by new levels of political activism and demonstrated widespread support for the revolutionary aspirations of the left, but the localized conditions precluded substantial social and economic reforms and insured that the elaborate new governmental structure remained largely a paper system. The first confrontation came on January 14, when, at the urging of the SDP, part of the military garrison launched an abortive rebellion protesting attempts to disarm the army. Although the republic managed to survive the revolt, its troubles continued to mount. The most serious problem was a credit boycott by the local financial institutions which began on January 21. During the next few days intermittent street fighting broke out again. At this point, the republic, searching for a satisfactory way out, declared its willingness to hold regular elections. On January 25, Noske, the SPD minister for internal security, announced his intention to crush the Bremen revolt militarily as a means of demonstrating the authority of the central government. Two days later he gave orders to a *Freikorps* regiment to march on Bremen and establish a provisional government. The battle for the city began on February 3 and continued throughout the next day with heavy casualties. The final blow came on February 5 when the Weser docks – a long-time bastion of the Bremen left – were occupied. In the aftermath of this bloody defeat, the councils were dissolved and a new SPD-dominated provisional government established.⁶³

This apparent failure of the radical left dampened but did not destroy Pannekoek's belief in the possibility of a second revolution. The left's defeat, as he saw it, represented only a 'small episode' in a whole period of revolutionary struggle.⁶⁴ He felt that the January offensive – which he had resolutely opposed – was not a struggle for power, but a battle only for certain power positions which had been shaped by the November revolution. Pannekoek steadfastly maintained that the revolution must either go forward toward conquest of new power positions or face loss of those positions conquered in November. Pannekoek took it for granted that the time was not ripe for a full-scale test of strength, since the German bourgeoisie still had considerable military power at its disposal. At the same time, however, Pannekoek was ill-prepared to revise his thinking to meet the new situation. In his view, it was still the doctrines from the pre-war era that represented the 'worst obstacle to socialist revolution'.⁶⁵ The workers, he insisted, were ready and willing to struggle, but they still expected the call to come from above and continued to listen to the old social democratic leaders. The Spar-

tacists had unwittingly reinforced this process by their alliance with the Independents. Had the Spartacists broken from the USPD earlier, he maintained, then the workers might have had a better understanding of the situation and perhaps not have acted so rashly. The Independents, for their part, instead of building a socialist consciousness, had relied on a form of 'revolutionary verbalism' which had no connection to revolutionary practice. But if Pannekoek felt impelled to blame the failure of the second revolution on the strength of the old organizations, he still did not have any specific policies or methods the new movement might adopt to counter the appeal of these organizations. On the contrary, he remained unshakeably convinced that the whole process would be largely spontaneous; he felt that as mass actions spread and intensified the old organizations would be increasingly unable to play a restraining role. For the present, he saw only a state of spiritual disorientation in which the old norms had fallen and the new had not yet broken through and must be prefigured by struggle. His basic formula for revolution remained essentially unchanged: 'The growth of communism in Germany is the growth of communist thought, of the will to conquer power, and the preparation for revolution.'⁶⁶

For the German communist movement, 1919 was above all a year of self-definition and reassessment. Although the January offensive revealed the inability of the left to make a social revolution, their defeat did not end civil strife in Germany. The remainder of 1919 was characterized by general unrest and scattered uprisings as rising expectations and deteriorating living conditions combined to create a volatile atmosphere. In Munich, another council republic was proclaimed and held power for three weeks in April. Troops were sent to quell disturbances in Hamburg, Leipzig, Halle, Brunswick, and the Ruhr. During the course of the year, nearly 5,000 strikes occurred throughout Germany.⁶⁷ These developments helped give a special sense of urgency to a lengthy tactical debate between the two currents of German communism, in which Pannekoek became a major participant.

Despite their common participation in the events of January and February, the amalgamation of the IKD with the Spartacists did not go smoothly. The first shadows of conflict were cast in June, 1919, when Paul Levi, who had assumed leadership of the KPD after the deaths of Luxemburg and Liebknecht, attacked the Bremen and Hamburg organizations for their lack of discipline. Levi considered the left to be largely responsible for the KPD's defeat and felt the party's first task was to restore authority through centralization. Levi also reasoned that the only way the KPD could escape its isolation was to adopt parliamentary tactics to rid itself of its left wing, and seek to attract the 800,000 members of the USPD.⁶⁸

The former IKD, for their part, tenaciously held to their Pannekoekian

position that a transition to the socialist stage of the revolution was possible only on the basis of new forms of working-class organization and a complete break with the politics of pre-war social democracy. Throughout the summer and fall of 1919, a renewed discussion of the question of revolutionary organization dominated internal party life in Bremen and Hamburg. From this discussion, the former IKD left emerged more convinced than ever that the party must become a decentralized federation devoted to propagating the ideas of 'unitary organization' and the council system.⁶⁹ These themes were summarized in a program drawn up by Pannekoek, which became the focus of a heated debate at a national conference of the KPD in August, 1919.⁷⁰

Shortly after the conference, Levi, with the theoretical support of Karl Radek, launched a full-scale assault on the left opposition. This task was not an easy one, since in addition to their strongholds in Bremen, Hamburg, and Berlin, the left possessed considerable strength in virtually all local KPD sections.⁷¹ In preparation for the Congress of Heidelberg on October 24, Levi and the KPD central committee (*Zentrale*) prepared a set of 'guidelines' for party policies which denounced the opposition as 'syndicalist' and called for the 'strictest centralism' in party affairs. Through tight control of both the delegate selection process and the proceedings of the congress, Levi managed to obtain both the approval of the guidelines and the expulsion of those who voted against them.⁷²

With the expulsions of Heidelberg, the first phase of German communism had abruptly come to an end. By now it had become clear that the differences between the two currents of German communism went much deeper than a simple disagreement over tactics, but involved a fundamentally different conception of communism itself. The process which culminated in the radical councilist perspective of the IKD clearly testifies to the depth of an alternative tradition within German Marxism which had little in common with the Leninist communism that later became dominant. Although their challenge to the existing order was ultimately very limited and their strategy greatly overestimated the revolutionary impulses that guided a certain segment of the working class, Pannekoek and the radical councilists managed to give expression to several critical innovations in tactics and theory, which would be further developed in the new anti-bureaucratic revolutionary organizations that emerged the following year.

The New Socialism of the Laboring Masses: Pannekoek's Political Thought, 1914-1919

Pannekoek's theoretical work during the war years – which was central to the strategy of both the Dutch and Bremen left – was largely an expansion and reformulation of his earlier analysis of 1910-1914. Aside from some

shifts in emphasis and a few new specifics, what was new in these formulations was largely their tone and sense of immediacy.

Pannekoek's point of departure was a bold and sweeping political and sociological critique of German social democracy. In an argument which closely paralleled that of the German sociologist Robert Michels, Pannekoek maintained that the ideological stagnation and attenuation of class conflict in the pre-war socialist and trade union movement was a direct consequence of its bureaucratic internal structure: 'It takes the form of a gigantic and powerful organization, almost a state within a state, with its own officials, finances and press, spiritual universe, and specific ideology (Marxism). By its very nature, it is adapted to the pre-imperialist peaceful era. The thousands of officials, secretaries, agitators, parliamentarians, theoreticians, and publicists – who already form a distinct caste, a group with very distinct interests – rule the organization on both the material and spiritual levels, and express its general character.'⁷³ But whereas Michels had focused upon organizational degeneration, Pannekoek chose to emphasize the ideological cooptation that went hand in hand with this process. He argued that the entire stratum of party and trade union officials, parliamentarians, and Marxist intellectuals had dampened working class militancy by importing various forms of bourgeois ideology into the socialist movement. Marxism, in this context, had been completely stripped of its revolutionary content and deformed into a 'dry doctrine of mechanical fatalism'; its practical function was nothing more than that of a legitimatizing ideology for a bureaucratic party elite. As a consequence, social democracy came to embody not the negation of bourgeois society, but rather its extension and rationalization.

Pannekoek felt that the consequences of this for party life at the base were clear: pre-war socialism had little impact on the daily lives of the great masses of workers. Most party members were not active fighters for socialism; only five to ten per cent participated in party activities; the others did little more than passively pay dues. Such a proletariat was neither ripe enough nor strong enough for political revolution. At best, it was an indication that they were 'socialist but not revolutionary'. For these reasons, Pannekoek concluded that the power of German social democracy was nothing more than a chimera. Behind its revolutionary facade, social democracy remained paralyzed by irreversible contradictions.⁷⁴

At the same time, Pannekoek felt that social democracy's capitulation was also a consequence of an inherent weakness in the proletariat's internationalism. He argued that as the growth of imperialism created a new privileged stratum within the working class, it simultaneously generated strong tendencies toward national chauvinism and reformism, which corresponded to the bureaucratic interests of the party and trade union leadership. Hence, nationalism became the most easily manipulated ideological tool at the dis-

posals of the bourgeoisie, and social democracy became one of its main conduits. In seeking to account for the failure of socialist internationalism, Pannekoek distinguished between three forms of internationalism within the workers' movement. The first of these was the 'primitive internationalism' which characterized the early stages of the workers' movement and was still propagated by the anarchists. In reality, this internationalism was nothing more than a powerless protest of the old peasant villages and trade communities against the strong centralized community of the bourgeois nation state. The second type was the 'abstract internationalism' of the intellectuals and the revisionists, which desired simply a peaceful community of nations. Third, was what he termed the 'practical internationalism' of the industrial proletariat, which was rooted in the work life of the proletariat and their daily struggles against the bourgeoisie. Its hallmark was a 'community of struggle', which – due to the nature of pre-war socialism – existed only in embryonic form: 'These tiny socialist congresses, in which the leaders good-naturedly or vehemently discussed all sorts of questions and then went out together to drink beer could not, of course, be a community of struggle. A community of struggle develops only out of real struggles.' At its best, proletarian internationalism was never more than an abstract feeling; there was in reality no community with the workers over the border. It was, therefore, not correct to say that the workers did not struggle against the war because they were not internationalist enough, but the reverse: because they did not struggle, their internationalism became a pale shadow.⁷⁵

As a corollary of his analysis, Pannekoek maintained that this deradicalizing process could only unfold in a period of economic and political stability, whereas the war unleashed exactly the opposite – crisis and polarization. It was for this reason that Pannekoek remained adamant in his opposition to any type of alliance with the centrist anti-war opposition led by Kautsky. He felt that the instinct of self-preservation compelled the centrists to shield the whole bureaucratic apparatus – to which they were irrevocably tied – from the threat of social revolution by engaging in class collaboration. At bottom, the policies of the centrists were merely one aspect of an attempt to reform capitalism with the help of social democracy, which was occurring at the very moment when socialism was a historical possibility.⁷⁶

To his longstanding belief in the inability of the center to wage a struggle for socialism, Pannekoek added a new ingredient: the possible structural and ideological integration of social democracy into a new system of state exploitation. The war-time experiences with state control over industries, he felt, had led a large part of the bourgeoisie to place their hopes in a form of 'state socialism'. Pannekoek maintained that from an economic and technological standpoint, a centralized and nationalized system of production

would offer a number of advantages over private ownership, such as technological rationalization, increased production, lower prices, and regulation of wages and working conditions. It would also allow a speedy reconversion of industry to peacetime production and provide an easy solution to the problem of returning soldiers seeking employment. But for the workers, the reality would only be a new system of domination erected behind the 'facade of socialism'.⁷⁷

These formulations led Pannekoek to place a renewed emphasis on the democratic aspects of socialist transformation. A constantly recurring theme in Pannekoek's war-time writings was his objection to equating nationalization of enterprises with socialism, a point he had raised as early as 1911. He warned that if socialism was considered synonymous with a state-controlled economy, then the working class would find itself without 'spiritual arms' once the state intensified exploitation. In seeking to explain how a statist conception of socialism had come to predominance in the socialist movement, Pannekoek argued that while Marx had originally conceived of socialism as rational economic planning combined with democracy, the purely economic aspects of his thought had received the most emphasis owing to half a century of economic scarcity. But as the economy was becoming increasingly organized through capitalist development, a new conception of socialism as democratic self-administration was slowly coming to the forefront. Pannekoek insisted that as the trend toward state socialism accelerated, the struggle for democratization – in the form of struggles for greater democracy both within the existing state and in the new self-administering organs of proletarian struggle – would take on a new intensity and significance.⁷⁸

As a counterweight to what he perceived as the growing statist orientation and deradicalization of social democracy, Pannekoek envisioned a 'new socialism of the laboring masses'.⁷⁹ Although avoiding a precise definition, Pannekoek viewed this new socialism as residing in the capacity of the masses for spontaneous action and self-organization and distinguished it from the old, discredited party-based socialism of the pre-war era: 'The hope of socialism no longer lies in its gradualist and bourgeois side, the admirable socialist parties with their glittering speakers, their famous politicians, their noble feelings of human love, their nice programs, their good, proud, self-righteous workers. It lies instead in the dark poverty and misery of the masses, who, as they rebel against their misery, are hated, scorned, and persecuted as the enemies of state and society; out of their struggles and sacrifices will arise the full freedom of mankind.'⁸⁰ For Pannekoek, the war symbolized the beginning of a new epoch for both capitalism and socialism 'in which the will and action of men will be primary'.⁸¹ Although his strategic

conceptions remained more an expression of faith than a practical guide to action – as the German Revolution clearly revealed – the trenchant logic and militant phraseology of Pannekoek's position could not be misunderstood; it was a clarion call to a new kind of socialism, free from the evasions, compromises, and ambiguities of the era of the Second International, one based on the single-minded waging of a total and world-wide class struggle.

CHAPTER IX

THE LEFT COMMUNIST ALTERNATIVE, 1920–1926*West European Marxism on the Offensive: The Amsterdam Bureau*

A new epoch in the history of European Marxism began with the formation of the Communist International in March, 1919. In spite of his longstanding differences with Pannekoek over the nature of the new international revolutionary Marxism, Lenin, nonetheless, made it clear long before the International was formed that he envisioned a leading role for both the Dutch and Bremen left. Writing on the possibility of forming a new International in 1917, Lenin noted: ‘The Bolsheviks within Polish Social Democracy, the Dutch, the “Arbeiter Politik” and “Demain” – this is a sufficiently large nucleus.’¹

During the early months of the Comintern’s existence, significant Western involvement was precluded by the disruption of the usual avenues of communication between Russia and Western Europe. The task of involving Western Europe was first approached in practical terms in September, 1919, when a decision was made to create a Secretariat for Western Europe in Berlin and a Western European Bureau in Amsterdam. To organize the Amsterdam Bureau, Lenin chose the Dutch Marxist S.J. Rutgers, who was residing in Moscow. An engineer by profession, Rutgers had spent several years in the Dutch East Indies prior to the war and in 1915 went to the United States where he, along with his close friend and political collaborator, Louis Fraina, played a key role in disseminating many of Pannekoek’s ideas within the American socialist movement.² After the war, he traveled across Siberia, then ravaged by civil war, to Moscow, arriving in time to represent the CPH at the foundation of the Comintern. Rutgers was given a three-fold mandate by Lenin: to establish relations with various communist groups in Western Europe and America, to set up a communist propaganda center, and to organize an international conference. Rutgers was also instructed by the Comintern executive to staff the Bureau with Pannekoek, Gorter, Roland Holst, Wijnkoop, and Van Ravesteyn.³

The Amsterdam Bureau first began to function in January, 1920, with the immediate goal of organizing an international conference in Amsterdam, which many viewed as the equivalent of an international congress of the

Comintern.⁴ This conference, which was held in Amsterdam from February 3 to 6, 1920, marked the high water mark of the Bureau's activity and its first attempt to serve as a *de facto* West European International. While Dutch delegates predominated, the conference drew delegates and observers from at least a dozen countries and was a more representative gathering than the earlier foundation congress of the Comintern.⁵

Although the conference was poorly organized and broken up prematurely by the police, it, nonetheless, attempted to articulate, for the first time, a specifically West European conception of communism. The manifesto adopted by the conference emphasized the significance of the workers' councils as the new principle of proletarian organization and included a set of theses drafted by Pannekoek explicitly condemning parliamentary and trade union tactics. In his 'Theses concerning Parliamentarism', Pannekoek – who almost immediately had emerged as the Bureau's 'spiritual leader'⁶ – also openly challenged the centralized structure of the International when he publicly criticized Comintern policy, noting: 'These mainlines laid down by the Moscow Secretariat have not since, proved sufficient in all practical cases. [...] whether and when a country is in this condition is a matter for the decision not of any international congress, but of the communists of this country.'⁷

The Amsterdam Bureau's antipathy toward parliamentarianism and trade unionism, and its emphasis on autonomy for the component parties was only the first open indication of a major difference in outlook between the leadership of the Communist International and the Dutch leftists. While serious differences between the Bolsheviks and the Dutch left can be traced back to the years of the Zimmerwald Marxism, both parties preferred to gloss over them in the revolutionary ferment that followed the Russian Revolution. Thus, when Rutgers spoke at the founding congress of the Comintern about the CPH's close relationship with the syndicalists, it was considered a positive feature of the party, consistent with the desire to bring all revolutionary elements into the new organization. In the months that followed, Pannekoek, Gorter, and Roland Holst all wrote ideologically acceptable articles for the review *Communist International*. When Rutgers left for Amsterdam, he carried with him an offer from Lenin for Pannekoek to work in Moscow as a full-time theoretician and advisor for the Comintern.⁸ The Dutch, for their part, had initially taken it for granted that both the Bolsheviks and the Communist International rejected parliamentary tactics. This assumption, in fact, seemed to be borne out by the few writings of Lenin available in translation – in particular by *State and Revolution* with its paean to Pannekoek – and by the early formative documents of the Comintern.

The Dutch left interpreted the structure and function of the Bureau ac-

cording to their own tradition which emphasized agitation over organization. They had few notions of specific policies the Bureau should adopt or the machinery appropriate to carry them out; their major activity often boiled down to writing apocalyptic revolutionary manifestos. From the very beginning, the Bureau's strategy was premised on their Pannekoekian belief in the need for a resolute break with the tactics and organizational forms of pre-war social democracy. In pursuit of this aim, a considerable part of the Bureau's work was devoted to a bold attempt to consolidate a specific current of left communism revolution throughout Europe. Through Henriette Roland Holst's extensive travels, close ties were forged with the Committee for the Third International in France, Sylvia Pankhurst and the Workers' Socialist Federation in England, and left groups in the Swiss and Belgian socialist parties. The closest relations, however, were reserved for the German left opposition, with whom Pannekoek remained in close contact. Although Germany was part of the territory assigned to the Berlin Secretariat, the Bureau attempted to intervene actively on the side of the left opposition in the factional struggle in the KPD, which earned it the lasting hostility of the Berlin Secretariat.

The Bureau's aggressive militancy and independent outlook were again demonstrated with striking clarity when it attempted to organize a sub-bureau of its own, the Pan American Provisional Bureau, which was set up in the United States by Rutgers' collaborator, Louis Fraina, to coordinate revolutionary activity in North and South America. The sub-bureau, however, soon became entangled in the factional disputes raging within the American communist movement and never managed to achieve more than a paper existence.⁹ A more audacious step was taken when the Bureau also maneuvered to downgrade the Berlin Secretariat by passing a resolution reassigning its duties and designating it 'a subdivision of the Amsterdam Bureau'.¹⁰ With one bold stroke, the Bureau had attempted to subordinate a branch conceived and organized by Moscow. Taken together, these plans, conceptions, and policies all clearly reveal that, far from viewing themselves as instruments of a central authority, the Amsterdam Bureau regarded itself as a major revolutionary center for the future European revolution.

Although the Bureau's independent revolutionary outlook was in part a reflection of a specifically West European conception of communism, it was also greatly facilitated by the lack of communication between Amsterdam and Moscow. From the time it started functioning in January 1920, until late April, when Rutgers established a regular courier link through Stockholm, the Bureau had virtually no direct communication with Moscow. By this time, however, the Bureau's policies and actions had become well known in

Moscow and the Comintern leadership considered the situation extremely embarrassing. The breaking point came when the Bureau began to take up the cause of the newly formed German KAPD. The response from the Comintern leadership was quick and unequivocal. On April 30, Radio Moscow made a terse announcement that the Bureau had been closed down and its functions assigned to the Berlin Secretariat.¹¹ The decision had been reached with neither consultation nor a chance of appeal. With this action, what has been described as 'the only opportunity ever given the Western Communists to form a subsidiary Communist center of their own'¹² abruptly came to an end.

Working Class Organization of a New Type: The KAPD and the AAUD

What Pannekoek and the Amsterdam Bureau were saying in a general way about the need for a specifically West European form of revolution, the militants of the German left were asserting directly in practice. The spontaneous creation of workers' councils in Germany during the period 1918 to 1921 was only one aspect of a larger process of working class mobilization and radicalization, which was marked by several attempts to develop anti-bureaucratic alternatives to the traditional forms of party and trade union organization.

Within the German labor movement, a new movement of revolutionary industrial unionism arose which owed little to formal socialist doctrine or practice. Like the workers' councils, this movement had its origins in the factory committees which emerged during the war and proliferated rapidly after November, 1918. Based almost entirely on local factory or shop organizations, the industrial union movement appeared almost spontaneously, without any precise ideological definitions or attachments. The local organizations that emerged were defined largely by their dissatisfaction with the existing trade unions, a willingness to use militant tactics, and a common anti-bureaucratic impulse. Their highly decentralized character was initially neither premeditated nor a matter of principle, but a consequence of their origins in localized wildcat strikes.¹³

In the process of ideological differentiation that followed, many of these local organizations began to look increasingly to syndicalism as a model, which led to the formation of the *Freie Arbeiter-Union Deutschlands* (FAUD – Free Workers' Union of Germany) in late 1919. Within a few months of its formation, the FAUD had grouped together nearly 200,000 workers.¹⁴ Other groups, however, began to turn their attention toward forming a new type of revolutionary factory organization, which they termed 'workers'

unions' (*Arbeiter-Unionen*) to distinguish themselves from the traditional trade unions. The theoretical cornerstone of the 'workers' unions' was the concept of 'unitary organization' which had been articulated by the Bremen and Hamburg left since 1917. Although the 'workers' unions' appeared spontaneously, the ideological form they assumed can be attributed in part to the continuous and intensive propagandizing for the idea of 'unitary organization' by the left radical activists. While the first 'workers' union' appeared as early as 1918, they began to emerge on a large scale only during the great wildcat strike wave of Ruhr coal miners in April, 1919.¹⁵ Although modeled in part on the IWW, the 'workers' unions' differed from the syndicalist factory organizations by their willingness to affiliate with the communist movement and their acceptance of a future state organized on the basis of the council system.

In the consolidation of these localized 'workers' unions' into a national federation, the Bremen left played an organizationally and ideologically decisive role. The first step toward the formation of a national organization was taken in August, 1919, when the Bremen left drafted a set of provisional statutes defining the proposed federation as 'an economic organization of struggle' in solidarity with the KPD and the Third International, and directed toward the establishment of a council republic. The basic unit of the new federation was to be the local factory or workshop organization, each of which would be tied to a network of local, regional, and national bodies, which would eventually merge into 'One Big Union'. Although the proposed federation was conceived of as a class-wide instrument of struggle, each affiliated unit was to have maximum independence and freedom of choice in determining tactics.¹⁶ To build the new federation, two national conferences of shop stewards from various independent revolutionary factory organizations were held in Bremen during the fall of 1919, which mandated the Bremen group to play a coordinating role and to publish a national newspaper.¹⁷

In no other city was the 'worker's union' movement as strong as in Bremen. A city-wide federation of workers' unions was first formed in August, 1919. By October, it had 3,000 members; by January, it had reached its high point of 7,000 members. Its main stronghold was at the docks and shipyards, where over 70 per cent of the workers were affiliated. At the Weser shipyards alone, 3,000 workers were members.¹⁸

Pannekoek gave qualified support to the revolutionary industrial union movement in January, 1920, in a major article in Bremen's *Der Kommunist* and in the theses on trade unionism he drafted for the Amsterdam Bureau. Arguing that the traditional trade unions had become an 'instrument of the leaders against the masses', Pannekoek maintained that the 'workers'

unions' represented a powerful revolutionary alternative, which by weakening the inner firmness of the centralized unions, removes a powerful obstacle to revolution. At the same time, however, Pannekoek cautioned that the new organizations could escape the logic of bureaucratization and avoid becoming *de facto* trade unions only in times of direct revolutionary struggle, when the character of the masses is completely transformed.¹⁹

The foundation congress for what officially became the *Allgemeine Arbeiter-Union Deutschlands* (AAUD – General Workers' Union of Germany) finally took place in Hanover from February 14 to 16, 1920. The proceedings of the congress revealed almost immediately a major division over the movement's basic mission and structure. One wing of the movement, the so-called 'federalists' led by Wolfheim and Laufenberg of the Hamburg left, took a position close to syndicalism and maintained that the AAUD represented 'the coming state organization' of the proletariat. For them, the principle of local autonomy signified not only the complete autonomy of every economic district or factory unit, but also the right of self-determination for each individual. Another wing, the so-called 'centralists' led by the Bremen and Berlin groups, contended that the AAUD could not be the organizational form for the new society and stressed its role as an instrument of industrial agitation. The 'centralists' insisted that the AAUD must not allow itself to become a network of 'localized *syndicats*', but must act as a catalyst for a revolution based on the councils.²⁰

Despite its inability to resolve its basic organizational structure, the AAUD, nonetheless, grew rapidly in the highly charged atmosphere of 1920.²¹ Its greatest successes were due to the large influx of members from the anarcho-syndicalist FAUD. In many cases, whole FAUD affiliates went over to the AAUD, including the FAUD's entire eastern region.²² Within a month of its foundation, the AAUD's membership had reached 80,000; by the spring of the following year, the number of members was perhaps as high as 200,000.²³

While the 'workers' unions' were taking root within the German labor movement, a parallel attempt was underway to develop an anti-bureaucratic alternative within the German communist movement. Levi's expulsion of the left opposition at the Congress of Heidelberg had grave consequences for the KPD. Almost overnight, the party was reduced from an estimated 107,000 to 50,000 members.²⁴ The KPD's strongest sections, those in northern Germany, the Rhineland, parts of Saxony and virtually the entire Berlin section, all joined the expelled opposition. In Berlin, where the KPD had 12,000 members, only 36 persons were present when Wilhelm Pieck delivered his report on the congress;²⁵ in Essen only 43 out of 2,000 members supported Levi and the *Zentrale*.²⁶

Once the smoke of factional battle had cleared from Heidelberg, the expelled left opposition began the immediate political task of redefining its organizational practice. The most immediate and pressing problem was whether or not to form a new revolutionary party, and, if so, what the nature of the new party would be. This question was first confronted at a national conference of expelled oppositionists in Bremen on October 30, 1919. Although the majority of delegates eventually voted in favor of working to restore party unity, the discussion revealed three main currents of opinion. The Hamburg group led by Wolffheim and Laufenberg, which had been the driving force of the opposition prior to the Heidelberg expulsions, favored the immediate formation of a new party. Another group centered around Otto Rühle of Dresden favored dispensing with the party form of organization altogether and working exclusively within the AAUD. The majority, led by the Bremen and Berlin organizations, however, felt that the KPD could be revitalized by waging a resolute struggle against the Levi leadership. Their position – which was shared by Pannekoek – was premised on the belief that they would ultimately win the support of Lenin and the Third International.

Shortly after the Bremen conference, Wolffheim and Laufenberg, seeking to put the movement on a broader basis, began to articulate a new strategy of ‘national bolshevisín’ which called for a common front between the German nation and the Soviet Union against the Entente powers.²⁷ This move isolated them from other elements of the opposition and as a result the main locus of the left opposition shifted to Bremen. The Bremen left’s central role in the opposition was formalized at a second national conference of the opposition on November 30, 1919, which mandated them to create an official opposition ‘information bureau’, which, in the months that followed, played the role of a ‘counter *Zentrale*’ to the expelled oppositionists.²⁸

These events coincided with a lengthy discussion in the pages of *Der Kommunist* over the opposition’s fundamental orientation, to which Pannekoek contributed several key articles. In seeking to put the left’s anti-parliamentarianism into theoretical perspective, Pannekoek made it clear that opposition to electoral democracy was not an abstract principle, but a practical necessity rooted in the strategic requirements of the new period. The hallmark of the epoch, he wrote, was the contradiction between the objectively revolutionary nature of the post-war situation and the passivity of the masses arising from their dependence on a bourgeois mode of thought. The fundamental task of the movement, he felt, was to overcome this passivity and ideological dependence by mobilizing the working class through action. To revert to parliamentary tactics in an era of class polarization would immobilize the movement and lay the foundation for its ultimate defeat: ‘More important than the fact that the workers do not rule is the

deeper and more decisive fact that they must rule if they are not to be crushed.'

Pannekoek's opposition to parliamentary tactics was closely linked to his support for the council system as the basis of the dictatorship of the proletariat. Stressing that proletarian democracy was the essence of socialism, Pannekoek maintained that parliamentary democracy represented only the semblance of democracy and constituted one of the main instruments of capitalist hegemony. The councils, on the other hand, represented the primary institution for combatting bourgeois hegemony and a powerful mechanism for uniting the previously fragmented working class into a cohesive system of political and economic democracy. Pannekoek insisted that the fundamental problems of revolutionary strategy and a socialist reorganization of society could no longer be resolved by the traditional 'leader politics', but only by the masses themselves, struggling to comprehend and change their social reality. As long as the masses are told there is an easier way, that others will do it for them, then they will hesitate out of an innate inertia and remain passively mired in the old ways of thinking. At bottom, parliamentarianism represented nothing less than 'the spiritual power of the leaders over the masses'.²⁹

Shortly afterwards, Levi responded to Pannekoek with an article arguing that under the prevailing conditions of capitalist offensive, parliamentary tactics represented 'the most acute form of revolutionary action'. In the course of his remarks, Levi constantly referred to the opposition as 'adventurists', 'putschists', 'Blanquists' and 'Bakuninists' and drew an approving parallel between his actions at Heidelberg and Marx's attempt to expel the anarchists from the First International.³⁰

These accusations prompted Pannekoek to reply with another article entitled 'The New Blanquism', in which he attempted to put Levi's charges into historical perspective. Pannekoek began by noting that when conditions for revolution are ripe and the masses still continue to remain passive, then other doctrines often come to the forefront which offer easier ways than revolution to achieve the same goals. In France prior to 1870 two such tendencies emerged: Proudhonism, which aimed at peaceful revolutionary transformation through economic arrangements; and Blanquism, which substituted the conspiratorial actions of a small, determined minority for proletarian self-emancipation. Both tendencies were rooted in the traditions of an earlier movement and retained a petit-bourgeois mentality because they could not perceive the powerful force in the developing class struggles, which was then being theorized in Marxist doctrine. Pannekoek went on to maintain that this division had reappeared in a new and more highly developed form in post-war Germany. Noske and Ebert's belief that the workers could gain power peacefully through their participation in the workers'

councils without revolutionary struggle, he felt, represented a form of neo-Proudhonism, while Radek and Levi's belief that power could be seized by a centralized and disciplined revolutionary minority signified a form of neo-Blanquism.

This assessment was bound up with Pannekoek's belief that Levi and Radek's policies amounted to nothing less than a crude attempt to create a dictatorship of the Communist Party, which would eventually culminate in a dictatorship of the central committee. Pannekoek took it for granted that an elitist party could never confront the critical question of bourgeois ideological hegemony. To attempt to substitute the actions of a small revolutionary minority for a spiritually prepared working class could only lead to the types of disasters that occurred in the council republics of Munich and Hungary.³¹ Throughout this controversy, Pannekoek still remained firmly convinced that Levi and Radek's tactics were the result of particular circumstances, and that the policy of the German opposition had the support of Lenin and the Third International.

As both sides struggled to give their case a theoretical foundation, events in Germany helped give the debate a special sense of urgency. From December, 1919, onwards there was a sudden resurgence of industrial unrest which arose from deteriorating economic conditions and an attempt by the Ebert government to weaken the remaining power of the workers' councils. On January 13, 1920, 42 persons were killed by the police at a demonstration in front of the Reichstag – the bloodiest incident since the revolution.³² This quickening tempo of events led to a new divergence of aims within the opposition. Confronted with the possibility of a major class confrontation, the Bremen section of the opposition began to place a renewed emphasis on reunification with the KPD. By this time, a new faction headed by Karl Jannack and Karl Becker had come to prominence which began to deemphasize the opposition's differences with the *Zentrale*. Following several weeks of intense debate, the Bremen section voted on March 11 to re-enter the KPD. With this move, the opposition was deprived of many of its best and most politically experienced militants. Although a minority of the Bremen membership remained with the opposition, the information bureau was dissolved and the main center of the movement immediately shifted to the Berlin group centered around Karl Schröder.³³

Only two days after the Bremen opposition voted to return to the KPD, Germany was engulfed in the great military revolt known as the Kapp-Lüttwitz Putsch.³⁴ The particular circumstances of the Kapp Putsch created a stark confrontation between the workers and their most hated enemy, the military, which brought to the surface a subterranean revolutionary torrent. In Berlin, the general strike called by the trade union leader Karl Legien was

so total that the counter-revolutionary regime could not function. Before the crisis was over, certain regions saw armed proletarian action of a kind Germany had not known even during the civil war of early 1919. Throughout all these events, the KPD leadership vacillated. After first instructing members not to defend the republic, the *Zentrale* suddenly reversed itself when it found that most KPD affiliates were ignoring its directive.

The apparent willingness of the working class to resort to militant actions and the unwillingness of the KPD to support such actions convinced the opposition that the time was ripe for the formation of a new party. On the initiative of the Schröder group, a national conference of the opposition was held in Berlin on April 4 to 5, 1920, out of which emerged the Communist Worker's Party of Germany (KAPD).³⁵ The KAPD's politics were based on the premise that the party was 'not a party in the traditional sense', but a medium to enable the working class to liberate itself from all forms of domination by leaders.³⁶ The new party's program, which was inspired largely by Pannekoek, emphasized the role of subjective factors in revolutionary development: 'The main problem of the German revolution is the self-conscious development of the German proletariat'. In keeping with this aim, the KAPD saw its role as one of uniting the most advanced elements of the working class and acting as a leaven within the masses, spreading propaganda, organizing discussions, and, when necessary, opposing the illusions of the masses. Unlike the Leninists, the KAPD stressed that the party must be a catalyst of ideas rather than a direct instrument of revolutionary action. The task of revolutionary organization and action was instead left to the AAUD, which was viewed as complementary to the KAPD. The AAUD's struggles in the factories, the KAPD felt, would create the necessary atmosphere and consciousness for the self-mobilization of the working class, which would culminate in a council state.³⁷

With the formation of the KAPD, the basic contours of the left communist alternative were firmly established. The new conceptions of working class organization and activity that found expression in the KAPD and the AAUD were in part the product of particular circumstances, but they also show a high degree of continuity with the concepts Pannekoek and the left radicals had developed both before and during the war. Their far-reaching critique of trade union and party-centered socialism grew out of a long-time conviction that bourgeois ideological hegemony could be transcended only by a direct confrontation with the state and capital by a militant and class-conscious working class organized from below on the basis of new structures of proletarian rule. By the spring of 1920, it had also become increasingly clear that the logic of this position was moving them irrevocably toward a major confrontation with the Communist International.

Pannekoek Against Lenin: Left Communism and the Comintern

Until the appearance of Lenin's '*Left-Wing' Communism: An Infantile Disorder*, left communism had not been proscribed by the Comintern. Prior to this time, the nature of Leninism and its significance for the West had not been firmly established. For Pannekoek and others, Lenin's name continued to be associated with world revolution, uncompromising class struggle, and militant anti-parliamentarianism. Although he expected opposition from others in the Comintern, Pannekoek still believed that left communism would find a steadfast ally in Lenin, the defender of world revolution. With the hope of influencing Comintern tactics, Pannekoek drafted in March, 1920, a major brochure addressed to the International entitled *World Revolution and Communist Tactics*, which almost immediately became the fundamental text of left communism.

Attempting to set forth a conception of revolution commensurate with a highly developed capitalism, Pannekoek distinguished between separate Eastern and Western forms of revolutionary practice. In the East, he maintained, the key factor in determining tactics was the predominance of a collectively oriented peasant society and culture. Unlike the workers of the West, the masses of Russia and Asia had never experienced the paralyzing effects of bourgeois culture and traditions and their inner character was thus completely different. Because of their longstanding traditions of village communalism, the peasants were able to relate to communism in a primitive, open manner.

In the West, on the other hand, a longstanding bourgeois civilization had thoroughly penetrated the thoughts and feelings of the masses. Taking up the critical question of why the German Revolution had failed to develop into a socialist revolution, Pannekoek asked: how was it possible that victory eluded the workers at a time when the state was powerless and they were seemingly in control? This defeat, he felt, proved that the bourgeoisie possessed still another source of power which permitted them to re-establish their domination: 'This hidden power is the spiritual power of the bourgeoisie over the proletariat. Because the proletarian masses were still completely governed by a bourgeois mentality, they restored the hegemony of the bourgeoisie with their own hands after it had collapsed.'³⁸

Pannekoek further maintained that the low level of working class consciousness and the slow tempo of revolutionary development in Western Europe had given rise to two conflicting tactical currents which were present in the communist movement in every country: radicalism and opportunism. He argued that whereas the radical current seeks to revolutionize men's minds by word and deed and attempts to counterpose the new conceptions

to the old conceptions in the sharpest possible manner, the opportunist current emphasizes points of agreement instead of demarcating differences in the hopes of securing short term gains of temporary power. In polemicizing against the current he labeled 'communist opportunism', Pannekoek stressed that opportunism did not necessarily mean a conciliatory or pliant attitude; on the contrary, a lack of clear principles is often concealed in strident rhetoric, and in revolutionary situations it is characteristic of opportunism to place its hopes on great revolutionary deeds. When the forces are not immediately adequate for the attainment of a certain goal, opportunism – instead of seeking to strengthen these forces – attempts to attain that goal by other more roundabout means at the expense of lasting success in the future. But power achieved in such circumstances, felt Pannekoek, always turns out to be an illusion – personal power exercised by leaders and not the power of a class. Power not based upon a working class fully prepared to exercise its hegemony would either be lost or have to make so many concessions to reactionary forces that it would be inwardly spent.

Pannekoek's emphasis on the radicalization of consciousness led him to reject both the amorphous mass party formations of social democracy and the elitist vanguard of Russian bolshevism as inadequate for the task of revolutionizing the masses: 'A revolution can no more be made by a big mass party or coalition of different parties than by a small radical party. It breaks out spontaneously among the masses; action instigated by a party can sometimes trigger it off (a rare occurrence), but the determining forces lie elsewhere, in the psychological factors deep in the unconsciousness of the masses and in the great events of world politics.'³⁹ The logic of the position led Pannekoek to raise the possibility that the vanguardist model of party organization being championed by the Comintern might at some point become a major obstacle to revolutionary development. In situations where the party has seized power without the active understanding and intervention of a united working class, the populace that has allowed this seizure to take place is equally capable of becoming a follower of reaction. But, more fundamentally, a revolution that does not permit control of society and production by the masses themselves is 'counter-revolutionary and harmful' and must be replaced by another form.⁴⁰

In outlining the tactical choices for Western Europe, Pannekoek took considerable pains to underline the differences between left communism and syndicalism. The principal dividing point, he maintained, lay in their different attitudes toward the structure and superstructure of society. Stripped of its revolutionary rhetoric, the fundamental aim of syndicalism was simply a government based on the trade union bureaucracy and a radical section of the old state apparatus, which essentially left the capitalist state intact. The

syndicalists were also content to leave the intellectual and cultural spheres of society to the bourgeoisie. By failing to dissolve the material and spiritual elements of capitalist rule and revolutionize the mental outlook of the proletariat, a syndicalist government would create the conditions for a later capitalist regroupment.

Although his differences with the Russian leadership of the Comintern, as they emerged in this discussion, were deep and indicated a substantial ideological split, Pannekoek, nonetheless, still continued to believe profoundly in the world-transforming significance of the Russian Revolution. He felt that the Russian Revolution had ignited the spiritual and material energy of the Russian masses and was enabling them to build and sustain a new society. Pannekoek remained firmly convinced that the Russian Revolution would be both the catalyst for the European revolution and the opening round of a larger Asian revolt against Western capitalism. This assessment led Pannekoek to de-emphasize the Russian Revolution's proletarian character and stress its significance as a movement of national liberation. Pannekoek saw the revolutionary developments in Russia and Asia as the ascendancy of a new world civilization which, by combining a communal spirit with historical materialism and modern technology, would challenge Western supremacy in culture, technology, and economic development.

With the tone of exuberant optimism characteristic of the years following the Russian Revolution, Pannekoek fostered a grand messianic vision of world-wide proletarian revolution:

'When the German revolution takes a decisive turn and connects with Russia, when revolutionary mass struggles break out in England and America, when revolt flares up in India, when communism pushes its frontiers forward to the Rhine and the Indian Ocean, then the world revolution will enter its next mighty phase... for Western Europe and the islands of the coast are only a peninsula projecting from the great Russo-Asian complex of lands. The common struggle against capital will unite the proletarian masses of the whole world. And when finally, at the end of the arduous struggle, the European workers, deeply exhausted, stand in the clear morning light of freedom, they will greet the liberated peoples of Asia in the East and shake hands in Moscow, the capital of the new humanity.'⁴¹

While Pannekoek was advancing these arguments, Lenin was developing, in preparation for the Second Congress of the Comintern, his own strategic analysis to refute the left communists, which took the form of his famous essay, *'Left-Wing' Communism: An Infantile Disorder*. Lenin took as his starting point the assumption that the slow tempo of the revolution in the West necessitated a period of retrenchment for the international communist movement. Under these new conditions of protracted warfare, communists

must learn to instill class consciousness in the workers by working and maneuvering wherever the masses are found – even in the most reactionary institutions. ‘Into the trade unions and parliaments’ was Lenin’s cure for the ‘infantile disease’ of leftism. To refuse to work in the trade unions and parliaments, he maintained, would only mean leaving the backward workers under the influence of their reactionary leaders. Communists, he declared, had the duty to resort to various subterfuges to carry out communist work in mass organizations. Lenin also stressed the importance of skillfully exploiting every rift among the bourgeoisie and taking advantage of every opportunity to build temporary alliances. Throughout his polemic, Lenin attempted repeatedly to generalize the Bolshevik experience into a universal model of revolution, stressing in particular that ‘absolute centralization and the strictest discipline’ were the fundamental conditions for victory.⁴²

In language that was often acrimonious – ‘out-and-out idiocy’, ‘muddle-headedness’, ‘mere babblers’, were only a few of the phrases he used – Lenin excoriated the Dutch and German left for their lack of tactical finesse. Lenin singled out Pannekoek’s theoretical work as ‘particularly solid and particularly stupid’.⁴³ After noting that the Dutch position arose from the ‘misfortune’ of having been born in a country where illegality was unnecessary, Lenin concluded that the Tribunist could never become more than ‘a circle, not a party of the masses, but a group of intellectuals and a few workers who imitate the worst features of intellectualism’.⁴⁴

Pannekoek responded to Lenin’s arguments and accusations with only a short afterword to subsequent editions of *World Revolution and Communist Tactics*, in which he laconically noted that the significance of Lenin’s formulations lay not in their originality and content, but in the fact that it was Lenin who made them. The real task, Pannekoek felt, was not to oppose Lenin’s arguments with other arguments, but to comprehend the historical circumstances that gave rise to his policies. Lenin’s defense of the traditional tactics of parliamentarianism and trade unionism, he maintained, was rooted in the contradiction between the Soviet Union’s role as a nation-state and the revolutionary vocation of the Third International. In analyzing this contradiction, Pannekoek pointed to the Soviet Union’s urgent need for economic reconstruction, which he felt could be realized only on the basis of a *modus vivendi* with the capitalist world. What such an accommodation required was not a radical communist revolution, but a pliable Western working class willing to intervene on the Soviet Union’s behalf. Pannekoek felt that the logic of this situation dictated that the political requirements of the Soviet Union would increasingly become the key factor in determining communist tactics in the West and that the Comintern would be reduced to a tool by which the Soviet Union intervenes in West European politics. Pannekoek

also expressed the fear that the Soviet Union might potentially become 'a reactionary impediment to revolution' and perhaps – by demoralizing the working class – unleash the forces for the triumph of the counter-revolution as well.⁴⁵ With these remarks, Pannekoek emerged as the first communist theoretician to publicly question the identity of the Russian Revolution with the one expected in Europe.

The main task of replying to Lenin was left to Gorter, who responded with his famous 'Open Letter to Comrade Lenin'. Of all the Dutch Marxists, Gorter had enjoyed the closest relationship with Lenin – whom he had known personally in Switzerland during the war – and seemed the least likely to become involved in a polemic against him. Like Pannekoek, Gorter structured his argument around the differences between Eastern and Western communism. But unlike Pannekoek, who attributed the slow tempo of revolution in the West to the predominance of bourgeois ideology, Gorter argued that the proletariat's main obstacle was the gigantic material power of capitalism. Unlike Russia, where the workers were allied with the peasantry, the workers in the West had no allies and were forced to struggle alone. This view led Gorter to stress the importance of firm Marxist principles, party centralization, and 'iron discipline' (although of a different type than that advocated by Lenin and the Comintern).⁴⁶

The essential strategic aims advanced by Pannekoek and Gorter were not confined to the Dutch and German left. By the spring of 1920, a powerful left communist challenge to the rapidly consolidating Leninist communism had surfaced throughout Europe.⁴⁷ Although it represented the most formidable challenge to the Comintern in 1920, left communism was never a coherent formation, but more a loose association of factional groupings, parties, and journals which encompassed widely divergent positions. They were linked not only by their repudiation of the Russian model for Western Europe, but by a common anti-bureaucratic impulse and emphasis on uncompromising revolutionary activism. After the dissolution of the Amsterdam Bureau, the international center of left communism shifted to another recently established Comintern bureau in Vienna and its journal *Kommunismus*. Under the editorship of Georg Lukács, *Kommunismus* served as a major forum for the loose network of left communists, publishing Pannekoek, Gorter, Roland Holst, Sylvia Pankhurst, and many others, along with the essays that later composed Lukács' *History and Class Consciousness*. Like Pannekoek, Lukács was a theoretician of the spontaneity of the masses, who saw class consciousness as the driving force in history and the decisive factor in the self-liberation of the proletariat. Indeed, Lukács' approach to Marxism had been shaped in part by a systematic study of Pannekoek he made shortly before becoming a Marxist in 1918.⁴⁸ Another major center of

left communism emerged in Italy, where the anti-parliamentary communists led by Amadeo Bordiga represented a considerable political force. Although Bordiga's anti-parliamentary position had been strongly influenced by Pannekoek's theoretical writings, which appeared regularly in his publication, *Il Soviet*, he rejected council organization as a syndicalist deviation and favored a disciplined Leninist-style party.⁴⁹

Still another major theoretical center of left communism surfaced in Britain, in Sylvia Pankhurst's Socialist Workers' Federation and their publication, *Workers' Dreadnought*. The left communist trend was also visible in the Swiss and Austrian communist parties, both of which were resolutely opposed to parliamentarianism. Within Russia, the Workers' Opposition developed a forceful critique of bureaucratic proletarian organization and maintained a close relationship with the KAPD.

The KAPD's formation in April, 1920, set the stage for a major confrontation between the left communists and the Comintern. Despite their opposition to Leninist tactics, the KAPD continued to remain firmly committed to the cause of the Third International. Shortly after its foundation, the KAPD dispatched a delegation led by Jan Appel to Moscow to negotiate the party's affiliation to the Comintern. Following two meetings between the delegation and the Comintern executive, Zinoviev issued an open letter to the KAPD membership setting forth four conditions for affiliation with the Communist International: immediate expulsion of Wolffheim, Laufenberg, and Rühle; unconditional submission to the decisions of the Second Congress; creation of a committee of reconciliation to seek reunification with the KPD; KAPD participation at the Second Congress.⁵⁰ While the Appel delegation was returning to Germany, a second KAPD delegation led by Otto Rühle arrived in Moscow without knowing what the first delegation had discussed or having had a chance to read Zinoviev's open letter. After lengthy discussions with Lenin and the other leaders of the Comintern, Rühle abruptly announced on the eve of the congress that the KAPD would neither participate in the congress nor join the Third International.⁵¹

The KAPD's absence from the Second Congress did not prevent the main issues the left communists had raised from being aired. The backdrop to this debate had already been provided by the distribution to the delegates of the respective texts of Pannekoek and Lenin – the last time the work of a foreign oppositionist was publicly disseminated by the Comintern. Despite a spirited defense of the left communist position by Bordiga and the Dutch delegation, the congress in the end approved resolutions supporting parliamentarianism, trade unionism, and centralized party organization.⁵²

In the aftermath of the Second Congress, a vigorous debate developed within the KAPD over its future relationship to the Third International. A

minority position was taken by Otto Rühle, who rejected any form of collaboration with the Comintern. The feelings of the majority of the KAPD were undoubtedly expressed by Gorter when he announced his intention to organize a revolutionary opposition within the Third International. Still hoping to convince Lenin of the erroneous nature of Comintern tactics, Gorter, along with the KAPD leaders Schröder and Rasch, journeyed to Moscow for further discussions with the Comintern executive. Although Lenin met personally with Gorter, he remained indifferent to his admonitions.⁵³ The outcome of these talks was a decision by the executive to provisionally admit the KAPD to the Comintern as a 'sympathizing party' with consultative status on the condition that they seek reunification with the KPD. Although the KAPD had serious reservations about this arrangement, they accepted it with the expectation of building a revolutionary opposition within the Third International.⁵⁴

The KAPD first approached the task of organizing a revolutionary opposition in May, 1921, when it dispatched still another delegation to Moscow, consisting of Appel, Schwab, and Meyer, to build support among the delegates to the upcoming Third Congress of the Comintern. Although conversations were held with left-leaning delegates from a number of countries, the KAPD was unable to organize a cohesive opposition faction for the congress. At this point, the executive issued an ultimatum to the KAPD to either merge with the KPD or face expulsion. The KAPD rejected it immediately and in September was formally expelled from the Comintern.⁵⁵

As the conflict with the Comintern intensified, Pannekoek and the left communists began to increasingly focus their attention on the larger underlying issue of the meaning of the Russian Revolution itself. Throughout 1920 and early 1921, both Pannekoek and Gorter deliberately avoided any type of personal attack on Lenin and remained firm in their belief that Russia had inaugurated a new communist society. Both failed to perceive, or ignored, the steady erosion of the power of the soviets, and took considerable pains to differentiate themselves from those who opposed the Russian Revolution and the Third International. Within the KAPD, the first public criticism of the Russian Revolution came from Otto Rühle, who, upon his return from Russia in June, 1920, began to argue that a counter-revolutionary party dictatorship had assumed power.⁵⁶

In the interval between the Second and Third Comintern congresses, the situation in both the Soviet Union and Western Europe had changed dramatically. In 1920, Soviet Russia was virtually isolated from the outside world and its leaders still believed that revolution in the West was imminent. By 1921, it had established trade and diplomatic ties with a number of countries, and if the Russian leadership still believed that revolution in Europe

was a possibility, they no longer considered it imminent. Within Russia, this altered perspective found expression in a policy of economic retrenchment known as the New Economic Policy.

These changes led Pannekoek, starting in May, 1921, to undertake a major re-evaluation of the Russian Revolution. Pannekoek's analysis was initially marked by the conviction that communism in Russia was not a concrete, economic relationship, but a 'spiritual reality' embodied in the popular measures that the Bolsheviks were pursuing in improving education, health care, housing, and in raising the cultural level of the masses. Pannekoek, at the same time, also felt that the chaotic economic conditions in Russia provided the objective basis for a new class struggle between workers and peasants such as had occurred in the Kronstadt uprising. Since neither the weak and demoralized working class, nor the atomized peasantry were capable of exercising power by themselves, the most likely outcome of such a struggle would be a new bureaucracy exercising power in their name. Only a revolutionary offensive in the West, he felt, could provide the spiritual impetus for a revitalization of the Russian Revolution.⁵⁷

By July, 1921, Pannekoek was fully prepared to assert that what he had two months earlier suggested was only a possibility had now become reality: Soviet Russia had degenerated into a bureaucratic elite ruling on behalf of the peasantry. What had occurred in Russia since the revolution was not the conquest of power by the proletariat, but a change of government from the capitalist rulers to a party dictatorship presiding over a system of production in which the capitalists were restrained only by certain forms of worker control. Pannekoek felt these changes were partly traceable to the growing penetration of the Soviet Union by Western capital, which put the Western capitalists in a position to influence the Soviet bureaucracy. This whole process, he felt, was best exemplified by the shift in Soviet foreign policy toward conciliation with the West and the extension of this policy to the tactics of the Comintern. From the perspective of the Soviet leadership, a revolutionary offensive in the West would bring only destruction and economic dislocation which would jeopardize the reconstruction of the Soviet economy.⁵⁸

Pannekoek's hostility towards the Bolsheviks became even more pronounced after the expulsion of the KAPD from the Comintern. By November, 1921, he had reached the drastic conclusion that the Soviet regime had been transformed into a repressive and counter-revolutionary bureaucracy that had reduced the proletariat to a new condition of servitude: 'The workers work in the factories for a meager wage under the supervision of state officials and directors. Do they determine their work collectively? No, they are directed and dictated from above, by authority of the government.' Pan-

nekoek made it clear that he considered communist doctrine in Russia to be nothing more than a legitimizing ideology adapted to mask the increasingly bourgeois function of the bureaucracy. This situation led Pannekoek to conclude that the first steps toward a full-scale capitalist restoration had already been taken; others would follow out of inevitable necessity.⁵⁹ Pannekoek extended his analysis to argue that the Third International had reached a point of objective convergence with the policies and tactics of the Second International. Despite their professed ideological differences, both social democracy and communism played the same functional role as mechanisms for integrating the working class into capitalist society.⁶⁰ Confronted with these new realities, Pannekoek could only conclude: 'Never has the necessity of unlearning what we have so recently learned been as great as now.'⁶¹

Between Deventer and Moscow: The CPH and the Comintern

Pannekoek's growing disillusionment with traditional party organization received additional reinforcement from a factional dispute which had developed earlier within the Dutch CPH. In contrast to Germany, where the lines of factional cleavage were clearly drawn and tied to a specific organizational practice, the differences that emerged in Holland were as much a matter of personality as political principle.

As in most instances of serious political disagreement, this controversy did not arise overnight but developed over the course of several years. The origins of this complex factional struggle are traceable, at least in part, to a dispute that flared up during the early days of the war between Pannekoek and the leadership triumvirate over what type of war victory would be most beneficial for the left. Wijnkoop and Van Ravesteyn took the position that a German defeat would be more desirable due to the oppressive nature of German militarism. Their attitude was based largely on traditional anti-German sentiment – an obsessive theme in Dutch culture – which had little to do with Marxist ideology. Indeed, Van Ravesteyn himself later admitted that they were partisans of a 'rigorous anti-German politics'.⁶² Pannekoek promptly charged that their position represented a dangerous deviation from proletarian internationalism.⁶³

Due to opposition from the membership, Van Ravesteyn and Wijnkoop were forced to retreat from their stand and the issue remained dormant for the next two years. In the spring of 1916, however, Van Ravesteyn once again took a strongly pro-Entente position, which led another executive committee member, Barend Luteraan, to charge that he was promoting Dutch intervention on the side of the Entente. At the same time, Luteraan began to organize a base of support in the Amsterdam section of the party

and initiated a series of polemics against Van Ravesteijn, which lasted throughout the remainder of 1916 and much of 1917.

Although Luteraan frequently cited the writings of Pannekoek and Gorter to justify his position, neither of them played a significant role in his opposition movement during the early stages of its existence. In Pannekoek's case, this was due to a strong personal animosity toward Luteraan.⁶⁴ This situation, however, began to change as Pannekoek and Gorter's relations with the triumvirate continued to deteriorate over the question of more active participation in the Zimmerwald left. The breaking point came in September, 1917, when Van Ravesteijn condemned Lenin's acceptance of German transportation to Russia and drew an approving parallel between Kerensky's offensive against Germany and the French revolutionary war of 1793.⁶⁵ Both Pannekoek and Gorter immediately responded with polemics. Pannekoek, for his part, maintained that Van Ravesteijn's attitude was similar to the social patriots.⁶⁶ Gorter, however, went a step further and made an uncharacteristically abusive personal attack on Van Ravesteijn and Wijnkoop.⁶⁷ With this action, Gorter placed himself irrevocably in the camp of the Luteraan opposition. Gorter lost no time in assuming a leading role. In October, he sent two articles to the *Tribune*, which Van Ravesteijn refused to print. When Gorter inquired about publication, Van Ravesteijn wrote back terming the opposition 'a collection of morally and mentally defective individuals'.⁶⁸

By the end of 1917, the opposition movement against the triumvirate was at its height with no less than four separate opposition groups in existence which had the sympathy of about a third of the membership.⁶⁹ In addition to the Amsterdam group centered around Luteraan, there was a group in Rotterdam, the entire Hague section, and a group terming itself the 'Propaganda Society of the Zimmerwald Left'. During the months which followed, the focus of the opposition's critique began to shift increasingly toward other issues. In March, 1918, the leader of the Hague opposition, W. van Reesema, published a pamphlet accusing the party leadership of an over-reliance on electoral methods and a passive attitude toward the trade union movement.⁷⁰ The underlying source of the opposition's discontent, however, was with Van Ravesteijn's high-handed leadership methods. Of these methods, a factional supporter of Van Ravesteijn later noted: 'The meetings were under the strict control of Van Ravesteijn. No opposition was tolerated except for details on day-to-day propaganda. When opposition seemed imminent, the faithful were commanded to attend and swing the vote. For Van Ravesteijn the party had to be his obedient tool (he actually used the expression: "the party? it is a tool" – it shocked me).'⁷¹

In September, 1918, the various opposition groups gathered together for

the first time at a national conference to build a coordinated opposition movement. Although the conference approved a rather vaguely formulated program, the opposition's cohesion was strong only on the question of greater internal party democracy.⁷² The new opposition consciously modeled itself on the initial Tribunist opposition and sought to appeal directly to the membership and the working class with its own publication, *De Internationale*. But in the absence of clear goals, the new publication never managed to achieve the scope and dynamism of the *Tribune*. During the seven months of its short existence, *De Internationale* never acquired more than two hundred subscribers.⁷³

By the fall of 1918, the conflict had reached a new pitch of intensity with Gorter leading the assault. The enmity between Gorter and the triumvirate had now grown to a passionate hatred. In September, Gorter published three serialized *Tribune* articles attacking the leadership on a variety of issues. In one of these, an article entitled 'Troelstra-Wijnkoop', he charged Wijnkoop and Van Ravesteijn with being part of a larger current of 'international reformism'. At the same time, Gorter announced that he would lead a struggle against Wijnkoop and Van Ravesteijn with the same fervor he had once led the struggle against Troelstra.⁷⁴ To make a comparison with Troelstra, who was considered to be the arch-betrayer of Marxism, was regarded as one of the worst insults of the SDP and even Pannekoek objected to Gorter's use of the parallel.⁷⁵ In reply, the triumvirate declared that their bonds with Gorter were 'irrevocably broken' and that, henceforth, the columns of the *Tribune* would be closed to him.⁷⁶ Van Ravesteijn followed this up with an abusive letter to Pannekoek in which he directly questioned Gorter's sanity. Carrying his attack a step further, Van Ravesteijn also accused Pannekoek of being 'not merely an accomplice, but the person actually responsible for this political and intellectual suicide'.⁷⁷

Although Van Ravesteijn later claimed that Gorter's assault threatened to bring a 'catastrophe' for the party, it was clear by the November, 1918 Congress of Leiden that the intensity of the opposition's polemics could not be translated into organizational strength.⁷⁸ For many oppositionists, Gorter's polemics were more a source of embarrassment than clarity. Except for circulating a declaration by Gorter, the opposition made virtually no attempt to carry the debate to the congress. With the coming of peace, the opposition had also lost its most compelling issue. As a result, much of the opposition's strength rapidly dissipated and most of 1919 was characterized largely by a factional stalemate.

In the months that followed, Wijnkoop and Van Ravesteijn took full advantage of the situation to consolidate their organizational base in the party. The triumvirate set the tone when it declared shortly after the congress:

'In cases when the party membership fails to show sufficient initiative, then the executive must determine the line of action itself, and it goes without saying that it will be somewhat dictatorial, perhaps even more so than at present.'⁷⁹ The leadership's position was greatly strengthened by the relative isolation of Pannekoek, Gorter, and Roland Holst from the party rank-and-file. At the 1919 Congress of Groningen, strong criticisms were made of their failure to participate in daily party life. The young activist Dirk Struik undoubtedly spoke for many when he accused them of acting like a 'Party Olympus'.⁸⁰

Throughout the long course of factional struggle, Pannekoek's response was complex and not uniform. Although sympathetic to the opposition's cause, Pannekoek, unlike Gorter, avoided direct participation, due to his distaste for the increasing personalization of political relations and a growing involvement in astronomy. Gorter has also noted that during this time Pannekoek had little interest in the affairs of the Dutch left and was mainly concerned with the German revolution.⁸¹ This situation led Luteraan at one point to publicly rebuke Pannekoek for his failure to play a more active role and accuse him of suppressing material favorable to the opposition's cause.⁸² Like Pannekoek, Roland Holst – despite her longstanding dislike of Wijnkoop and Van Ravesteijn – also avoided playing an active role in the opposition out of a conviction that such action would be divisive. Both Pannekoek and Roland Holst confined their oppositional activity to writing for the *Nieuwe Tijd*, which in Van Ravesteijn's words had once again become an 'oppositional organ'.⁸³

In August, 1919, the remnants of the opposition attempted to regroup with a new publication, *De Roode Vaan*, which was edited by Luteraan and financed by Gorter. In order to give what was essentially a personal dispute a broader justification, the opposition began to increasingly take up the main themes of the German left opposition. On this basis, the new publication was defined as a 'paper of the workers' rather than a 'paper of the leaders'.⁸⁴ Gorter summed up what he considered the main issue when he declared that bureaucratization was not something confined to the pre-war socialist movement. Frustrated and embittered, Gorter also announced his resignation from the party and proclaimed his intention to work directly among the masses, 'in that other area of communism which is real and living'.⁸⁵ Although Luteraan continued to work within the CPH, the opposition – lacking an organizational practice or political base of any consequence – was unable to regain the strength it enjoyed during 1917 and 1918.

Until the spring of 1920, the factional struggle in the CPH had no connection to the growing conflict in the international communist movement. When Lenin's '*Left Wing*' *Communism* first appeared all sections of the party

were taken completely by surprise by his formulations and his harsh and abusive attack on Pannekoek.⁸⁶ Throughout 1920 and much of 1921, Pannekoek's conceptions still exercised considerable influence within the party and were at least partly shared by the triumvirate.⁸⁷ During their joint participation in the Amsterdam Bureau, both sides – although barely on speaking terms – were united in their desire to transform the Bureau into a West European Comintern. At the Second Congress of the Comintern, Wijnkoop put aside his own differences with Pannekoek and Gorter to champion the cause of the KAPD and criticise the growing Russian domination of the International. For these actions, the CPH was stripped of its seat on the executive and Lenin was moved to note: 'We have the statement of Wijnko[o]p that he does not agree with Pannekoek's ideas, but in his speeches he has proved the contrary.'⁸⁸

In the months following the Second Congress, a tripartite division began to increasingly characterize the CPH. At one pole was the leadership triumvirate of Wijnkoop, Van Ravesteijn, and Ceton and their supporters, who continued to dominate the party's organizational structure. At the other pole was the loosely organized opposition divided between the *Nieuwe Tijd* intellectuals, the *Roode Vaan* group of Luteraan, and several fractious local groups. Between these two poles, lay an intermediate group composed predominantly of young activists who had joined the party during the war years and whose main political reference point was the Russian Revolution. Few members of this group had been involved in the pre-war SDP and their distinguishing characteristic was rejection of theory for the lessons of everyday struggle. Although they shared a common dislike of the triumvirate's leadership methods and approved of much of the opposition's political perspective, they were open to the doctrines of Bolshevism and the influence of the Comintern in a way that the pre-war leaders of the SDP could never be. Included among this group were men such as Jacques de Kadt, Jan Romein, G.J.M. van het Reve, Dirk and Anton Struik, Louis de Visser, and A.S. de Leeuw, who with a few key additions and subtractions would soon constitute the basic leadership nucleus of the CPH for the next two decades.⁸⁹

For the CPH, the Second Congress of the Comintern marked the first sustained contact with the Russian leadership and opened a new phase in the party's development. Following Wijnkoop's chastisement at the congress, the triumvirate – although continuing to maintain an independent and leftist outlook – began an attempt to bring the party more in line with Comintern policy.⁹⁰ The first indications of a change in policy came when Van Ravesteijn proposed to modify the CPH's trade union program by shifting the main focus of the party's trade union activities from the syndicalist NAS federation to the SDAP-dominated NVV. Despite an intensive campaign by

the triumvirate, Van Ravesteijn's proposal was overwhelmingly rejected at the party congress that November.⁹¹

Undeterred by this rebuff, the triumvirate turned their attention toward centralizing the party along Bolshevik lines. When, in May, 1921, the Enschede section passed a resolution condemning a decision to have the delegates to the Third Congress of the Comintern chosen by the executive rather than the membership, the entire section was expelled *en bloc* and party members were forbidden to have contact with them. The full implications of this move became apparent when the Zwolle and Deventer sections were expelled for supporting the Enschede section.⁹² Shortly afterwards Luteraan met the same fate.

At this point, a major debate developed in the opposition over whether to follow the German example and build 'workers' unions' and a new party along the lines of the KAPD. Following his return from Moscow in late 1921, Gorter raised the possibility of forming a new party and in February began to propagandize openly for such a move.⁹³ Pannekoek, however, cautioned that in Holland, unlike Germany, conditions were not ripe for the creation of new forms of working class organization since the 'old thought patterns' had not been altered by a war and crisis of capitalist society. The most the left could do was to propagate the significance of workers' councils and anti-parliamentarianism for future developments. Pannekoek's readiness to continue working within the framework of the CPH was also grounded in his assumption that the divisions in the party were more a 'technical matter' related to the triumvirate's heavy-handed leadership and the growing influence of Moscow, rather than fundamental strategic differences. To withdraw from the party would only cut the opposition off from the predominantly left-leaning membership and preclude the possibility of adapting the CPH's tactics to future revolutionary developments.⁹⁴ Gorter and Luteraan, however, rejected this strategy and began to undertake preparations to form a new party.

These efforts culminated in the formation of the *Kommunistische Arbeiders-Partij Nederland* (KAPN – Communist Workers' Party of the Netherlands) in September, 1921. Although the KAPN was modeled directly on the KAPD, with a virtually identical program, the new party lacked both the social base and dynamism of its German counterpart.⁹⁵ At its high point in late 1921, the party numbered less than 200 members, organized in eight sections.⁹⁶ While Pannekoek chose not to join, the KAPD received the wholehearted support of Gorter, who acted as its main spokesman, edited its publication, provided much of its financial support, and attempted to mediate its never-ending factional disputes.

Throughout all these events and developments, the independently-

owned *Nieuwe Tijd* remained firmly in the hands of the left. For the CPH leadership, Pannekoek's defense of the KAPD and his increasingly hostile assessment of the Soviet Union was an acute source of embarrassment and threatened their already strained relationship with the Comintern. Confronted with this situation, the triumvirate began to take measures to bring the *Nieuwe Tijd* under party control. Pannekoek responded to this drive by reaffirming the *Nieuwe Tijd*'s importance as an instrument of socialist clarification and announcing his intention to fight any attempt at party interference.⁹⁷ Following the decision at the Third Congress that all communist publications must be brought under strict party control, the leadership began to pursue its campaign with renewed intensity. At this point, the opposition suffered a major loss with the defection of Roland Holst. Although she had stubbornly defended the KAPD at the Third Congress, Roland Holst's position shifted suddenly upon her return, when she began to polemicize against Pannekoek for joining a 'reactionary assault on Russia'.⁹⁸ With Roland Holst's support, Van Ravesteyn maneuvered to have a declaration published in the *Nieuwe Tijd* on September 5 announcing that the publication had been placed under direct party control with Roland Holst as sole editor.⁹⁹ Van Ravesteyn now felt confident enough to declare to Moscow that the left had been removed from all positions of influence in the party.¹⁰⁰ Although Pannekoek had initially been pressured into supporting this arrangement, he responded a few days later by resigning from the CPH. Pannekoek, however, continued to remain on the editorial board of the *Nieuwe Tijd*, and convoked a board meeting to discuss the declaration. Following a heated debate between Pannekoek and Van Ravesteyn, the board deadlocked, with Van Ravesteyn and Roland Holst supporting party control, and Pannekoek and J. Rogge, the son of the publisher, opposed. In the ensuing days, the Comintern executive made it clear that Moscow would not permit the CPH to co-edit a review with Pannekoek.¹⁰¹ Pannekoek, by now completely isolated, tenaciously held to the position that rather than allow the *Nieuwe Tijd* to lose its independent status, he would dissolve the review and put up a sign declaring: 'Closed by order of Moscow'.¹⁰²

When Van Ravesteyn persisted in his demand, Pannekoek and Rogge ceased publication on December 20. Shortly afterwards, the CPH came out with its own publication, *De Communistische Gids*, which was edited by Van Ravesteyn and Roland Holst. The triumvirate's triumph, however, was short-lived. Within five years, both they and Roland Holst would be outside the CPH.¹⁰³ For the Dutch left, the dissolution of the *Nieuwe Tijd* brought to a close a quarter century of theoretical creativity and innovation. Although the publication's outward form remained intact in the *Communistische Gids*, its substance became a mere shadow of what it had been in its dynamic years.

For Pannekoek, this event marked his final break with the international communist movement.¹⁰⁴

From Movement to Sect: Left Communism in Decline

While the battle within the CPH raged, the newly formed KAPD was embroiled in its own internal turmoil. The initial circumstances for the KAPD were highly favorable. Born in a period of proletarian radicalization, the party incarnated the German left radical tradition – albeit in a modified and more radicalized form. Membership at the party's foundation stood at an estimated 38,000, which was several thousand more than the KPD, and nearly double what the Bolshevik party had been at the beginning of 1917.¹⁰⁵ In addition, the KAPD possessed an extensive range of regional, local, and factory publications. Yet the party's strength still had significant limitations, of which its amorphous organizational structure was the most serious. Like the AAUD, the KAPD was never more than a loose federation of different ideological and regional tendencies which were capable of sudden disintegration. Their reliance on working class spontaneity and rejection of limited demands for material improvements led them to consistently refuse to create stable, permanent organizations for fear of deadening the revolutionary dynamic with bureaucracy. During the war years, *Arbeiterpolitik* and Pannekoek's theoretical work had played a central role in the consolidation of a specific left communist current. But by 1920, other theoretical tendencies and publications had emerged as independent ideological centers in their own right. The KAPD's basic structural weakness was compounded by the changed political and economic situation prevailing in Germany after 1920. The initial stabilization (or apparent stabilization) of the Weimar regime, combined with the ebbing of the council movement and the withdrawal from political involvement of much of the working class, while it did not weaken the determination of the left communists, did set limits to their appeal. What remained of the council movement was either organized through state initiative or subsidiary to the trade unions with specialized tasks. With no revival of the council movement at hand, empty rhetoric and sectarian logic swiftly took hold.¹⁰⁶

The first of the KAPD's many ideological disputes occurred at the party's foundation congress when a conflict developed with the 'national bolshevik' tendency led by Wolffheim and Laufenberg.¹⁰⁷ Following several months of controversy, this dispute was finally resolved at the KAPD's second congress in August, 1920, when the 'national bolsheviks' were expelled as 'nationalist saboteurs of the German revolution'.¹⁰⁸

Among all the theoretical problems confronted by the left communists,

the question of revolutionary organization was the thorniest and most divisive. Even before the KAPD's foundation congress, a group led by Otto Rühle and Franz Pfemfert expressed their opposition to any type of centralized party structure. At the congress, Rühle strenuously objected to designating the new organization a party and the statement in the KAPD's program that it was not a party in the traditional sense was made largely in deference to his position.¹⁰⁹ In numerous articles, and in his widely circulated brochure, *Die Revolution ist keine Parteisache! (Revolution is Not a Party Matter!)*, Rühle argued that the main goal of the revolutionary workers' movement must be to assume direct control of social production on a factory-by-factory, industry-by-industry basis, through unitary organizations, bypassing political parties altogether. While much of this was the common stock of left communist ideology, Rühle went a step further and suggested that all types of party organization were historically outdated and simply another form of domination. Taking a position close to syndicalism, Rühle maintained that party centralism embodies the same principles as the bourgeois state and that the politics of every party inevitably leads to opportunism.¹¹⁰ To remain consistent with this perspective, Rühle and his East Saxony organization voted in November, 1920, to withdraw from the KAPD and merge into the AAUD.¹¹¹

Rühle's decision added fuel to a debate that was already raging within the ranks of the AAUD over its relationship to the KAPD. These differences were brought dramatically into the open for the first time at a national conference of the AAUD in December, 1920, at which a faction favoring close relations with the KAPD led by Karl Schröder won control. When it became clear at the next national conference of the AAUD in June, 1921, that the pro-party tendency was firmly entrenched, Rühle and his followers left to form the AAUD-Einheitsorganisation (AAUD-E).

Taking as their point of departure Rühle's opposition to any form of political party separate from the factory organizations, the AAUD-E criticized the KAPD for being a centralized party of professional leaders, distinguished from the KPD only by its rejection of parliamentarianism. In its organizational statutes, the AAUD-E declared that it would be governed solely by the federalist principle, with no centralism, no 'outside' leadership, and no interference from intellectuals not belonging to the plant. Never numbering more than a few thousand supporters, the AAUD-E concentrated its work within the local factory organizations affiliated with the AAUD.

Rühle's departure from the KAPD did not end internal strife in that organization. Shortly before the KAPD was expelled from the Comintern, a debate had developed within the party over whether to form a new left

communist International. The most prominent proponent of a new International was Herman Gorter, who was supported organizationally by Karl Schröder. Although the majority of the party clearly opposed such a move, Schröder maneuvered in late July, 1921, to have the KAPD set up an international information bureau to lay the groundwork for a Fourth International.

The division of opinion over the question of forming a new International was, for the moment, less divisive than a parallel cleavage that emerged over an attempt to develop a new theoretical basis for the KAPD's activity under the prevailing conditions of capitalist stabilization. Theorizing on the basis of Rosa Luxemburg's theory of accumulation, the Schröder group constructed an argument which maintained that capitalism, despite its apparent stability, had entered a 'death crisis' (*Todeskrise*) from which it could not recover. The tactical conclusion that Schröder drew from this was that although the situation in Germany was objectively revolutionary, the working class still remained under the influence of their reformist leaders, which required that the KAPD maintain firm revolutionary principles in order to win the workers at a later point. This amounted above all to the belief that KAPD militants should not participate in traditional trade union struggles, which many in the KAPD and AAUD were urging as a 'flexible tactic'. The anti-Schröder tendency, while agreeing that capitalism was in a state of collapse, chose to de-emphasize the objective or economic aspects of the crisis and stressed instead a confrontation based on a Pannekoekian process of spiritual struggle. While this group did not specifically endorse 'flexible tactics', it did maintain a more open attitude toward them.

These theoretical controversies were aggravated by what many perceived to be Schröder's increasingly dictatorial leadership methods. When in March, 1922, Schröder won a factional vote under questionable circumstances, his Berlin district expelled him. Schröder and his followers responded by forming their own KAPD, complete with its own AAUD affiliate, which became known as the 'Essen tendency' to distinguish it from the majority 'Berlin tendency'. Consequently, from 1922 onwards there existed two KAPD's and three AAUD's. At the beginning of the split, the Berlin-based KAPD had 2,000 members, plus another 11,000 in its AAUD, which compared to 450 in the Essen-based KAPD and 1,600 in its AAUD.¹¹² The 'Essen tendency' did, however, manage to acquire much of the KAPD's most experienced political leadership, along with its leading intellectuals, Gorter, Reichenbach, and Goldstein. The most important achievement of the Essen KAPD was the formation of the *Kommunistische Arbeiter-Internationale* (KAI – Communist Worker's International), which became almost the sole focus of its activities during the 1920's. Despite the high hopes of its founders, the KAI led a largely shadow existence, with the Dutch KAPN

and Bulgarian Communist Workers' Party as the only active affiliates. Unlike Gorter, who became an active proponent of the 'Essen tendency', Pannekoek, by now thoroughly disillusioned with the movement's factionalism, chose not to take sides, although his sympathies were with the Berlin group.¹¹³ Throughout all this ideological discord, Pannekoek continued to maintain that in spite of its factionalism and the often crude character of its propaganda, the left communist movement represented the conscious expression of a new principle of proletarian organization and was struggling to develop and deepen new insights. He felt the movement's sectarianism was a symptom of capitalist stabilization and would be swept away once and for all by a renewed capitalist crisis.¹¹⁴

Despite the revolutionary optimism of Pannekoek and others, the years after 1922 were ones of catastrophic decline and disintegration for the once-powerful left communist movement. Badly fractured by sectarian turmoil and bereft of a mass base, the entire movement could count on no more than 20,000 supporters in 1923, and only a few hundred by the time Hitler seized power in 1933.¹¹⁵ Although the left communists continued to maintain an extensive press and an active and vocal presence in the working class throughout the 1920's, their political history during these years is largely a chronicle of loose and proliferating congeries of splinter groups, lost for the most part in obscurity.

The most prominent of the left communist groups, the KAPD-Berlin, deprived of much of its theoretical leadership, soon confined its main activities to issuing fruitless and dogmatic appeals for insurrection. Their only organizational success came in 1927 when they developed close ties with a dissident left group in the KPD led by Karl Korsch known as the *Entschiedene Linke*. The two groups finally merged only when the Korsch group lost most of its members. By this point, the KAPD-Berlin had been reduced to only a few hundred members. Shortly afterwards, the party became embroiled in a dispute with its AAUD affiliate over the question of supporting traditional economic strikes, which led the AAUD to declare that it had assumed the tasks of the party.

The disintegration of the Essen-based KAPD was even more rapid. The first major defection came in 1923, when a Leipzig-based faction, charging that the party was dominated by a 'literary circle', detached itself to form the League of Council Communists. Since their principles were already close to the AAUD-E's, most of the League's members joined that organization in 1924. The most far-reaching crisis, however, occurred in 1925 when the KAPD-Essen's main leaders – Schröder, Goldstein, and Reichenbach – left to rejoin the SPD, arguing that a revival of the council movement was unlikely. With Gorter's death in 1927, the 'Essen tendency' lost its last theoreti-

cian of any consequence. By 1929, the party could no longer afford to publish its own newspaper, although it continued to maintain a tenuous formal existence until Hitler's seizure of power.

This whole process of sectarian fragmentation and marginalization was perhaps best exemplified by the fate of Rühle's AAUD-E. Throughout 1923, a series of defections and expulsions took place over the questions of amalgamation with the anarcho-syndicalist FAUD, participation in wage struggles, the extent of autonomy for individual factory units, and the degree to which congress resolutions were binding. In 1925, its leading theoretician, Otto Rühle, resigned, contending that the climate of political reaction was too strong for an active revolutionary politics. Two years later the AAUD-E merged with a left group expelled from the KPD and a factory organization known as the Industrial Union of Transport Workers to form the Spartacist League of Left Communist Organizations (SLO). But by 1931, when the SLO joined with the AAUD-Berlin to form the 343-member *Kommunistische Arbeiter-Union Deutschlands* (KAUD – Communist Workers Union of Germany) it could contribute only 31 members.¹¹⁶ By now, however, the remnants of left communism no longer had any pretensions of being a mass movement and viewed themselves primarily as groups of propagandists fighting to maintain the council ideal.

Despite their best efforts, the left communists had clearly failed to translate their theories into a permanent revolutionary anti-bureaucratic alternative to Leninism and social democracy. In the highly-charged atmosphere of the immediate post-war period, the extraordinary militancy and active involvement of the left communists had made it possible to create new and innovative forms of working class organization and a distinctive political consciousness. But with the decline of the council movement after 1921, their theories lost their immediacy and took on an increasingly abstract character. At the same time, the failure of left communism cannot be explained simply by historical events. This failure was, in part, traceable to the inadequacy of left communist theory and practice. In formulating their strategies, the left communists consistently refrained from analyzing in-depth key questions such as the exact composition of the council movement, the factors behind its sudden decline, and the reasons why social democracy and Leninism so easily retained their hold on the working class. On the contrary, the left communists emphasized the universal nature of the council form of organization and failed to develop any policy for operating under conditions of even a temporary stabilized capitalism. These theoretical deficiencies were compounded by a narrow purist mentality and a tendency toward inflexible dogmatism that often helped isolate the movement even from the most sympathetic elements of the working class. In comparison to other

groups, there was also a serious shortage of reliable leaders in the lower ranks who might have been able to channel more effectively the energies of the militants. Nonetheless, although their exertions had done little to clear the path for a genuine self-governing socialism, they were not entirely without effect. If nothing else, the left communists had at least outlined the possible form that an anti-bureaucratic socialism might take and helped to identify the main obstacles to its realization. Out of this legacy would emerge a new school of council communism, which would find its clearest theoretical voice in Pannekoek.

CHAPTER X

**A NEW WORKERS' MOVEMENT IN FORMATION:
INTERNATIONAL COUNCIL COMMUNISM,
1927–1945**

From Left Communism to Council Communism: The Origins of the GIC and GCC

In one sense, Pannekoek's active political career terminated with the demise of the non-Leninist revolutionary left after 1921. He was never again able to participate in any social movement with a recognizable influence on public events. Nonetheless, Pannekoek never at any stage retired from his vocation as a revolutionary theorist, and, except for a brief period between 1921 and 1927, wrote without respite almost until his death. The lengthy works he undertook as the pre-eminent theorist of council communism, destined for the eyes of a mere handful, were composed with the same intellectual acumen and thoroughness as the works he once wrote for millions.

Although his political perspective remained substantially unchanged, the ebbing of the revolutionary tide after 1920 caused Pannekoek to experience a profound and distressing disillusionment, which led him to confine his political activity largely to personal contacts. According to his own testimony, when the *Nieuwe Tijd* was abolished in 1921 he considered it 'for me personally [...] not inconvenient' since it enabled him to devote his full attention to astronomy.¹ While political frustration provided a powerful impetus, Pannekoek's withdrawal from active political involvement was also motivated by the difficulties he was having in resuming a full-time career in astronomy at the age of almost fifty. His politics always made his career prospects, at best, tenuous. The precarious nature of Pannekoek's position was made particularly clear in 1919, when, after a heated parliamentary debate, the conservative government of Ruys de Beerenbrouck blocked his appointment as deputy-director of the prestigious Leiden Observatory on the grounds that he might use the position to conduct 'Bolshevik propaganda'.² Shortly afterwards, Pannekoek was appointed lecturer in mathematics and astronomy at the University of Amsterdam which was a municipal university not controlled by the state. Another major career breakthrough came in 1921, when the university granted him funds to establish an astronomical institute. During

the course of the next two decades, this institution provided the framework for much of his pioneering work in astrophysics.³

While Pannekoek's energies were being increasingly absorbed by his astronomical institute, the foundations for what later emerged as Dutch council communism were slowly being laid. Council communism did not emerge full-blown as a tendency distinct from left communism, but slowly evolved from a prolonged intellectual inquiry into the political, social, and economic conditions necessary for a non-bureaucratic, non-statist transition to socialism. What initially differentiated council communism from left communism was its refusal to identify with the international communist movement, its total rejection of party organization, and its emphasis on developing a fresh theoretical approach to the problems of socialist transformation.⁴ Although small in scope and lacking any capacity to translate their ideas into practice, the council communists, nonetheless, have been termed, on the basis of the depth of their theoretical analysis, the 'most comprehensive ideological challenge to Soviet Leninism in the inter-war period'.⁵

During its initial stages, the transition from left communism to council communism took place largely under the impetus of the ex-KAPN leader Henk Canne Meijer. A former metal-worker turned teacher, Canne Meijer had joined the CPH in 1918 under the impact of the Russian Revolution and almost immediately became a supporter of the opposition. When the KAPN was formed in 1921, Canne Meijer was elected to the executive committee and served as an editor of its newspaper.⁶ In 1924, Canne Meijer and several others, objecting to Luteraan's leadership and the KAPN's growing sectarianism, resigned from the party, charging that it had become a 'stinking cesspool', and called for a new movement 'not rooted in German relationships'.⁷ In the months which followed, Canne Meijer organized a small informal discussion group for the purpose of integrating the basic conceptions of left communism into a new theoretical analysis. Canne Meijer's theoretical inquiry received a major boost in 1925 when the former KAPD leader Jan Appel moved to Holland and joined the group. A former shipyard worker and leader of several wildcat strikes, Appel had been active in the Hamburg left during the war where he came under the influence of Pannekoek's theoretical writings.⁸

Until early 1927, the discussion group led a largely informal existence. At this point, a decision was made to formally constitute the group as the Group of International Communists (GIC).⁹ The initial political perspective of the GIC centered around three broadly defined principles: 1) anti-parliamentarianism; 2) replacement of the trade unions by self-governing factory committees; 3) direct control of these committees by the workers themselves.¹⁰ In using the designation 'group', the GIC consciously rejected the

principle of party organization and defined itself primarily as a small 'work group' charged with clarifying basic insights about the nature of the class struggle and the council system within the working class. While proclaiming its intention to actively support working class actions and to work to increase the participation of the workers in all decisions, the GIC stressed that it would not act as a factional grouping.¹¹

The decision to formally constitute the GIC was made partly in response to a major tactical debate that began in 1925 among the remnants of left communism about the movement's fundamental orientation. The issue underlying this debate was the problem of how to resolve the contradiction between the movement's revolutionary aspirations and the practical need to maintain a constituency among the workers. What triggered this debate was a decision by the KAPD-Berlin approving limited use of parliamentary tactics and strikes over economic issues, following their merger with the *Entschiedene Linke* and its two parliamentary delegates in 1927. The opponents of parliamentary and trade union tactics attempted to defend their position by arguing that capitalism had entered a 'death crisis' which would generate a revival of the revolutionary workers' movement.¹²

These developments prompted Pannekoek to break six years of self-imposed political silence with a prominent article entitled 'Principles and Tactics', which sought to define a role for the non-Leninist revolutionary left under the prevailing conditions of capitalist stabilization. Although not as yet affiliated with the GIC, Pannekoek enunciated some of the main issues that were to dominate its early development. In analyzing the prospects for revolutionary development, Pannekoek attacked both the efforts to modify the left's opposition to parliamentary and trade union tactics and the attempt to derive a tactic from the 'death crisis' theory. Pannekoek's position was based on his distinction between principle-centered tactics and opportunist tactics. What distinguished an opportunist tactic, he maintained, was its emphasis on short-term goals and its inability to take anything into account beyond the present. He contended that all forms of opportunist tactics – whether based on parliamentarianism, trade unionism, or 'death crisis' theory – are concerned primarily with developing a practice for the moment and increasing the immediate strength of the movement instead of raising the consciousness of the workers for a future upheaval. By contrast, a principle-centered tactic is based on a conception of the total process of revolutionary development and seeks to develop a long-term practice for the future. While opportunist tactics might attract supporters in the short run, clear and proven principles represent a key source of the movement's spiritual power and the basis for a fundamental revolutionary transformation. Pannekoek argued that whereas opportunism thrives in times of prosperity, the picture

changes completely in revolutionary periods when the workers turn to those who are able to articulate a clear revolutionary alternative. While paying tribute to the importance of the KAPD and the AAUD as vehicles for conserving the lessons of 1918–1921, Pannekoek felt that these organizations would continue to be bogged down in sectarian politics until they could develop a fresh theoretical approach to the new phase of capitalism that began in 1918. The situation, he reasoned, was analogous to the period between the failure of the revolutions of 1848 and the emergence of the socialism of the Second International: 'The old revolution is finished; we must prepare the new one.'¹³

Pannekoek's insistence on the need for a new ideological orientation was fully consistent with the intellectual focus of the GIC. The first full exposition of the GIC's position came with the publication of its book-length document, *Grundprinzipien kommunistischer Produktion und Verteilung* (Basic Principles of Communist Production and Distribution) which was commonly known as the *Grundprinzipien*. Although not formally published until 1930, the *Grundprinzipien* evolved out of a document Jan Appel had written while imprisoned in Germany during 1923–1925. Through a systematic study of Marx's writings, Appel sought to investigate the main problems in creating a new socialist society. Appel's principal concern was with providing a theoretical framework for resolving what he felt were the two key questions arising out of the experiences of the Russian and German revolutions: 1) What economic conditions are necessary for the abolition of exploitation? 2) What are the political and economic conditions that will allow the proletariat to maintain power once it has been won? Following Appel's arrival in Holland, the manuscript was revised by Canne Meijer and presented to the group for several years of discussion and revision.

The *Grundprinzipien* was postulated on the assumption that the worker's self-activity and self-organization, by themselves, offered no guarantee of proletarian emancipation. This emancipation, the GIC felt, could only be realized and maintained through the abolition of the capital-labor relationship in production and a complete decommodification of the labor process. The GIC argued that it was not enough simply to suppress private property – as the Russian Revolution had clearly demonstrated. The GIC's solution to the problem of extending the political conquests of the revolution to economics was to devise an elaborate hypothetical system detailing how the councils could organize society in a way that would allow distribution to conform to labor expended until a stage is reached in which social consumption outweighs individual consumption. Once social consumption predominated, both value exchange and the wage system would be abolished and the basis for a genuine communism firmly established. To replace the

exploitation inherent in the wage system, the GIC developed the idea of a new computing unit of average social labor time, which they felt would be capable of embracing all categories of production and distribution in a communist society. These measures, they maintained, would transform production from a process of capital expansion into a labor process in which society draws from nature the means of consumption it needs, in a manner consistent with Marx's dictum: 'From each according to his ability; to each according to his need.'¹⁴

Although his writings served as a major point of departure for the GIC's theoretical work, Pannekoek had no formal contact with the organization until 1929, when Canne Meijer visited him with a request to write an introduction to the *Grundprinzipien*. Pannekoek, however, declined on the grounds that he considered the *Grundprinzipien* to be 'somewhat utopian and unreal'.¹⁵ Nonetheless, Pannekoek almost immediately established a close working relationship with the GIC, which was soon complemented by a close personal friendship with Canne Meijer.

With their ideological cornerstone in place, the GIC's theoretical and political development was rapid and purposeful. Through their rigorous theoretical activity, the GIC soon gained a reputation out of proportion to their small numbers.¹⁶ Although still hoping for a revival of the council movement in the near future, the GIC's overwhelming preoccupation was with analyzing the long-term features of revolutionary transformation, which led their political opponents to label them the 'cloister friars of Marxism'.¹⁷ In the realm of daily practice, the GIC structured its work around a variety of educational and propaganda activities such as forums, literature distribution, and publishing several publications. In addition, the GIC also attempted to serve as a national and international clearing house for council communist activities. In Holland, the GIC worked to spread its ideas among the other non-Leninist left organizations. By 1932, three other such organizations were in existence along with the GIC: the KAPN; a split-off from the KAPN known as the Groups of Council Communists; and an offshoot from the NAS known as the Left Workers' Opposition. In November, 1932, the GIC organized a conference of these groups to discuss the question of unification, but they were unable to agree on a common program.¹⁸ Until Hitler's seizure of power, the GIC also maintained close ties with the remnants of the German left communist movement. During these years, Canne Meijer and Appel were frequent contributors to the German left communist press and regularly attended their conferences. Links were also forged with left groups in England, France, Denmark, Hungary, and the United States. On the initiative of the GIC, an international conference of these groups was held in Copenhagen during June, 1935. Although the gathering affirmed a

set of basic principles, a dispute developed between the Dutch and German delegates over whether to emphasize theory or the practical necessities of struggle. When the Germans extended this debate to the question of forming an international council organization, the Dutch charged that 'the new fifth or sixth International is here present in crudely revised edition'.¹⁹

Of the GIC's international contacts, none were more important than those with the American group centered around Paul Mattick, which by the mid-1930's had emerged as a major theoretical center of council communism in its own right. A metal-worker and former member of the KAPD, Mattick had emigrated to the United States in 1926 and immediately joined the IWW.²⁰ In early 1927, Mattick entered into a long period of collaboration with the GIC when he wrote Canne Meijer requesting Pannekoek's address.²¹ Throughout the late twenties and early thirties, Mattick focused his work on bringing the ideas of council communism to the IWW and to the local councils of the unemployed in Chicago which he had helped organize. In 1931, he embarked on a year-long effort to revive the once influential *Chicago Arbeiter-Zeitung*. Dissatisfied with the IWW's anti-Marxist orientation, Mattick in 1934 joined with a group expelled from the Leninist-oriented Proletarian Party to form the United Workers' Party. To reflect the group's council communist orientation, the name was later changed to the Groups of Council Communists (GCC). Directly modeled on the GIC, the GCC was conceived of primarily as a theoretical and propaganda group seeking to recognize and elucidate major patterns of development.²² Like the GIC, the GCC's main strength lay in the high caliber of its theoretical work. Its theoretical review *International Council Correspondence* (later renamed *Living Marxism* and *New Essays*) featured, in addition to the extensive works of Mattick, regular contributions from Pannekoek and Karl Korsch.²³

Pannekoek's willingness to collaborate with the GIC and the GCC was premised on his belief that the two organizations represented models of proletarian self-education. It was partly on these grounds that shortly after *International Council Correspondence* first appeared, Pannekoek reproached Mattick for the publication's intellectualism, contending that 'often [it] looks like an intricate and difficult splitting of curled hairs, and sometimes I wonder how such clear and simple a theory as Marx'[s] can be made so difficult by misunderstandings and learned or quasi-learned complications'.²⁴ These criticisms were reiterated in another form a few years later when Mattick announced his intention to replace the mimeographed *International Council Correspondence* with the printed review *Living Marxism*. Pannekoek felt that this decision shifted the publication's main function from worker's self-education to abstract theory and would undoubtedly be perceived by the workers as another attempt by intellectuals to dominate them mentally.²⁵

In the political development of both the GIC and the GCC, Pannekoek played a key role as a quasi-official theoretician, mentor, and financial supporter, but remained deliberately aloof from the day-to-day functioning of the movement. Pannekoek justified his unwillingness to play a more active role by arguing that a movement dominated by intellectuals contradicted the basic task of self-education. This role as an external theorist, however, often led to a strained relationship with both groups. Speaking of Pannekoek's relationship to the GIC, Canne Meijer noted in a revealing comment:

'Pannekoek is a "pure theoretician", he is not a fighter in our sense. He offers analyses and conclusions, but doesn't attempt to carry them out. He won't participate in the organizational life because he "doesn't have enough time". [...] He provides his analyses and we fight it out about what they mean. He is an extraordinarily modest man without the slightest trace of self-conceit, but he won't take a position on anything he is not absolutely certain about. For these reasons, we often think: "Pannekoek says it so it must be true, but is it indeed really true?" But praxis involves decisions about which one can never be entirely certain. This is the real difference between a "pure theoretician" and a fighter.'²⁶

When similar criticisms were voiced in the GCC about his theoretical domination of the group, Pannekoek felt compelled to reply that if it were indeed true that theory represented a 'condensed form' of experiences, then 'it is not strange that one person sees it better and clearer than another' on the basis of a lifetime of theoretical and practical activities within the socialist movement. Using such reasoning, Pannekoek insisted that his writings were 'part of those forces, by which the material world transforms the mind of the workers'.²⁷

The Permanent Crisis: the Theoretical Development of Council Communism in the Inter-War Period

The themes most frequently stressed by both the GIC and the GCC were essentially an extension of those which had been articulated by Pannekoek and the left communists since 1920. In place of the 'leader politics' of the trade unions and parties, the council communists sought to build a new movement based on the principle of workers' self-management. Despite the predetermined character of their views, the council communists repeatedly maintained that it was not their intention to create a new ideology in regard to the organizational forms of the future, but simply to comprehend the self-emancipatory movement of the working class and to elucidate it theoretically. For this reason, they contended that building their own organizations had little relevance to this process except to serve as instruments to

clarify and publicize the necessary course of actions.²⁸ Active intervention in the sense of attempting to get the workers to follow specific policies was regarded as only one step removed from Leninism.²⁹

These ideas were brought into sharp theoretical focus by Henk Canne Meijer in a seminal article – inspired largely by Pannekoek – entitled ‘The Rise of a New Labor Movement’. The essential point of Canne Meijer’s analysis was his argument that the ‘workers’ movement’ no longer coincided with the ‘movement of the workers’. The real movement of the workers since 1917, he insisted, lay in the workers’ councils, which would again come to the forefront as capitalism continued its economic decline. What still remained of the old workers’ movement in the form of trade unions and parties was a ‘capitalistic movement of workers’ so completely integrated into capitalist society that it was unable to function other than as an instrument of that society. Canne Meijer argued that because the old organizations were based on the principle of dominance by leaders, they were a faithful reproduction of the capitalist state and would be a steadfast ally of the bourgeoisie during the revolution. A rebirth of the workers’ movement was possible only on the basis of a rebellion of the masses against the old organizations: ‘The destruction of the state signifies, above all, the destruction of these organizations.’ In attempting to build a new worker’s movement based on the principle of ‘self-leadership of the masses’, the workers would have to destroy the very features of the old workers’ movement that were considered its strengths. While praising the earlier left communist movement for its attempt to apply these principles, Canne Meijer criticized it for its lack of theoretical finesse, sectarianism, impatience, ill-considered actions, revolutionary verbalism, and a general lack of insight. At the same time, he made it clear that the GIC was not identical with the new workers’ movement, but merely a theoretical reflection of a certain stage of social development.³⁰

In theorizing how the new workers’ movement would emerge, the council communists sharply diverged from Pannekoek in their attempt to tie their strategy to a new version of crisis theory. In 1929, the German economist Henryk Grossmann, in a detailed work entitled *Das Akkumulations- und Zusammenbruchsgesetz des kapitalistischen Systems. (Zugleich eine Krisentheorie)* (The Law of Accumulation and Collapse of the Capitalist System), sought to ‘reconstruct’, through a critique of Rosa Luxemburg’s theory of underconsumption, Marx’s law of accumulation in a way that would demonstrate the inevitable necessity of collapse inherent in the mechanisms of capitalist production.³¹ Grossmann made it clear that because of its importance for revolutionary practice, the theory of capitalist collapse represented ‘the portal column of Marx’s economic thought’.³² Against Rosa Luxemburg’s view

that capitalism would eventually break down in the circulation of goods, through a lack of markets, Grossmann argued that the collapse of capitalism would originate in production itself, through a decline in profits. On the basis of an abstract theory of value bound to labor time, Grossmann constructed a rigorous schema of the accumulation process, showing how it was destined to culminate in a crisis brought about by a breakdown of the necessary proportionality between the production of surplus-value and the needs of accumulation. This meant that capitalism's inevitable drive toward collapse was not rooted in any external contingency, but in the system's own 'cellular form', the commodity. Published during the first year of the depression, Grossmann's work almost immediately became a theoretical cornerstone of the council communist movement.

The widespread acceptance of Grossmann's work within the council communist movement prompted Pannekoek to undertake a detailed critique of Grossmann's analysis. Pannekoek's critique was marked by his conviction that the problem of capitalist collapse was the 'most important of all questions' confronting the working class – particularly during a time when economic conditions were helping to prepare men's minds for the possibility of a full-scale collapse. Although Pannekoek utilized his formidable mathematical talents to demonstrate the quantitative fallacy of Grossmann's arguments, his critique was largely an extension and reaffirmation of his longstanding objection to any form of economic fatalism. Taking up first Grossmann's claim to have 'reconstructed' Marx's original theory in the face of social democratic and communist distortions, Pannekoek charged that Grossmann's work was nothing more than a 'patchwork of quotations from Marx, incorrectly applied and stuck together by means of a fabricated theory'. Grossmann's analysis, he insisted, was founded on a fundamental methodological error: an inability to comprehend the total economic, ideological, and political nature of capitalism. As a counter to the crisis model proposed by Grossmann, Pannekoek reaffirmed what had been at the heart of his criticism of Rosa Luxemburg in 1913: 'The accumulation of capital, crisis, pauperization, the proletarian revolution, the seizure of power by the working class form together, acting like a natural law, an indivisible unity, the collapse of capitalism.'

Grossmann's main error, Pannekoek declared, was therefore, 'that of a bourgeois economist who has never had practical experience of the struggle of the proletariat and who is consequently not in a position to understand the essence of Marxism'. Theories of economic catastrophe, Pannekoek maintained, were ready-made for intellectuals desiring a planned economy built in accordance with the reproduction schema they have invented. Such theories often have considerable appeal to large numbers of revolutionary work-

ers who see an economic catastrophe as the only possible means of activating the passive masses. In place of a final catastrophe, Pannekoek envisioned a long series of crises, each leading to new struggles, in which the illusions and passivity of the workers would progressively collapse, as they discover their true aims and struggle for control of social production itself. The tactical conclusion Pannekoek drew from this analysis was that: 'The self-emancipation of the proletariat is the collapse of capitalism.'³³

Pannekoek's critique of Grossmann triggered a counter-polemic from Paul Mattick, who embarked on a lengthy effort to refine and expand Grossmann's analysis. According to Mattick, Grossmann's chief merit was to have developed a theoretical model of crises which, through its analysis of value, was capable of enabling the workers' movement to move from an abstract theory of capital development to concrete revolutionary practice. Mattick made it clear, at the same time, that he considered the theory of collapse a major point of demarcation between reformists and revolutionaries.³⁴ During the course of this controversy, Pannekoek received the support of Karl Korsch, who offered a similar 'subjectivist' criticism of Grossmann.³⁵ In the end, however, Pannekoek and Korsch's views failed to sway majority sentiment in the council communist movement.

The council communists' emphasis on the permanent crisis of capitalism was closely bound up with their assessment of the function of the state in advanced capitalist societies. Within a general process of capitalist dissolution, the council communists identified a world-wide counter-trend of capitalist concentration and state intervention which took two forms: fascism and monopoly state capitalism.

From the council communist perspective, fascism was seen as a modified and more aggressive version of the traditional capitalist deflationary solution to relaunching the accumulation process: compression of wages, suppression of trade unions, and limitation of consumption. In contrast to the old capitalism, in which the state was a necessary instrument of industry, the new fascist stage of capitalism had achieved a merger of the state and production whereby industry was subordinated to the state. While stressing that fascism was a response to capitalist disorder – both economic crisis and working class revolt – the council communists maintained that fascism was not a new form of social organization, but simply a new phase in the history of the capitalist division between the producers and the means of production.³⁶ Reduced to its most essential aspects, fascism represented merely the 'fully matured and self-realized capitalist state'.³⁷

The same trend, they felt, was present in different form in the non-fascist countries as a growing tendency toward monopoly state capitalism, which found its clearest expression in the American New Deal. Unlike fascism,

however, the New Deal was an inflationary solution to capitalist stagnation based on state-financed production, public works programs, and the transformation of the trade union movement into a pillar of a new Keynesian system. Essentially, the New Deal paved the way for the development of monopolies by introducing trade unions into large factories and exempting the price of labor from the laws of supply and demand, thereby ruining small businesses and encouraging the process of concentration required for increasing capital accumulation. Despite their outward differences, both fascism and the New Deal had essentially the same goal: the establishment of a state-controlled economy which would no longer experience the disequilibrium that capitalism was unable to eliminate on its own. By eliminating competition and centralizing the means of production, monopoly state capitalism had also created the preconditions for a later emergence of a totalitarian political and ideological dictatorship.³⁸

In pointing to the changes in the state brought about by the stagnation in the accumulation process, the council communists attempted to tie their case to a historical analysis of the role of the state in capitalist society. During the early stages of capitalism, they argued, the prevailing theory of economic liberalism, which opposed any form of state intervention in the economy, corresponded to the practice of unrestrained capitalism. Even at this early stage, however, certain bourgeois intellectuals dissented from the prevailing ideology of *laissez faire* capitalism. In the 1840's, the economist Friedrich List, for instance, developed a theory of state socialism which assigned the state a central role in expanding the internal market and supporting production for the general welfare. With the emergence of cartels and monopolies in the period after 1870, the capitalists began to enter into a closer economic relationship with the state. This relationship went hand in hand with imperialism and its conquest of world markets. During this stage, the state increasingly became the maintainer of certain capitalist interest groups who used the state to increase their monopolization of the domestic market and to help dump their goods on the international market. The First World War initiated a new phase of direct state intervention in the economy, which provided the model for both state capitalism and fascism. Social democracy reinforced this process by viewing the growing state intervention as the beginning of socialism and identifying socialism with nationalization. In suspending the market's competitive laws and assigning the state direct responsibility for production, both fascism and state capitalism marked merely the culmination of a process long underway.³⁹ In Mattick's view, these changes amounted to nothing less than a 'Second Industrial Revolution'.⁴⁰

While agreeing that fascism and state capitalism represented a major alteration of the state, Pannekoek dissented from the prevailing view that they

were a consequence of economic crisis and thus a necessary precondition for proletarian revolution. He felt that although fascism and state capitalism corresponded to the needs of an economically distressed capitalism, they were not the only options available to resolve the crisis, and, in fact, were probably less effective as a long-term strategy than the normal mechanism of bourgeois democracy. What was most critical, Pannekoek insisted, was that fascism and state capitalism were an expression of the will of the capitalist class, a political decision made in response to a certain stage of the class struggle. For these reasons, the evolving new workers' movement must not allow the belief in the inevitability of fascism and state capitalism to become the basis of its strategy. The key factor for revolutionary development, he argued, was the constantly growing power of capital and the inability of the old workers' movement to confront it.⁴¹

The council communists' assessment of the statist tendencies in advanced capitalism also applied to Soviet Russia. The prevailing view was summarized in a set of theses, which argued that Soviet Russia was merely another expression of the logic of capitalist development and part of a worldwide counter-revolutionary process. It was maintained that a socialist transformation was precluded by the predominantly feudal and agrarian socio-economic structure of Russia. Although the Bolsheviks' practice was based on Marxist principles, their political behavior was shaped by essentially the same tasks which had earlier defined the bourgeois revolutions in the West: the destruction of an absolutist, agrarian, feudal system and the creation of a political and administrative apparatus capable of responding to a modern, commodity-based economy. The Russian bourgeoisie, numerically small, and politically dependent on czarism through state subsidies, was incapable of fulfilling this task. What this ultimately meant was that the bourgeois revolution in Russia had to be carried out not only without, but directly against, the bourgeoisie. The solution to this problem was provided by the unique set of social conditions prevailing in Russia. In attempting to pinpoint the main dynamic of the Russian Revolution, the Theses singled out the peasantry, which, because of its majority status, had passively determined the social character of the revolution. Owing to their atomized character, however, the peasants were unable to fight for their class interests on their own. The numerically smaller working class, on the other hand, while possessing a proper fighting spirit and the rudiments of a communist consciousness, lacked the social strength for victory, and were compelled to subordinate themselves to a group of petit-bourgeois intellectuals not organically bound up with their class interests. Whatever their subjective intentions, the special genius of the Bolsheviks, therefore, was to have resolved the historical problem of bourgeois revolution in Russia by forging,

through their leadership tactic, a seemingly contradictory alliance between a peasantry fighting for private property and a proletariat fighting for socialism.

At the same time it was made clear, that although nationalization clearly differentiated the Bolshevik system from Western capitalism, it did not alter the social relations of production, which in both systems was based on the separation of workers from the means of production and the monopolization of political power by the state. It was no longer private capital but state-controlled capital which now opposed the working class and perpetuated the wage-labor form of productive activity conducted according to capitalist standards of profitability, while allowing the appropriation of surplus-labor through the agency of the state. Although the Soviet state expropriated private capital, it did not abolish the capital-labor relationship upon which modern class rule rests. Under these conditions, it was therefore only a matter of time before the emergence of a new ruling class whose privileges depended upon the maintenance of a state-controlled system of production and distribution. What this meant for proletarian tactics was that Bolshevism was not only 'unserviceable' as a revolutionary ideology but one of the 'heaviest and most dangerous impediments' to proletarian revolution. The implications of this for the new workers' movement were fully clear: 'The struggle against the bolshevik ideology, against the bolshevik practices and hence against all groups seeking to anchor them anew in the proletariat is one of the first tasks in the struggle for the revolutionary reorientation of the working class.'⁴²

In their prognosis for the future, the council communists felt that the various state capitalist solutions to the problem of capital accumulation were only temporary and unstable expedients. Although a certain amount of order had been attained, production remained restricted and social development hindered. The economic limits of fascism and state capitalism, they felt, would intensify the contradictions between the productive forces and the relations of production, leading to new working class upheavals. Owing to their inclination to treat state power as an essentially homogeneous entity and to their inability to analyze fascism in anything other than classical Marxist terms, the council communists flatly rejected the possibility that fascism represented a new and unscrupulous force capable of mobilizing the whole society for its designs. Without providing a comprehensive and in-depth analysis, Pannekoek clung to the belief that the triumph of fascism had put the class struggle on a completely new basis. What fascism had destroyed, he insisted, was not the workers' movement but only its historically outdated forms. Unlike parties and trade unions, the class struggle was something which could not be destroyed or forbidden. By destroying the

old movement and the illusions connected to it, fascism had restored the workers' natural class unity and compelled them to think and feel in class terms without any mental or organizational barriers. Pannekoek's incorrigible optimism led him to argue that under fascism every struggle would become a direct revolutionary struggle.⁴³

The outbreak of the Second World War led to no changes in the theory and practice of council communism. The council communists' attitude toward the war was fully consistent with the positions they had worked out earlier. In an unusually indifferent and undifferentiating analysis, they argued that the war was a conflict between two basically similar social systems. The war, like the depression, was seen as only another sign of the permanent crisis of capitalism. Although both fascism and monopoly state capitalism had tried, with different tactical tools, to resolve the crisis of capitalist accumulation, the concentration of capital continued to slow down until it had to be bolstered by violent methods. The war, they felt, had clearly revealed that the new productive forces unleashed by the various forms of state capitalism were not compatible with a world market system still based on competition. Despite their common elements, the new ruling classes had developed in a manner that excluded the possibility of sharing in world exploitation. By creating a condition of near permanent war, the capitalists had replaced the 'anarchy of the market' with the 'anarchy of planning'.⁴⁴

While in agreement about the intrinsically capitalist character of the war, the council communists differed about its eventual implications for social development. Mattick and Korsch felt that in a situation characterized by the absence of any autonomous action by the workers, the war would lead, no matter who won, to a 'fascistization' of the world. In Mattick's words: 'All roads lead to the totalitarian state.'⁴⁵ While still holding out the possibility of spontaneous working class revolt, they maintained that an international fascist world order was neither a prelude to a genuine revolution, nor an intrinsic part of the revolutionary process itself. Pannekoek, however, stubbornly insisted that the war would bring about a general exhaustion and impoverishment which would be accompanied by new and more violent revolutionary upheavals. The failure of the working class to prevent war and fascism, he felt, was due solely to the legacy of a half century of Marxian reformism under the 'leadership principle', which had produced a workers' movement incapable of acting in its own interest.⁴⁶

Faced with the reality of the Second World War, the council communists' already small numbers continued to decline rapidly. In the United States, the GCC had largely ceased functioning by 1940, although Mattick continued to publish *New Essays* until 1943. In the Netherlands, the GIC disbanded itself

in the wake of the Nazi occupation. Part of the GIC, however, put aside their objections to party organization and joined forces with Henk Sneevliet's quasi-Trotskyist Revolutionary Socialist Workers Party in July, 1940, to form the clandestine Marx-Lenin-Luxemburg Front. Shortly after the arrest and execution of Sneevliet in August, 1942, differences developed over the question of support for the Soviet Union, which prompted the former GIC members to leave to form the Spartacist Communist League. With only a handful of members, however, this organization remained inactive throughout the duration of the war.⁴⁷

As they wrestled with the complex of theoretical and practical problems posed by the war, fascism, and economic crisis, the council communists, like the left communists, had clearly failed to resolve the concrete problems of revolutionary transformation. From an historical standpoint, it was their chief merit to have helped pioneer new theoretical work in several areas. In their extensive analyses, they mounted a detailed and penetrating critique not only of the function of the state in advanced capitalism and of the general trend of capitalist development, but also of the predominant forms taken by the socialist movements in the past. Through their rigorous criticism of state-dominated systems in all forms and their articulation of an ideology of workers' control, the council communists provided invaluable theoretical tools for a critical re-elaboration of Marxian analysis. But for all the importance and originality of their insights, the council communists' highly abstract formulations were completely inadequate as a guide to practice. Too often, the narrow underlying assumptions of their doctrines tended to impede both an understanding of the actual development of the working class and the recognition of the need for new categories of theoretical speculation. Blinded by the categories of classical Marxism and lacking any organic contact with the social reality they sought to transform, the council communists were unable to conceive of any strategy for democratic transformation outside of the workplace and, in the end, were forced to fall back on an illusory confidence in an heroic industrial proletariat engaged in spontaneous struggles at the point of production. In the final analysis, a strategy premised on non-participation and theoretical purism led only to a paradox. On the one hand, council communism presented itself as merely the intellectual component of a political practice; on the other, it lacked any specific political anchorage. The result was the substitution of a theory as a surrogate for politics.

CHAPTER XI

THE WORLD OF THE WORKERS' COUNCILS: PANNEKOEK AND THE THEORY OF COUNCIL COMMUNISM

The Workers' Way to Freedom: Rebellion and Council Organization

Although his energies were primarily devoted to astronomy after 1920, Pannekoek played a vital role in giving the basic ideas of council communism theoretical depth and comprehensiveness. Pannekoek's ideas were repeatedly articulated and systematically developed in numerous articles and in three book-length works: *Workers' Councils*, *Lenin as Philosopher*, and the unpublished 'The Workers' Way to Freedom'. In these works, Pannekoek's primary intention was to provide a body of popularized theoretical literature to be disseminated within the working class as part of the task of developing a 'new orientation'. His point of departure for this 'new orientation' was a bold and sweeping critique of the 'statist' and 'leader' oriented politics of both social democracy and Leninism:

'Socialism, as inherited from the 19th century, was the creed of a social mission for the leaders and politicians: to transform capitalism into a system of State-directed economy without exploitation, producing abundance for all. It was the creed of class struggle for the workers, the belief that by transferring government into the hands of these socialists they would assure their freedom. [...] Now it is seen that socialism in the sense of State-directed planned economy means state-capitalism and that socialism in the sense of workers' emancipation is only possible as a new orientation. The new orientation of socialism is self-direction of production, self-direction of the class-struggle, by means of workers' councils. [...] The workers educated in the belief in socialism stand bewildered now that they see that the very opposite, heavier slavery, is the outcome. To grasp that socialism and communism now both mean doctrines of enslavement is a hard job. New orientation needs time; maybe only a new generation will comprehend its full scope.'

As conceived by Pannekoek, the main focus of this new orientation was to be on elucidating the idea of council organization as the creative and dynamic element of socialist transformation. In theorizing the role of the workers' councils, Pannekoek stressed that while the councils represented a

higher stage of proletarian organization, they were not simply replacements for the old organizations, but the very negation of the principles underlying these organizations. Pannekoek remained firmly convinced that the councils would resolve the conflict between leaders and followers by eliminating the professional leadership bodies which had gained power over the rank-and-file. He insisted that in the councils, the entire function of leadership would be abolished and the whole class actively incorporated into the decision-making process.

—Although Pannekoek viewed the councils as the central agent of socialist transformation, he steadfastly maintained that they could not be mechanically proclaimed or arbitrarily willed into existence by revolutionary groups. At the most, such groups could only propagate the idea and necessity of council organization. Rather than being tactical objectives in themselves, the councils represented merely the transitory organizational form of the class struggle and the embodiment of the principle of workers' control over production:

'Workers' councils does not designate a fixed form of organization whose lines have been established once and for all, and for which all that remains is to perfect the details. It is concerned with a *principle* — that of workers' self-management of enterprises and of production. This principle can never be realized through a theoretical discussion of the best actual form it might take [...]. In our era, "workers' councils" is [...] synonymous with the class struggle itself [...]. Thus the idea of "workers' councils" has nothing in common with a program of practical objectives to be realized tomorrow or next year. It serves solely as a connecting thread for the long hard fight for freedom that still lies ahead for the working class.'²

From the standpoint of revolutionary transformation, what was primary and decisive in the councils, therefore, was not their organizational structure, but the spirit of rebellion that creates them.³ In this fighting capacity of the working class, he argued, resides the means of individual and collective transformation by which the passive, dependent, alienated wage laborer of capitalism becomes the active, independent, self-conscious producer of the future council state. As instruments of proletarian warfare, the councils are suitable only for revolutionary periods, when the working class is on the offensive. In cases where the workers are unable to complete the revolution, the councils would no longer serve a useful social function and would be open to cooptation by either the state or the parties and trade unions.⁴

According to Pannekoek, the councils could only emerge spontaneously and organically out of actual working class practice and were already present in embryonic form in actions such as wildcat strikes. He argued that the key factor in the transformation of wildcat strikes into workers' councils would

be the strike committees that often emerge spontaneously to coordinate strike actions. These committees, he felt, embody both direct democracy and a class community – the two most essential elements of council organization. Pannekoek remained confident that the principle of direct recall of delegates and the limited sphere of decision-making power vested in the committees would prevent them from developing into bureaucratized leadership bodies in their own right. He viewed the committees as simply 'messengers' for communicating the opinions and wishes of the groups they represented.⁵

Pannekoek envisioned the wildcat strike tactic at least in part as a form of rebellion against the trade unions. Expanding upon the analysis he had been articulating since at least 1906, Pannekoek argued that in advanced capitalism the trade unions had lost all traces of their proletarian identity and had become a permanent fixture of capitalist society. He saw the unions as 'the apparatus by means of which monopolistic capital imposes its conditions upon the entire working class'.⁶ Because of their commitment to the principles of capitalist rationality, the trade union leaders could never raise the issue of workers' control since it would threaten the very source of their power. Pannekoek, however, felt that this equilibrium could not be maintained indefinitely. As monopoly capitalism developed a growing sense of power and self-confidence, it would attempt to dominate the working class completely. Since a mobilization at the point of production was anathema to the union leaders, they would be forced to defend a lowering of the workers' standard of living. Under these conditions, a contradiction of viewpoint between the workers and the union bureaucracy would swiftly arise, leading to spontaneous revolts at the point of production.⁷

Pannekoek believed that workers' councils were also prefigured in the tactic of factory occupations. By preventing strike-breakers from being brought in and helping keep the work community intact, factory occupations represent a higher form of struggle than wildcat strikes. But for the consciousness and political development of the working class, these occupations would signify much more:

'In it, as in a light flash at the horizon, a glimpse of future development springs up. By shop occupations the workers, unwittingly, demonstrate that their fight has entered a new phase. [...] Here the workers become conscious of their intimate connection with the shop. To them it is not another man's building where only at his command they come to work for him till he sends them away. To them the shop with its machines is a productive apparatus they handle, an organ that only by their work is made a living part of society. It is nothing foreign to them; they are at home here, much more than the juridical owners, the shareholders who do not even know its

whereabouts. In the factory the workers grow conscious of the contents of their life, their productive work, their work-community as a collectivity that makes it a living organism, an element of the totality of society. Here, in shop occupation, a vague feeling arises that they ought to be entirely master of production, that they ought to expel the unworthy outsiders [...].⁸

Pannekoek's enthusiasm for wildcat strikes and shop occupations, however, was tempered by his belief that unless these actions are expanded into a class-wide movement they can rarely bring victory since their focus is too narrow and they are too easily suppressed. The chief importance of these actions, he felt, lies in their capacity to generate fresh fighting spirit, increased self-reliance, and class consciousness. In cases where such movements are able to develop into national and class-wide movements they will immediately come into conflict with the capitalist state, which forces them to assume a directly political role. It is at this point that the workers' councils first begin to make their appearance, expanding their role simultaneously with the revolution until the capitalist state is destroyed.

Although Pannekoek believed that the preconditions for workers' control of production existed in the daily work life of the proletariat, he felt that their perception of this possibility was greatly circumscribed by the prevailing spiritual hegemony of the bourgeoisie. Since the consciousness of the workers is essentially practical and not concerned with speculative truths or moral imperatives, their thoughts and actions are governed by a cautious realism which makes them reluctant to act on the anti-capitalist attitudes they have acquired as wage earners. Because adaptation to existing circumstances yields predictable results, consciousness, under normal conditions, is likely to remain within the traditional categories of bourgeois society.⁹

This pattern of adaptive behavior, Pannekoek felt, was also legitimized by a highly structured code of values and beliefs which has been passed down from preceding generations as tradition and collective memory. What this ultimately meant for the development of proletarian consciousness was that because of the predominance of the traditional thought systems from the past, the immediate material situation often has little influence on the workers' thought process:

'[...] traditional ideas hamper the spread of new ideas that express new necessities. [...] every tradition is a piece of reality, just as every idea is itself a part of the real world, living in the mind of men; it is often a very powerful reality as a determinant of men's actions. It is a reality of an ideological nature that has lost its material roots because the former conditions of life which have produced them have since disappeared. [...] Much more important is what may be termed the social memory, the perpetuation of collective ideas, systematized in the form of prevailing beliefs and

ideologies, and transferred to future generations in oral communications, in books, in literature, in art and in education. The surrounding world which determines the mind consists not only of the contemporary economic world, but also of all the ideological influences derived from continuous intercourse with our fellow men. Hence comes the power of tradition, which in a rapidly changing society causes the development of ideas to lag behind the development of society.¹⁰

But Pannekoek was unable to offer any convincing answers as to how the movement could compensate for the time lag between consciousness and social development. Rather than acknowledge this dilemma, he simply banished the problem altogether by arguing that the lagging consciousness would eventually be radicalized by a severe crisis of the system. He foresaw a period of acute social crisis in which the material and spiritual foundations of society would begin to collapse and the real nature of the system would be suddenly exposed for all to see. Under these conditions, the workers' conformity to traditional belief systems would no longer yield predictable results and submissiveness would swiftly give way to rebelliousness. It is at this point that a mass transformation of consciousness begins. Once the dynamics of working class rebellion come into play, then those elements of proletarian consciousness which are antithetical to the dominant bourgeois categories begin to develop. Notions of solidarity, community feeling, collective action, creativity, and self-reliance, all of which have long been present in the daily work experience and struggles of the working class, immediately come to the forefront. As the struggle intensifies and the workers gain new experiences in solidarity and self-management, these concepts are greatly expanded into a 'dominating life principle' of society.¹¹

Of all the strategic questions confronting the international council communist movement, none was more important than the question of forming a revolutionary organization separate from the councils. Pannekoek's writings on this question reflect the confusion and ambiguity existing within the movement. His basic position was summed up in 1927 when, after the KAPN asked him to clarify whether or not he was a member, he bluntly stated: 'I consider the party-system and the conception of party membership to be in large part a remnant of the earlier socialist era of the workers' movement, which, however, inevitable it may be in certain respects, is in general harmful. For this reason, I remain outside it.'¹² From the 1920's onwards, Pannekoek repeatedly argued that political parties, as instruments for gaining and holding power, were by their very nature rigid structures with strict discipline and tight admission and expulsion procedures. Their task was not to develop the initiative and self-activity of the workers, but to train loyal and obedient followers. Whereas the struggle for the liberation of the work-

ing class requires unlimited intellectual freedom, parties seek to suppress all opinions except their own. Because of their commitment to the leadership principle, parties represent a powerful obstacle to the realization of a genuine self-governing socialism.¹³

Despite his resolute hostility to traditional party organization, Pannekoek was far from clear and categorical in his views on the question of organization separate from the councils. At other points in his analysis he maintained that parties were 'necessary elements in social development' which express unavoidable differences of tactical opinion within the working class during revolutionary periods.¹⁴ To a certain extent, he tried to sidestep the issue by calling for the formation of special kinds of groups which 'might be called parties, but they would be parties in an entirely different sense from those of today'.¹⁵ Pannekoek, however, was frustratingly vague on what the precise outlines of these new formations would be, except to note that they would be 'think groups' charged with exclusively theoretical and educational tasks:

'Groups of common opinion will be formed, to discuss and propagate their ideas, to fight the scientists of the capitalist class, to wage the spiritual contest with other groups. This is the way of self-education for the working class. Parties in this sense may be called the scouting groups in the capitalist jungle. They have to investigate the ways, to study science and circumstances, to discuss these in mutual debate, to lay *their* ideas, *their* explanations, *their* advice before their fellow workers. In this way they are necessary instruments to build up the intellectual power of the working class.'¹⁶

Only in this way could the workers in the councils compare and choose the appropriate 'orientation' for the fundamental transformation of economic, social, and authority relations.

Organization and Production: The Council State

In Pannekoek's model of revolutionary transformation, the workers' councils serve a dual purpose. They represent, in the first instance, the direct organs of struggle, and hence the material base of revolution, in a specific phase of capitalism; and, in the second instance, they constitute the infrastructure and organizational arrangement of the new society. In his book, *Workers' Councils*, the most comprehensive statement of his council communist position, Pannekoek attempted to detail exactly how the council system would function in practice. In comparison to the bulk of his theoretical writings, which at least nominally sought to be empirical, this analysis was unusually futuristic in character. Pannekoek justified this approach by

arguing that the criticism of the old conceptions could be effective only if they conveyed a positive image which could be used to compare the principles of the old world with those of the new.¹⁷

What Pannekoek envisioned was a network of autonomous factory-level councils, each of which would be the locus of discussions and decisions for matters of local production. In plants too large to assemble all the workers, delegates would be selected from the various work groups who would be subject to instant recall. The councils would not be composed of experts, nor would they be responsible for the administration of the factory. Their main function would be to carry out the decisions of the workers, facilitate discussions, and to serve as a liaison between the various work groups and factories. As hypothesized by Pannekoek, the local factory councils would be merged into a variegated network of collaborating regional, national, and industry-wide councils, so that production constitutes a single interconnected entity. To help coordinate the work of the local councils, central councils would be formed on the same structure as the local councils (i.e., on the principle of shop floor delegates subject to immediate recall). Although the central councils were to be responsible for coordination, collection of data, and dissemination of information, they would not be planning bodies. That task was to be left to the workers in the local councils, who, once in possession of the necessary information, would be in a position to make the critical decisions and convey them to the delegates to the central council. Beyond this, the central councils were to be responsible for maintaining horizontal cooperation between factories in the same branch of industry and vertical cooperation between the factories that provide them with materials or use their products. To supplement this network of factory councils, Pannekoek envisioned a parallel, but more localized, network of councils for consumer and professional groups.

In outlining the constituent elements of the council state, Pannekoek constantly underscored that the council system was not a new form of government, but the complete negation of governmental authority. Whenever power is needed it would come directly from the collectivities of workers in the shops and would be entirely under their control. Pannekoek went on to draw the conclusion that once the council system was firmly established the division between politics and economics would also disappear. Since society and production would form an interconnected totality, there would no longer be any need for a group of specialists and managers divorced from the great body of producers to regulate the social and legal conditions of production. This democratization of social and productive relationships, he felt, would be sufficient to motivate the workers to devote their full attention to the totality of social production.

Pannekoek took it for granted that the new structure of democratic self-management, combined with the changes in the productive sphere – increased productivity and rapid technological development – that would accompany it, would completely revolutionize the nature of work. He assumed *a priori* that the continuing development of the council society would undermine the traditional division between intellectual and manual labor, transforming work from a means of survival into a means of self-expression: 'Whereas the abundance of life necessities, the universal prosperity represents the passive side of the new life, the innovation of labor itself as its active side makes life a delight of glorious creative experience.'¹⁸ In Pannekoek's hypothetical schema, the role of labor in the new society had almost quasi-religious significance: 'For the free worker of the future the handling of the perfectly constructed machine, providing a tension of acuteness, will be a source of mental exaltation, of spiritual rejoicing, of intellectual beauty.'¹⁹

Pannekoek's paradigm of the future society was also postulated on the assumption that this new structure of workers' self-management provided, for the first time, the possibility for transforming production into a 'mentally dominated process'. As envisioned by Pannekoek in one of his more utopian moments, this transformation was to be accomplished by an elaborate new system of statistics and bookkeeping which would make all aspects of the economic process fully accessible to the producers. Through a network of interconnected computing offices, each branch of production would have responsibility for collecting and disseminating statistical data and rendering it into easily comprehensible form, by means of tables, graphs, and pictures, as a precondition for discussion: 'As a plain and intelligible numerical image the process of production is laid open to everybody's views. Here mankind views and controls its own life. What the workers and their councils devise and plan in organised collaboration is shown in character and results in the figures of bookkeeping. Only because they are perpetually before the eyes of every worker the direction of social production by the producers themselves is rendered possible.'²⁰

In exploring how the council state would function in practice, Pannekoek maintained that the councils would manifest themselves not merely as a form of proletarian organization and action, but also as a principle for the liberation of the mind from all forms of subordination and domination. The advent of a network of councils, he argued, would signal a highly advanced state of proletarian consciousness and the prelude to a 'total revolution in the spiritual life of man'.²¹ In Pannekoek's ideal of council democracy, the councils would assume critical pedagogical functions which would transform the mind from a concern with self to a concern with the community and society at large. The 'world of the workers' councils', he insisted, would be struc-

tured around a new organization of knowledge based on the acquisition of new intellectual tools by the producers. But in defining the exact content of this new organization of knowledge, Pannekoek became exceedingly vague and contended only that it would be based on an all-encompassing scientific world view, which would form the basis for the social organization of production in the same manner that the natural sciences formed the basis for the technical organization of production. Through an understanding of the basic structure of society and the labor process, and their role in it, the workers would acquire, for the first time, the ability to consciously manage society: 'From obedient subjects they are changed into free and self-reliant masters of their fate, capable to build and manage their new world.'²² It was on these grounds that shortly after the Hungarian Revolution of 1956, Pannekoek criticized the workers' councils that emerged for their failure to articulate a new level of consciousness and for their emphasis on 'pure practice'.²³

In the hypothetical schema described by Pannekoek, the picture that emerges is a highly problematic one. Deriving his views less from a practical understanding of social reality than from a Marxist metaphysic, Pannekoek constantly assumed that the council state would automatically resolve fundamental questions such as the relation between leaders and masses, the unification of diverse social strata, the division and specialization of labor, technological innovation, and the concrete problems of political administration and democratic self-management. In his highly schematic presentation, Pannekoek never addressed the specific problems of administration. He provided no satisfactory answers to critical questions such as: how would the network of councils combine to create an effective structure of administration? How would a fragmentation of administrative resources be prevented? How would an even representation of groups be insured? What would be the criteria for assigning administrative responsibility? What would be the role for non-proletarian social strata? In the same vein, his conviction that the control and continuing development of productive forces alone would form the basis of a new spiritual life, led him to refrain from analyzing in-depth precisely how culture, art, literature, science, and education would be produced in the council state. More fundamentally, in theorizing the dynamic of the new society, Pannekoek neither questioned the basic structure and social content of capitalist industrialization, nor attempted to place the development of productive forces in a framework that significantly challenged the class division of labor and the nature of existing productive roles. On the contrary, he insisted that under the council system the rate of growth and economic progress would reach levels unheard of in capitalist society. His vision of the new society was, in the final analysis, firmly rooted in the basic categories and assumptions of capitalist economic

development: unlimited industrial production and growth, rationalization of production, cost efficiency, and exaltation of the work ethic.

Ideology and Social Reality: Pannekoek's Philosophical Critique of Leninism

Pannekoek's theory of council communism was complemented by his view of the Soviet Union as a state capitalist society based on a bourgeois revolution and sustained by a pseudo-Marxist ideology. Although others had advanced similar theories, justified on social and economic grounds, Pannekoek sought to go a step further by giving his theory a rigorous philosophical base as well. To show what he felt the Marxism of the Russian Revolution really implied, Pannekoek undertook a detailed critical examination of the philosophical basis of Leninism, which was published as *Lenin as Philosopher* in 1938.

Lenin's philosophical ideas were first expressed systematically in his 1908 work, *Materialism and Empiriocriticism*, which later became a canon of Soviet Marxism. The specific questions to which Lenin addressed himself were inspired principally by a series of developments within the Bolshevik party. Shortly after the turn of the century, certain intellectuals in the Russian socialist movement had taken an interest in Western natural philosophy, particularly in the ideas of the physicist Ernst Mach and the Swiss philosopher Richard Avenarius. Although their views were not identical, both Mach and Avenarius felt that the main task of philosophy was to elaborate a 'natural concept of the world' based on 'pure experience'. To this end, they attempted to develop – in a conception which had many similarities to the ideas of Joseph Dietzgen²⁴ – an epistemological theory based on the premise that all knowledge consists of the description and ordering of sensations and experiences, which became known as empiriocriticism. Mach went on to demonstrate how the phenomena of physics could be adequately explained without recourse to the concept of physical matter.²⁵ By 1908, a kind of 'Machism', with Bogdanov and Lunatcharsky as the leading spokesmen, had emerged as an influential trend within the Bolshevik party, which Lenin sought to undermine in *Materialism and Empiriocriticism*.

Characterizing the empiriocritics' view that reality is composed primarily of mental elements as a form of subjective idealism, Lenin attempted to defend his conception of historical materialism on what he regarded as the chief points at issue: the status and character of matter and the nature of knowledge. In response to the empiriocritics' belief that matter is a construct of sensations, Lenin argued that matter is ontologically primary, existing independently of consciousness and representing the objective world. Lenin maintained, at the same time, that because the movement of matter is gov-

erned by unchangeable natural laws, space and time were not subjective modes of ordering experience, but objective forms of the existence of matter. On the question of knowledge, Lenin affirmed a 'copy theory' of perception which contended that sensations depict or mirror the real world exactly. From this perspective, Lenin defended the possibility of obtaining objective truth and emphasized practice as its main criterion.

Pannekoek's main aim was to confront the scientific and philosophical content of Leninism by a consideration of the philosophical and social background out of which it emerged. Believing that the underlying source of Lenin's errors lay in his conception of historical materialism, Pannekoek sought to anchor his critique in an analysis of the relationship between Marxism and modern physics. Taking up Lenin's claim that matter was an exclusively physical concept based on atoms and molecules, the movement of which was governed by unchangeable natural laws, Pannekoek maintained that the physical matter so central to Lenin was in reality nothing but an abstraction. The whole course of modern physics, Pannekoek declared, had replaced the material notion of matter with an abstract mental concept: 'Atoms of course are not observed phenomena themselves; they are inferences of our thinking. As such they share the nature of all products of our thinking; their sharp limitation and distinction, their precise equality belongs to their abstract character. As abstractions they express what is general and common in the phenomena, what is necessary for predictions.'²⁶ From his Dietzgenian perspective, Pannekoek broadened this definition to define matter as everything which actually exists, whether in nature or in the human mind: 'If [...] matter is taken as the name for the philosophical concept denoting objective reality, it embraces far more than physical matter. Then we come to the view [...] where the material world was spoken of as the name for the entire observed reality. This is the meaning of the word *materia*, matter in Historical Materialism, the designation of all that is really existing in the world, "including mind and fancies", as Dietzgen said.'²⁷ From this standpoint, human ideas were just as much a part of objective reality as tangible objects. For the science of historical materialism this meant that the concept of physical matter was insufficient to render the entire world of experience; other concepts such as energy, mind, and consciousness were clearly needed. Lenin, therefore, in criticizing Mach and Avenarius (and for that matter Dietzgen to whom he devoted a chapter entitled 'How Could Joseph Dietzgen have Found Favor with the Reactionary Philosophers?') for their alleged subjectivism, had failed even to reach the conceptual sophistication of their system. While admitting that Marxist criticism of Mach and Avenarius was clearly needed, Pannekoek made it clear that it had to be on different grounds than that given by Lenin.²⁸

Pannekoek, however, was not content to demonstrate the distance between Lenin's *Materialism and Empiriocriticism* and the developments in modern physics, but sought to pinpoint the source of these errors and assess their significance for the revolutionary movement. For Pannekoek, the central methodological principle to be applied was a distinction between bourgeois materialism and historical materialism. Bourgeois materialism, he insisted, had initially developed as an ideological weapon of the bourgeoisie in their struggle against the aristocracy. Consequently, it was a type of materialism whose main point of reference was individualistic, a materialism whose principal tool was natural science, and whose main enemy was the religious ideology in which the absolutist status quo rationalized itself. According to this doctrine, all phenomena of human life, including ideas, have their origins in the chemical and physical processes of cellular substances and ultimately can be explained by the dynamics and movements of atoms. Historical materialism, on the other hand, arose as a weapon of the proletariat in the struggle against the bourgeoisie. Its main reference point is society, and its science is a social rather than a natural science, which reveals to the proletariat their true relationships within the capitalist system. For these reasons, it considers ideas a social rather than a physical problem. Thus, for example, in the case of religion, historical materialism seeks to explain its social base and does not fight it directly, but attacks the economic structure of society.

Using this reasoning, Pannekoek argued that the basic fallacy of Lenin's position lay in his inability to transcend the philosophical categories of bourgeois materialism. According to Pannekoek, it was neither an accident nor an aberration that Lenin used an outdated, mechanistic, bourgeois materialism for his point of departure, but a natural outgrowth of the prevailing socio-economic conditions in pre-revolutionary Russia. In czarist Russia, the revolutionary intellectuals, Lenin among them, were confronted with essentially the same task and problems as had been the bourgeois revolutionaries of an earlier historical epoch: the overthrow of an absolutist, land-based ruling class which was impeding the development of modern industry. But in Russia the bourgeoisie was too weak and too dependent upon czarism to carry out this revolutionary task itself. This role, therefore, fell to the intelligentsia, a class composed of technical and professional people of non-noble origin, often employed by the state, who were aided in their task by the small and backward Russian working class. What this meant for the proletarian movement in Russia was that the revolutionary class struggle was first and foremost a struggle against czarist absolutism, pursued under the banner of socialism and led by the intelligentsia. These themes were not entirely new in Pannekoek's thought. As early as 1909, he had argued, in an

undeveloped analysis, that Marxism was serving as the ideology of the revolutionary bourgeoisie in Russia, and had concluded that: 'Only Marxism can [...] serve as the ideology and fighting theory of bourgeois revolution in the twentieth century.'²⁹

Within this process of bourgeois revolution, Pannekoek felt that Lenin's chief contribution was to have provided both the organizational form (the vanguard party of professional revolutionaries) for carrying out the revolution and a philosophy suitable for revolutionary activity. Since religion served as a major ideological prop of czarist aristocracy, the militant wing of the rising Russian bourgeoisie felt it was necessary to devote first priority to waging a resolute campaign against it. Lenin's reversion to the militant bourgeois materialism of a past historical epoch provided the necessary ideological and philosophical basis for this struggle. Indeed, throughout *Materialism and Empiriocriticism*, Lenin seemed to suggest that the most important ideological struggle in the world was between materialism and religion. What this meant, Pannekoek felt, was that: 'To the Russian Marxists the nucleus of Marxism is not contained in Marx's thesis that social reality determines consciousness, but in the sentence of young Marx, inscribed in big letters of the Moscow People's House, that religion is the opium of the people.'³⁰ Both in his obsolete materialist philosophy and in his theory of revolution, Lenin hid himself from the historical truth that the Russian Revolution was bound to remain a belated successor to the great bourgeois revolutions of the past. Lenin's 'Marxism' Pannekoek insisted, did not express the practical necessities of the workers' fight for freedom, but was a response to specific Russian conditions. Russia required not so much the emancipation as the creation of a modern industrial proletariat; not so much the end of capitalist accumulation as its acceleration. On these grounds, Pannekoek concluded that 'the alleged Marxism of Lenin and the Bolshevik party is nothing but a legend. Lenin never knew real Marxism'.³¹ Capitalism he knew only as colonial capitalism; and social revolution he knew only as the annihilation of large-scale land-ownership and czarist despotism. The problem was not so much that Lenin was wrong or that his logic was fallacious, but that his mode of thought was bourgeois. Leninism represented, therefore, the theory of a new state capitalist middle class revolution installing a new ruling class which signified for the workers just another form of slavery and exploitation. This was the true significance of Lenin as philosopher. Had Lenin's *Materialism and Empiriocriticism* been known in the West in 1920, Pannekoek concluded, then the development of West European communism might have taken an entirely different course.³²

CHAPTER XII

REVOLUTION AND REALITY: THE COUNCIL IDEAL IN THE POST-WAR PERIOD

'Hope is Far Distant': Pannekoek and the Dilemma of the Independent Left

The period following the Second World War marked the final stage of Pannekoek's political career. During the last decade and a half of his life, increasing age did little to diminish either the extent of his writings or the intensity of his political commitment.¹ Although Pannekoek continued to analyze with great acumen the major questions confronting the workers' movement, his writings found only a limited audience and his political ideas even less, in a social climate shaped by preparation for war and the defeat, either actual or by default, of virtually all revolutionary aspirations. Powerless to act beyond the scope of a few scattered individuals, Pannekoek continued to write after 1945 largely out of a personal, moral conviction.²

During the first four decades of the twentieth century, Pannekoek had shared the revolutionary optimism of the left, but in the post-war period this optimism was tempered by his belief that the working class had failed to fulfill its historical task. Although he initially felt the war would be followed by a wave of wildcat strikes, a new mood of despair began to appear in Pannekoek's writings toward the end of the war. In an update to his book *Workers' Councils*, written in 1944, the usually optimistic Pannekoek felt compelled to note:

*'In this second world war the workers' movement has fallen much deeper than in the first. In the first world war its weakness, so sharply in contrast with former pride and boasting, manifested itself in that it was dragged along, that deliberately, by its own will, it followed the bourgeoisie and turned into underlings of nationalism. [...] In the present war the working class had no will of its own any more to decide on what to do; it was already incorporated into the entirety of the nation. As they are shuffled to and fro over factories and shops, uniformed and drilled, commanded to the fronts, mixed up with the other classes, all essence of the former working class has disappeared. The workers have lost their class; they do not exist as a class anymore; class-consciousness has been washed away in the wholesale submission of all classes under the ideology of big capital. Their special class-vocabulary: socialism, community has been adopted by capital for its dissimilar concepts.'*³

Pannekoek made it clear throughout his post-war writings that this defeat of the working class was the natural legacy of over a half-century of traditional Marxist theory and practice. Thinking along the same lines as Karl Korsch during this same period, he contended that the first half of the twentieth century had witnessed not the decay of capitalism, but the decomposition of the revolutionary dynamic in Marxism. Whereas Marxist theory and practice had become totally disfigured and stagnant, capitalism had modified itself and thereby survived the shocks of depression and two world wars. Rather than acting to destroy the capitalist system, the Marxist movement had actually served to bolster it.⁴ But in confronting this situation, Pannekoek – although still retaining his full intellectual vigor – was ill-prepared to make any bold departures. Instead, he chose to make what was essentially a declaration of faith by arguing that the defeat of the traditional workers' movement was only a precondition for the emergence of a new workers' movement based on the principle of workers' self-management: 'To put it into one specialised point: when I was in the German S.P., I wrote for tens of thousands; I felt part of a movement apparently on the verge of victory; now we see that it was all preliminary, without consciousness of the real fight to come – though our small opposition groups got glimpses of it; this big movement for state socialism *had* to succumb, to make place for the fight for real self-determination and mastership, that now is to come.'⁵

Unlike others of the independent left, Pannekoek did not attempt to re-examine or modify his basic strategy in any substantial way during the post-war period. His main hopes were still centered around a spontaneous council movement emerging out of the practice of wildcat strikes and shop occupations.⁶ The repeated failure of such a movement to emerge since 1920 did not alter his outlook. As a consequence, Pannekoek's discussions of post-war strategy became increasingly unrealistic because the narrow categories with which he was operating no longer corresponded to the realities of advanced capitalism. Although he glimpsed the general outlines of the highly rationalized capitalism that was reshaping post-war European society, Pannekoek was unable to develop fresh concepts and insights on the basis of this transformation. For these reasons, his post-war writings were often labored and repetitive. The accents were those of a man who, although exhausted, was making a desperate effort to keep on talking in the belief that sheer repetition and volume would convince a future audience of the truth and importance of his mission.

Like many others during the post-war period, Pannekoek gave increasing attention to the problem of mounting tension between the United States and the Soviet Union. Pannekoek's analysis of the post-war situation pivoted on his belief that developments in both the East and West were leading to a final

convergence of centralized, state capitalist political systems with increasingly totalitarian aims: 'Everywhere governments assume a totalitarian character, seek to lead production, make alliance with the party and trade union leaders to form a united power over the working class.'⁷ In the West, he felt, the governments would be transformed – through democratic institutions – into completely dictatorial power bodies. In these circumstances, the trade unions would become almost pure instruments of big capital, perhaps through the mechanism of a 'capitalist-fascist' labor party.⁸ At the same time, Pannekoek hardened noticeably in his attitude toward the Soviet Union. For the first time, he was prepared to assert that, for the workers of the West, Soviet-style state capitalism would be a dangerous regression since the possibilities for autonomous working class action were more severely limited.⁹ Such an outlook led Pannekoek to increasingly pin his hopes – at least privately – on a future *pax americana*: 'I am increasingly mindful of the fact that the new revolutionary struggles that will occur through the medium of the councils will come, and can only come, after American capitalism establishes its supremacy on a world scale.'¹⁰

Pannekoek's mood of radical pessimism was most clearly evident in his belief that the rivalry between the two state capitalist power blocs – reinforced by a crisis of overproduction – made a Third World War almost inevitable. In this situation, he felt that the working class – paralyzed by fear and irrevocably bound to the capitalist order – would be completely powerless to act: 'We cannot expect that the working class, in its present weakness, will be able to prevent a third world war by thwarting it by revolutionary counteractions; but after the devastation it will stand before the choice of building up their free world, or fall into a deep slavery under a united world-capitalism.'¹¹

If in the past Pannekoek had no doubts about the tide of history, he now contemplated, at least for the short run, a future lying in ruins. For both the working class and the future of humanity, he felt, 'only slavery and destruction seem near; hope is far distant'.¹² It was in this spirit that Pannekoek embarked on the last major intellectual project of his career, his uncompleted 'The Future of Civilization'. Pannekoek had originally conceived of this work as an examination of the development and role of mental concepts throughout the entire course of human history, but his fear of an impending collapse of contemporary civilization, either through nuclear war or worldwide totalitarianism, led him to shift his attention to drawing a parallel with the collapse of ancient civilization, the Dark Ages, and the rise of capitalism.¹³ Despite four years of intense intellectual activity and almost 800 pages of notes, Pannekoek managed to complete only a fragment of what he initially envisioned.¹⁴ In late 1954, discouraged by the lack of interest in his

work, Pannekoek abandoned the project entirely, noting to Canne Meijer: 'There is no public who would read something like this, and it is highly improbable that it would even be published. Everything we have written in the past few years has remained completely unsold and unread.'¹⁵

Pannekoek's growing pessimism was heightened by a political isolation even more pronounced than during the 1930's. In Holland, the former GIC, now partly regrouped in the Spartacist Communist League, underwent a major crisis in late 1946 over the question of whether to form a party similar to the KAPD or to organize an international federation of factory organizations. When it became clear in mid-1946 that this dispute could not be resolved, Canne Meijer, Appel, and several other supporters of a federation withdrew from the organization to establish their own publication, *De Vlam*.¹⁶ But in contrast to the pre-war GIC, neither group was able to generate a significant body of theoretical literature. While supporting the idea of an international federation of factory organizations, Pannekoek objected to the sectarianism of both groups and defined his attitude as 'objectively critical but without personal opposition'.¹⁷ Conditions were even less favorable in Germany for a revival of council communism, where only a small circle around the former KAPD activist Alfred Weiland was active. In the United States, Paul Mattick made no effort to revive either the GCC or his publication *New Essays*, and began to confine his activities almost exclusively to economic theory. Mattick undoubtedly captured the isolation of post-war council communism when he noted: 'at present there is not a single human being in New York with whom I could cooperate on anything'.¹⁸

Although the pre-war council communist movement had collapsed, Pannekoek continued to disseminate his ideas through a network of independent leftist intellectuals and groups. His most extensive contacts were in Germany, where he wrote regularly for the independent left publications, *Volk und Zeit*, *Funken*, and *Neues Beginnen*. In England, Pannekoek remained in close contact with the Independent Labour Party leader F.A. Ridley, a group in the Socialist Party of Great Britain, and the publication *Left*. In France, ties were maintained with the *Socialisme ou Barbarie* group and the syndicalist *La Révolution prolétarienne*. In the United States, Pannekoek enjoyed a good working relationship with Dwight MacDonald and his review *Politics* until he wrote a critique of MacDonald's celebrated article, 'The Root is Man'.

Pannekoek's only success in converting an independent left group to council communism came with the small Australian group centered around James Dawson. A former metal worker turned shopkeeper, Dawson had been active in the Socialist Party of Australia (an affiliate of the eclectic and sectarian World Socialist Party) until he was forced to resign in 1945. Upon his resignation, Dawson founded his own review, the *Southern Socialist Di-*

gest, which moved rapidly from a dissident version of the Socialist Party of Australia's ideology to syndicalism. Following correspondence with Pannekoek in late 1946, Dawson shifted to council communism and renamed his publication the *Southern Advocate for Workers' Councils*. Although the *Southern Advocate* soon drew regular contributions from Pannekoek, Mattick, and Korsch, it never achieved the scope and dynamism of the pre-war GIC and GCC publications, and remained largely a personal and eclectic organ of James Dawson.

In defining his own political role during this period, Pannekoek felt that his main task remained essentially the same as it had always been: to help discover and propagate the conditions and method by which the working class could become its own master.¹⁹ As part of this task, Pannekoek envisioned a key role for his book *Workers' Councils*. Following his dismissal from the University of Amsterdam by the German occupation authorities in 1941, Pannekoek immediately began to devote his full attention to this work, which was completed in 1942, with major additions in 1944 and 1947.²⁰ Assuming at the time that the war had opened a 'new epoch for the workers' movement', Pannekoek conceived of *Workers' Councils* not as a program for action, but as a tool which would enable the workers to gain a clear understanding of the wider aspects of their actions.²¹ With this expectation, Pannekoek prepared separate Dutch, German, and English editions. Despite Pannekoek's high hopes, only the Dutch edition appeared in print in 1946. In Germany, Pannekoek initially arranged for Alfred Weiland to secure publication, but no funds could be raised. For the English edition, Pannekoek first approached Paul Mattick, but once again no funds were available. Pannekoek next approached the Independent Labour Party and the Socialist Party of Great Britain, but was turned down for ideological reasons.²² At this point, the task of publishing the English edition fell upon James Dawson in Australia. Although parts of *Workers' Councils* were serialized in the *Southern Advocate for Workers' Councils* in 1948, financial difficulties and Dawson's mounting personal problems prevented full publication until 1951. In the end, Pannekoek had to personally provide most of the financing.

One of Pannekoek's few opportunities to deepen and develop the theory of council communism came during a polemic with the French *Socialisme ou Barbarie* group throughout 1953 and 1954. Like many other independent left groups and journals of the post-war period, *Socialisme ou Barbarie* emerged as an attempt to create a revolutionary alternative to Stalinism and social democracy. Although they initially began political life as an opposition group within the Trotskyist *Parti Communiste Internationale*, the *Socialisme ou Barbarie* group began to rapidly articulate their own version of council commu-

nism.²³ Unlike the council communist mainstream, however, they defended the need for an anti-bureaucratic, *avant-garde* revolutionary organization distinct from the working class to help give direction to the spontaneous struggles of the workers. An opportunity for a theoretical exchange came when Cornelius Castoriadis, the main theoretician of the group, presented a detailed outline of how such an anti-bureaucratic party could be organized.²⁴

While paying tribute to *Socialisme ou Barbarie* for having reached a councilist perspective by independent means, Pannekoek criticized Castoriadis' program on the grounds that it was impossible to reconcile self-governing with leadership by a small external group or party. To attempt to do so, he felt, would be to reproduce Leninism.²⁵ In reply, Castoriadis maintained that some type of centralized revolutionary organization would be necessary both to facilitate a revolutionary seizure of power and to insure that the councilist viewpoint prevails. Since the councils would reflect the character of the working class – which would change little during the course of the revolution – some form of 'avant-garde minority' would be necessary to prevent them from being dominated by hostile forces such as Leninism or from succumbing to a process of bureaucratization. Using such reasoning, Castoriadis maintained that the sole guarantee against bureaucratization was to demonstrate in practice that an *avant-garde* but non-bureaucratic organization with organic ties to the working class was possible. The fundamental error of Pannekoek's position, he felt, was his belief that Leninist and Stalinist type organizations were the only kind possible. Castoriadis also objected to Pannekoek's view that the main task of the council communists was theoretical and spiritual. He argued that, on the contrary, the council communists must actively intervene in struggles, proposing to the workers modes of action, and combatting the influence of the bureaucratic organizations. A dozen resolute, organized, *avant-garde* workers, he contended, could, in certain instances, launch strikes involving thousands.²⁶

Pannekoek responded to this argument by maintaining that during proletarian class actions certain persons stand out by virtue of their courage and clarity of vision, and that such persons together constitute a *de facto* *avant-garde* which appears in every mass action. In this manner, they become leaders who can rouse the activity of the masses and by their broader view give good advice for these actions. Pannekoek, however, cautioned that once such leaders combine into fixed groups or parties these fluid relations become petrified. Then as *ex officio* leaders they feel themselves in command and wish to be obeyed. Pannekoek concluded by reiterating his longstanding belief that what was real and lasting in proletarian struggles was the change that takes place in the inner character of the entire class – a change that can occur only through their own activity and initiative, not by following

others. Only this transformation, he insisted, could guarantee a meaningful self-emancipation of the working class.²⁷

Re-thinking Marx: Pannekoek and the Reconstruction of Revolutionary Theory and Practice

Although Pannekoek never wavered in his basic commitment to council communism, elements can be found throughout his post-war essays and letters of an awareness of the need to develop a new approach to revolutionary theory and practice. From his criticism of the failure of the Marxism of the Second and Third Internationals, Pannekoek moved to a reconsideration of the meaning of Marxism itself. For the first time, he was prepared to assert that the terminology of Marxism had long since lost its meaning and that, applied in an orthodox manner, the doctrine of Marxism stood as a powerful barrier to working class self-emancipation: 'So I think we must make a close with the old slogans and traditions of socialism, and make a new start. And even with the slogans and doctrines of Marxism. The science of Marx, the true lasting part of his work, remains the basis of all our opinions and thoughts. But to put it crudely: the word Marxism should disappear from our propaganda. Everything we tell is based upon what we *see* and [what] every worker can see. Every explication based on 'Marxism' floats over the heads of the masses and disappears.'²⁸

Pannekoek felt that for the purpose of developing a 'new life conception' based on the principle of workers' self-management of production, appeals to Marxism would have no significance because the workers know nothing of it or have seen it used by the communist parties to turn them into obedient followers.²⁹ Through its use by the communist and social democratic parties, Marxism had degenerated into a mere system of knowledge which no longer represented the consciousness of a revolutionary practice. What in Marxist theory and practice had appeared as anti-capitalist at one stage of capitalist development became incorporated into the capitalist mode of production at another stage. What had once seemed to be the road to socialism led merely to a new type of capitalism.³⁰

Pannekoek remained firmly convinced that before Marxism could again serve as an instrument of emancipation a fundamental reconceptualization of its meaning must take place. But as with so many aspects of his thought, Pannekoek made only perceptive observations that were never developed. He could offer neither a fully reconstituted Marxism nor a post-Marxist radical theory. In this respect, his critique of Marxism was far less compelling and systematically developed than those of other post-war leftist critics of Marxism such as Korsch and Castoriadis, both of whom perceived with

far greater clarity the problems that continued reliance on traditional Marxist categories might encounter. At no point did Pannekoek attempt to discuss which elements of Marxism might actually be reconceptualized. He deemed it sufficient to note only that a new revolutionary theory and practice – a kind of Marxism of the twentieth century – would arise with the resumption of an actual struggle against capitalism. He felt that this struggle for a new world view would be comparable to the similar struggles that took place during the formative period of the socialist movement and during Galileo's seventeenth century struggles in astronomy.³¹ In the end, Pannekoek's break with Marxism remained tentative and incomplete largely because Marxism still offered an explanation of the nature of society that satisfied his highly rationalistic scientific inclinations.

Pannekoek's reconsideration of Marxism did, however, lead him to take a fresh look at anarchism. When James Dawson criticized the anarchists in the *Southern Advocate for Workers' Councils* for their individualism, Pannekoek wrote a short article in their defense. In contrast to his earlier view that anarchism was a manifestation of petit-bourgeois ideology, Pannekoek now maintained that both anarchism and social democracy had developed as complementary responses to the conditions of nineteenth century capitalism. Whereas social democracy had been concerned primarily with economic exploitation, anarchism focused on the enslavement and suppression of the personality of the workers. But since economic exploitation was felt most directly, social democracy won the masses. Both anarchism and social democracy, he felt, reflected the primitive social consciousness of the nineteenth century. For anarchism, this meant that freedom was conceptualized on the basis of middle-class *laissez faire* notions of freedom; for social democracy, freedom was perceived solely in terms of organization. The real task of creating an emancipatory socialism by combining freedom with organization could not be accomplished in the nineteenth century because it required a higher stage of proletarian consciousness: instead, a synthesis had to await the emergence of the council form of organization. From his Dietzgenian perspective, Pannekoek argued that what had once appeared as opposites had given way to a new set of distinctions.³² For these reasons, Pannekoek was now prepared to accord the anarchist theorist Bakunin an equal stature with Marx in the formation of the nineteenth century workers' movement.³³ In keeping with his changed attitude, Pannekoek contributed articles to the anarchist review *Retort*, and to the syndicalist publications, *Industrial Worker* and *La Révolution prolétarienne*.

With revolution no longer on the immediate historical agenda, Pannekoek, during his final years, saw his task largely as one of preserving what was most important in the heritage of council communism for future gener-

ations. What the council communist tradition had achieved, he felt, was less a set of doctrines or accomplishments than a method of proletarian self emancipation. In summing up his political legacy, Pannekoek noted what he considered to be most essential in his life work:

'I rather doubt that I can be very useful as a guide for the younger generation. The world develops so swiftly that they will acquire from an entirely different milieu and experience, doctrines that are completely different from those we acquired from an earlier era. Just as we obtained our doctrines through many difficult struggles, they too will have to do the same, and the most we can do is to help them see the variegated possibilities in everything, in order that they can form their own judgments. To teach them to use their own brains is the best doctrine that can be handed down. It is also a doctrine that could well be applied in the present workers' movement.'³⁴

Ultimately, he felt, the central issue would always be the same: to overcome the traditional division of humanity into two groups: a small ruling elite and subordinate and exploited masses.

Unfulfilled Promise: Pannekoek in Historical Perspective

Nearly six decades separate Pannekoek's first writings from his last. In the years between, Pannekoek served both as an impassioned participant in the political and social struggles of the era and an illuminating interpreter of their significance. Throughout his long political odyssey, the ultimate ideals that Pannekoek cherished remained the same and he pursued them with great zeal and an unusual selflessness. Although a middle class academic can hardly be considered a revolutionary in any realistic sense, Pannekoek had the particular kind of fortitude appropriate to his role: the courage of a conscientious objector in a militant society.

As a practical revolutionary, Pannekoek's life was always stalked by disappointment. For all the intensity and originality of his efforts, he never succeeded in theorizing his ideas into a cogent political practice or in developing a permanent alternative to the social democratic and Leninist models – although elements of his doctrines have surfaced intermittently in movements such as the Eastern European revolts and the New Left. Confronted with the frustrations of his great hopes, Pannekoek often sought to affirm his life's work by arguing that the categories which define success or failure are socially and historically determined:

'Looking back at the political history of the past century we find two political methods constantly standing in opposition to each other, both of which are expressions of the class struggle. Why is it that one is called "good politics" and the other "bad

politics"? Clever politicians direct their efforts to "reforming", in other words to buttressing the old system of domination [...]. This is called "good politics". Others direct their efforts to aiding the exploited masses acquire the force to emancipate themselves from all forms of domination and exploitation. And yet in parliamentary jargon this is called "bad politics".³⁵

But even for Pannekoek such reasoning had the character of a *post facto* rationalization. Most of the time his unsuccessful quest for an emancipatory socialism left him unhappy. Unlike other historical figures, Pannekoek never derived any compensatory feelings of martyrdom or moral superiority from his political beliefs – socialism was always for him an attainable possibility.

As a theorist, Pannekoek considered his work less a finished theory than a critical methodology open to all new social developments. But if the trend of his thought is considered as a whole, Pannekoek's work contains a collection of elements of critique, analysis, and constructive conceptions with sufficient coherence to fit together into a single conceptual framework. What emerges is a broad theoretical synthesis which suggests a particular orientation toward the main questions of social transformation. It is a theory which at its best established a whole new set of priorities and helped inspire new ways of thinking about revolutionary politics and questions of domination and subordination. In one form or another many of his central themes – self-management, mass consciousness, and non-bureaucratic authority relationships – have become part of the common discourse of a large part of the left in advanced capitalism.

Pannekoek always considered his Marxism both the detached work of a scientist and the product of specific working class struggles. Until 1921 virtually all of his theoretical work was closely tied to the everyday political struggles of the Dutch and German socialist movements. The intersection of his theoretical conceptions with the concrete experiences of these movements decisively influenced the development of a distinct left radical current, which ultimately culminated in a form of council communism. During the highpoint of the European council movement from 1918–1920, Pannekoek's ideas became for the first and only time an actual historical possibility. But with the ebbing of the post-war tide of rebellion and the subsequent collapse of the council movement, Pannekoek swiftly lost his historical importance. In 1921, when faced with a choice between participation in a sectarian and declining radical councilist movement, an accommodation with Leninism or social democracy, or a retreat from active politics altogether, he opted without hesitation for the latter and sought to act as a detached intellectual. Neither a communist nor a social democrat during the

1920's and 1930's, he could play only a small role in shaping left wing attitudes. Far from leading to disinterested scientific contemplation, his retreat from politics cut him off from actual historical developments and eventually affected his theory as well. Divorced from the concrete struggles and possibilities contained within society, and isolated from the likely consequences of his actions, Pannekoek tended to produce in the years after 1921 arbitrary schema at the expense of depth and insight. The result was that his ideas remained frozen instead of developing.

Pannekoek's isolation from politics after 1921 only compounded what was a serious methodological flaw in his theoretical work, which ultimately undermined its historical possibilities. Although he formulated his ideas with considerable force and lucidity, Pannekoek's efforts were greatly handicapped by his tendency to seek and discover a simple formula that would provide the answers to a wide range of complex problems. Throughout his career, Pannekoek was often unwilling to wrestle with fundamental questions or probe into the foundations of his central assumptions and concepts. Abstracting from the bewildering particulars of experience, he often projected large generalizations and then attempted to qualify them by an unduly literal use of analogy and social metaphor. Even during his best moments as a theorist, broad schematic patterns on the decline of capitalism and the rise of socialism clouded the more immediate strategic realities he sought to elucidate. When unforeseen developments called into question certain aspects of his theories he seldom acknowledged it. His first response was usually to relegate the resolution of the problem to the future. Only rarely do Pannekoek's writings give the impression that he is struggling with an idea on the basis of evidence open to a variety of interpretations.

For all his concern with updating the class science developed by Karl Marx, Pannekoek's thought remained permeated with the worst features of the orthodox Marxist paradigm: its restrictive philosophical materialism, optimistic evolutionism, reductionist methodology, rationalist psychology, cataclysmic eschatology, theoretical dogmatism, and ardent productionism. In spite of his nominal voluntarism, Pannekoek – like most Marxists of his generation – remained firmly anchored to an almost Comtean nineteenth century faith in science and a rigid linear conception of historical progress. From the Marxian premise that production constitutes the basis of all social existence, Pannekoek deduced that only the factory could serve as the locus of revolutionary struggle. To the end of his life, Pannekoek never lost his faith in a romanticized, homogeneous, and heroic proletariat as the sole agent of socialist transformation. His productive and moral worker of the council state was, in the final analysis, modeled more on standards of capitalist efficiency than a hegemonic alternative. Like Lenin and Kautsky, he

equated socialism with large scale industrial development, rationalized mass production, rapid economic growth, centralized planning, a disciplined labor force, and a highly advanced technological and scientific infrastructure. Nowhere in his writings is there any consideration of an alternative conception of industrial and economic development. Nor did he attempt – in contrast to others of the Western Marxist tradition – to broaden his work in include a critique of capitalist society outside the factory or to question materialist logic in general. Pannekoek's 'productionist Marxism', it has been noted, never escaped the historical phase of capitalism in which it was formulated. For Pannekoek, bourgeois society was always viewed as an immense factory.³⁶

Yet from a larger historical perspective, Pannekoek's shortcomings represent less a personal failure than the objective limitations of a historical outlook. His ideas were shaped during an era of great social turbulence, when a relatively homogeneous proletariat was fighting to preserve a degree of craft skills and job autonomy that were rapidly being eroded by the initial effects of capitalist rationalization. They corresponded to a competitive, pre-Keynesian stage of capitalism in which the instability of the market economy found expression in a harsh and unrestrained class struggle at the point of production. They became increasingly obsolete as capitalist rationalization created a new type of consumer capitalism with a new working class more diversified in its composition and less centered in the traditional factory setting. In the last analysis, Pannekoek's Marxism reflected more the growing pains of a bureaucratic advanced industrial capitalism than a viable historical alternative.

While it remains true that Pannekoek's Marxism did not have within it, either as an ideology or organized movement, the components necessary for keeping pace with the rapid social and economic changes of the era, his ideas cannot be viewed as entirely irrelevant. The general content of the issues raised by Pannekoek extends well beyond their specific historical form. Pannekoek's great achievement was to have reaffirmed with unmistakable clarity a goal of socialism that has often been neglected. It is a goal of democratic transformation starting from the shop floor and extending to the whole of society. In attempting to recover the democratic and egalitarian core of the socialist ideal, Pannekoek adhered with unparalleled persistence to the hope and faith that people can still create their own history. In a century where Marxism has failed to deliver human emancipation, Pannekoek's critique of the extreme statist and authoritarian tendencies inherent in the entire Marxist tradition and his vision of a radically free and democratic society, if nothing else, has provided both an inspiration and a direction for others. One ought not to expect more from political theory.

NOTES

Introduction

1. Obscurity was not always the case for Pannekoek. Prior to the First World War, and for a few years afterward, Pannekoek was a widely known figure in the international socialist movement. Commenting on the impact of Pannekoek's thought on the formation of American communism, the historian Theodore Draper has noted: '[...] Pannekoek and Gorter were familiar names to many American Socialists when Lenin and Trotsky were virtually unknown'. Theodore Draper, *The Roots of American Communism*, New York, 1957, pp. 65-66.

2. The term 'Western Marxism' has generally been used to refer to an alternative tradition within Marxism which has stressed the subjective and active elements of Marxism and has focused attention on such previously ignored issues as philosophy, culture, and consciousness. It has been counterposed to orthodox Marxism, which has emphasized the structural, economic, and determinist elements of Marxism. The bibliography on Western Marxism is vast. For a critical overview of this tradition, see: Perry Anderson, *Considerations on Western Marxism*, London, 1976; Russell Jacoby, *Dialectic of Defeat. Contours of Western Marxism*, Cambridge [etc.], 1981.

3. The best source of information on Pannekoek's astronomical career is his own scientific autobiography: 'Sterrenkundige herinneringen', in: B.A. Sijes, J.M. Welcker, J.R. van der Leeuw (eds.), *Anton Pannekoek. Herinneringen. Herinneringen uit de arbeidersbeweging. Sterrenkundige herinneringen*, Amsterdam, 1982, pp. 229-274. A detailed evaluation of his scientific accomplishments is given in: E.P.J. van den Heuvel, 'Pannekoek als sterrenkundige', in: *ibid.*, pp. 219-228.

4. The two most useful overviews of Pannekoek's Marxism were both written by council communists: Serge Bricanier's pioneering quasi-anthology, *Pannekoek et les conseils ouvriers*, Paris, [1969], which has appeared in English translation as *Pannekoek and the Workers' Councils*, St. Louis, 1978; and Cajo Brendel, *Anton Pannekoek. Theoretikus van het socialisme*, Nijmegen, 1970. Among the anthologies that have appeared are: Hans Manfred Bock (ed.), *A. Pannekoek, H. Gorter, Organisation und Taktik der proletarischen Revolution*, Frankfurt am Main, 1969; Anton Pannekoek, *Neubestimmung des Marxismus*, Berlin, 1974, with an introduction by Cajo Brendel; Jaap Kloosterman (ed.), *Anton Pannekoek. Partij, Raden, Revolutie*, Amsterdam, 1972; D.A. Smart (ed.), *Pannekoek and Gorter's Marxism*, London, 1978.

5. Included in this category are: Paul Mattick, 'La prospettiva della rivoluzione mondiale di Anton Pannekoek', in: *Annali Istituto Giangiacomo Feltrinelli*, XV (1973); Hans Manfred Bock, 'Anton Pannekoek in der Vorkriegs-Sozialdemokratie', in: *Jahrbuch Arbeiterbewegung*, nr. 3, Frankfurt am Main, 1975, pp. 103-167; H. Schurer, 'Anton Pannekoek and the Origins of Leninism', in: *The Slavonic and East European Review*, June, 1963.

6. The only detailed study of Pannekoek's entire career undertaken until now has been Mark Boekelman's unpublished 1982 University of Toronto Ph.D. dissertation, *The Development of*

the *Social and Political Thought of Anton Pannekoek, 1873–1960: From Social Democracy to Council Communism*. B. A. Sijes has provided a valuable overview of Pannekoek's political development in his 'Anton Pannekoek, 1873–1960', in: *Pannekoek. Herinneringen*, op. cit., pp. 11–69.

Chapter I

1. The best accounts of the industrialization process in the Netherlands are: J. A. de Jonge, *De industrialisatie in Nederland tussen 1850 en 1914*, Amsterdam, 1968; I. J. Brugmans, *Paardenkracht en Mensenmacht. Sociaal-economische geschiedenis van Nederland 1795–1940*, 's-Gravenhage, 1961. Still useful is Henriette Roland Holst's classic work, *Kapitaal en arbeid in Nederland. Bijdrage tot de economische geschiedenis der 19e eeuw*, Amsterdam, 1902.

2. This ideological and cultural segmentation of Dutch society is covered in: L. G. J. Verberne, *De Nederlandse arbeidersbeweging in de negentiende eeuw*, Amsterdam, 1940; Johan Goudsblom, *Dutch Society*, New York, 1967; Arend Lijphart, *The Politics of Accommodation. Pluralism and Democracy in the Netherlands*, Berkeley, 1968.

3. For an analysis of the effect of religion on the emergence of Dutch trade unions, see: Erik Hansen, Peter A. Prosper, Jr., 'Religion and the Development of the Dutch Trade Union Movement, 1872–1914', *Histoire sociale/ Social History*, Nr. 18, November, 1976, pp. 357–383.

4. The early organizational development of the Dutch working class is covered in: Ger Harmsen, *Historisch overzicht van socialisme en arbeidersbeweging in Nederland. Deel 1. Van de begintijd tot het uitbreken van de Eerste Wereldoorlog*, Nijmegen, 1973; Verberne, *De Nederlandse arbeidersbeweging in de negentiende eeuw*, op. cit.; I. J. Brugmans, *De arbeidende klasse in Nederland in de 19e eeuw (1813–1870)*, Utrecht, 1963; A. J. C. Rüter, *De spoorwegstakingen van 1903. Een spiegel der arbeidersbeweging in Nederland*, Leiden, 1935.

5. The most comprehensive history of the SDB is: D. J. Wansink, *Het socialisme op de tweesprong. De geboorte van de SDAP*, Haarlem, 1939.

6. The best source on Ferdinand Domela Nieuwenhuis is his autobiography, *Van Christen tot Anarchist*, Amsterdam, 1910.

7. Wansink, *Het socialisme op de tweesprong*, op. cit., pp. 47–65. Despite his importance both for the formation of Marxian socialism in the Netherlands and late nineteenth century Dutch intellectual and cultural life, Frank van der Goes still awaits a biographer.

8. P[ieter]J[elles] Troelstra, *Gedenkschriften. Eerste deel. Wording*, Amsterdam, 1927, pp. 254–270. Troelstra's early career is traced in: A. F. Mellink, 'Het politiek debuut van Mr. P. J. Troelstra (1891–1897)', *Tijdschrift voor Geschiedenis*, nr. 1, 1970, pp. 38–58.

9. Sam de Wolff, *En toch...! Driekwart eeuw socialisme in vogelvlucht*, Amsterdam, 1951, p. 98. Information on the Peoples' Party of Friesland can be found in: T. van der Wal, *Op zoek naar een nieuwe vrijheid. Een kwart eeuw arbeidersbeweging in Friesland (1870–1895)*, Leiden, 1972.

10. Troelstra, *Gedenkschriften. Tweede deel. Groei*, Amsterdam, 1928, p. 60.

11. *Ibid.*, pp. 116–117.

12. Information on the early years of the SDAP's development can be found in: H. van Hulst, A. Pleysier, A. Scheffer, *Het Roode Vaandel volgen wij. Geschiedenis van de Sociaal Democratische Arbeiderspartij van 1880 tot 1940*, 's-Gravenhage, 1969; W. H. Vliegen, *Die onze kracht ontwakende. Geschiedenis der Sociaaldemocratische Arbeiderspartij in Nederland gedurende de eerste 25 jaren van haar bestaan*, Amsterdam, 1924.

13. De Wolff, *En toch...!*, op. cit., p. 118.

14. These developments are covered in: Rüter, *De spoorwegstakingen*, op. cit., pp. 85–148.

15. Pannekoek, 'Sterrenkundige herinneringen', op. cit., pp. 229–230.

16. Dirk Struik, 'Years of Revolution', unpublished manuscript, p. 13. I am indebted to Professor Struik for making a copy of this manuscript available to me.

17. Pannekoek has provided a revealing glimpse into his lifestyle in a passage in his memoirs: 'I remember that Henriette Roland Holst recommended to me the Hotel Frankfurter Hof (because, as she later told me, it had nice flowers in the windows), but after two days I left because it was too expensive and too chic. I then went to a people's hotel the comrades had recommended to me, but it was too crude and *too* simple. Finally, I went to one of the hotels behind the station catering to commercial travellers, and there I found what I was looking for.' Pannekoek, 'Herinneringen uit de arbeidersbeweging', in: Pannekoek. *Herinneringen*, op. cit., p. 131. This document was originally written by Pannekoek as a personal memoir for his family in 1944.
18. Pannekoek to Sijes, January 21, 1953, B.A. Sijes Archives, International Institute of Social History (Amsterdam).
19. Pannekoek was a founder of the debating society 'Christiaan Huygens' and chairman from 1895 to 1896. *75 Jaar Christiaan Huygens*, s.l., 1970.
20. Pannekoek, 'Herinneringen uit de arbeidersbeweging', op. cit., pp. 71-218, quotation p. 72.
21. Ibid.
22. Pannekoek, undated entry, untitled notebook, Anton Pannekoek Astronomical Institute, University of Amsterdam. Pannekoek used this notebook to record his thoughts during the years 1899 and 1900.
23. Ibid., entry for April 8, 1899.
24. Ibid., entry for April 23, 1899.
25. Ibid., entry for April 23, 1899, p. 19.
26. Pannekoek, 'Herinneringen uit de arbeidersbeweging', op. cit., p. 72.
27. Edward Bellamy, *Equality*, London, 1897, p. 273.
28. Ibid., p. 293.
29. Pannekoek, untitled notebook, entry for June 11, 1899, p. 36.
30. Pannekoek, 'Herinneringen uit de arbeidersbeweging', op. cit., p. 73.
31. Ibid.
32. A[ntony] P[annekoek], 'Misverstand?', *Het Sociaal Weekblad*, August 5, 1899, pp. 367-369.
33. Ant[on] Pannekoek, 'Geen verbetering', *De Kroniek*, nr. 263, 1900, pp. 3-4.
34. Pannekoek, 'Herinneringen uit de arbeidersbeweging', op. cit., p. 75.
35. Ibid., p. 74.
36. Socio-economic conditions in Leiden and the state of the city's working class are described and analyzed at length in the January 24, 1903 issue of *De Wekker*. Also useful is: Dick Wortel, Mark Kranenburg, *80 jaar vakbeweging in Leiden*, Leiden, 1980.
37. C.H. Kettner to the SDAP Partij Bestuur, July 6, 1900, SDAP-Leiden Archives, International Institute of Social History (Amsterdam). Information on the early years of the Leiden SDAP is contained in two works by Dick Wortel: 'De memoires van Hendrik Neuteboom', *Leids Jaarboekje*, Leiden, 1983, pp. 167-200; 'Dr. J.A.N. Knuttel, peuterige Kamergeleerde tussen Marx en Kluyver', *Jaarboek van de Stichting Instituut voor Nederlandse Lexicologie. Overzicht van de jaren 1981 en 1982*, Leiden, 1984.
38. C.H. Kettner to the SDAP Partij Bestuur, November 4, 1901, SDAP-Leiden Archives.
39. Pannekoek to the SDAP Partij Bestuur, January 13, 1903, SDAP-Leiden Archives. The SDAP fared little better in the elections. In 1902 it received only 150 out of 3,825 votes cast. *Het Volk*, November 25, 1903.
40. An occupational listing from the early 1900's lists members in the following trades: cigar-makers, 2; shoemakers, 2; typographers, 1; housepainters, 4; blacksmiths, 4; plasterers, 4; guards, 3; masons, 2; bricklayers, 5; carpenters, 6; weavers, 1; bakers, 1; paper hangers, 1. Undated membership listing attached to the 'Notulenboek van de afdeeling Leiden der Sociaal-demokratische Arbeiderspartij, 1899-1903', SDAP-Leiden Archives.

41. Minutes for February 12, 1900, *ibid.*
42. Pannekoek to the SDAP *Partij Bestuur*, March 5, 1900, SDAP-Leiden Archives.
43. The activities of this committee are traced in: Wortel, Kranenburg, *80 jaar vakbeweging in Leiden*, op. cit., pp. 17-18.
44. Pannekoek, 'Wat wij willen', *De Wekker*, December 20, 1902.
45. Pannekoek's key role in the development of this bakery is discussed in: Wortel, Kranenburg, *80 jaar vakbeweging in Leiden*, op. cit., pp. 42-44.
46. This club is described in the February 20, 1904 edition of *De Wekker*.
47. Minutes for January 28, 1901. 'Notulenboek van de afdeeling Leiden [...]', op. cit., Pannekoek also took up this theme in one of his first articles: [Anton Pannekoek], 'Arbeidskracht en Rust', *De Nieuwe Tijd*, 1899-1900, pp. 644-648.
48. Pannekoek, 'Wat wij willen', op. cit.

Chapter II

1. Pannekoek, 'Herinneringen uit de arbeidersbeweging', op. cit., p. 76.
2. The most comprehensive account of Dietzgen's life and work is: Gerhard Huck, *Joseph Dietzgen (1828-1888). Ein Beitrag zur Ideengeschichte des Sozialismus im 19. Jahrhundert*, Stuttgart, 1979. Also useful are: Eugen Dietzgen, 'Joseph Dietzgen: A Sketch of His Life', in: Joseph Dietzgen, *Some of the Philosophical Essays on Socialism and Science, Religion, Ethics. Critique-of-Reason and the World-at-Large*, Chicago, 1917; Adam Buick, 'Joseph Dietzgen', *Radical Philosophy*, Spring, 1975; Vittorio Ancarani, 'La teoria della conoscenza nel primo Dietzgen (1866-1869)', *Annali*, 1976, pp. 137-164; Adolf Hepner, *Josef Dietzgens Philosophische Lehren*, Stuttgart, 1916; Henriëtte Roland-Holst, *Joseph Dietzgens Philosophie gemeinverständlich erläutert in ihrer Bedeutung für das Proletariat*, München, 1910.
3. Quoted in: Eugen Dietzgen, 'Joseph Dietzgen', op. cit., p. 15.
4. Marx, *Letters to Dr. Kugelmann*, London, s.a., p. 80. Marx qualified this enthusiasm by noting 'a certain confusion' and a 'too frequent repetition' in a manuscript Dietzgen had sent him. *Ibid.*
5. 'And this materialist dialectic which for years has been our best working tool and our sharpest weapon, was, remarkably enough, discovered not only by us, but also independently of us and even of Hegel by a German worker, Joseph Dietzgen.' Frederick Engels, *Ludwig Feuerbach and the Outcome of Classical German Philosophy*, London, [1934], p. 54. Although he termed Dietzgen's 'account of the thing-in-itself as a thing made of thought' as 'brilliant', Engels complained that Dietzgen's use of the dialectic appeared 'more in flashes than as a connected whole'. Engels to Marx, November 6, 1868, in Karl Marx, Frederick Engels, *Selected Correspondence*, London, 1942, pp. 253-254.
6. In this connection, George Lichtheim has noted: 'On the whole he probably came closest to expressing what the average Socialist of the period thought and felt about the world, but his thinking was too unsystematic to yield the kind of coherent doctrine that could be opposed to the official teaching in the universities.' George Lichtheim, *Marxism. An Historical and Critical Study*, New York, 1961, p. 242.
7. An examination of certain aspects of Dietzgen's influence on rank-and-file militants can be found in two works by Stuart MacIntyre: 'Joseph Dietzgen and British working-class education', *Bulletin [of the] Society for the Study of Labour History*, nr. 29, Autumn, 1974, pp. 50-54; *A Proletarian Science: Marxism in Britain 1917-1933*, Cambridge [etc.], 1980, pp. 129-140.
8. Dietzgen, 'The Nature of Human Brain Work', in: Joseph Dietzgen, *The Positive Outcome of Philosophy*, Chicago, 1906, p. 47-173, quotation p. 8.
9. *Ibid.*, p. 97.

10. Ibid., p. 433.
11. Pannekoek, 'Herinneringen uit de arbeidersbeweging', op. cit., p. 94.
12. Pannekoek noted in this connection that it was 'a proof of the deep validity of a clear Marxist insight that Dietzgen, a layman and an amateur in the scientific area, fully clarified the basis of modern natural science long before the modern natural scientists themselves went the same way [...]; the most well known of them, Ernst Mach, has admitted his astonishment upon learning that many of his newly developed theories had been developed a quarter century earlier by Dietzgen'. Pannekoek, 'Twee natuuronderzoekers in de maatschappelijk-geestelijke strijd', *De Nieuwe Tijd*, 1917, pp. 300-314, 375-392, quotation p. 304. Throughout his career, Pannekoek consistently attempted to apply a Dietzgenian methodology to his own scientific research. For examples of this, see his works: *De Evolutie van het Heelal*, Leiden, 1918; *De Astrophysica en hare moderne ontwikkeling*, Amsterdam, 1925.
13. Pannekoek, 'De Filosofie van Kant en het Marxisme', *De Nieuwe Tijd*, 1901, pp. 549-564, 605-620, 669-688.
14. Pannekoek, 'Herinneringen uit de arbeidersbeweging', op. cit., p. 94.
15. Pannekoek, 'The Position and Significance of J. Dietzgen's Philosophical Works', in: Dietzgen, *The Positive Outcome of Philosophy* [...], op. cit., pp. 30-31.
16. Ibid., p. 28.
17. Pannekoek, 'Dietzgens Werk', *Die Neue Zeit*, 1912-1913, vol. II, pp. 37-47, quotation p. 37.
18. Pannekoek, 'De Filosofie van Kant en het Marxisme', op. cit., p. 620.
19. Pannekoek, 'The Position and Significance of J. Dietzgen's Philosophical Works', op. cit., p. 17.
20. Ibid., p. 27.
21. Pannekoek to Gerald Lucas, January 7, 1953, Pannekoek Archives, nr. 108/13.
22. Pannekoek, 'The Position and Significance of J. Dietzgen's Philosophical Work', op. cit., p. 21.
23. Ibid., p. 29.
24. Ibid., p. 27.
25. Ibid., p. 12.
26. See: Roy Bhaskar, *A Realist Theory of Science*, Atlantic Highlands, 1978.
27. [Antonie Pannekoek], 'The Origin of Astronomy, George Darwin Lecture, delivered by Professor Antonie Pannekoek on 1951 April 13', *Monthly Notices of the Royal Astronomical Society*, 1951, nr. 4, pp. 347-356. Pannekoek's most comprehensive discussion of the relationship between science and social development is contained in his *A History of Astronomy*, New York, 1969.
28. Pannekoek, *Lenin as Philosopher. A Critical Examination of the Philosophical Basis of Leninism*, New York, 1948, p. 19. Pannekoek has elaborated elsewhere on the concept of technology: 'The basis of society – productive power – is formed chiefly through technology, though in primitive societies natural conditions play a major role. [...] Technology does not merely involve material factors such as machines, factories, coal mines and railroads, but also the ability to make them and the science which creates this technology. Natural science, our knowledge of the forces of nature, our ability to use it and to calculate with it, may be conceived as factors of production too. Technology rests not on material factors alone, but also on strong spiritual elements.' Pannekoek, 'Het Historisch materialisme', *De Nieuwe Tijd*, 1919, pp. 15-22, 52-58, quotation p. 19. By analogy, Pannekoek viewed socialist politics as the 'technology of the proletariat', since it had a similar scientific and spiritual connection to their productive relationships. Pannekoek, 'Sozialistische Politik', *Zeitungskorrespondenz*, Nr. 65, May 1, 1909. From 1908 to 1914, while a full-time militant in the German SPD, Pannekoek wrote a regular series of weekly articles which were sent to subscribing local SPD publications. The dates cited are those

of the proof copies contained in the Pannekoek Archives, nr. 281. These articles can be found most regularly in the *Leipziger Volkszeitung* and the *Bremer Bürger-Zeitung*, usually several days to several weeks after the proof date copy.

29. A. Pannekoek, 'Klassenwissenschaft und Philosophie', *Die Neue Zeit*, 1904–1905, vol. I, pp. 604–610, quotation p. 606.

30. Pannekoek, 'The Position and Significance of J. Dietzgen's Philosophical Writings', op. cit., p. 10.

31. J. Harper [i.e. Anton Pannekoek], 'Materialism and historical Materialism', *New Essays*, nr. 2, Fall, 1942, pp. 9–25, quotation p. 17.

32. Pannekoek, 'Klassenwissenschaft und Philosophie', op. cit.

33. Ant. Pannekoek, 'Professor Treub over het historisch materialisme', *De Nieuwe Tijd*, 1904, pp. 87–97, 159–172, 295–308, quotation p. 306.

34. Pannekoek, 'Klassenwissenschaft und Philosophie', op. cit.

35. Pannekoek, 'Twee natuuronderzoekers in de maatschappelijk-geestelijke strijd', op. cit.

36. Pannekoek, 'Klassenwissenschaft und Philosophie', op. cit.

37. Pannekoek, 'The Position and Significance of J. Dietzgen's Philosophical Works', op. cit., p. 34.

38. Pannekoek, 'Professor Treub over het historisch materialisme', op. cit. Pannekoek argued that the dialectical mode of thinking provides truth only through its relative character: 'Dialectical thinking corresponds to reality in as much as it takes into consideration that the finite cannot explain the infinite, nor the static the dynamic; that every concept has to develop into new concepts, or even into its opposite'. J. Harper [i.e. Anton Pannekoek], 'Materialism and historical Materialism', op. cit., p. 23.

39. Anton Pannekoek, 'Historischer Materialismus und Religion', *Die Neue Zeit*, 1903–1904, vol. II, pp. 133–142, 180–186.

40. Ant. Pannekoek, 'Marx-Studiën', *De Nieuwe Tijd*, 1905, pp. 4–13, 129–142, quotation p. 11. See also Pannekoek's article, 'Energie und Wirtschaft', *Die Neue Zeit*, 1905–1906, Vol. II, pp. 620–626, 653–659.

41. Pannekoek, 'Der Marxismus', unpublished manuscript, Pannekoek Archives, nr. 158.

42. Pannekoek, 'Historischer Materialismus und Religion', op. cit., p. 140.

43. J. Harper [i.e. Anton Pannekoek], 'Materialism and historical Materialism', op. cit., p. 22.

44. Pannekoek, 'Dialectisch Materialisme', unpublished manuscript, Pannekoek Archives, nr. 191.

45. Pannekoek, 'Der Marxismus', op. cit. (cf. note 41).

46. Pannekoek, *Lenin as Philosopher*, op. cit., p. 31.

47. Pannekoek, 'Inlichting', *De Kroniek*, August 31, 1901.

48. Pannekoek, 'What About Marxism?', *Industrial Worker*, February 7, 1948.

49. Pannekoek to Maximilien Rubel, April 29, 1953, Pannekoek Archives, nr. 108.

50. Pannekoek, 'Het standpunt der partij', *De Nieuwe Tijd*, 1903, pp. 94–104. Pannekoek later claimed it was on these grounds that he never studied Marx systematically. Pannekoek to Rubel, July 21, 1951, Pannekoek Archives, folder 108.

51. A[nton] P[annekoek], 'Die Arbeiter und die sozialistische Wissenschaft', *Zeitungskorrespondenz*, Nr. 90, October 23, 1909.

52. Ant. Pannekoek, 'Ideologisch-modern of Marxistisch-ouderwetsch', *De Nieuwe Tijd*, 1903, pp. 489–503.

53. For a full discussion of the role of Darwinism in German social democratic ideology see: Hans-Josef Steinberg, *Sozialismus und deutsche Sozialdemokratie. Zur Ideologie der Partei vor dem I. Weltkrieg*, Hannover, 1967, pp. 45–56.

54. Anton Pannekoek, *Marxism and Darwinism*, Chicago, 1912, p. 7.

55. Pannekoek, 'Professor Treub over het historisch materialisme', op. cit.

Chapter III

1. For an overview of the factional struggle in the SDAP see: De Wolff, *En toch...!*, op. cit., pp. 143-183; Frits de Jong, *J. Saks, Literator en Marxist. Een bijdrage tot de geschiedenis van het Marxisme in Nederland*, Amsterdam, 1954, pp. 59-96; P.J. Troelstra, *Gedenkschriften. Derde deel. Branding*, pp. 89-129; Vliegen, *Die onze kracht ontwaken deed*, op. cit., Vol. II, pp. 124-314; Erik Hansen, 'The Origins and Consolidation of Dutch Social Democracy, 1894-1914', *Canadian Journal of History/Annales Canadiennes d'Histoire*, nr. 2, December, 1977, pp. 145-171. The position of the party leadership is summarized in Troelstra's brochure, *Inzake partijleiding*, Rotterdam, 1906, while a counter brochure by Frank van der Goes, *Verkeerde partijleiding*, Rotterdam, 1907, states the case of the left opposition.
2. The 'tachtigers' movement has been examined in Gerben Colmjon, *De beweging van tachtig. Een cultuurhistorische verkenning in de negentiende eeuw*, Utrecht, 1963.
3. The central role of the *Nieuwe Gids* in Dutch intellectual life is analyzed in: G. Stuiveling, *De Nieuwe Gids als geestelijk brandpunt*, Amsterdam, 1935. Additional material on this publication can be found in: F. van der Goes, *Litteraire herinneringen uit den Nieuwe-Gids-Tijd*, Santpoort, 1931.
4. Tak, who like Van der Goes was a prominent figure in both Dutch socialist and intellectual circles, has received attention in: G.W.B. Borrie, *Pieter Lodewijk Tak (1848-1907), Journalist en politicus*, Assen, 1973.
5. Yves van Kempen [et al.], *Materialistische Literatuurtheorie*, Nijmegen, 1973, p. 22.
6. Rob Antonissen, *Herman Gorter en Henriëtte Roland Holst*, Utrecht, Antwerpen, 1946, p. 169. For additional information on Gorter, see: Herman de Liagre Böhl, *Herman Gorter. Zijn politieke activiteiten van 1909 tot 1920 in de opkomende kommunistische beweging in Nederland*, Nijmegen, 1973; Henriëtte Roland Holst, *Herman Gorter*, Amsterdam, 1933 (reprint Nijmegen, 1973); Garrit Stuiveling (ed.), *Acht over Gorter. Een reeks beschouwingen over poëzie en politiek*, Amsterdam, 1978.
7. Roland Holst, *Herman Gorter*, op. cit., p. 137. Gorter's most well known verses are his epic poems *Mei* (1889), *Pan* (1912), and *De Arbeidersraad* (1931).
8. H. Gorter, 'Kritiek op de Litteraire beweging van 1880 in Holland', *De Nieuwe Tijd*, 1897/1898, pp. 208-217, 369-383; 1898/1899, pp. 168-188, 603-615; 1899/1900, pp. 251-255.
9. Roland Holst, *Herman Gorter*, op. cit., p. 37.
10. Ibid., p. 23. The best source of biographical information on Roland Holst is: Antonissen, *Herman Gorter en Henriëtte Roland Holst*, op. cit.
11. De Wolff, *En toch...!*, op. cit., p. 127.
12. Henriëtte Roland Holst-Van der Schalk, *Het vuur brandde voort. Levensherinneringen*, Amsterdam, Antwerpen, 1949, p. 65.
13. Henriëtte Roland Holst, *Socialisme en literatuur*, Amsterdam, 1899.
14. In addition to Pannekoek's work, other studies from this group dealing with Dietzgen include: Herman Gorter, 'Marx en het determinisme', *De Nieuwe Tijd*, 1904, pp. 52-61; H. Gorter, *Het historisch materialisme voor arbeiders verklaard*, Amsterdam, 1908; Roland Holst, *Joseph Dietzgens Philosophie gemeinverständlich erläutert in ihrer Bedeutung für das Proletariat*, op. cit. Dietzgen's philosophy also exercised considerable influence on the literary work of Gorter and Roland Holst. A useful discussion of Dietzgen's literary impact can be found in: Antonissen, *Herman Gorter en Henriëtte Roland Holst*, op. cit.; Van Kempen [et al.], *Materialistische Literatuurtheorie*, op. cit.
15. Ant. Pannekoek, 'Overgang', *De Nieuwe Tijd*, 1921, pp. 714-725.
16. In 1895, the SDAP had only 700 members, a figure which grew to 2,500 by 1899, and to 4,500 in 1902, which was still far less than the membership of the SDB in 1892. Erik Hansen, 'Workers and Socialists: Relations between the Dutch Trade-Union Movement and Social Democracy, 1894-1914', *European Studies Review*, April, 1977, p. 199-226.

17. Harmsen, *Historisch overzicht*, op. cit., p. 47.
18. Troelstra, *Gedenkschriften. Tweede deel. Groei*, op. cit., p. 239.
19. The best account of the origins and ideological development of the NAS is: Rüter, *De spoorwegstakingen*, op. cit., pp. 83-148. Also useful is: Erik Hansen, Peter A. Prosper, Jr., 'The Nationaal Arbeids-Secretariaat. Revolutionary Syndicalism in the Netherlands, 1892-1914', *Societas*, Spring, 1978, pp. 121-144.
20. Biographical data on Polak and background information on the formation and development of the ANDB can be found in: O. Montagne, Johan Winkler (eds.), *Doctor Henri Polak. Van het vuur dat in hem brandde*, Amsterdam, 1948.
21. *Verslag van het verhandelde op het vijfde Kongres der Sociaaldemokr. Arbeiderspartij in Nederland. Gehouden te Leeuwarden op den 2den en 3den April 1899*, Amsterdam, n.d., p. 9.
22. [Pieter Jelles Troelstra], 'Reorganisatieplannen N.A.S.', *Het Volk*, October 30 and 31, November 1 and 6, 1900.
23. H. Gorter, 'Vakverenigingen en S.D.A.P.', *Het Volk*, March 16 and 19, 1901.
24. *Verslag van het Zevende congres der S.D.A.P., en van het Verkiezings-congres. Gehouden op 7 en 8 April 1901 [...] te Utrecht*, Amsterdam, 1901, p. 14.
25. The most comprehensive discussion of the role of the agrarian question in SDAP policy is: Erik Hansen, 'Dutch Social Democracy and Agrarian Policy, 1894-1906', *Agricultural History*, nr. 3, July, 1976, pp. 461-476.
26. P.J. Troelstra, 'Het agrarisch program', *De Nieuwe Tijd*, 1901, pp. 244-250.
27. H. Gorter, 'Troelstra tegen Kautsky', *De Nieuwe Tijd*, 1901, pp. 251-255.
28. Troelstra, untitled editorial, *Het Volk*, April 12, 1901.
29. Pannekoek, 'Herinneringen uit de arbeidersbeweging', op. cit., p. 77.
30. *Verslag van het zevende congres der S.D.A.P.*, op. cit., p. 21.
31. The most detailed and comprehensive discussion of the school controversy is contained in: Erik Hansen, 'Marxism, Socialism, and the Dutch Primary Schools', *History of Education Quarterly*, Winter, 1973, pp. 145-171.
32. [Pieter Jelles Troelstra], 'Staat en school', *Het Volk*, February 12, 1901.
33. [Frank van der] G[oes], 'De schoolkwestie', *De Kroniek*, nr. 326-328, 1901.
34. A[n]ton P[annekoek], 'De School', *De Kroniek*, nr. 331, 1901, p. 131-132.
35. [Pieter Jelles Troelstra], 'Een reaktionnaire motie', *Het Volk*, December 21, 1901.
36. Henr. Roland Holst, Herman Gorter, 'Verklaring in zake de Vrije School', *Het Volk*, December 24, 1901.
37. This account is based largely on Rüter's work, *De Spoorwegstakingen*, op. cit. Also useful is: Albert de Jong, *De stakingen van 1903. Een onderzoek naar de oorzaken van de overwinning in Januari en de nederlaag in April*, Den Haag, [1953].
38. Rüter, *De Spoorwegstakingen*, op. cit., p. 294.
39. Ant. Pannekoek, 'Een belangrijk oogenblik', *De Nieuwe Tijd*, 1903, pp. 162-171.
40. Henriëtte Roland Holst, *De groote Spoorwegstaking, de Vakbeweging en de S.D.A.P.*, 's-Gravenhage, [1903].
41. Quoted in: Rüter, *De Spoorwegstakingen*, op. cit., p. 406.
42. De Jong, *De stakingen van 1903*, op. cit., p. 35.
43. For details on the formation of the NVV see: Hansen, 'Workers and Socialists: Relations between the Dutch Trade-Union Movement and Social Democracy, 1894-1914', op. cit.
44. Pannekoek to Van der Goes, August 9, 1903, Van der Goes Archives, nr. 701.
45. [Pieter Jelles Troelstra], 'Wat nu?', *Het Volk*, March 17, 1903.
46. Ant. Pannekoek, 'Wat nu?' (letter to the editors), *Het Volk*, March 26, 1903.
47. Unsigned commentary appended to *ibid*.
48. Pannekoek, 'Waarom Afkeuring', unpublished manuscript sent to *Het Volk*. Contained in the Pannekoek Archives, nr. 209.

49. Troelstra to Pannekoek, March 31, 1903, *ibid*.
50. Pannekoek to Troelstra, April 14, 1903, Troelstra Archives, nr. 802. Pannekoek's personal bitterness was motivated at least partly by his experiences in Leiden where he had been active in organizing strike support activities. For his role as chairman of a large strike support meeting, Pannekoek was threatened with dismissal from his Leiden Observatory post. Pannekoek, 'Herinneringen uit de arbeidersbeweging', *op. cit.*, pp. 92-93.
51. Pannekoek to Troelstra, December 10, 1901. Troelstra Archives, nr. 65/1.
52. H. Roland Holst, 'Verandering van taktiek?', *Het Volk*, March 24, 1903.
53. Henriëtte Roland Holst, *Generalstreik und Sozialdemokratie*, with an introduction by Karl Kautsky, Dresden, 1905.
54. *Verslag van het Negende Congres der Sociaaldemocratische Arbeiderspartij op 31 Mei en 1 Juni 1903 te Enschede*, Amsterdam, [1903].
55. [Anton Pannekoek], 'Der politische Streik. Bericht der Redaktion von "De Nieuwe Tijd" an den Parteivorstand der sozial-demokratischen Arbeiterpartei Hollands', *Die Neue Zeit*, 1903-1904, Vol. II, pp. 342-348.
56. *Verslag van het Tiende Congres der S.D.A.P., gehouden op 3, 4 en 5 April 1904 te Dordrecht*, Amsterdam, 1904.
57. Ant. Pannekoek, 'Politieke beschouwingen', *De Nieuwe Tijd*, 1905, pp. 570-585.
58. De Jong, J. Saks, *op. cit.*, p. 74.
59. Ant. Pannekoek, 'De herstemmingen', *Het Volk*, July 1, 1905.
60. Pannekoek, 'Politieke beschouwingen', *op. cit.*
61. P.J. Troelstra, 'Over de herstemmingen en nog wat', *Het Volk*, July 13, 15, 18, and 20, 1905.
62. *Verslag van het twaalfde Congres der S.D.A.P., gehouden op 15, 16 en 17 April 1906 te Utrecht*, Amsterdam, [1906], pp. 15-40.

Chapter IV

1. Pannekoek, 'Herinneringen uit de arbeidersbeweging', *op. cit.*, p. 100.
2. Pannekoek to Kautsky, September 27, 1901, Kautsky Archives, DXVIII 376.
3. Pannekoek to Kautsky, n.d. [1905], Kautsky Archives, DXVIII 368.
4. Pannekoek to Kautsky, n.d., Kautsky Archives, DXVIII 374.
5. The best study of the SPD school is: Nicholas Jacobs, 'Workers' Education. The German Social Democratic Party School in Berlin, 1906-1914', *History Workshop*, nr. 5, Spring, 1978. See also: Dieter Fricke, 'Die sozialdemokratische Parteischule (1906-1914)', *Zeitschrift für Geschichtswissenschaft*, nr. 1, 1957, pp. 229-248. Pannekoek has also described the school in: A[nton] P[annekoek], 'The Social Democratic Party-School In Berlin', *The International Socialist Review*, nr. 6, December, 1907, pp. 321-324.
6. Pannekoek to Kautsky, n.d. [1906], Kautsky Archives, DXVIII 380.
7. Fricke, 'Die sozialdemokratische Parteischule', *op. cit.*
8. Pannekoek, 'Herinneringen uit de arbeidersbeweging', *op. cit.*, p. 113.
9. Pannekoek has discussed his growing disenchantment with his observatory position in his 'Sterrenkundige herinneringen', *op. cit.*, pp. 237-240.
10. Pannekoek, 'The Social Democratic Party-School In Berlin', *op. cit.*
11. Pannekoek to Kautsky, n.d. [1906], Kautsky Archives, DXVIII 380.
12. Pannekoek, 'Herinneringen uit de arbeidersbeweging', *op. cit.*, p. 115.
13. These course notes are contained in a 284-page unpublished manuscript entitled 'Historischer Materialismus', Pannekoek Archives, nr. 284. Pannekoek had originally intended to turn this manuscript into a book.

14. Pannekoek, 'Herinneringen uit de arbeidersbeweging', op. cit., p. 124.
15. Ibid., p. 126.
16. Several works are useful for gaining a broad overview of the developments leading to the split of 1909. Foremost among these is Willem van Ravesteyn's semi-autobiographical, but partisan, *De wording van het communisme in Nederland 1907-1925*, Amsterdam, 1948, pp. 5-102. Also useful are: Erik Hansen, 'Crisis in the Party: De Tribune Faction and the Origins of the Dutch Communist Party 1907-9', *Journal of Contemporary History*, nr. 2/3, July, 1976, pp. 43-64; De Wolff, *En toch...!*, op. cit., pp. 157-161; Vliegen, *Die onze kracht ontwaken deed*, op. cit., vol. II, pp. 265-308; Troelstra, *Gedenkschriften. Derde deel. Branding*, Amsterdam, 1929, pp. 89-128; and Pannekoek's own summary of these events, *Die Gründung der 'Sozialdemokratische Partei in Nederland' (S.D.P.). Adresse an die Internationale*, Berlin, 1909.
17. For a full-scale biography of Wijnkoop, see: A.J. Koejemans, *David Wijnkoop. Een mens in de strijd voor het socialisme*, Amsterdam, 1967.
18. De Wolff, *En toch...!*, op. cit., pp. 163-165.
19. Van Ravesteyn, *De wording*, op. cit., p. 7.
20. Wijnkoop to Van Ravesteyn, April 26, 1903. Published in *ibid.*, pp. 70-71.
21. Wijnkoop, untitled letter to *Het Volk*, February 12, 1905.
22. Van Ravesteyn, *De wording*, op. cit., p. 15.
23. Ibid., p. 64.
24. Pannekoek to Van der Goes, March 26, 1907, Van der Goes Archives, nr. 1294.
25. Van Ravesteyn, *De wording*, op. cit., p. 82.
26. Pannekoek to Van Ravesteyn, [September 9, 1907], Van Ravesteyn Archives, folder 15.
27. 'Ter inleiding', unsigned editorial, *De Tribune*, October 19, 1907.
28. P.J. Troelstra, 'Het politiek systeem der sociaal-demokratie', *Het Volk*, September 3 and 5, 1907.
29. A[nton] P[annekoek], 'Troelstra' politiek systeem der sociaaldemokratie', *De Tribune*, December 21 and 28, 1907; January 4 and 11, 1908.
30. D[avid] W[ijnkoop], 'Schijn en wezen', *De Tribune*, April 4, 1908.
31. Wijnkoop, 'De vakbeweging in de Russische Revolutie', *De Tribune*, December 14, 1909.
32. [Jan Cornelis] C[eton], 'Over onze vakbladen', *De Tribune*, September 19, 1908; and [Jan Cornelis] C[eton], 'Het Revisionisme in de Vakbeweging', *De Tribune*, December 19, 1908.
33. A[nton] P[annekoek], 'De Kiesrecht-demonstratie in Pruisen', *De Tribune*, January 18, 1908.
34. H[enriëtte] R[oland] H[olst], 'Kentering', *De Tribune*, March 21 and 28, 1908.
35. 'Onze partij en haar aanstaand kongres', *Het Volk*, April 1, 2, 3, 4, 7, and 8, 1908.
36. Minutes of the Partijbestuur for April 4, 1908, 'SDAP Notulen boeken', SDAP Archives, nr. 18.
37. Noted in: *Verslag van het veertiende congres der S.D.A.P., gehouden op 19, 20 en 21 April 1908 te Arnhem*, Amsterdam, [1908], p. 11.
38. Van Ravesteyn, *De wording*, op. cit., p. 96.
39. D[avid] W[ijnkoop], 'De Afrekening?', *De Tribune*, October 24, 1908.
40. This letter was later published under the title: 'Troelstra's Kandidatuur in III', *Het Volk*, November 25, 1908.
41. Troelstra's letter is contained in his *Gedenkschriften. Derde deel. Branding*, op. cit., pp. 109-114.
42. This trip is noted in a letter from Pannekoek to Van Ravesteyn, December 8, 1908, Van Ravesteyn Archives, nr. 15.
43. Troelstra, *Gedenkschriften. Derde deel. Branding*, op. cit., pp. 115-117.
44. Vliegen, *Die onze kracht ontwaken deed*, op. cit., vol. II, pp. 283-285.
45. Wijnkoop, 'Eenheid en Strijd', *De Tribune*, January 9, 1909.

46. Vliegen, *Die onze kracht ontwaken deed*, op. cit., vol. II, p. 282.
47. Van Ravesteyn to Pannekoek, February 26, 1909, Pannekoek Archives, nr. 56.
48. *Verslag van het buitengewoon congres der S.D.A.P., gehouden op 13 en 14 Februari 1909 te Deventer*, Amsterdam, [1909], p. 10.
49. Ibid., p. 13.
50. Ibid., p. 19.
51. Vliegen, *Die onze kracht ontwaken deed*, op. cit., vol. II, pp. 301-302.
52. Troelstra later noted: 'My proposed conference, which excluded the *Tribune* editors, was directed precisely toward splitting the Marxist camp.' Troelstra, *Gedenkschriften. Derde deel. Branding*, op. cit., p. 119.
53. Quoted in: Harmsen, *Historisch overzicht*, op. cit., p. 56.
54. Pannekoek, 'Herinneringen uit de arbeidersbeweging', op. cit., p. 143.
55. *Verslag van het buitengewoon congres der S.D.A.P., gehouden op 13 en 14 Februari 1909 te Deventer*, op. cit., p. 14.
56. Ibid., p. 18.
57. Pannekoek, 'Herinneringen uit de arbeidersbeweging', op. cit., p. 143.
58. Roland Holst to Pannekoek, February 20, 1909, Pannekoek Archives, nr. 63.
59. Gorter to Kautsky, n.d. [February or March, 1909], Kautsky Archives, DXI 241.
60. Gorter to Van Ravesteyn, January 23, 1909, Van Ravesteyn Archives, folder 9.
61. De Liagre Böhl, *Herman Gorter*, op. cit., p. 44.
62. Pannekoek, 'Herinneringen uit de arbeidersbeweging', op. cit., p. 143.
63. Pannekoek to Van der Goes, February 5, 1909, Van der Goes Archives, nr. 1803.
64. Pannekoek to Van der Goes, n.d. [February, 1909], Van der Goes Archives, nr. 1803.
65. Pannekoek to Van der Goes, February 5, 1909, Van der Goes Archives, nr. 1803.
66. De Liagre Böhl, *Herman Gorter*, op. cit., p. 48.

Chapter V

1. The main outlines of Marx's conception of consciousness and social development are contained in the *German Ideology* and the *Preface to a Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy*.
2. Pannekoek, 'Het Historisch materialisme', op. cit.
3. Pannekoek, 'The Position and Significance of J. Dietzgen's Philosophical Works', op. cit., pp. 12-13.
4. For an excellent general discussion of Gramsci's theory of hegemony, see: Gwyn A. Williams, 'The Concept of "Egemonia" in the Thought of Antonio Gramsci: Some Notes on Interpretation', *Journal of the History of Ideas*, nr. 4, October-December 1960, pp. 586-599.
5. Pannekoek, *Religion and Socialism*, Detroit, n.d., p. [4].
6. [Anton Pannekoek], 'Bildungsarbeit', *Zeitungskorrespondenz*, nr. 135, September 3, 1910.
7. Ant. Pannekoek, 'Massenaktion und Revolution'. *Die Neue Zeit*, 1911-1912, vol. II, pp. 541-550, 585-593, 609-616.
8. [Anton Pannekoek], 'Der Sozialismus als Kulturmacht', *Zeitungskorrespondenz*, nr. 203, December 24, 1911.
9. Ant. Pannekoek, 'Sozialismus und Anarchismus', *Die Neue Zeit*, 1905-6, vol. I, pp. 836-846.
10. Pannekoek, *Die taktischen Differenzen in der Arbeiterbewegung*, Hamburg, 1909, p. 130.
11. Ibid., p. 121.
12. Ibid., p. 25.
13. Ibid., p. 132.

14. Ibid., p. 59.
15. Pannekoek, 'Sozialismus und Anarchismus', op. cit., p. 837.
16. Pannekoek, *Die taktischen Differenzen*, op. cit., p. 34.
17. Ant. Pannekoek, 'Theorie en beginsel in de arbeidersbeweging', *De Nieuwe Tijd*, 1906, pp. 602-628.
18. Pannekoek to Van der Goes, August 7, 1900, Van der Goes Archives, nr. 1803.
19. Pannekoek, *Die taktischen Differenzen*, op. cit., p. 122. Pannekoek, however, held that, unlike the proletariat, the peasantry could not escape the domination of traditional ideas by their own efforts and socialist thought would, therefore, have to be brought to them. Pannekoek, 'Die Ausgebeuteten', in: Ant. Pannekoek, *Der Kampf der Arbeiter. Sieben Aufsätze aus der Leipziger Volkszeitung*, Leipzig, 1907, p. 10.
20. Pannekoek, 'Theorie en beginsel', op. cit.
21. Pannekoek, *Die taktischen Differenzen*, op. cit., p. 61.
22. Ibid., pp. 125-126. Although the concept of the 'labor aristocracy' had a long pedigree in socialist theory, and is traceable at least as far back as Engels, Pannekoek was among the first to integrate it into a major theoretical and tactical analysis. But Pannekoek was unsure of how broadly this concept should apply and chose for the most part to de-emphasize it.
23. Op. cit.
24. Op. cit.
25. Pannekoek, *Die taktischen Differenzen*, op. cit., pp. 19-20.
26. Ibid., p. 18.
27. Pannekoek, 'Der politische Streik', op. cit., p. 343.
28. Pannekoek, *Die taktischen Differenzen*, op. cit., p. 18.
29. A[nton] P[annekoek], 'Die Einheit der Arbeiterklasse', *Zeitungskorrespondenz*, nr. 64, April 24, 1909.
30. Pannekoek, *Die taktischen Differenzen*, op. cit., p. 19.
31. Pannekoek, 'Theorie en beginsel', op. cit., p. 615.
32. Pannekoek, 'Een belangrijk oogenblik', op. cit.
33. Pannekoek, *Die taktischen Differenzen*, op. cit., p. 90.
34. Ant. Pannekoek, 'Die konservative und die revolutionäre Seite der Gewerkschaften', *Leipziger Volkszeitung*, February 12, 1906.
35. Pannekoek, *Die taktischen Differenzen*, op. cit., p. 94. It was on these grounds that Pannekoek criticized the syndicalists for presupposing a revolutionary disposition in the workers instead of seeking to build revolutionary consciousness and a strong organization on the basis of a struggle for small-scale improvements.
36. Pannekoek, 'Theorie en beginsel', op. cit., p. 616.
37. Pannekoek, *Die taktischen Differenzen*, op. cit., pp. 68-69, 73.
38. Ibid., p. 78.
39. Ant. Pannekoek, 'De reorganisatie van de partij', *Het Volk*, August 30, 1902.
40. Pannekoek, *Die taktischen Differenzen*, op. cit., p. 79.
41. Pannekoek, 'The Social Democratic Party School in Berlin', op. cit., p. 323.
42. A[nton] P[annekoek], 'Philisterangst', *Zeitungskorrespondenz*, nr. 1, February 1, 1908.
43. A[nton] P[annekoek], 'Joseph Dietzgen', *De Tribune*, April 18, 1908.
44. Pannekoek, 'Ein Bankrott des Parlamentarismus', *Zeitungskorrespondenz*, nr. 27, August 1, [1908].
45. Pannekoek, *Die taktischen Differenzen*, op. cit., p. 105.
46. Dietzgen's ethical views are most concisely stated in his essay, 'The Ethics of Social Democracy', in: Joseph Dietzgen, *Philosophical Essays*, Chicago, 1906. An excellent discussion of these views is contained in: Loyd D. Easton, 'Empiricism and Ethics in Dietzgen', *Journal of the History of Ideas*, Nr. 1, January, 1958, pp. 77-90.

47. Ant. Pannekoek, *Ethiek en Socialisme*, Leiden, 1907, p. 15.
48. Ibid., p. 17.
49. Ibid., pp. 19–20.
50. [Anton Pannekoek], 'Marx der Ethiker', *Zeitungskorrespondenz*, nr. 160, February 25, 1911.
51. A[nton] P[annekoek], 'Bürgerliche und proletarische Ethik', *Zeitungskorrespondenz*, nr. 91, October 30, 1909.

Chapter VI

1. Pannekoek, 'Herinneringen uit de arbeidersbeweging', op. cit., p. 139.
2. Pannekoek discussed these criticisms in a letter to Kautsky dated February 4, 1909, Kautsky Archives, D XVIII 408.
3. Ibid.
4. Carl E. Schorske, *German Social Democracy 1905–1917. The Development of the Great Schism*, Cambridge, 1955, p. 179.
5. J.P. Nettl, *Rosa Luxemburg*, London [etc.], 1966, vol. I., p. 418.
6. K. Kautsky, 'Was nun?', *Die Neue Zeit*, 1909–1910, vol. II, pp. 33–40, 68–80. Reprints of the texts of both Kautsky and Luxemburg are contained in: Antonia Grunenberg (ed.), *Die Massenstreikdebatte*, Frankfurt a.M., 1970.
7. A. Pannekoek, 'Zur Massenstreikdebatte', *Bremer Bürger-Zeitung*, April 9, 12 and 13, May 2 and 3, 1910.
8. A[nton] P[annekoek], 'Die Organisation im Kampfe', *Zeitungskorrespondenz*, nr. 114, April 9, 1910. Other installments in this series appeared on April 12, 13, and May 3, 1910.
9. K. Kautsky, 'Die Aktion der Masse', *Die Neue Zeit*, 1911–1912, vol. I, pp. 43–49, 77–84, 106–117.
10. Pannekoek to Kautsky, November 6, 1911, Kautsky Archives, D XVIII 413.
11. This controversy is noted in: Pannekoek to Kautsky, March 18, 1912, Kautsky Archives, D XVIII 415.
12. Pannekoek to Kautsky, April 14, 1912, Kautsky Archives, D XVIII 416.
13. Pannekoek, 'Massenaktion und Revolution', op. cit. The respective texts of both Pannekoek and Kautsky have been reprinted in: Grunenberg (ed.), *Die Massenstreikdebatte*, op. cit. This controversy occupied 116 pages in the *Neue Zeit* as compared to 93 pages for the 1910 Kautsky-Luxemburg controversy.
14. Pannekoek, 'Massenaktion und Revolution', op. cit., p., 546.
15. While noting that Pannekoek's analysis had 'very great defects' and 'lacks precision and concreteness', Lenin went on to praise Pannekoek: 'In this controversy it is Pannekoek, not Kautsky, who represents Marxism [...]', V.I. Lenin, *State and Revolution: Marxist Teaching about the Theory of the State and the Tasks of the Proletariat in the Revolution*, New York, 1932, p. 94–95.
16. Karl Kautsky, 'Die neue Taktik', *Die Neue Zeit*, 1911–1912, vol. II, pp. 654–664, 688–689, 723–733.
17. Anton Pannekoek, 'Kautsky über "die neue Taktik"', *Bremer Bürger-Zeitung*, September 10, 11 and 12, 1912.
18. Anton Pannekoek, 'Marxistische Theorie und revolutionäre Taktik', *Die Neue Zeit*, 1912–1913, vol. I, pp. 272–281, 365–373. An English translation of this can be found in: Smart (ed.), *Pannekoek and Gorter's Marxism*, op. cit., pp. 50–73.
19. K. Kautsky, 'Der jüngste Radikalismus', *Die Neue Zeit*, 1912–1913, vol. I, pp. 436–446, quotations pp. 440, 446.

20. Ant. Pannekoek, 'Zum Schluss', *Die Neue Zeit*, 1912–1913, vol. I, pp. 611–612. It was on these grounds that Pannekoek deliberately chose not to buttress his arguments for the necessity of smashing the capitalist state with citations from Marx's *The Civil War in France*.
21. Hans Manfred Bock, *Geschichte des 'linken Radikalismus' in Deutschland. Ein Versuch*, Frankfurt a.M., 1976, p. 78.
22. All statistics in this paragraph are from: Gerhard Engel, 'Die politisch-ideologische Entwicklung Johann Kniefs (1880–1919)', unpublished doctoral dissertation, Humboldt University, Berlin/ GDR, 1967, pp. 16–20.
23. The most comprehensive source of information on the origins and development of left wing radicalism in Bremen is: Karl-Ernst Moring, *Die Sozialdemokratische Partei in Bremen 1890–1914. Reformismus und Radikalismus in der Sozialdemokratischen Partei Bremens*, Hannover, 1968. For a summary account of the development of the Bremen left see: Josef Miller, 'Zur Geschichte der linken Sozialdemokraten in Bremen 1906–18', *Zeitschrift für Geschichtswissenschaft*, Sonderheft, 1958, pp. 202–217.
24. *Bremer Bürger-Zeitung*, August 16, 1906.
25. Moring, *Die Sozialdemokratische Partei in Bremen*, op. cit., pp. 77–102.
26. 'Das Fazit des Parteitages', *Bremer Bürger-Zeitung*, September 23, 1909.
27. Pannekoek, 'Herinneringen uit de arbeidersbeweging', op. cit., p. 139.
28. 'Die Arbeiterbildung in Bremen', *Bremer Bürger-Zeitung*, September 29, 1909.
29. Pannekoek to Wilhelm Pieck, October 28, 1909, Henke Archives, Friedrich Ebert Stiftung (Bonn).
30. Pannekoek to Kautsky, June 26, 1911, Kautsky Archives, D XVIII 412.
31. For an account of one of Pannekoek's courses by a former participant, see: Karl Jannack, *Wir mit der roten Nelke*, Bautzen, 1959, p. 47.
32. For a biography of Radek, see: Warren Lerner, *Karl Radek. The Last Internationalist*, Stanford, 1970.
33. Engel, *Die politisch-ideologische Entwicklung Johann Kniefs*, op. cit., pp. 79–80.
34. *Ibid.*, p. 105.
35. *Bremer Bürger-Zeitung*, February 16, 1910.
36. Moring, *Die Sozialdemokratischen Partei in Bremen*, op. cit., p. 121.
37. *Protokoll über die Verhandlungen des Parteitages der Sozialdemokratischen Partei Deutschlands. Abgehalten in Magdeburg vom 18. bis 24. September 1910*, Berlin, 1910, pp. 181–182 (motion nr. 100).
38. A[nton] P[annekoek], 'Unteroffiziere', *Zeitungskorrespondenz*, nr. 95, November 27, 1909.
39. Pannekoek, 'Herinneringen uit de arbeidersbeweging', op. cit., p. 153.
40. For a detailed account of this strike, see: Helmut Kral, *Streik auf den Helgen. Die gewerkschaftlichen Kämpfe der deutschen Werftarbeiter vor dem ersten Weltkrieg*, Berlin, 1964, pp. 132–193.
41. *Ibid.*, p. 185.
42. Moring, *Die Sozialdemokratische Partei in Bremen*, op. cit., p. 137.
43. A[nton] P[annekoek], 'Gewerkschaftliche Demokratie', *Zeitungskorrespondenz*, nr. 150, December 17, 1910.
44. A[nton] P[annekoek], 'Das Vertretungssystem in der Arbeiterbewegung', *Zeitungskorrespondenz*, nr. 168, April 22, 1911.
45. 'Dr. Pannekoek und die deutschen Gewerkschaften', *Correspondenzblatt der Generalkommission der Gewerkschaften Deutschlands*, January 14, 1911, pp. 21–23.
46. Pannekoek, 'Herinneringen uit de arbeidersbeweging', op. cit., p. 161. A transcript of this debate is contained in the *Hamburger Echo*, March 3, 1911.
47. Moring, *Die Sozialdemokratische Partei in Bremen*, op. cit., p. 139.

48. Pannekoek, 'Herinneringen uit de arbeidersbeweging', op. cit., p. 153.
49. A comprehensive and detailed account of this strike and its aftermath is contained in: Kral, *Streik auf den Helgen*, op. cit., pp. 211-269.
50. Ibid., p. 235.
51. Ibid., pp. 225-226.
52. A[nton] P[annekoek], 'Der Werftarbeiterstreik', *Zeitungskorrespondenz*, nr. 287, August 9, 1913.
53. A[nton] P[annekoek], 'Gewerkschaftsdisziplin', *Zeitungskorrespondenz*, nr. 242, October 18, 1913.
54. Cited in: Kral, *Streik auf den Helgen*, op. cit., p. 248.
55. Ibid., p. 245.
56. A[nton] P[annekoek], 'Die Reorganisation der Parteileitung', *Bremer Bürger-Zeitung*, June 29, 1912.
57. *Protokoll über die Verhandlungen des Parteitages der Sozialdemokratischen Partei Deutschlands. Abgehalten in Chemnitz vom 15. bis 21. September 1912*, Berlin, 1912, p. 423.
58. 'Berichterstattung vom Parteitag', *Bremer Bürger-Zeitung*, October 10, 1912.
59. Ibid., October 16, 1912.
60. See: *Protokoll über die Verhandlungen des Parteitages der Sozialdemokratischen Partei Deutschlands. Abgehalten in Jena vom 14. bis 20. September 1913*, Berlin, 1913, pp. 281-338.
61. Ibid., pp. 337-338, 515-517.
62. 'Berichterstattung vom Parteitag', *Bremer Bürger-Zeitung*, October 24, 1913.
63. Knief to Henke, January 10, 1913. Cited in: Moring, *Die Sozialdemokratische Partei in Bremen*, op. cit., p. 202.
64. *Congres-Verslagen der Sociaal-Democratische Partij*, n.p., 1910, p. 43.
65. Ibid., pp. 15-16.
66. Van Ravesteyn, *De wording*, op. cit., p. 103.
67. This letter was published in *De Tribune* on March 6, 1909.
68. H. Roland Holst, 'Aan de Nederlandsche Marxisten (S.D.A.P. en S.D.P.)', *De Nieuwe Tijd*, 1909, pp. 317-328.
69. 'Rapport du comité exécutif du Bureau Socialiste Internationale sur les dissentiments des socialistes Hollandais et les négociations entreprises pour mettre fin au conflit', *Troelstra Archives*, nr. 774.
70. De Liagre Böhl, *Herman Gorter*, op. cit., p. 56.
71. Pannekoek, 'Herinneringen uit de arbeidersbeweging', op. cit., p. 145.
72. Pannekoek to Roland Holst, n.d., Pannekoek Archives, nr. 108.
73. De Liagre Böhl, *Herman Gorter*, op. cit., p. 58.
74. Ibid., p. 57.
75. H[erman] G[orter], 'De toekomst der S.D.P.', *De Tribune*, June 19, 1909.
76. H[enriëtte] R[oland] H[olst], 'Een keerpunt', *Het Weekblad*, June 18, 1909.
77. [Jan Cornelis] C[eton], 'De tactiek der vakbeweging', *De Tribune*, December 25, 1909, January 1 and 8, 1910.
78. These events and their consequences are covered in: Henk Sneevliet, 'De Stakingen in het Transportbedrijf', *De Nieuwe Tijd*, 1911, pp. 769-791, 834-856, 971-994.
79. Max Perthus, *Henk Sneevliet, revolutionair socialist in Europa en Azië*, Nijmegen, 1976, pp. 61-80. Sneevliet later became a founder of the communist movement in Indonesia, and a key emissary of the Communist International in China. From the mid-1920's onwards he was a leading figure in the Trotskyist opposition in Europe. In 1942 he was executed by the Nazis for his activity in the resistance.
80. D.J. Wijnkoop, 'Het Rotterdamsche Kongres der S.D.P.', *De Nieuwe Tijd*, 1911, pp. 573-578.

81. Van Ravesteijn, *De wording*, op. cit., p. 127.
82. [Jan Cornelis] C[eton], 'Een nieuwe strijd', *De Tribune*, December 16, 1911.
83. 'Nationaal Agitatie-Comité tegen de Duurte', *De Tribune*, January 13, 1912.
84. 'Agitatie tegen de Duurte', *De Tribune*, April 6, 1912.
85. '1e Jaarverslag der S.D.P.', *De Tribune*, May 7, 1910.
86. 'Tweede Jaarverslag', *De Tribune*, May 6, 1911.
87. 'Derde Jaarverslag', *De Tribune*, April 27, 1912.
88. 'Vierde Jaarverslag', *De Tribune*, March 15, 1913.
89. 'Vijfde Jaarverslag', *De Tribune*, May 13 and 16, 1914.
90. Van Ravesteijn, *De wording*, op. cit., p. 117.
91. Ibid., p. 118.
92. Ibid.
93. De Liagre Böhl, *Herman Gorter*, op. cit., p. 89.
94. *De Tribune*, May 6, 1911.
95. Vliegen, *Die onze kracht ontwaken deed*, op. cit., vol. II, p. 384.
96. Ibid., p. 582.
97. Ibid.
98. Ibid.
99. Ibid., p. 583.
100. Perthuis, *Henk Sneevliet*, op. cit., p. 88.
101. H[erman] G[orter], 'Sekte of Partij?', *De Tribune*, november 19, 1910.
102. A[nton] P[annekoek], 'Het strijd Marxisme', *De Tribune*, October 5, 1912.

Chapter VII

1. A[nton] P[annekoek], 'Die Massenstreikdebatte', *Zeitungskorrespondenz*, June 18, 1910.
2. A[nton] P[annekoek], 'Von der Verteidigung zum Angriff', *Zeitungskorrespondenz*, nr. 295, October 4, 1913.
3. Pannekoek, 'Marxistische Theorie und revolutionäre Taktik', op. cit.
4. A. Pannekoek, *Die Machtmittel des proletariats. Vortrag gehalten vor Stuttgarter Arbeitern Oktober 1910*, Stuttgart, n.d., p. 11.
5. A[nton] P[annekoek], 'Das Ergebnis des belgischen Massenstreiks', *Zeitungskorrespondenz*, nr. 273, May 3, 1913.
6. A[nton] P[annekoek], 'De Massastaking', *De Tribune*, July 22, 1914.
7. Pannekoek, 'Massenaktion und Revolution', op. cit.
8. A[nton] P[annekoek], 'Der Instinkt der Massen', *Zeitungskorrespondenz*, nr. 238, August 24, 1912.
9. Pannekoek, 'Marxistische Theorie und revolutionäre Taktik', op. cit., quotation p. 278. See in addition: 'Geist und Masse', *Zeitungskorrespondenz*, nr. 210, February 10, 1912.
10. A[nton] P[annekoek], 'Die Eroberung der Herrschaft', *Zeitungskorrespondenz*, September 10, 1912.
11. A[nton] P[annekoek], 'Volksinteresse und Massenaktion', *Zeitungskorrespondenz*, nr. 274, October 26, 1912.
12. Pannekoek, 'Die Organisation im Kampfe', op. cit.
13. Pannekoek, 'Die Massenstreikdebatte', op. cit.
14. Pannekoek, 'Marxistische Theorie und revolutionäre Taktik', op. cit. Pannekoek defined the party as simply the nucleus of class-conscious social democratic workers who had the task of providing initiative and leadership to the mass struggles: A[nton] P[annekoek], 'Partei und Masse', *Zeitungskorrespondenz*, nr. 334, July 4, 1914.

15. Ibid.
16. A[nton] P[annekoek], 'Der Sozialismus als Führer', *Zeitungskorrespondenz*, nr. 182, July 29, 1911. It is also significant that although his emphasis was on extra-parliamentary forms of struggle, Pannekoek still viewed mass action and parliamentary action as complementary forms of struggle. Mass action, he felt, 'endows parliamentary activity with a new, broader basis'. 'Marxistische Theorie und revolutionäre Taktik', op. cit.
17. Pannekoek, 'Die Eroberung der Herrschaft', op. cit.
18. Pannekoek stated his views on the non-violent aspects of proletarian revolution most forcefully in an article written during the war: 'Proletarisch wapengeweld', *De Tribune*, February 2, 1918. This article led to one of the few political conflicts between Pannekoek and Gorter.
19. For a comprehensive treatment of the problem of imperialism and pre-war social democracy, see: Hans-Christoph Schröder, *Sozialismus und Imperialismus. Die Auseinandersetzung der deutschen Sozialdemokratie mit dem Imperialismusproblem und der 'Weltpolitik' vor 1914*, vol. 1, Hannover, 1968.
20. Pannekoek to Van der Goes, August 7, 1900, Van der Goes Archives, nr. 1803.
21. Ant. Pannekoek, 'Deckungsfrage und Imperialismus', *Die Neue Zeit*, 1913-1914, vol. 1, pp. 110-116.
22. Anton Pannekoek, 'The Elections In Germany', *International Socialist Review*, nr. 9, March, 1912, pp. 557-562, quotation p. 560.
23. Although Pannekoek first made this critique in 1913, he expressed it in fully developed form in his 'De ekonomische noodzakelijkheid van het imperialisme', *De Nieuwe Tijd*, 1916, pp. 268-285.
24. Anton Pannekoek. 'Rosa Luxemburg: Die Akkumulation des Kapitals. Ein Beitrag zur ökonomischen Erklärung des Imperialismus', *Bremer Bürger-Zeitung*, January 29 and 30, 1913. See also his 'Theoretisches zur Ursache der Krisen', *Die Neue Zeit*, 1912-1913, vol. 1, pp. 780-792.
25. [Anton Pannekoek], 'Zeitschriftenschau', *Die Neue Zeit*, 1911-1912, vol. 1, pp. 542-544.
26. A[nton] P[annekoek], 'Weltrevolution', *Zeitungskorrespondenz*, nr. 204, December 30, 1911.
27. For a representative sampling of Marx's thinking on this question see: *Karl Marx on Colonialism and Modernization*, New York, 1969.
28. Karl Kautsky, 'Die moderne Nationalität', *Die Neue Zeit*, 1887, pp. 392-405, 442-451. For a full discussion of the treatment of the national question in Marxist thought, see: Horace B. Davis, *Nationalism & Socialism. Marxist and Labor Theories of Nationalism to 1917*, New York, London, 1967.
29. Otto Bauer, *Die Nationalitätenfrage und die Sozialdemokratie*, Wien, 1907, p. 135.
30. Ibid., p. 186.
31. For Pannekoek, a militant anti-nationalism was already present in his pre-Marxist phase when he spoke of the dangers of 'national fanaticism' and praised the cosmopolitanism of science. Pannekoek, untitled notebook, entry for January 13, 1899.
32. Anton Pannekoek, *Klassenkampf und Nation*, Reichenbach, 1912, p. 11. A French edition of this work has appeared under the title: Anton Pannekoek, Otto Strasser, *Nation et lutte de classe*, Paris, 1977.
33. Pannekoek, *Klassenkampf und Nation*, op. cit., p. 14.
34. Ibid., p. 26.
35. Ibid., p. 17.
36. Ibid., p. 49.
37. Lenin, while pronouncing Pannekoek's work an 'excellent brochure', criticized him for underestimating the differences between Eastern and Western Europe and incorrectly identifying the nation with the state. Cited in: Pannekoek, Strasser, *Nation et lutte de classe*, op. cit., p. 26.

38. A[nnton] P[annekoek], 'Nationalismus und Sozialismus', *Zeitungskorrespondenz*, nr. 294, September 27, 1913. Other major writings of Pannekoek on nationalism and the national question include the following correspondence articles: 'Sozialismus und Nationalismus in Österreich', *ibid.*, nr. 143, October 30, 1910; 'Die Wurzeln des Separatismus', *ibid.*, nr. 223, May 11, 1912; 'Patriotismus und Sozialdemokratie', *ibid.*, nr. 269, April 5, 1913.

Chapter VIII

1. Pannekoek, 'The Downfall of the International', *The New Review*, nr. 11, November, 1914, pp. 621-630, quotation p. 630.

2. Lenin to Alexander Shlyapnikov, October 27, 1914, in: V.I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, vol. 15, Moscow, 1966, p. 168.

3. Pannekoek, 'Herinneringen uit de arbeidersbeweging', *op. cit.*, p. 181.

4. For a broad overview of these events and developments see: Merle Fainsod, *International Socialism and the World War*, Cambridge/Mass., 1935, reprint New York, 1966; Olga Gankin, Harold H. Fisher, *The Bolsheviks and the World War. The origin of the Third International*, Stanford, London, 1940; Horst Lademacher (ed.), *Die Zimmerwald Bewegung. Protokolle und Korrespondenz*, The Hague, Paris, 1967.

5. Lenin to Wijnkoop, n.d. [some time between June 19 and July 13, 1915], in: Lenin, *Collected Works*, vol. 35, *op. cit.*, pp. 191-192.

6. D.J. Wijnkoop, 'De geest van Zimmerwald', *De Nieuwe Tijd*, 1916, pp. 54-62.

7. Lenin to Wijnkoop, n.d. [some time after July 24, 1915], in: Lenin, *Collected Works*, vol. 35, *op. cit.*, pp. 195-197.

8. Lenin to Radek, n.d. [August 19, 1915], *ibid.*, pp. 202-203.

9. Noted in a letter from Wijnkoop to Van Ravesteijn, September 4, 1915, in: Gankin, Fisher, *The Bolsheviks and the World War*, *op. cit.*, p. 103.

10. Lenin's attitude toward Roland Holst is revealed in a letter to Wijnkoop: 'I see that we cannot in any circumstances accept solidarity with Mme. Roland-Holst. Mme. Roland-Holst, in my opinion, is a Dutch Kautsky or a Dutch Trotsky.' Lenin to Wijnkoop, n.d. [some time after July 24, 1915], *op. cit.*

11. Fainsod, *International Socialism and the World War*, *op. cit.*, p. 69.

12. L.J. van Rossum, 'Ein unveröffentlichter Brief Trockijs von Anfang 1916', *International Review of Social History*, nr. 2, 1969, pp. 251-266.

13. This information is contained in a letter of Radek to Roland Holst, October 12, 1915, in: Lademacher (ed.), *Die Zimmerwalder Bewegung*, *op. cit.*, vol. II, pp. 165-166.

14. Pannekoek to Van Ravesteijn, October 22, 1915, Van Ravesteijn Archives, nr. 15.

15. A[nnton] P[annekoek], 'Nog eens Zimmerwald', *De Tribune*, January 5, 1916.

16. Anton Pannekoek, 'New Tactics Against War Basis of a New International', *New Review*, nr. 2, February, 1915. Similar reservations about Lenin were also shared by most of the Dutch Marxists. Roland Holst, while considering Lenin sympathetic as a person, felt he was 'much more a modernized Blanquist than a revolutionary Marxist' and 'somewhat narrow, pedantic, and with few ideas'. Roland Holst to Pannekoek, n.d. [1916], Pannekoek Archives, nr. 63. Wijnkoop, for his part, noted that he was 'never very much attracted to Lenin's "theory"', though he admitted to knowing 'very little about it'. Wijnkoop to Van Ravesteijn, September 21, 1915, in: Lademacher (ed.), *Die Zimmerwalder Bewegung*, *op. cit.*, vol. II, pp. 114-116.

17. [Anton Pannekoek], 'Zur Einführung', *Vorbote*, nr. 1, January, 1916, pp. 1-4. An English version of this article appeared under the title: 'The Third International', *International Socialist Review*, February, 1917, pp. 460-462.

18. Lenin to Roland Holst, n.d. [early 1916], in: Gankin and Fisher, *The Bolsheviks and the World War*, *op. cit.*, pp. 484-485.

19. Lenin to Inessa Armand, n.d. [November 30, 1916], in: Lenin, *Collected Works*, vol. 35, op. cit., pp. 250-255.
20. Trotsky to Roland Holst, n.d. [February, 1916], in: Van Rossum, 'Ein unveröffentlichter Brief Trockijs von Anfang 1916', op. cit.
21. Information on the relationship between the Zimmerwald left and the later foundation of the Communist International can be found in: Edward Hallett Carr, *The Bolshevik Revolution. 1917-1923*, vol. III, London, 1953, pp. 567-670.
22. This discussion of the SDP's wartime activities is based on: Van Ravesteijn, *De wording*, op. cit., pp. 133-181; Koejemans, *David Wijnkoop*, op. cit., pp. 122-174; De Liagre Böhl, *Herman Gorter*, op. cit., pp. 115-159.
23. Van Ravesteijn, *De wording*, op. cit., p. 142.
24. [Willem] van Ravesteijn, 'De teerling is geworpen!', *De Tribune*, August 5, 1914.
25. Information on the BCS can be found in: Daan van der Zee, *Een tijdsverschijnsel. De voormalige Bond van Christen-Socialisten*, Den Haag, [1966].
26. Koejemans, *David Wijnkoop*, op. cit., pp. 153-154.
27. Ibid., pp. 154-158.
28. Roland Holst, *Het vuur brandde voort*, op. cit., p. 167.
29. Radek to Roland Holst, October 12, 1915, op. cit.
30. Van Ravesteijn, *De wording*, op. cit., p. 158.
31. Among the many German deserters who took refuge in Holland was Wilhelm Pieck, who was a frequent guest in Pannekoek's home from March to November, 1918. Pannekoek, 'Herinneringen uit de arbeidersbeweging', op. cit., p. 185.
32. Van Ravesteijn, *De wording*, op. cit., p. 16.
33. Ant. Pannekoek, 'De Russische revolutie', *De Nieuwe Tijd*, pp. 438-452, 548-560; 1918, pp. 31-46, 119-142.
34. Ant. Pannekoek, 'Rusland, Duitschland, Amerika', *De Nieuwe Tijd*, 1917, pp. 229-236.
35. Struik, 'Years of Revolution', op. cit., p. 14.
36. S.J. Rutgers, 'Industriele Werkers van de Wereld (I.W.W.)', *De Nieuwe Tijd*, 1919, pp. 570-584.
37. The most useful source of information on the development of Bremen left radicalism during the war is: Erhard Lucas, *Die Sozialdemokratie in Bremen während des Ersten Weltkrieges*, Bremen, 1969.
38. Pannekoek to Henke, October 29, 1914, Henke Archives, Friedrich Ebert Stiftung, Bad Godesberg, nr. 50. To help unify the German left Pannekoek also proposed that Rosa Luxemburg be given a position on the editorial board.
39. Engel, 'Die politisch-ideologische Entwicklung Johann Kniefs', op. cit., p. 228.
40. For a detailed treatment of the German anti-war movement, see: F.L. Carsten, *War Against War. British and German Radical Movements in the First World War*, London, 1982.
41. Engel, 'Die politisch-ideologische Entwicklung Johann Kniefs', op. cit., pp. 219-220.
42. These differences were exacerbated by long-standing personality clashes. As Franz Mehring noted: 'Rosa is so little dependent upon Radek and Pannekoek that she hates the first one like hell and considers the last one as an ass'. Franz Mehring to Alfred Henke, June 15, 1916. Reprinted in: Erhard Lucas, *Die Sozialdemokratie in Bremen*, op. cit., p. 64.
43. Bremen police report for July 5, 1916. Contained in: *Geschichte der deutschen Arbeiterbewegung*, vol. II, Berlin, 1959, p. 475.
44. For information on Pannekoek's role in the formation of *Arbeiterpolitik* see his correspondence with Adolf Dannat in the Staatsarchiv Bremen.
45. 'Niederbruch and Aufsteig', *Arbeiterpolitik*, nr. 1, 1916. See also the following unsigned articles in *Arbeiterpolitik*: 'Einheit oder Spaltung der Partei', nrs. 4, 6, 7, 8, 10, 1916; 'Die alte und die neue Bewegung', nr. 10, 1916.
46. Engel, 'Die politisch-ideologische Entwicklung Johann Kniefs', op. cit., p. 324.

47. 'Das Kompromiss von Gotha', *Arbeiterpolitik*, nr. 15, 1917. These differences are superficially treated in: Günter Benser, 'Das Verhältnis der Bremer Linksradikalen zur Spartakusgruppe', in: *Die Gründung der Kommunistischen Partei Deutschlands*, Berlin, 1959, pp. 113-122.
48. W. Meppen [i.e. Fritz Wolffheim], 'Gewerkschaftsprobleme', *Arbeiterpolitik*, nr. 12, 1917, pp. 92-95.
49. Engel, 'Die politisch-ideologische Entwicklung Johann Kniefs', op. cit., p. 349.
50. Ibid., pp. 360-366.
51. A.J. Ryder, *The German Revolution of 1918. A Study of German Socialism in War and Revolt*, Cambridge, 1967, pp. 116-119.
52. Engel, 'Die politische-ideologische Entwicklung Johann Kniefs', op. cit., p. 369.
53. The best overall account of the German Revolution and the events leading up to it is: A.J. Ryder, *The German Revolution of 1918*, op. cit. Also useful are: F.L. Carsten, *Revolution in Central Europe 1918-1919*, London, 1972; Eric Waldman, *The Spartacist Uprising of 1919 and the Crisis of the German Socialist Movement*, Milwaukee, 1958.
54. For an extensive treatment of the role of the councils in the German revolution and its aftermath see: Eberhard Kolb, *Die Arbeiterräte in der deutschen Innenpolitik 1918-1919*, Düsseldorf, 1962; Walter Tormin, *Zwischen Rätediktatur und sozialer Demokratie. Die Geschichte der Rätebewegung in der deutschen Revolution 1918/19*, Düsseldorf, 1954; Peter von Oertzen, *Betriebsräte in der Novemberrevolution. Eine politikwissenschaftliche Untersuchung über Ideengehalt und Struktur der betrieblichen und wirtschaftlichen Arbeiterräte in der deutschen Revolution 1918/19*, Düsseldorf, 1963.
55. The most comprehensive treatment of the revolution in Bremen is: Peter Kuckuk, 'Die Revolution 1918/19 in Bremen bis zur Niederschlagung der Räterepublik', M.A. thesis, Hamburg, 1964 (unpublished). Also useful are: Peter Kuckuk (ed.), *Revolution und Räterepublik in Bremen*, Frankfurt am Main, 1969; Paul Müller, *Bremen in der deutschen Revolution vom November 1918 bis zum März 1919*, Bremen, 1919.
56. At the workers' council for the Weser docks, the city's largest employer, the ISD held 28 seats to eight for the USPD and thirteen for the SPD. Miller, 'Zur Geschichte der linken Sozialdemokraten in Bremen', op. cit.
57. Anton Pannekoek, 'Neue Aufgaben', *Arbeiterpolitik*, nr. 47, 1918, p. 281. See also his: 'Der Sozialismus der sozialistischen regierung', *Arbeiterpolitik*, nr. 50, 1918, pp. 299-300; 'Der Anfang', *Arbeiterpolitik*, nr. 27, 1918, p. 286; nr. 28, 1918, pp. 288-289.
58. Peter Kuckuk, 'Bremer Linksradikale bzw. Kommunisten von der Militärrevolte im November 1918 bis zum Kapp-Putsch im März 1920. Ihre Politik in der Hansestadt und in den Richtungskämpfen innerhalb der KPD', Ph.D. thesis, Hamburg, 1970 (unpublished), p. 28.
59. Kuckuk (ed.), *Revolution und Räterepublik*, op. cit., p. 144.
60. For an account of this congress, see: Waldman, *The Spartacist Uprising of 1919*, op. cit., pp. 149-158.
61. Although Knief lived until March, and was elected to the post of Peoples' Commissar, he played no active role in the council republic.
62. Jannack, *Wir mit der roten Nelke*, op. cit., pp. 107-109.
63. *Illustrierte Geschichte der Deutschen Revolution*, Berlin, 1929, pp. 330-447.
64. K. Horner [i.e. Anton Pannekoek], 'Vooruitzichten', *De Nieuwe Tijd*, 1919, pp. 313-323.
65. K. Horner [i.e. Anton Pannekoek], 'Der Ausgang des Kampfes', *Arbeiterpolitik*, nr. 5, 1919, pp. 342-343.
66. K. Horner [i.e. Anton Pannekoek], 'De groei van het Kommunisme', *De Nieuwe Tijd*, 1919, pp. 489-502.
67. Ryder, *The German Revolution of 1918*, op. cit., pp. 216-217.
68. Kuckuk, 'Bremer Linksradikale', op. cit., p. 185.

69. See in particular the following articles in *Der Kommunist*: Carl Stucke, 'Organisatorische Gegensätze', June 5, 1919; Carl Stockhinger, 'Zentralistische Organisationsweise', July 10, 1919; Fritz Sturm, 'Zur Organisationsfrage', September 17, 1919.
70. This program is contained in: A[nton] P[annekoek], 'De Strijd over de kommunistische taktiek in Duitschland', *De Nieuwe Tijd*, 1919, pp. 693-699.
71. Hans Manfred Bock, *Syndikalismus und Linkskommunismus von 1918-1923. Zur Geschichte und Soziologie der Freien Arbeiter-Union Deutschlands (Syndikalist), der Allgemeinen Arbeiter-Union Deutschlands und der Kommunistischen Arbeiter-Partei Deutschlands*, Meisenheim am Glan, 1969, p. 140.
72. The most detailed account of the Heidelberg Congress and its aftermath is contained in: Kuckuk, 'Bremer Linksradikale', op. cit., pp. 280-308.
73. Anton Pannekoek, 'Der Imperialismus und die Aufgaben des Proletariats', *Vorbote*, nr. 1, January, 1916. This text also appears in: Bock (ed.), *A. Pannekoek, H. Gorter. Organisation and Taktik*, op. cit., pp. 88-101.
74. Ant. Pannekoek. 'De sociaaldemocratie en de oorlog', *De Nieuwe Tijd*, 1915, pp. 69-84, 137-151.
75. Ibid.
76. Pannekoek, 'Der Imperialismus und die Aufgaben des Proletariats', op. cit.
77. Anton Pannekoek. 'Wenn der Krieg zu Ende geht', *Vorbote*, nr. 2, April, 1916, pp. 22-27. Pannekoek maintained elsewhere that 'state socialism' was synonymous with 'state capitalism', but failed to state why he preferred the former term. Anton Pannekoek, 'Was ist Sozialismus?', *Lichtstrahlen*, nr. 11, May 1915, pp. 220-223.
78. Pannekoek, 'Was ist Sozialismus?', op. cit.
79. [Anton] Pannekoek, 'Friedrich Adler', *De Nieuwe Tijd*, 1916, pp. 640-647.
80. Pannekoek, 'De sociaaldemocratie en de oorlog', op. cit., quotation p. 146. Pannekoek envisioned a process similar to the French Revolution whereby extreme misery produced mass actions, which in turn converged with new ideas to propel a revolutionary movement.
81. Anton Pannekoek. 'Der Marxismus als Tat', *Lichtstrahlen*, nr. 2, March, 1915, pp. 99-102.

Chapter IX

1. Quoted in: Branko Lazitch, Milorad M. Drachkovitch, *Lenin and the Comintern*, vol. 1, Stanford, 1972, p. 27. For a full discussion on the origins of the Communist International, see: James W. Hulse, *The Forming of the Communist International*, Stanford, 1964.
2. Information on Rutgers' activities in the United States, where he played a pivotal role in the formation of American communism, can be found in: Draper, *The Roots of American Communism*, op. cit., pp. 70-72, 89-90. Pannekoek's influence can be seen in Rutger's article: 'The Left Wing Socialist. Mass Action', *International Socialist Review*, nr. 4, October, 1916, pp. 233-237.
3. Van Ravesteijn, *De wording*, op. cit., p. 206.
4. For an overview of the Amsterdam Bureau's brief existence, see: Hulse, *The Forming of the Communist International*, op. cit., pp. 152-160; Lazitch, Drachkovitch, *Lenin and the Comintern*, op. cit., pp. 182-198; Pannekoek, 'Herinneringen uit de arbeidersbeweging', op. cit., pp. 196-200.
5. For information on this conference, see its own report: 'Conference of the 3rd International [...]', *Bulletin of the Sub-Bureau in Amsterdam of the Communist International*, nr. 2, March, 1920, pp. 3-9.
6. Herman Gorter, 'Opportunism and Dogmatism', *Workers' Dreadnought*, June 26, 1920.
7. [Anton Pannekoek], 'Theses concerning Parliamentarism', *Bulletin of the Provisional Bureau in Amsterdam of the Communist International*, nr. 1, February, 1920.

8. Pannekoek. 'Herinneringen uit de arbeidersbeweging', op. cit., p. 196. Pannekoek rejected Lenin's offer on the grounds that financial dependence on the Comintern would impair his role as an independent scientific theorist.
9. Draper, *The Roots of American Communism*, op. cit., pp. 234-235.
10. This resolution is contained in the March, 1920 issue of the *Bulletin of the Sub-Bureau in Amsterdam of the Communist International*.
11. Noted in: *L'Internationale communiste*, nr. 10, May, 1920. For the Bureau's response and the controversy that ensued, see: 'Het Adamsche Bureau en het Uitvoerend Comité van de 3e Internationale', *De Tribune*, June 14, 1920.
12. Draper, *The Roots of American Communism*, op. cit., p. 235.
13. The best source of information on the roots of the industrial union movement is: Hans Bötcher, *Zur revolutionären Gewerkschaftsbewegung in Amerika, Deutschland und England. Eine vergleichende Betrachtung*, Jena, 1922, pp. 57-97.
14. Denis Authier, Jean Barrot, *La Gauche communiste en Allemagne (1918-1921)*, Paris, 1976, p. 121.
15. The wildcat strikes in the Ruhr and the formation of the General Union of Coal Miners is covered in: Bock, *Syndikalismus und Linkskommunismus*, op. cit., pp. 132-139; Peter von Oertzen, 'Die grossen Streiks der Ruhrbergarbeiterschaft im Frühjahr 1919', *Vierteljahrshefte für Zeitgeschichte*, nr. 3, 1958, pp. 231-262.
16. 'Statutenentwurf für die "Allgemeine Arbeiter-Union" (AAU) vom August 1919', in: Bock, *Syndikalismus und Linkskommunismus*, op. cit., pp. 353-355.
17. An examination of the key role of the Bremen left in the formation of the AAUD is contained in: Kuckuk, 'Bremen Linkradikale', op. cit., pp. 310-352.
18. *Ibid.*, p. 322.
19. K. Horner [i.e. Anton Pannekoek], 'Die Gewerkschaften', *Der Kommunist*, January 28, 1920.
20. Kuckuk, 'Bremer Linkradikale', op. cit., pp. 342-348.
21. The AAUD's early development is traced in: Bock, *Syndikalismus und Linkskommunismus*, op. cit., pp. 122-132, 188-194; Authier, Barrot, *La Gauche communiste en Allemagne*, op. cit., pp. 117-122.
22. Bötcher, *Zur revolutionären Gewerkschaftsbewegung*, op. cit., p. 73.
23. *Ibid.* Another source places the AAUD's maximum membership at 300,000. Raden [i.e. Henk Canne Meijer, *The Origins of the Movement for Workers' Councils in Germany 1918-1935*, London, [1968], p. 7.
24. Ossip Flechtheim, *Die Kommunistische Partei Deutschlands in der Weimarer Republik*, Offenbach, 1948, p. 60.
25. Ruth Fischer, *Stalin and German Communism. A study on the origins of the State Party*, London, 1948, p. 119.
26. Bock, *Syndikalismus und Linkskommunismus*, op. cit., p. 227.
27. The most concise statement of the 'national bolshevik' theory is: Heinrich Laufenberg, Fritz Wolffheim, *Revolutionärer Volkskrieg oder Konterrevolutionärer Bürgerkrieg? Erste kommunistische Adresse an das deutsche Proletariat*, Supplement to *Kommunistische Arbeiter-Zeitung*, November 15, 1919.
28. Kuckuk, 'Bremer Linkradikale', op. cit., pp. 407-408.
29. K. Horner [i.e. Anton Pannekoek], 'Taktische und organisatorische Streitfragen', *Der Kommunist* (Bremen), December 13, 14, 15 and 16, 1919.
30. P[aul] L[evi], 'Können wir auf den Parlamentarismus verzichten?', *Der Kommunist* (Bremen), January 11 and 14, 1920.
31. K. Horner [i.e. Anton Pannekoek], 'Der neue Blanquismus', *Der Kommunist* (Bremen), February 3, 1920.

32. Arthur Rosenberg, *A History of the German Republic*, London, 1936, p. 127.
33. Kuckuk, *Bremer Linksradikale*, op. cit., pp. 363-364.
34. These events are covered in detail in: Johannes Erger, *Der Kapp-Lüttwitz-Putsch. Ein Beitrag zur deutschen Innenpolitik 1919/20*, Düsseldorf, 1967.
35. For an overview of the origins and development of the KAPD, see: Bock, *Syndikalismus und Linkskommunismus*, op. cit.; Authier, Barrot, *La Gauche communiste en Allemagne*, op. cit.; Raden [i.e. Henk Canne Meijer], *The Origins of the Movement for Workers' Councils in Germany*, op. cit.; Bernhard Reichenbach, 'Zur Geschichte der K(ommunistischen) A(rbeiter)-P(artei) D(eutschlands)', *Archiv für die Geschichte des Sozialismus und der Arbeiterbewegung*, vol. XIII, 1928, pp. 117-140; Frits Kool, 'Einleitung', in: Frits Kool (ed.), *Die Linke gegen die Parteiherrschaft*, Olten, Freiburg im Breisgau, 1970.
36. The foundation congress is covered in: Hans Manfred Bock (ed.), 'Bericht über den Gründungs-Parteitag der Kommunistischen Arbeiter-Partei Deutschlands am 4. und 5. April 1920 in Berlin', in: *Jahrbuch Arbeiterbewegung*, nr. 5, Frankfurt am Main, 1977, pp. 185-242.
37. This program has been reprinted in: Bock, *Syndikalismus und Linkskommunismus*, op. cit., pp. 407-418.
38. Anton Pannekoek, *Weltrevolution und kommunistische Taktik*, Wien, 1920. Reprinted as: 'World Revolution and Communist Tactics', in: Smart (ed.), *Pannekoek and Gorter's Marxism*, op. cit., quotation p. 130.
39. Ibid., pp. 100-101.
40. Ibid., p. 116.
41. Ibid., p. 141. While conceding that the Asian liberation movements might degenerate into purely nationalist movements seeking a national capitalist order, Pannekoek felt that the decline of Europe and the spiritual influence of Bolshevism would inspire them to adopt a communist world view and wage a struggle on the basis of a workers' and peasants' alliance against world capital.
42. V.I. Lenin, 'Left-Wing' Communism, an Infantile Disorder, Peking, 1970, p. 6.
43. Ibid., p. 36.
44. Lenin's attack on the CPH prompted Wijnkoop to protest that Pannekoek's position was not characteristic of the whole party, which led Lenin to substitute 'some members of the Dutch Communist Party' for 'Dutch Tribunists' in later editions. Ibid., p. 125.
45. 'Afterword to World Revolution and Communist Tactics', in: Smart (ed.), *Pannekoek and Gorter's Marxism*, op. cit., pp. 147.
46. Herman Gorter, 'Open Letter to Comrade Lenin: An Answer to Lenin's Pamphlet, "'Left-Wing' Communism, an Infantile Disorder"', in: Helmut Gruber, *International Communism in the Era of Lenin*, Ithaca, 1967, pp. 231-240.
47. For an excellent general evaluation of the relationship between left communism and the larger tradition of Western Marxism, see: Jacoby, *Dialectic of Defeat*, op. cit.
48. Michael Löwy, *Georg Lukács – From Romanticism to Bolshevism*, London, 1979, p. 123.
49. During this period, Pannekoek's writings outnumbered those of all other foreign contributors to *Il Soviet*, while virtually none appeared from the Bolsheviks. For a full discussion of the differences between Pannekoek and Bordiga, see: 'Les K.A.P.D., ses théoriciens Pannekoek et Gorter et nous', *Programme Communiste*, April, 1973.
50. 'Extracts from an Open Letter from the ECCI to the Members of the German Communist Labour Party' in: Jane Degras (ed.), *The Communist International 1919-1943. Documents*, vol. I, London [etc.], 1956, pp. 93-99.
51. Lazitch, Drachkovitch, *Lenin and the Comintern*, op. cit., pp. 305-306.
52. For a complete account of the congress, see: Carr, *The Bolshevik Revolution. 1917-1923*, vol. III, op. cit., pp. 187-200.
53. For an account of these negotiations and Gorter's activities in Moscow, see: Jenne Clinge

Doorenbos, *Wisselend Getij. Dichterlijke en politieke activiteit in Herman Gorters leven*, Amsterdam, 1964, pp. 44–52.

54. Autheir, Barrot, *La Gauche communiste en Allemagne*, op. cit., pp. 183–184.

55. Bock, *Syndikalismus und Linkskommunismus*, op. cit., pp. 251–261.

56. Otto Rühle, 'Bericht über Moskau', *Der Kommunist* (Dresden), nr. 37, 1920.

57. Ant. Pannekoek, 'De krisis in Rusland', *De Nieuwe Tijd*, 1921, pp. 262–268.

58. Ant. Pannekoek, 'Sovjet-Rusland en het West-Europeesche Kommunisme', *De Nieuwe Tijd*, 1921, pp. 436–448. The logic of this perspective led Pannekoek to condemn the Soviet Union's acceptance of food aid from the West as 'a violation of the most elementary principles of the class struggle'. Ant. Pannekoek, 'Hulpaktie en klassestrijd', *De Nieuwe Tijd*, 1921, pp. 519–523.

59. Ant. Pannekoek, 'Rusland en het kommunisme (Antwoord aan Henriëtte Roland Holst)', *De Nieuwe Tijd*, 1921, pp. 640–660, quotation p. 645.

60. Pannekoek, 'Overgang', op. cit.

61. Pannekoek, 'Rusland en het kommunisme', op. cit.

62. Willem van Ravestein, 'De roman van mijn leven', manuscript (fotocopy), Van Ravestein Archives, nr. 112–115, p. 322. Significantly, Van Ravestein later admitted that he had contact with the French intelligence service for part of this period. Van Ravestein, *De wording*, op. cit., pp. 174–175.

63. A[nton] P[annekoek], 'Mogelijkheden van de oorlog', *De Tribune*, November 25, 1914.

64. Pannekoek later described Luteraan as 'sharp of spirit and aggressive', and a 'good-for-nothing' who frequently manipulated Gorter for his own ends. Pannekoek, 'Herinneringen uit de arbeidersbeweging', op. cit., p. 190.

65. De Liagre Böhl, *Herman Gorter*, op. cit., p. 163.

66. Pannekoek, 'De Russische revolutie', op. cit., p. 444.

67. H. Gorter, 'De taktiek der Russische Maximalisten', *De Tribune*, September 18, 1917.

68. Van Ravestein to Gorter, October, 1917, in: Van Ravestein, 'De roman van mijn leven', p. 395.

69. Mathijs C. Wiessing, *Die Holländische Schule des Marxismus – Die Tribunisten. Erinnerungen und Dokumente*, Hamburg, 1980, p. 89.

70. W.S. van Reesema, *De Taak der Revolutionaire Socialisten. Een Waarschuwing tegen de Parlementaire Illusie*, Amsterdam, 1918.

71. Struik, 'Years of Revolution', op. cit., p. 12.

72. This information is contained in a document entitled: 'Rapport van de Conferentie van de oppositie-groepen der S.D.P. gehouden den 29sten September 1918 te Rotterdam', Van Ravestein Archives, nr. 77.

73. De Liagre Böhl, *Herman Gorter*, op. cit., pp. 202–203.

74. H. Gorter, 'Troelstra-Wijnkoop', *De Tribune*, September 17 and 18, 1918.

75. Pannekoek, 'Herinneringen uit de arbeidersbeweging', op. cit., pp. 189–190.

76. Note appended to Gorter's 'Troelstra-Wijnkoop', op. cit. (September 18).

77. Van Ravestein to Pannekoek, September 20, 1918, in: Van Ravestein, *De wording*, op. cit., pp. 191–192. It might be noted that Gorter had earlier suffered a nervous breakdown and was undergoing deep psychological stress over his wife's death. Pannekoek felt that Van Ravestein was doing everything possible to provoke Gorter and broke off all personal relations with him after receiving his letter.

78. Van Ravestein, *De wording*, op. cit., p. 189.

79. *De Tribune*, November 21, 1918.

80. D.J. Struik, 'Het Groningsch Congres der Communistische Partij', *De Nieuwe Tijd*, 1919, pp. 464–469.

81. Gorter to Lenin, May 1, 1920, in: Wiessing, *Die holländische Schule*, op. cit., pp. 90–94.

82. Unsigned, 'De redactie van het maandschrift "De Nieuwe Tijd" en de oppositie', *De Roode Vaan*, nr. 6, January, 1920.
83. Van Ravesteyn, *De wording*, op. cit., p. 201.
84. 'Aan de lezers', *De Roode Vaan*, nr. 1, August, 1919.
85. H. Gorter, 'De Eenheid van het Internationale Proletariaat', *De Nieuwe Tijd*, 1920, pp. 208-236.
86. Struik, 'Years of Revolution', op. cit., p. 14.
87. Van Ravesteyn, *De wording*, op. cit., p. 208.
88. *The Second Congress of the Communist International. Proceedings [...]*, Moscow, 1920, p. 239.
89. The rise of this group is traced in: Van Ravesteyn, *De wording*, op. cit., pp. 215-218.
90. For an overview of these developments, see: A.A. de Jonge, *Het Communisme in Nederland. De geschiedenis van een politieke partij*, Den Haag, 1972, pp. 34-41.
91. Wiessing, *Die holländische Schule*, op. cit., pp. 110-114.
92. Pannekoek, 'Herinneringen uit de arbeidersbeweging', op. cit., p. 204.
93. Herman Gorter, 'De K. A. P. D. en de derde Internationale', *De Roode Vaan*, nr. 5, [April], 1921.
94. A[nton] P[annekoek], 'Partijgeschillen. (Naar aanleiding van de kwestie-Enschede.)', *De Nieuwe Tijd*, 1921, pp. 376-379.
95. 'Stellingen', H. Canne Meijer Archives, International Institute of Social History (Amsterdam), nr. 2.
96. De Liagre Böhl, *Herman Gorter*, op. cit., p. 260.
97. Pannekoek to J. Rogge, September 6, 1921, B. Sijes Archives, Dossier Rogge, International Institute of Social History (Amsterdam).
98. H. Roland Holst, 'De nieuwste aanval op Sovjet-Rusland', *De Nieuwe Tijd*, 1921, pp. 525-544. Pannekoek responded with: 'Rusland en het kommunisme', *De Nieuwe Tijd*, 1921, pp. 640-660, to which Roland Holst countered with: 'Sovjet-Rusland en de proletarische revolutie. (Antwoord aan Anton Pannekoek)', *De Nieuwe Tijd*, 1921, pp. 660-676.
99. [Willem] van Ravesteyn, 'Verklaring', *De Nieuwe Tijd*, 1921, p. [497].
100. See his notes on 'C.P.H. Partijgeschillen 1920. Aantekeningen strijd vR, Wp tegen HRH/AP/HG', Van Ravesteyn Archives, nr. 78.
101. Roland Holst to J. Rogge, September 23, 1921, B. Sijes Archives, Dossier Rogge.
102. Pannekoek to J. Rogge, October 1, 1921, B. Sijes Archives, Dossier Rogge.
103. Henriette Roland Holst remained in the CPH until 1925 when – owing in part to her longstanding friendship with Trotsky – she became a prominent member of the international Trotskyist opposition and helped form the League of Communist struggle and Propaganda Clubs. Following a short return to the CPH during 1926-27, she came under the influence of the religious socialist, L. Ragaz, and became a Christian socialist, which she remained until her death in 1952. After losing a power struggle with the new group of young activists, Van Ravesteyn, Wijnkoop, and Ceton left the CPH to form the Communist Party of Holland-Central Committee which for a time was larger than the official Communist Party. For details of this split, see: De Jonge, *Het communisme in Nederland*, op. cit., pp. 41-46.
104. Pannekoek has analyzed the historical significance of the *Nieuwe Tijd* in: 'Overgang', op. cit. In contrast to the 800 subscribers the *Nieuwe Tijd* had at the time of its dissolution, the *Communistische Gids* had only 200 during the early months of its existence. Bertus Mulder, 'Theorie en scholing in de vroege SDAP: De Nieuwe Tijd, sociaal-demokratisch maandschrift 1896-1921', *Het tweede jaarboek voor het democratisch socialisme*, Amsterdam, 1980, pp. 42-80.
105. Bock, *Syndikalismus und Linkskommunismus*, op. cit., p. 228.
106. For a detailed discussion of the failure of the council movement, see: Carl Boggs, 'Marxism, Prefigurative Communism, and the Problem of Workers' Control', *Radical America*, nr. 6, 1977/nr. 1/ 1978, pp. 99-122; Sergio Bologna, 'Class Composition and the Theory of the Party

and the Origin of the Workers' Council Movement', *Telos*, Fall, 1972; Brian Peterson, 'Workers' Councils in Germany, 1918–19. Recent Literature on the Rätebewegung', *New German Critique*, nr. 4, Winter, 1975, pp. 113–124; Guido de Masi, 'Councils and State in Weimar Germany', *Telos*, Summer, 1976.

107. Pannekoek, for his part, accused Wolffheim and Laufenberg of attempting to tie nationalist ideology to council doctrine, and thereby weakening clear Marxist insight: 'Ein Brief des Genossen Pannekoek', *Kommunistische Arbeiter-Zeitung*, nr. 112, [July, 1920].

108. Bock, *Syndikalismus und Linkskommunismus*, op. cit., pp. 274–281.

109. Next to Pannekoek and Gorter, Otto Rühle was probably the most seminal and well-known left communist theorist. A professional educator with a deep interest in pedagogic and psychological problems, Rühle had gained fame as SPD deputy during the war by joining Karl Liebknecht in March, 1915, to vote against war credits. For biographical sketches of Rühle, see: Paul Mattick, 'Otto Rühle and the German Labor Movement', in: Paul Mattick, *Anti-Bolshevik Communism*, White Plains, 1978, pp. 87–115; Friedrich Georg Herrmann, 'Otto Rühle als politischer Theoretiker', *Internationale Wissenschaftliche Korrespondenz*, nr. 17, 1972, pp. 16–60; nr. 18, 1973, pp. 23–50.

110. Rühle, 'Die Revolution ist keine Parteisache!', in: Kool (ed.), *Die Linke gegen die Parteiherrschaft*, op. cit. pp. 329–337.

111. The following discussion of the fragmentation of the left communist movement after 1920 is based on: Authier, Barrot, *Le Gauche communiste en Allemagne*, op. cit., pp. 163–165, 222–227; Bock, *Syndikalismus und Linkskommunismus*, op. cit., pp. 214–224, 341–348.

112. Kool (ed.), *Die Linke gegen die Parteiherrschaft*, op. cit., p. 142.

113. Pannekoek, 'Herinneringen uit de arbeidersbeweging', op. cit., p. 209.

114. Ant. Pannekoek, 'De opmarsch der reaktie', *De Nieuwe Tijd*, 1921, pp. 161–172.

115. Authier, Barrot, *La Gauche communiste en Allemagne*, op. cit., p. 222.

116. *Ibid.*, p. 224.

Chapter X

1. Pannekoek, 'Herinneringen uit de arbeidersbeweging', op. cit., pp. 108–109.

2. *De Nieuwe Rotterdamse Courant*, December 3, 1919.

3. Pannekoek, 'Sterrenkundige herinneringen', op. cit., pp. 245–249. Pannekoek's affiliation with the University of Amsterdam did not, however, end political discrimination. Pannekoek has recounted how, in order to gain permission to take an astronomical expedition to Sumatra to observe an eclipse in 1926, he was required to sign a statement declaring that he would not engage in 'communist propaganda activities'. Pannekoek, 'Herinneringen uit de arbeidersbeweging', op. cit., p. 212.

4. Literature on council communism is not plentiful, and what is available is often inaccurate and misleading. Among the most useful works are: Peter J. Rachleff, *Marxism and Council Communism. The Foundation for Revolutionary Theory for Modern Society*, New York, 1976; Mattick, *Anti-Bolshevik Communism*, op. cit.; Richard Gombin, *The Radical Tradition. A Study in modern revolutionary Thought*, New York, 1979, pp. 80–118; Richard Gombin, *The Origins of Modern Leftism*, London, 1975, pp. 77–117; Gabriella Bonacchi, 'The Council Communists: Between the New Deal and Fascism', *Telos*, Winter, 1976–1977; Cajo Brendel, 'Die "Gruppe Internationale Kommunisten" in Holland. Persönliche Erinnerungen aus den Jahren 1934–1939', in: *Jahrbuch Arbeiterbewegung*, nr. 2, 1974, pp. 253–263.

5. David McLellan, *Marxism after Marx. An Introduction*, London, 1979, p. 170.

6. For biographical information on Canne Meijer, see: B.A. Sijes, 'Henk Canne Meijer', unpublished manuscript, Sijes Archives.

7. Canne Meijer to the Amsterdam section of the KAPN, October 26, 1924, Canne Meijer Archives, nr. 25.
8. A short biographical sketch of Jan Appel is contained in: Bock, *Syndikalismus und Linkskommunismus*, op. cit., p. 427.
9. The origins of the GIC are briefly traced in the introduction to: Gottfried Mergner (ed.), *Gruppe Internationale Kommunisten Hollands*, Reinbek, 1971.
10. Canne Meijer to Mattick, February 25, 1927, fotocopy, Canne Meijer Archives, nr. 100 A.
11. Remarks of Henk Canne Meijer to the foundation conference of the KAUD, December 24-27, 1931, Canne Meijer Archives, nr. 236.
12. Kool (ed.), *Die Linke gegen die Parteiherrschaft*, op. cit., pp. 147-153.
13. K. Horner [i.e. Anton Pannekoek], 'Prinzip und Taktik', *Proletarier*, nr. 7, July, 1927, pp. 141-147; nr. 8, August, 1927, pp. 178-186. A partial English translation of this article is contained in: Bricaner, *Pannekoek and the Workers' Councils*, op. cit., pp. 231-244, quotation p. 237.
14. *Grundprinzipien kommunistischer Produktion und Verteilung. Kollektivarbeit der Gruppe Internationale Kommunisten (Holland)*, Berlin 1930. An abridged English summary has appeared as: 'Communist Production and Distribution', *Living Marxism*, nr. 4, August, 1938, pp. 109-114.
15. Pannekoek, 'Herinneringen uit de arbeidersbeweging', op. cit., p. 215.
16. B.A. Sijes, a former participant in the GIC, has noted that in the GIC's largest local section, in Amsterdam, the number of active participants never exceeded ten. Of these, most were unemployed workers. Sijes, 'Anton Pannekoek, 1873-1960', op. cit., p. 19.
17. Kool (ed.), *Die Linke gegen die Parteiherrschaft*, op. cit., pp. 22-23.
18. Kloosterman (ed.), *Anton Pannekoek. Partij, Raden, Revolutie*, op. cit., pp. 190-191.
19. 'On the resolution adopted by the Brussels Conference', *International Council Correspondence*, nr. 1, December, 1935, pp. 20-26, quotation p. 21. Although the conference was termed the 'Brussels conference', in fact, it took place in Copenhagen.
20. For biographical data on Mattick, see: Frank Dingel, 'Paul Mattick (1904-1981)', *Internationale Wissenschaftliche Korrespondenz*, nr. 2, June, 1981, p. 190-197; Michael Buckmiller, 'Paul Mattick (1904-1981)', *Root and Branch*, number ten; Pierre Souyri, 'The Marxism of Paul Mattick', *Root and Branch*, number ten.
21. Canne Meijer to Mattick, February 25, 1927, Canne Meijer Archives, nr. 100 A.
22. The best source of information on the GCC is Paul Mattick's 'Introduction' to the reprinted volumes of *New Essays*, vol. I, 1934-1935, Westport, 1970, p. [7-13]. Mattick contended that the GCC was composed entirely of factory workers and that *International Council Correspondence* had a circulation of 1,000 copies. Mattick to Pannekoek, March 18, 1938, Pannekoek Archives, nr. 43 A. In addition to the group of former IWW members and German exiles centered around Mattick in Chicago, the GCC had affiliate groups in New York City, Buffalo, and Washington, D.C.
23. For information on Korsch's collaboration with the GCC, see his correspondence with Paul Mattick, which has been published in: Michael Buckmiller, Götz Langkau (ed.), 'Karl Korsch: Briefe an Paul Partos, Paul Mattick und Bert Brecht. 1934-1939', in: *Jahrbuch Arbeiterbewegung*, nr. 2, 1974, pp. 117-249.
24. Pannekoek to Mattick, April 13, 1935, Pannekoek Archives, nr. 108.
25. Pannekoek to Mattick, February 13, 1938, Pannekoek Archives, nr. 108.
26. Canne Meijer to Mattick, n.d. [1930?], Canne Meijer Archives.
27. Pannekoek to Mattick, February 2, 1936, Pannekoek Archives, nr. 108.
28. Among the best expositions of the GIC's political perspective are: 'Stellingen omtrent partij en dictatuur', reprinted in: Kloosterman (ed.), *Anton Pannekoek. Partij, Raden, Revolutie*, op. cit., '[Thesen über den Kampf um die Arbeiterräte]', *Rätekorrespondenz*, nr. 29, July, 1934, pp. 18-19; 'Thesen über Staat und Partei', undated mimeographed leaflet; 'Stellingen omtrent revolutionaire bedrijfskern', undated mimeographed leaflet.

29. The GIC's focus on intellectual activities did not go unchallenged. In the summer of 1935, a group within the GIC presented a resolution calling for more practical activity and charged that the GIC had become a 'dead organisation'. When this resolution was rejected, the Leiden, Groningen, and Hague sections withdrew from the GIC. Brendel, 'Die "Gruppe Internationale Kommunisten" in Holland', op. cit.
30. [Henk Canne Meijer], 'Das Werden einer neuen Arbeiterbewegung', *Rätekorrespondenz*, nr. 8/9, April–May, 1935, pp. 1–28. An English version of this article appeared as: 'The Rise of a New Labor Movement', *International Council Correspondence*, nr. 10, August, 1935, pp. 1–26.
31. Henryk Grossmann was a former social democrat connected with the Frankfurt 'Institut für Sozialforschung' who later became a prominent economist in East Germany.
32. Henryk Grossmann, *Das Akkumulations- und Zusammenbruchsgesetz des kapitalistischen Systems. Zugleich eine Krisentheorie*, Leipzig, 1929, p. 1.
33. [Anton Pannekoek], 'Die Zusammenbruchstheorie des Kapitalismus', *Rätekorrespondenz*, nr. 1, June, 1934, p. 1–21. Quotations from an English translation: 'The Theory of the Collapse of Capitalism', *Capital and Class*, Spring, 1977.
34. [Paul Mattick], 'Zur Marx'schen Akkumulations- und Zusammenbruchstheorie', *Rätekorrespondenz*, nr. 4, September, 1934, pp. 1–18. An English version of this article appeared as: 'The permanent Crisis. Henryk Grossmann's Interpretation of Marx's Theory of Capitalist Accumulation', *International Council Correspondence*, nr. 2, November, 1934, pp. 1–20.
35. [Karl] Korsch, 'Über einige grundsätzliche Voraussetzungen für eine materialistische Diskussion der Krisentheorie', *Proletarier*, February, 1933, pp. 20–25. An English translation has appeared as: 'Some Fundamental Presuppositions for a Materialist Discussion of Crisis Theory', in: Douglas Kellner (ed.), *Karl Korsch: Revolutionary Theory*, Austin, London, 1977, pp. 181–186. The respective texts of Pannekoek, Mattick, and Korsch have also been collected and reprinted in: [Karl] Korsch [Paul] Mattick, [Anton] Pannekoek, *Zusammenbruchstheorie des Kapitalismus oder Revolutionäre Subjekt*, Berlin, 1973.
36. The council communist conception of facism is summarized most succinctly in: 'Verband tussen staat en economisch leven onder het facisme', *Persmateriaal van de Groepen van Internationale Communisten*, nr. 12, September, 1934, pp. 1–13. See also: 'Fascisme en arbeidersklasse', *Persmateriaal van de Groepen van Internationale Communisten*, nr. 7, July, 1935, pp. 6–8; Luenika [i.e. Paul Mattick], 'From Liberalism to Fascism', *Living marxism*, nr. 4, Spring, 1941, pp. 6–20.
37. [Paul Mattick], 'The War is Permanent', *Living Marxism*, nr. 1, Spring, 1940, pp. 1–27.
38. This analysis is most systematically developed in: 'Thesen über Staat und Partei', op. cit.; 'De vakvereniging als lichaam van de staat', *Persmateriaal van de Groepen van Internationale Communisten*, nr. 9, June, 1932, pp. 1–4; [Paul Mattick], 'The World War in the Making', *Living Marxism*, nr. 5, November, 1938, pp. 129–138.
39. 'Verband tussen staat en economisch leven onder het fascisme', op. cit.
40. Mattick, 'The War is Permanent', op. cit.
41. [Anton Pannekoek], 'State Capitalism and Dictatorship', *International Council Correspondence*, nr. 1, January, 1937, pp. 8–16.
42. 'Theses on Bolshevism', *International Council Correspondence*, nr. 3, December, 1934, pp. 1–18. Mattick carried this analysis several steps further when he argued that Bolshevism provided the model for fascism and that the two contained identical elements. [Paul Mattick], 'The Struggle against Fascism begins with the Struggle against Bolshevism', *Living Marxism*, nr. 8, September, 1939, pp. 245–255.
43. J.H. [i.e. Anton Pannekoek], 'The Role of Fascism', *International Council Correspondence*, nr. 8, July, 1936, pp. 10–16.
44. These themes received a full exposition in Mattick's unsigned article: 'The War is Permanent', op. cit.

45. Ibid. Korsch's analysis is contained in his articles: 'The Fascist Counter Revolution', *Living Marxism*, nr. 2, Fall, 1940, pp. 29-37; 'The Workers' Fight Against Fascism', *Living Marxism*, nr. 3, Winter, 1941, pp. 36-49.
46. Anton Pannekoek, 'Why past revolutionary Movements failed', *Living Marxism*, nr. 2, Fall, 1940, pp. 19-28.
47. Kloosterman (ed.), *Anton Pannekoek. Partij, Raden, Revolutie*, op. cit., pp. 210-211.

Chapter XI

1. Anton Pannekoek, *Workers' Councils*, Melbourne, 1950, pp. 230-231. Parts one and two of this work have been reprinted in: Root & Branch (eds.), *The Rise of the Workers' Movements*, Greenwich, Conn., 1975, pp. 384-500.
2. Anton Pannekoek, 'Über Arbeiterräte', *Funken*, nr. 1, June, 1952, pp. 14-15.
3. This theme of rebellion as the driving force of working class development became the principal focus of Pannekoek's unpublished book-length manuscript, 'The Workers' Way to Freedom', Pannekoek Archives, nr. 255. Pannekoek originally wrote this work for the GCC, but Mattick was unable to raise the funds to have it published.
4. J.H. [i.e. Anton Pannekoek], 'Workers' Councils', *New Essays*, nr. 5, April, 1936, pp. 20-27.
5. J. Harper [i.e. Anton Pannekoek], 'General Remarks on the Question of Organization', *Living Marxism*, nr. 5, November, 1938, pp. 144-153.
6. Pannekoek, *Workers' Councils*, op. cit., p. 65. See also his essay: J.H., 'Trade Unionism', *International Council Correspondence*, nr. 2, January, 1936, pp. 10-20.
7. J. Harper, 'General Remarks on the Question of Organization', op. cit.
8. Pannekoek, *Workers' Councils*, op. cit., pp. 73-74.
9. See in particular Pannekoek's 'Society and Mind in Marxian Philosophy', *Science and Society*, nr. 4, Summer, 1937, pp. 445-453.
10. Ibid.
11. Pannekoek, *Workers' Councils*, op. cit., p. 71.
12. Pannekoek to the Amsterdam section of the KAPN, March 12, 1927. Canne Meijer Archives, nr. 38. The KAPN, in turn, accused Pannekoek of 'bourgeois individualism'. C. van der Meer to Pannekoek, March 28, 1927, Canne Meijer Archives, nr. 37.
13. Anton Pannekoek, 'The Party and Class', *Modern Socialism*, nr. 2, Winter, 1941-1942, pp. 7-10.
14. Pannekoek, 'The Workers' Way to Freedom', Pannekoek Archives, nr. 255, p. 96.
15. Pannekoek, 'The Party and Class', op. cit.
16. Pannekoek, 'The Workers' Way to Freedom', Pannekoek Archives, nr. 255, p. 96.
17. Pannekoek to Alfred Weiland, November 5, 1948, Pannekoek Archives, nr. 240.
18. Pannekoek, *Workers' Councils*, op. cit., p. 56.
19. Ibid.
20. Ibid., p. 27.
21. Ibid., p. 50.
22. Ibid., p. 34.
23. Pannekoek, 'Beschavingen', notebook 10, Pannekoek Archives, nr. 288.
24. Ernst Mach, in a letter to Dietzgen's son Eugen, noted that he had read the elder Dietzgen's writings with 'the greatest interest' and was 'astonished' to discover how similar Dietzgen's methodology was to his own. Mach to Eugen Dietzgen, July 16, 1906, a copy is contained in the Pannekoek Archives, nr. 109.
25. Mach's conceptions are summed up in his work, *Analysis of Sensations and the Relation of the*

Physical to the Psychical, New York, 1959. For the views of Avenarius see his *Kritik der reinen Erfahrung*, 2 vol., Leipzig, 1888–1890.

26. Pannekoek, *Lenin as Philosopher*, op. cit., p. 28.

27. Ibid., p. 61.

28. To this end, Pannekoek criticized Mach and Avenarius on the grounds that their basic reference point – personal experience and sensation – was individualistic and did not take into account that personal experiences were shaped by socially inherited words and concepts, without which they could not be conceived and expressed.

29. A[n]ton P[annekoek], 'Marx der Liberale', *Zeitungskorrespondenz*, nr. 50, January 9, 1909. Pannekoek's criticisms, however, were not at this point directed toward the Bolsheviks.

30. Pannekoek, *Lenin as Philosopher*, op. cit., p. 71.

31. Ibid. Pannekoek adds further: 'Marxism, however, at the same time shows the necessity of the legend; every middle-class revolution, requiring working class and peasant support, needs the illusion that it is something different, larger, more universal.'

32. Pannekoek's analysis of the philosophical basis of Leninism possesses close affinities with the analysis developed contemporaneously by Karl Korsch. Although Korsch, like Pannekoek, concluded that Lenin was the philosopher of an essentially bourgeois revolution, he arrived at his conclusions from a completely different starting point and through entirely different theoretical formulations. See in particular: Karl Korsch, *Marxism and Philosophy*, London, 1970; and his review of Pannekoek's *Lenin as Philosopher*: K[arl] K[orsch]: 'Lenin's philosophy. Some additional remarks to J. Harper's recent criticism of Lenin's book "Materialism and Empirio-Criticism"', *Living Marxism*, nr. 5, November, 1938, pp. 138–144.

Chapter XII

1. In addition to his numerous social and political commentaries, Pannekoek embarked on several major intellectual projects, including his *History of Astronomy*, and a projected trilogy to be entitled: *The Origin of Life*, *Anthropogenesis*, and the *Future of Civilization*. Of this trilogy, only *Anthropogenesis* – which was an attempt to trace the relationship between the evolution of man and the social origins of thought – was completed.

2. The intensity of Pannekoek's political commitment is illustrated by the acceptance speech he gave when he was awarded the gold medal of the Royal Astronomical Society, which focused on the class basis of astronomy. His remarks prompted the president of the society to note: 'I suppose what strikes us first about the subject of this lecture which we have just heard is its remoteness from the kind of paper which we have usually heard at our meetings.' 'Address Delivered by the President, Professor W.M. Smart, on the Award of the Gold Medal to Professor Antonie Pannekoek', *Monthly Notices of the Royal Astronomical Society*, 1953, pp. 245–256.

3. Pannekoek, *Workers' Councils*, op. cit., p. 210.

4. Pannekoek to Mattick, November 21, 1945, Pannekoek Archives, nr. 108. See also his essay: 'The Failure of the Workingclass', *Politics*, September, 1946, pp. 270–272.

5. Pannekoek to Mattick, June 11, 1946, Pannekoek Archives, nr. 108.

6. For a concise statement of Pannekoek's post-war council communist viewpoint see his: 'Five Theses', *Southern Advocate for Workers' Councils*, May, 1947, pp. 2–3.

7. Pannekoek to A. Ciliga, December 25, 1946, draft, Pannekoek Archives, nr. 108.

8. Pannekoek to Mattick, September 28, [1945], Pannekoek Archives, nr. 108.

9. Pannekoek to Rubel, April 12, 1955, Pannekoek Archives, nr. 108.

10. Pannekoek to Canne Meijer, September 23, 1946, Canne Meijer Archives.

11. Pannekoek to F.A. Ridley, April 7, 1947, Pannekoek Archives, nr. 108. These considerations led Pannekoek to contemplate, for the first time, the possibility of building a multi-class

- coalition against war. Pannekoek to Pierre Chaulieu (Cornelius Castoriadis), September 3, 1954, Pannekoek Archives, nr. 108. See also his article: 'Revolt of the Scientists', *Retort*, nr. 2, Spring, 1948, pp. 19-23.
12. Pannekoek, *Workers' Councils*, op. cit., p. 231.
 13. Pannekoek outlined his plans in eleven notebooks entitled 'Beschavingen', Pannekoek Archives, nr. 288.
 14. Pannekoek, 'De toekomst der beschaving', unpublished manuscript, Pannekoek Archives, nr. 288.
 15. Pannekoek to Canne Meijer, December 12, 1954, Canne Meijer Archives.
 16. Canne Meijer to Pannekoek, June 29, 1947, copy, Pannekoek Archives, nr. 10.
 17. Pannekoek to Weiland, December 3, 1948, Pannekoek Archives, nr. 240.
 18. Quoted in a letter from Dawson to Pannekoek, November 19, 1947, Pannekoek Archives, nr. 16.
 19. Pannekoek to Weiland, August 9, 1950, Pannekoek Archives, nr. 240.
 20. Pannekoek has described how he was compelled to write *Workers' Councils* under wartime conditions with only a candle for light, without heat, bundled up in several layers of clothing. Pannekoek to Weiland, December 3, 1948, Pannekoek Archives, nr. 240.
 21. Pannekoek to Weiland, August 26, 1948, Pannekoek Archives, nr. 240.
 22. Pannekoek's difficulties in publishing *Workers' Councils* are traced throughout the Pannekoek-Dawson correspondence, Pannekoek Archives, nr. 16.
 23. For an examination of the origins and political development of *Socialisme ou Barbarie*, see: Arthur Hirsh, *The French New Left: An Intellectual History from Sartre to Gorz*, Boston, 1981, pp. 108-135; Gombin, *The Origins of Modern Leftism*, op. cit., pp. 97-117.
 24. Pierre Chaulieu [i.e. Cornelius Castoriadis], 'Discussion sur le problème du parti révolutionnaire', *Socialisme ou Barbarie*, July-August, 1952, pp. 10-18.
 25. [Anton Pannekoek], 'Une lettre de Anton Pannekoek', *Socialisme ou Barbarie*, nr. 14, April-June, 1954, pp. 39-43.
 26. Pierre Chaulieu [i.e. Cornelius Castoriadis], 'Réponse au camarade Pannekoek', *Socialisme ou Barbarie*, nr. 14, April-June, 1954, pp. 44-50.
 27. Pannekoek to Castoriadis, September 3, 1954. Pannekoek Archives, nr. 108. This letter was never published in *Socialisme ou Barbarie*, but later appeared in the May, 1971 issue of *Cahiers du communisme de conseils*.
 28. Pannekoek to Mattick, June 11, 1946, Pannekoek Archives, nr. 108.
 29. Pannekoek to Mattick, May 18, 1946, Pannekoek Archives, nr. 108.
 30. Pannekoek's reconsideration of Marxism is most clearly stated in his extensive correspondence with the French Marxologist Maximilien Rubel, Pannekoek Archives, nr. 108. See also his two essays: 'What About Marxism?' op. cit., and 'Marx and Utopia', unpublished manuscript, Pannekoek Archives, nr. 160.
 31. Pannekoek to Rubel, April 30, 1952, Pannekoek Archives, nr. 108.
 32. [Anton Pannekoek], 'Not Suitable. A Necessary Corrective Criticism of Our Attitude Toward Anarchism', *Southern Advocate for Workers' Councils*, February, 1948, p. 2.
 33. Pannekoek to Kenaflick, May 26, 1949, copy, Pannekoek Archives, nr. 108.
 34. Pannekoek to Sijes, January 21, 1953, B.A. Sijes Archives.
 35. Pannekoek, 'La politique de Gorter', *La Révolution prolétarienne*, August-September, 1952, pp. 13-14.
 36. Gombin, *The Radical Tradition*, op. cit., p. 117.

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