

THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE SOCIAL AND POLITICAL THOUGHT OF
ANTON PANNEKOEK, 1873-1960: FROM SOCIAL
DEMOCRACY TO COUNCIL COMMUNISM

by



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THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE SOCIAL AND POLITICAL THOUGHT

OF ANTON PANNEKOEK, 1873-1960: FROM
SOCIAL DEMOCRACY TO COUNCIL COMMUNISM

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ABSTRACT

THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE SOCIAL AND POLITICAL THOUGHT OF ANTON PANNEKOEK: FROM SOCIAL DEMOCRACY TO COUNCIL COMMUNISM

With Herman Gorter and Henriette Roland-Holst, Pannekoek represented what has come to be known as the Dutch School of Marxism. This study examines the development of Pannekoek's political ideas within the historical context that gave birth to them. Emphasis is placed on Pannekoek's conception of parliamentarism and mass action, ideological hegemony and the critique of Social Democracy. These themes are informed by an overriding concern with the educative aspects of participation in the political process or with what Marxists call the formation of revolutionary class consciousness.

The development of Pannekoek's social and political thought is divided into five distinct stages and coincides with the development of the labour movement itself. The first stage, 1901-1907, is influenced by a debate within the Dutch Social Democratic Workers' Party (SDAP) which corresponded to the intellectual conflict between the "revisionist" followers of Bernstein and the "orthodox" defenders of Marxism. Pannekoek's position aligned itself with the orthodox Marxism of Kautsky; he opposed reformism on the right and anarchism on the left. Pannekoek regarded

parliamentarism as a means to promote the general franchise and the class consciousness of the proletariat. This tactic came to be known as revolutionary parliamentarism.

His most politically active period within the labour movement was 1907-1914. During these years he worked for the German Social Democratic Party, contributed regularly to the German Social Democratic Party press and taught at the party schools in Berlin, and in Bremen, where he became a major spokesman of the Bremer Left. This period witnessed a split amongst those who were opposed to Bernstein.

Kautsky became the centre with Bernstein on the right and the Bremer group on the left. The debate between Kautsky and Pannekoek crystalized the ideological rift that had developed during these years. As a theoretician of this new radicalism, Pannekoek advocated extra-parliamentary mass action and increasingly questioned whether parliamentary tactics were useful in a time of imperial rivalries.

The third stage of Pannekoek's thought developed during the First World War, until the Russian Revolution. Pannekoek adopted the position held by the Zimmerwald Left, whose review, Vorbote, he edited. With Lenin and the Bolsheviks he supported the tactic of turning the imperialist war into proletarian revolution.

His fourth stage (1917-1921) consisted of Pannekoek's participation in the newly formed Dutch Communist Party and in the Comintern. With Herman Gorter, Henriette Roland-Holst and others, Pannekoek headed the Amsterdam Bureau. Although he had been one of the first supporters of Lenin, after 1920 Pannekoek frequently expounded on alternative interpretations of revolutionary Marxism, and offered vocal criticism of Russian dominance of the Comintern and of the organizational principles of Bolshevism.

Pannekoek saw an important role for workers' councils in a socialist society, to prevent authoritarian characteristics in a party dominated state. In 1921, after the publication of Lenin's "Left-Wing" Communism: An Infantile Disorder, he broke with the Comintern and the Dutch Communist Party. For some time thereafter, he continued to influence the policy of the Communist Workers' Party of Germany (KAPD), but he soon retired from all party activities.

The final stage (1921-1960): Pannekoek, although to a large part withdrawn from practical politics, elaborated his theory of council communism as a revolutionary alternative to Leninism. Until shortly before his death in 1960, Pannekoek's opposition to Bolshevik centralizing and authoritarian tendencies continued to grow. Based upon his own experience with the Second and Third Internationals, he

formulated a comprehensive theoretical statement, embracing the nature of parliamentarism, trade unionism, mass action, Bolshevism, state socialism/ state capitalism, class consciousness, the concept of spiritual power and a critique of Social Democracy.

As a critic of the Bolshevik Revolution and Social Democracy, and as an advocate of council communism, industrial democracy and democratic socialism, Pannekoek has been given increasing attention in recent years.

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M.A.M. ~~Boekelman~~

INTRODUCTION

As a form of political activity, mass action draws on a number of different traditions. It has been defined as the rejection of parliamentary democracy, as a means of representation of subordinate classes, and as an extra-parliamentary tactic, in opposition to or in support of certain parliamentary actions.¹ Thus, mass action is not necessarily in opposition to parliamentarism, and aspects of both concepts have found their place in Pannekoek's political thought. As a political concept, mass action in the nineteenth and twentieth century appeared as a response to the inadequacy or irrelevance of parliamentarism for the lower classes. Popular movements of rebellion had, in fact, frequently occurred throughout history. The Levellers and the Diggers of the English Revolution and the Sans Culottes and the Enrages of the French Revolution participated in the revolutionary origins of bourgeois society,² and later the Chartist movement marked the first form of modern working class mass action.³ In the three major Western European revolutions, the seventeenth century revolution in England, the French Revolution of 1789 and the revolution of 1848, mass action gave rise to extra-parliamentary assemblies, based on direct democratic principles, and representing the lower

social echelon--soldiers, artisans and workers. These representative organs of the lower classes were the beginnings of the council movement.⁴

In this context, councils, as Anweiler noted, have three distinctive characteristics. They are connected with a particular, "dependent or oppressed social stratum;" they take "radical democracy as their form;" and are of "a revolutionary origin." Such councils encourage, "far-reaching and unrestricted participation of the individual in public life." Collectively, they symbolize, "the self-government of the masses."⁵

The origins of such self-government through representative assemblies are to be found, however, much earlier. Rosenberg sees evidence of a continuum between the urban communes of the Middle Ages, the Swiss peasant cantons, the original collective settlements in North America, the Paris Commune of 1871 and the Russian Soviets.⁶ Another writer cites the first historical instance of the council concept in the Roman Lex Hortensia of 287 B.C., which recognized plebeian associations as legal institutions of the Roman state.⁷

The theory and practice of mass action developed with new force in the early twentieth century. In Europe, the Russian Soviets of 1905 and 1917,⁸ and the German⁹ and Italian workers' councils of 1918 and 1919¹⁰ were

expressions of mass action, revolutionary in nature. In Pannekoek's thought, the concept of mass action is deeply rooted in the civil rights movement of the left wing of German Social Democracy prior to World War One, and in the failure of Social Democracy.

This study examines the development of Pannekoek's thought, life and work as a publicist and political theorist.¹¹ It explores themes in his thought on parliamentarism, mass action, class consciousness and hegemony in relation to the political history of the Second and Third Internationals.

Pannekoek has remained, for the most part, a neglected figure in the history of European socialist thought.¹² He is not well-known in the West. A decade ago his work was familiar to only a few scholars, and as Schurer suggests; "if orthodox communists still remember Pannekoek and Gorter as revolutionary thinkers it is merely because Lenin's diatribe against 'ultra-leftist folly' has perpetuated their names and caused them to endure like flies encased in amber."¹³ Internationally, Pannekoek was better known among scholars and scientists as an outstanding astronomer at the University of Amsterdam,¹⁴ where he founded the Astronomical Institute. For his contribution to the field of astronomy he received an honorary doctorate from Harvard University in 1936 and was made an

honorary member of the American Astronomical Society, which in 1951 awarded him the Gold Medal.

Politically, Pannekoek, Herman Gorter and Henriette Roland-Holst were best known among international socialists as prominent members of the Dutch School of Marxism.¹⁵ Pannekoek played a major role as a publicist and theoretician in the international socialist movement and made some significant contributions to contemporary Marxist thought during his lifetime. His work presents an opportunity to examine some aspects of the movement's development from the vantage point of an iconoclast in socialist politics. Pannekoek's political career, more than that of any other major socialist figure, was characterized by his opposition to the reigning orthodoxies of his time, and among socialist theorists his observations provide a continuum of social critique, almost without parallel, spanning half a century.

While most students of Pannekoek have had no difficulty distinguishing two major periods in the development of his thought--with the First World War constituting the dividing line--a closer analysis reveals several significant stages in the evolution of his ideas. There are five distinct periods which reflect stages in the development of the European labour movement itself.

The first stage in Pannekoek's thought, 1901-1907, which marks a period of intense study laying the theoretical foundation for his beliefs, also represents the only time he was elected to a political office, as chairman of the local Social Democratic Workers' Party (Sociaal Democratische Arbeiders Partij) (SDAP) in the city of Leiden. Politically he concurred with the orthodox Marxism of intellectuals associated with the left wing of the SDAP.¹⁶ Internationally, this position referred to the larger schism in socialist thought characterized by the Bernstein-Kautsky debate; with the revisionists adhering to the former and the orthodox Marxists to the latter.¹⁷ Pannekoek's position was strongly influenced by Kautsky, as a fellow student of Marxism. He espoused the left wing standards prevailing in both Dutch and German Social Democracy at the turn of the century. This meant that he opposed reformism on the right and anarchism on the left, while supporting parliamentarism as a means to advance the class consciousness of the working class. This particular policy came to be known as revolutionary parliamentarism.

After the Russian Revolution of 1905, Pannekoek, together with Herman Gorter, Henriette Roland-Holst and Frank van der Goes, emerged as a spokesman for an increasingly dissident left faction, who rejected their party's

pre-occupation with parliamentary work and electoral strategy. Social Democratic politics in the Netherlands became an embryonic model of ideological and factional disputes which reverberated throughout the International for over a decade. Pannekoek's representative writings of this period define the theoretical contours of his subsequent work. They include: Ethics and Socialism, "Class, Science and Philosophy," "Marxism and Teleology," "The Philosophy of Kant and Marxism," "Religion and Socialism," "The Standpoint and Significance of Joseph Dietzgen's Philosophical Works," "Theory and Principle in the Labour Movement," and "The General Franchise."

The second period, 1907-1914, is the setting for Pannekoek's most active political involvement as a publicist and theoretician of German Social Democracy.¹⁸ Along with Rosa Luxemburg he emerged as one of the leading advocates of the Social Democratic Party of Germany (Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschland) (SPD) left wing faction. Though living and working in Germany, he also gave his active support to the Dutch journal De Tribune,¹⁹ which sought to present its dissident views to the general membership of the SDAP. At this time Pannekoek contributed regularly to the leading publications of the German Social Democratic Party press,²⁰ including its theoretical journal

Die Neue Zeit.²¹ In addition, he taught political theory at the Social Democratic Party school,²² first in Berlin and later in Bremen, where he became the leading publicist of the radical views of the Bremer Left.²³ In Bremen he worked together with Karl Radek and other Bolsheviks who were committed to revolutionary Marxist politics. In 1909, he published Die Taktische Differenzen in der Arbeiterbewegung, a critique of two prominent tendencies within the Social Democratic movement (anarchism and revisionism), which gained Lenin's recognition.²⁴ In their intellectual and historical context, Pannekoek's theories about mass action and parliamentarism relate especially to the thought of Kautsky and Luxemburg.

Rosa Luxemburg's polemic, with Karl Kautsky, about the nature of parliamentarism and mass action in 1912 marks a point of departure in Pannekoek's own intellectual development. He became one of the first socialists to understand the fundamental weaknesses of Social Democracy, and he anticipated its collapse. In a lengthy debate with Kautsky in Die Neue Zeit he broke with the latter's interpretation of orthodox Marxism. As one of the theorists of the Bremer Left he supported the politics of mass action and the spontaneity associated with the civil rights movement for the universal franchise, and the anti-war sentiment in pre-1914 Germany. The idea of spontaneity

had primarily been expressed within the framework of the Social Democratic left and reflected the advocacy of a democratic revolutionary socialism.

With the growth of imperialism, parliamentarism as a forum for working class politics had become, in his view, irrelevant as a means of waging the class struggle, and Pannekoek came to see the councils as an alternative to parliamentary working class representation. Samples of his works from this period include: Darwinism and Marxism, Tactical Differences in the Labour Movement, "Class Struggle and Nationalism," "The Labour Movement and Socialism," "Marxist Theory and Revolutionary Tactic," "Mass Action and Revolution," "The New Middle Class," and "The Political System of Social Democracy."

In the third period, 1914-1917, during the First World War until the Russian Revolution, Pannekoek took an internationalist stand against the war, calling for the formation of a new International. He played a role in the Zimmerwald anti-war movement,²⁵ edited its review Vorbote²⁶ and contributed to the publications of revolutionary groups which were emerging in Germany during the war.²⁷ Intellectually his position emphasized the radical anti-imperialist line of the Zimmerwald Left, whose aim was to turn the imperialist war into a civil war. With other Marxists from the Netherlands Pannekoek declared his

solidarity with the group around Lenin at Zimmerwald and Kienthal, and he supported a strategy aimed at world revolution as an alternative to imperialism, war and the continuing immiserization of the proletariat.

In 1917, Pannekoek saw the Russian Revolution as the beginning of a new era in politics, which would accelerate the German revolution and lead to a new order throughout Europe. His major works centre around the war, imperialism and the establishment of the Third International as an expression of the new democratic revolutionary socialism. They include: "The Downfall of the International," "The Economic Necessity of Imperialism," "German Socialism in the War," "The Great European War and Socialism," "Imperialism and the Task of the Proletariat," "Marxism as Action," "The New Socialism," "New Tactics Against War Basis of a New International," and "The War and its Effects."

During the fourth period, 1917-1921, Pannekoek's interpretation of the concept of the dictatorship of the proletariat and his rejection of parliamentarism as a non-working class political institution, set him on a collision course with Bolshevik policy and with the politics of the Third International. As a member of the Dutch Social Democratic Party (Sociale Democratische Partij)

(SDP) formed in 1909 after the left wing faction had been expelled from the SDAP, he automatically became a Communist Party member. When the SDP, in 1918, changed its name to Communist Party of Holland (Communistische Partij Holland) (CPH).²⁸ In 1919, he participated in the early work of the Comintern, and with others headed the Communist International's Amsterdam Bureau.²⁹ He became a regular contributor to the Communist International³⁰ under the pseudonym Karl Horner. Although Pannekoek was one of the earliest supporters of Lenin, as one of the theoreticians of the Communist Workers' Party of Germany (Kommunistische Arbeiter Partei Deutschland) (KAPD).³¹ after 1920, he engaged Lenin in a debate regarding the question of Communist Party participation in parliamentary elections and trade union activity.

Criticizing Karl Radek's policy for the German Communist Party (Kommunistische Partei Deutschland) (KPD), Pannekoek offered an alternative to the organizational principles of Bolshevism. With George Lukacs he became one of the theoreticians of the revolutionary left in Western Europe to propose a tactical analysis of parliamentarism in opposition to Lenin's views. As one of the principal thinkers of 'Left-Wing Communism',³² Pannekoek opposed the dominant role of the party in the revolution,

the development of state socialism, and the centralizing tendencies of Bolshevism. In his 1920 work Die Entwicklung der Weltrevolution und die Taktik des Kommunismus,³³ he presented the view that the theory and practice of Bolshevism are not suited to highly industrialized Western countries, but have their greatest potential as formative strategy in underdeveloped countries, particularly in Asia.

For industrialized Western nations Pannekoek advocated workers' councils as the primary institution of working class democracy. Parliamentarism and trade unionism, he asserted, were institutions which emerged with the rise of the bourgeois class and the development of capitalism, and hence conformed to an institutional paradigm which belonged to a bourgeois society. Within this framework, parliamentarism and trade unionism exercised functions of domination in civil society and were in Pannekoek's view incompatible with a democratic socialism based upon participation in and control of production and distribution. He favoured democratic socialism as a form of self-management of the institutions which affect the lives of workers.³⁴ As an alternative to Bolshevism he posed the political theory of council communism.

Lenin's response to the criticism of Pannekoek and other left wing communists, "Left-Wing Communism: an Infantile Disorder",³⁵ led to Pannekoek's expulsion from

the Third International and from the Dutch Communist Party. For some time he continued to influence the policy of the KAPD but he abstained from all party activity. Throughout his life, however, he continued to discuss the issues raised in the left communist critique. His writings of this period include: Bolshevism and Democracy, World Revolution and Communist Tactics, "Communism and Social Democracy," "The German Revolution," "Historical Materialism," "The New World," and "The Russian Revolution."

During the fifth period (1921-1960) he at first withdrew from political life until 1927, devoting himself entirely to astronomy.³⁶ After 1927 and until his death, Pannekoek continued to develop his theoretical opposition to the centralizing tendencies of Bolshevism. He became the theoretical mentor of the left wing quasi-syndicalist, council communist movement. At this time he no longer had any real influence on the Dutch, much less on the European, labour movement, but he produced theoretical works based on his experience in both the Second and Third Internationals and produced a comprehensive conceptual statement of alternatives. He developed a theoretical critique of the practical alternatives to council communism, Bolshevik state socialism and the state socialism advocated first of all by the German SPD.

In 1938, Pannekoek wrote Lenin as Philosopher,³⁷ to discuss some of the implications of Lenin's Marxism. At the end of World War Two he wrote The Workers' Councils,³⁸ as well as numerous articles, in which he hoped to convince future generations that the class struggle and the fight for democratic socialism must be fought through and in the councils.³⁹ He collaborated closely, during these years, with the Dutch council communist, Henk Canne Meijer, who coordinated the activities of various groups of council communists in the Netherlands, Germany, France, the United States and Scandinavia. The activities of these groups were primarily scholarly and speculative, lacking any real influence on the labour movement. They sought to deal with the issues of their time; with the failure of the world revolution, and with the nature of communist production and distribution.⁴⁰

Publishing in international journals on the fringes of the socialist movement, they worked in anticipation of the formation of a new labour movement.⁴¹ In an era which was characterized, in Western parliamentary democracies, by a cold war climate of undifferentiated anti-communism, they were one of the few groups⁴² whose censure of the Soviet regime was solidly rooted in the tradition of Marxist theory and scholarship, critical of both Western parliamentary democracy and the communist movement.

As a critique of the Bolshevik Revolution and the Third International, and as a theory of council communism and extra-parliamentary democracy, Pannekoek's work has been given considerable scholarly attention in recent years. In addition, Pannekoek developed the concept of "spiritual power" which we might call following Antonio Gramsci, "ideological hegemony," and a critique of Social Democracy. These themes are informed by an overriding concern with the need for educating the masses, making the notion of revolutionary class consciousness central to his political thought.

NOTES

* Unless otherwise indicated, all English translations have been done by Marinus Boekelman.

¹Henriette Roland-Holst, De revolutionaire massa aktie (Rotterdam, 1918). See also Philip Resnick, "The Political Theory of Extra-Parliamentarism," Canadian Journal of Political Science 6 (March 1973), pp. 65-8.

²The term "bourgeois" has become one of the least precise in political and historical writing, but in the absence of a more compelling word it is used here and throughout this work in the context of C.B. Macpherson's definition of bourgeois society:

a society in which the relations between men are dominated by the market; in which...land and labour, as well as movable wealth and goods made for consumption, are treated as commodities to be bought and sold and contracted for with a view to profit and accumulation, and where men's relations to others are set largely by their ownership of these commodities and the success with which they utilize that ownership to their own profit.

--C.B. Macpherson, The Political Theory of Possessive Individualism (Oxford, 1962), p. 162. Bourgeois class is, of course, the class dominant in that society.

³Anton Pannekoek, "De Chartistenbeweging," De Nieuwe Tijd (1916), pp. 554-71 & 680-94.

⁴Oskar Anweiler, The Soviets (New York, 1974), chapter one. I am indebted to Anweiler for his insightful analysis of the historical origins of the council theory.

⁵Ibid., p. 4.

⁶Arthur Rosenberg, Geschichte des Bolschewismus von Marx bis zur Gegenwart (Berlin, 1932), p. 92. Cited in Anweiler, The Soviets, p. 3.

7. F. Wersin, "Diktatur des Proletariats," (Ph.D. dissertation, Breslau, n.d.), p. 3. Cited in Anweiler, The Soviets, pp. 3-4.

8. L. Trotsky, "Der Arbeiter deputiertenrat und die Revolution," Die Neue Zeit 25, no. 2 (1906-1907); pp. 76-86; O. Seeling, Der Rätegedanke und seine Verwirklichung in Sowjetrusland (Berlin, 1925).

9. F. Gutmann, Das Rätssystem, seine Verfechter und seine Probleme (Munich, 1922); F. Gutmann, Die Parteien und das Rätssystem (Charlottenburg, 1919); W. Tormin, Zwischen Rätediktatur und sozialer Demokratie: Die Geschichte der Rätebewegung in der deutschen Revolution, 1918-1919 (Düsseldorf, 1954); Günter Hillmann, ed., Die Rätebewegung II (Hamburg, 1972), pp. 46-57.

10. Antonio Gramsci, Soviets in Italy (Institute for Workers' Control, Nottingham, Pamphlet series no. 11, n.d.). See also Antonio Gramsci, Selections from Political Writings, 1910-1920 (New York, 1977); p. 260.

11. The most recent works in English are: D.A. Smart, ed., Pannekoek and Gorter's Marxism (London, 1978); and Serge Bricianer, Pannekoek and the Workers' Councils, introduced by John Gerber (St. Louis, 1978).

12. The bibliography in Appendix I will show the extent of the available literature.

13. H. Schurer, "Anton Pannekoek and the Origins of Leninism," Slavonic and East European Review, no. 41 (June 1963), p. 344.

14. Anton Pannekoek, De Groei van ons wereldbeeld, een geschiedenis van de sterrekunde (Amsterdam, 1951); Anton Pannekoek, A History of Astronomy (New York, 1961). Both have been widely used as textbooks for college astronomy courses. Students of Anton Pannekoek have tended to ignore his importance as an astronomer and place the emphasis of their study on his political theories. His astronomy memoirs show, however, that politics frequently entwined with his academic career. For example, one of

his teachers of natural science and cosmography, Dr. J.M. Smit, a friend of Domela Nieuwenhuis, was fired for engaging in socialist political activities--he spoke at a public rally in support of the general franchise ("Sterrekundige Herinneringen", p. 2). In 1903, during the great general strike, Pannekoek chaired a mass meeting and along with all other civil servants who had participated, the Dutch government planned to fire him from his position at the Leiden observatory. The motion voted on and ratified at that meeting was that one must use "all means" to prevent the formulation of anti-strike legislation. The director of the observatory had a private interview with the minister, President A. Kuijper, to convince him that "all means" meant "all means within the law." ("Sterrekundige Herinneringen", pp. 8-9).

The "Herinneringen"--the memoirs of his political life--shows that during his stay at the Saanich Hill Observatory, Victoria, British Columbia, he had informal discussions with B.C. socialists. His participation in the 1926 Netherlands West Indies scientific expedition was conditional upon signing a declaration to "abstain from any form of communist propaganda," and he decided to opt out of the expedition. According to Professor D.J. Struik, during his time at Harvard University, Pannekoek addressed a meeting of the World Socialist Party in Boston (letter from D.J. Struik to M. Boekelman, 10 March 1976). Moreover, his political adversaries, who, at different times, included K. Radek, P.L. Tak, P.J. Troelstra, W. van Ravensteijn and A.C.J. de Vrankrijker, have frequently portrayed him as a cold, rigorous mathematician devoid of human emotions, or as a star gazer who does not have both feet on the ground. For these reasons the bibliography includes a selection of his work in astronomy and natural science. See Fritz Kief, "In memoriam Anton Pannekoek," De Groene Amsterdammer, 7 May 1960, p. 5. "In the party struggle they have typefied him as a 'rigorous mathematician', in other words as the dry theoretician devoid of any human feelings."

15. The term was first used in 1921 when a special issue of the Proletarier was devoted to the writings of Pannekoek, Gorter and Henriette Roland-Holst. "Die hollandische marxistische Schule," Proletarier I, no. 4, monatschrift fur kommunismus (Feb./Mar. 1921). See Hans Manfred Bock, "Zur Geschichte und Theorie der Hollandischen Marxisten Schule," in Hans Manfred Bock, ed., A. Pannekoek, H. Gorter, Organisation und Taktik der proletarischen Revolution (Frankfurt, 1969), pp. 7-48; Frits Kool, "Die

'Holländische Marxistische Schule'," in Die Linke gegen die Parteiherrschaft (Olten, 1970), pp. 80-92; Franz Pfemfert, "Kamp um eine Rate-Internationale," Die Aktion, 22 January 1921, pp. 30-1. He refers to "Die holländische marxistische 'Schule'." D.J. Struik suggests that the term had been used during World War One in the same manner as the "Austrian School," i.e., V. Adler, K. Renner and Max Bauer (D.J. Struik to M. Boekelman, 14 June 1976).

16. Sociaal Democratische Arbeiders Partij (SDAP)-- on February 8, 1946, along with other groups, it became part of the newly founded Labour Party, De Partij van de Arbeid (PvdA), the major Dutch opposition party. In rejecting the anti-parliamentary platform of the Sociaal Democratische Bond (SDB), on August 26, 1894, the so-called "twelve apostles" founded the SDAP in Zwolle; Troelstra became its leader and the party programme was based on the Erfurter programme of Karl Kautsky.

17. Carl E. Schorske, German Social Democracy 1905-1917: the Development of the Great Schism (New York, 1972); Peter Gay, The Dilemma of Democratic Socialism (New York, 1970); Peter Strutynski, Die Auseinandersetzungen Zwischen Marxisten und Revisionisten in der deutschen Arbeiterbewegung um die Jahrhundertwende (Cologne, 1976).

18. Hans Manfred Bock, "Anton Pannekoek in der Vorkriegs-sozialdemokratie, Bericht und Documentation," Jahrbuch Arbeiterbewegung 3 (Berlin: Fischer Taschenbuch-Verlag, 1975), pp. 103-67. This study deals with Pannekoek's role in pre-war Social Democracy. See also Massimo Salvadori, Karl Kautsky and the Socialist Revolution, 1880-1938, pp. 133-69.

19. De Tribune (1907-1937). On April 17, 1916, De Tribune became a daily publication for the Revolutionaire Socialistische Verbond (RSV) and the SDP. On this occasion Henriette Roland-Holst joined the editorial board. On April 18, 1916, Anton Pannekoek and others were mentioned as regular contributors. From February 20, 1917 on, however, Pannekoek's name no longer appears. The paper was then edited by H. Roland-Holst, W.v. Ravesteijn and D.J. Wijnkoop. The paper continued to publish after 1937 under the name Het Volksdagblad.

20. The most important was Die Bremer Bürgerzeitung (1890-1915). Before World War One it stood for revolutionary socialism and anti-imperialism. Rosa Luxemburg, Franz

Mehring and van Ravesteijn were frequent contributors. Alfred Henke had been general editor since 1900 and the political editor since 1906. Johan Knief became a co-editor in 1911.

²¹Die Neue Zeit (1883-1923), a German Social Democratic weekly, was founded and edited until 1917 by Karl Kautsky. It became the leading voice of Social Democracy in Europe and of the Second International. Among its co-founders were August Bebel and Wilhelm Liebknecht.

²²D. Fricke, "Parteischule," Zeitschrift für Geschichtswissenschaft 5 (1957), pp. 229-47; and Karl Ernst Moring, Die Sozialdemokratische Partei in Bremen, 1890-1914 (Hannover, 1968), pp. 113-7.

²³Moring, Sozialdemokratische Partei; Chr. Paulmann, Die Sozialdemokratie in Bremen, 1864-1964 (Bremen, 1964); Erhard Lucas, Die Sozialdemokratie in Bremen während des Ersten Weltkrieges (Bremen, 1969).

²⁴Anton Pannekoek, Die Taktische Differenzen in der Arbeiterbewegung (Hamburg, 1973).

²⁵The Zimmerwald Conference took place September 5-8, 1915. The initiative for the conference came from the Italian Party. Its purpose was to re-establish among revolutionary socialists the International which had collapsed with the outbreak of the war. A small group around Lenin and Karl Radek was opposed to the majority of 'moderates', i.e., Trotsky and G. Ledebour. To maintain unity the Leninists co-signed the Zimmerwald Manifesto which condemned the imperialist war, violence and annexation. The radical minority around Lenin drafted an independent manifesto which was published in Vorbote. "Vorschlag der Resolution der Zimmerwalder Linken über Weltkrieg und die Aufgaben der Sozialdemokratie," Vorbote, no. 1 (January 1916), pp. 5-6.

²⁶Anton Pannekoek and Henriette Roland-Holst, eds., Vorbote: Internationale Marxistische Rundschau, no. 1 (January 1916), no. 2 (April 1916). No further issues appeared.

27 Among others: , Johan Knief and Paul Frölich, eds., Arbeiterpolitik: Wochenschrift für wissenschaftlichen Sozialismus (Bremen, June 1916-March 1919); Julian Borchard, ed., Lichtstrahlen: Monatliches Bildungsorgan für denkende Arbeiter (September 1913-May 1921).

28 A.A. de Jonge, Het communisme in Nederland: De geschiedenis van één politieke partij (The Hague, 1972).

Sociaal Democratische Partij (SDP) was founded on March 14, 1909, as a result of the ideological struggle between the Marxists and the revisionists in the SDAP. The birth of the SDP marked the founding of the first independent Marxist party in Europe before World War One. Its initial membership amounted to only 400-500. Wijnkoop, van Ravesteijn and Ceton founded the party. In 1918, it became the Communist Party Holland (CPH) and later the Communist Party Nederland (CPN).

29 James W. Hulse, The Forming of the Communist International (Stanford, 1964), pp. 152-60. The task which the Amsterdam Bureau set itself is explained in H. Roland-Holst, "Für das Amsterdammer Bureau: Dokumente der III Internationale, Mitteilung," Kommunismus 1 (1920), p. 338; Bulletin of the Provisional Bureau in Amsterdam of the Communist International, no. 1 (February 1920), p. 1; and Branko Lazitch and Milorad M. Drachkovitch, Lenin and the Comintern (Stanford, 1975), pp. 253-4.

30 The Communist International (New York, 1919-1940). Beginning with the sixth issue (Russian edition) the contributors included six prominent Dutch communists-- Roland-Holst, Pannekoek, Gorter, Wijnkoop, Rutgers and van Ravesteijn. Gorter and Pannekoek's final entry in the journal appears in the tenth issue, 11 May 1920. Cited in Lazitch and Drachkovitch, Lenin and the Comintern, p. 259.

31 Kommunistische Arbeiter Partei Deutschlands (KAPD) was founded in April 1920. The party represented the left wing majority opposition which was expelled from the Communist Party of Germany (KPD(s)) at the Heidelberg Party Congress in 1919. The KAPD espoused Pannekoek's political views.

³² Hans Manfred Bock, Syndikalismus und Linkskommunismus von 1918-1923 (Meisenheim am Glan, 1969), p. 100.

³³ Anton Pannekoek, Weltrevolution und kommunistische Taktik (Vienna, 1920); Anton Pannekoek, "Weltrevolution und kommunistische Taktik," in Die Linken gegen die Parteierrschaft, edited by Fritz Kool (Olten, 1970), pp. 355-416.

³⁴ For a discussion of democracy in non-parliamentary context see C.B. Macpherson, The Real World of Democracy (Toronto, 1965), pp. 2-22.

³⁵ V.I. Lenin, "Left-Wing" Communism: an Infantile Disorder (Peking, 1970).

³⁶ Pannekoek's re-entry into the debate was marked by K. Horner [Anton Pannekoek], "Prinzip und Taktik," Proletarier, no. 7 (July 1927), pp. 141-7 and no. 8 (August 1927), pp. 176-86.

³⁷ Anton Pannekoek, Lenin als Philosoph [Lenin as Philosopher] (Amsterdam, 1938).

³⁸ Anton Pannekoek, "The Workers' Councils," in The Rise of the Workers' Movements, edited by Root & Branch (Greenwich, Conn.: Root & Branch, 1975), pp. 384-500.

³⁹ See Jaap Kloosterman, ed., Partij, Raden, Revolutie (Amsterdam, 1972). Most articles are available in English translation but have not found a publisher.

⁴⁰ G [roepen] Internationales [Communisten] (GIC), Grondbeginselen der communistische productie en distributie (Amsterdam, 1930); Grundprinzipien kommunistischer Produktion und Verteilung, introduced by Paul Mattick (Berlin, 1970). Kollektivarbeit der Gruppe Internationaler Kommunisten.

⁴¹ [Henk Canne Meijer], "The Rise of a New Labour Movement," Council Correspondence, no. 10 (August 1935), pp. 1-25; [Henk Canne Meijer], "Das werden einer neuen Arbeiterbewegung," Räte Korrespondenz, no. 8/9 (Feb./Apr./May 1935).

⁴²See Gottfried Mergner, ed., Gruppe Internationale
Kommunisten Hollands (Hamburg, 1971); Richard Gombin,
The Origins of Modern Leftism (Harmondsworth; 1975),
pp. 77-117; Stan Poppe, Het Radencommunisme (Amsterdam,
n.d.); Rene Riesel, "Preliminaires sur les conseils et
l'organisation conseilliste," Internationale Situationniste,
no. 12 (September 1969), pp. 64-73; and Paul Mattick,
Anti-Bolshevik Communism (London, 1978).

CHAPTER I

PARLIAMENTARISM, CLASS CONSCIOUSNESS AND THE GENERAL FRANCHISE, 1901-1907

Theoretical Foundations of Pannekoek's Thought

Anton Pannekoek was born January 2, 1873 in Vaassen, in the Dutch province of Gelderland. His rural middle class parents, Johannes Pannekoek and Wilhelmina Dorothea Beins, felt that higher education was a necessary adjunct to social mobility and, through diligence and sacrifice, pursued this end for both their children.¹

Before Pannekoek enrolled in secondary school he had developed a keen interest in the natural sciences and had become an accomplished amateur astronomer. He recalled, in his memoirs, that as a twelve-year-old he had listened to a family discussion on the star, Sirius. Dissatisfied with the explanation that, "it is the star straight above you,"² he followed up the question by conducting his own research in cosmography. As a high school student, his interests were drawn, in particular, to astronomy. His teacher, Dr. J.M. Smit, encouraged him in the purchase of related texts at book auctions, such as scientific works by Kaiser, Brünnow and Argelander.³ Confident of his own ability and aptitude, Pannekoek at an early age chose to follow a career in astronomy.

During his secondary school years, Pannekoek's academic interests focused almost exclusively on the natural sciences, including chemistry, botany and zoology. Coming from a moderately well-to-do family, there was no evidence of any awareness, on his part, of the social deprivation of the Dutch lower classes characteristic of the era.⁴ Pannekoek's earliest social knowledge was not based on personal experience, but was acquired in school as a theoretical study, and accepted in the same manner as a scientific premise.⁵ His exposure to the social sciences was elementary, with only one hour per week allotted to its study in the school curriculum.

His introduction to the social and political thought of his time came through reading Leerboek der staathuis-kunde,⁶ a Dutch text on political economy. He was most impressed with the liberal free trade theorists, Richard Cobden, John Bright and Jean Baptiste Say, but his readings also touched on the teachings of Lassalle and Marx, as well as the socialist and communist movements. Initially, he held a critical and disapproving view of the teachings of socialism. Pannekoek recalls how, on one of his final examinations, he fervently argued that, "although communism leads to equality, it would be an equality under conditions of the greatest poverty."⁷

At the University of Leiden, Pannekoek's main field of study was astronomy: "there was nowhere a principle or direction which could provoke in me a strong enthusiasm, other than the conviction...that natural science was the source of all progress, in which we had a part, and to which all energy ought to be directed."⁸ Marxist theory, socialism and labour politics seemed far removed from Pannekoek's immediate interests. In 1895, he began his career as a geodesetist, and in 1898 became an observer at the Leiden Observatory. At this time, his employer, Ernst van de Sande Bakhuijzen, urged him to join the Liberal Party. He felt a certain pressure to conform to the expectations of his colleagues, "to feel and behave like them."⁹ Consequently, Pannekoek became a member of the local Liberal Association and its society. On one or two occasions he joined the Leiden burghers at the society's social gatherings, but most of his time was spent in reading and discussions in the upstairs library. At these sessions he met the Social Democrat, Willem H. de Graaf, who introduced him to the Social Democratic movement and its literature.

One of the socialist-inspired works Pannekoek read in 1898, was Edward Bellamy's Equality,¹⁰ an American novel which dealt with the nature of equality in an utopian

state and the relationship between the realm of ideas and material class interest. Bellamy's twentieth century utopia depicted an economy based on public benefit instead of private gain. The establishment of an egalitarian society in Equality had been preceded by a revolutionary movement to overthrow the old order. The prevailing concepts of capitalism, in Bellamy's view, were the principal impediments to an egalitarian society; "false teachings" were at the root of the survival of a social order founded on exploitation. The lack of class consciousness on the part of the masses had prevented the revolutionary transformation of society for centuries. By illustrating the burden of outmoded ideas in the struggle for emancipation, Bellamy popularized the belief in the power of dominant "ideas [which] are born of previous ideas and are long in outgrowing the characteristics and limitations impressed on them by the circumstances under which they came into existence."¹¹

The first task of the revolutionary, according to Bellamy, was to overcome the effect of "inherited prejudice" against revolutionary change and a balanced society. Bellamy showed that the distribution of wealth was incongruent with new social conditions and he advocated radical change to align institutions with social development.¹²

The fundamental cause of Bellamy's utopian revolution was the growth of science and the subsequent "diffusion of knowledge among the masses."¹³ He argued that the revolution "must accumulate a tremendous moral force, an overwhelming weight of justification...behind it before it can start."¹⁴ The old order must be theoretically assaulted, thereby making its position "untenable," and compelling its termination.¹⁵

Bellamy's American social fiction had a profound influence on Pannekoek: "it was as if a blindfold had been removed."¹⁶ Equality convinced Pannekoek that the scientific practitioners of political economy were the official spokesmen for the capitalist class and that they defended the interests of that class in their political theory. Bellamy's novel made a lasting impression and was a contributing factor in Pannekoek's decision to join the Social Democratic Party and its international movement and to defend the interests of its members. It was not through the writings of Marx that he ascertained that philosophy or theory becomes a material force when it seizes the masses. Pannekoek wrote that through Bellamy, "For the first time I became aware that all theories have a social basis and meaning and develop in response to real material interest rather than abstract reasoning."¹⁷

Before breaking with the Liberals, Pannekoek did some party work in the 1899 elections, transporting Liberal voters by horse-drawn carriage to the polling booths. The realization that he intended to join the Social Democratic Party came as a great disappointment to the director of the Leiden Observatory. The formal announcement, to the predominantly middle class Leiden community, of his breach with the Liberal Party came at a public meeting called by the Liberals to discuss proposed legislation on compulsory education. Pannekoek's address to the assembly reflected his socialist analysis of the issue, causing considerable consternation and disapproval among his colleagues.¹⁸

Following this break with the past came a period of deliberation--a study of Marxist and other Social Democratic literature. Pannekoek now subscribed to the Social Democratic journal De Nieuwe Tijd.¹⁹ He acquired the first Dutch translation of Marx's Das Kapital²⁰ and, together with its translator, Frank van der Goes, who introduced Marxism into the Netherlands, he undertook an intense study of the work.

Through this initial review, he became aware of the importance of the philosophical principles of Marxism, but he was dissatisfied with the rigid determinism that he attributed to Marxian economics. Reading Capital

convinced Pannekoek that capitalism was a complex structure of exploitation and domination, whose foundation lies in a pervasive psychological network of ascendancy--the power some men have over others to obscure reality and to mystify the class base of society. He saw the necessity to build upon the work of Marx by first looking at economic domination in terms of ideological hegemony, and he became most concerned with the challenge of developing a conceptual framework for analyzing the relationship of class consciousness and political action in the present day.

While Bellamy's Equality had given him a popular conception of the role of ideas in maintaining a society based upon the exploitation of one social class by another, his study of Erick Adiches' Kant Studies²¹ and of Wilhelm Windelband's History of Philosophy²² deepened his understanding of the philosophic basis of Marxism. In Joseph Dietzgen's proletarian philosophy, Pannekoek discovered the theoretical platform for the development of his own thought.

Dietzgen's most important work, The Positive Outcome of Philosophy: the Nature of Human Brainwork,²³ rejected the Kantian dualism which separated the real from the ideological world. Dietzgen postulated a "doctrine of the interrelation of mind and matter." The mind, he

argued, interacts with its environment, and its development is a result of the totality of the historical social evolution which has been passed from one generation to another.²⁴

The dialectics of innate and experienced knowledge affirmed the continuous transformation of mind and matter. Dietzgen's philosophy emphasized the dynamic interconnectedness of objects and concepts. It implied the existence of a social transformation of class ideologies in relation to economic production and led Pannekoek to a more distinct understanding of Marx's social theories. Dietzgen considered thought as having arisen from "sense perception" of material objects. Ideas had no reality apart from the brain, which received the sense impressions of material things.²⁵

In defining thought in relation to the material world, Dietzgen stressed the importance of psychological domination and, while he accepted Marxism, he was keenly aware that the cultural and ideological superstructure was not merely a reflection of the exigencies of production, but that the abolition of cultural domination required, "the overcoming of all prejudices by which the capitalist world is held together."²⁶ Dietzgen's proletarian philosophy was inspired by his vision of a new man, and he based his demands for proletarian emancipation on the idea of the equality of all human beings. This represented,

to him, the "ultimate proletarian idea."²⁷

In making explicit the psychological assumption underlying economic production through an inductive theory of cognition, Dietzgen, as one student has suggested, approached the human thought process as if it were as accessible to scientific analysis and conceptual categorization as any other natural phenomenon or social process.²⁸ He sought to give the process of thinking a scientific foundation:

...If we were able to discover the means by which reason arrives at its understanding, 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. 29

Dietzgen was essentially a philosopher of classification who developed a methodology for scientific analysis of the relationship of ideas to the material world:

"science, perception, understanding, thought, require internal and external things, subject and object, brain and world."³⁰ He formulated a theory of understanding based on the "...contradiction between subject and object, thinking and being, between form and content, between phenomenon and essential thing, between attribute and substance, between the general and the concrete." Dietzgen sought to analyse the entire process of consciousness, the knowledge of being, of existing, in terms of its

natural contradictions. By recognizing that contradiction pervades all thought and being, "...that everything is what it is only in co-operation with its opposite," Dietzgen arrived at a science of understanding based on the unity of contradictions.³¹

The relationship between Dietzgen and Hegel was explained by Engels in his essay, Feuerbach and the End of Classical Philosophy, where he wrote:

...the dialectic of Hegel was placed upon its head; or rather off its head, on which it was standing, and placed upon its feet. 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.³²

Engels referred to Dietzgen's major work The Nature of Human Brainwork and explicitly credited him with taking up "the revolutionary side of Hegelian philosophy" and freeing it from "idealist trimming," independently of both Hegel and Marx. Marx and Engels recognized Hegel as a conservative philosopher in terms of his system, but also as a revolutionary philosopher in terms of his method:

Hegel was not simply put aside. On the contrary, one started out from his revolutionary side, described above, from the dialectical method. But in its Hegelian form this method was unusable.³³

As one student of Dietzgen argued, the discovery of the

materialist dialectic by a labourer made it possible to bypass Hegel. "One can forego Hegel to discover the materialist dialectic!"³⁴ Although nowhere in Dietzgen's work is there a definition of the materialist dialectic, nor is the phrase used, Marx and Engels realized that there was an important contribution to dialectical materialism and Marxist philosophy in Dietzgen's writings. Lenin, as well, made a study of his work in preparation for his own Materialism and Empirio-Criticism in which he remarked that Dietzgen, "a worker philosopher who had discovered in his own way dialectical materialism, does not lack greatness."³⁵ Pannekoek, himself, had forsaken the study of Hegel in favour of Dietzgen, and the subjective qualities in Pannekoek's work must be credited to Dietzgen rather than Hegel.

One contemporary student of Dietzgen's thought summarizes his contribution to philosophy as establishing:

- 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;
- 3) The unity of human activity, (particularly thought activity) with the natural and social environment and its importance as a factor conditioning it. 36

Dietzgen questioned the value of knowledge which exceeds experience. To him, rational proletarian thought meant the recognition of the intellect and its accomplishments as attributes of man's total historical experience. His

philosophy implied the possibility and necessity of revolution of matter and mind.

Pannekoek's own education in the natural sciences had lacked the intellectual base provided in Dietzgen's philosophy. Science had been presented as important for its own sake, as technical knowledge independent of a scientific philosophy. Dietzgen's work acted as a medium between Pannekoek's understanding of Marxism and his profession. It provided a body of principles consistent with the theories of natural science. In his memoirs, Pannekoek acknowledged Dietzgen's writings as having supplied the theoretical foundation for all his own subsequent work in political theory.

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 abstract thought... through the reading of Dietzgen I was able to... clarify my conception of the underlying relationship between Marxism and a theory of knowledge and develop it into a unified whole. 37

Pannekoek considered the result of Dietzgen's investigation, "the first valuable contribution to a scientific theory of understanding..." man, nature and society.³⁸

The outcome, for Pannekoek, of this period of study of philosophy and of Marxism was published in 1901 as De Filosofie van Kant en het Marxisme,³⁹ his first contribution to Marxism, in which he sought to establish the

importance of Dietzgen's thought in the history of philosophy. Pannekoek criticized Marx and Engels for not having dealt more thoroughly with the epistemological foundations of Marxian political economy, and he believed Dietzgen had complemented Marxist economics with an explicit theory of knowledge. Pannekoek saw Dietzgen's contribution to philosophy as a "necessary consequence of the discovery of Marx. Dietzgen completed the work of Kant like Marx completed that of Smith." He considered a thorough study of Dietzgen to be unavoidable for anyone who wanted to understand the philosophical basis of Marxism and the proletarian world view.⁴⁰

Marxism and the philosophy of Kant defined the contradiction between bourgeois philosophy and Marxist theory in terms of the political development of Social Democracy itself. The theoretical struggle of Marxism against the bourgeois neo-Kantian revisionists, according to Pannekoek, had lost its dialectical imagination, its ability to fight. "Through a lack of philosophical insight the theoretical debates of the last years have been on a low level and the neglect of the work of Dietzgen, the philosopher of the proletariat, has taken its toll. There is today above all a need for a thorough study of Dietzgen."⁴¹

During these formative years of study, which saw the completion of his dissertation in astronomy,⁴² Pannekoek had the opportunity to hear and meet the theoreticians

and spokesmen of international Social Democracy. In 1900, I.F. Ankersmith (1871-1942), the editor of the Amsterdam daily Het Volksblad (1901-1902), proposed to invite the most well-known foreign socialists to speak at the Universities of Amsterdam, Leiden, Utrecht and Groningen, and the Institute of Technology (Technische Hogeschool) at Delft. Among these speakers were such notables as Emile van der Velde, Wilhelm Liebknecht, Enricco Ferri, Paul Lafargue and Karl Kautsky.

Pannekoek met Kautsky personally and attended his lectures on social revolution. With Henriette Roland-Holst he sat in the first row, "at the feet of the master."⁴³ Gorter had introduced the two, and Pannekoek and Kautsky initiated a regular correspondence. The former was invited to become a regular contributor to Die Neue Zeit⁴⁴ and became one of Kautsky's circle of friends and colleagues for more than ten years.

At Kautsky's suggestion, Pannekoek began corresponding with Dietzgen's son, Eugen. The ensuing friendship led to the publication of a second edition of Dietzgen's most important work, in the introduction of which, Pannekoek broadened Dietzgen's analysis of the role of human consciousness in Marxian thought. Pannekoek criticized Marx's pre-occupation with the social nature of

production and its "significance as a lever for social development." He faulted Marx for not having adequately explained the role of the mind in this material process. According to Pannekoek, this "weak spot" in Marx's economic system contributed to an "erroneous understanding of Marxian theories."⁴⁵

What Pannekoek took to be the "shortcomings" of Marxism pertained to an inadequate reflection on the "spiritual" or ideological dimension of proletarian dependence. It was not enough to show, as Marx had done, that consciousness derived its content from the material base of production. The question remained, how can the workers achieve an independent outlook and revolutionary aspirations when their consciousness is limited to their working experience filtered through the dominant ideas they have absorbed from the bourgeoisie. In seeking answers to this question, Pannekoek hoped to stem the influence of neo-Kantian bourgeois thought, which, in his opinion, had discredited Marxism as a science of history among socialists and had distorted its image among its opponents. The task of Marxian proletarian philosophy, as he saw it, was to combat the influence of neo-Kantian doctrines in the socialist movement.

Kant had introduced the concept of the freedom of will into moral and political philosophy. This demonstrated

to Pannekoek that, "Kantian philosophy is the purest expression of bourgeois thought...",⁴⁶ since the free independent will reflected the conditions of a market economy. As market society portrayed a condition of individuals voluntarily contracting with one another, the emphasis on "freedom" or "free will," Pannekoek thought, justified the conditions of capitalist competition. The bourgeois man sought freedom of action without coercion, so that he could pursue the competitive spirit with his fellow citizens. "Freedom became the slogan of the young bourgeoisie aspiring to political power, and Kant's doctrine of the free will, the basis of his ethics...."⁴⁷

Pannekoek's contribution to political theory was to integrate the work of Dietzgen into the history of political philosophy. He explained that the German "idealist philosophical systems from Kant to Hegel... must be regarded as the indispensable pioneers and precursors of Dietzgen's proletarian philosophy."⁴⁸ Kant's philosophy had advanced a theory of understanding and human causation and, by doing so, had laid the groundwork for a proletarian philosophy of the process of human consciousness. Pannekoek criticized Kant's system because of its dualism, but he praised Kant for making the "first valuable contribution to a scientific theory of understanding...."⁴⁹

According to Pannekoek, Hegel's system superseded Kant's and provided a superior stage in the development of a scientific theory of understanding, by uniting a theory of mankind and all the sciences into one singular "revolutionary dialectic."⁵⁰ Pannekoek was quick to discard Hegel's doctrine on knowledge of absolute truth, and those of his theories which were directed at justifying the Prussian state apparatus,⁵¹ but he credited Hegel with having provided, "an excellent theory of the human mind and its working methods...." With the qualification that "we must strip off its transcendental character," Pannekoek considered Hegel's contribution to the conception of understanding superior to the first contributions of Kant. It remained for Dietzgen, however, to lay the foundation, "for a dialectical and materialistic theory of understanding," thus completing the work of Kant and Hegel.⁵²

Dietzgen, in Pannekoek's analysis, "raised philosophy to the position of a natural science," just as Marx had raised the position of history. Dietzgen did not present the science of philosophy as "his philosophy"⁵³ but, as the title of the English translation of his major work implies, the positive outcome of all preceding philosophies and as a theory of human understanding. Pannekoek

claimed for Dietzgen the position of founder of the "philosophical basis of historical materialism, but also of all other science...."⁵⁴ With his discovery of Dietzgen, Pannekoek believed he had found the "weak spot in Marxism." To Pannekoek, Dietzgen's work created for the working class a powerful weapon, "not only in proletarian economics, but also in proletarian philosophy."⁵⁵

Nineteenth Century Socialism in the Netherlands

When Pannekoek joined the Social Democratic Party, industrial capitalism was still in its infancy in the Netherlands. Sombart had called this early stage, "Werkmeistersystem."⁵⁶ Socialism in the nineteenth century, here as elsewhere, was a political and social movement in response to the rise of an indigenous industrial capitalist class which pursued profit, wealth and power through exploitation of the labourer.⁵⁷ Pannekoek characterized the factories in Holland as "medieval institutions" which practised a form of "semi-serfdom" in order to satisfy their owners' greed.⁵⁸ The development of industrial capitalism in the Netherlands differed somewhat from the experience of other Western European countries. It evolved relatively late, lagging behind Britain and even Germany. Consequently, at the turn of the century the Netherlands had not yet developed the kind of strong socialist traditions which already prevailed in other parts of Europe.

Between the years 1850 and 1870, a working class as a social unit, was ill-defined because, "wage workers were indistinguishable from the large masses, known as the people." (Het Volk included the Lumpen-Proletariat, peasants, wage earners and urban bourgeoisie.) Brugmans, an economic historian of the period, remarked that, "wages were so low that the workers could properly be deemed to be the 'poor'," He designated 1870 as the take off stage for industrial capitalist development in the Netherlands. Prior to this time, socialist ideas had made very little impact upon Dutch society.⁵⁹ The organization of labour was limited to the Nederlandsch Werklieden Verbond, established in 1871 by A.H. Gerhard, and to the Algemeen Nederlandsch Werklieden Verbond, founded in the same year by B.H. Heldt. Although both of these unions were trade and craftsmen's organizations, the former expressed a radical utopian tendency and, as a reaction to this radicalism, the latter followed a policy of co-operation with the employers.⁶⁰

In 1869, with the founding of a section of the First International in Amsterdam, a first attempt had been made to organize a workers' movement, but it only played a minor role in the First International.⁶¹ The Dutch sent no official delegates to any of its congresses until 1872,

when a small group headed by Gerhard took an active part in the proceedings relating to the great debate between Marx and Bakunin.⁶² The Dutch delegation disliked Marx's ideas and therefore, supported the minority position of Bakunin, but they did not pursue the matter any further at the subsequent Congress of the Anarchist International.

In 1877, Klaas Kater founded another employer-oriented labourers' association, the Calvinist Workers' League (Patrimonium), which based its policy on a patriarchal relationship between workers and employers.

Until the turn of the century, the labour movement, still in its initial stage, had little effect or influence on Dutch parliamentary politics. Socialism was considered a novel and fashionable idea which tended to attract, from the Dutch middle class, some students and university-educated people. In 1878, some socialist discussion groups were launched in Amsterdam, Haarlem and the Hague. It was not until the following year, however, that the groups of Sociaal Democratische Verenigingen (SD clubs) found an able spokesman in D. Nieuwenhuis, who advocated a strong international socialism. In 1881 he was instrumental in organizing the Social Democratic clubs into a Social Democratic League (Sociaal Democratisch Verbond) (SDV).⁶³ Nieuwenhuis and his SDV soon came in conflict

with Dutch law, however, and in 1886 he was incarcerated on a charge of having insulted the king (Majesteitschennis) in his efforts to organize the labourers and demand improved working conditions. The following year, with an amendment to the franchise law and because of widespread sympathy aroused by his imprisonment, he was able to win a seat in the legislature. He sat in Parliament from 1888 to 1891, when he was defeated. Nieuwenhuis' experience on both sides of the law left him convinced that nothing could be done through Parliament, and that the workers must develop their own organizations and achieve emancipation through direct industrial action.

The Social Democratic League had looked for inspiration to the 1874 Gotha programme of the German Social Democratic Party, but, in 1891, the year of the Erfurt programme, Nieuwenhuis aligned himself with the left opposition (Die Junge), which was subsequently expelled from the German party.⁶⁴ As a result, at the 1893 Groningen Congress, the majority of the Dutch Social Democratic League, under the influence of Nieuwenhuis, repudiated parliamentary action and party work in favour of anarcho-syndicalist action. At the same time, the trade union movement, which had grown up alongside of the Social Democratic League, established its own central

body, the Nederlandse Arbeiders Secretariaat (Dutch Labour Secretariat) (NAS), to pursue a broadly defined syndicalist programme of action.

The moderates in the SDV, under the leadership of P.J. Troelstra, founded their own organization, the Social Democratic Labour Party (SDAP) in 1894. Its platform was based upon the Erfurt programme of the German Social Democratic Party. The SDAP's early years were troubled from within by the antagonism between the revisionists and Marxist factions, and from without by the anarcho-syndicalist movement directed against both Social Democratic tendencies.

Troelstra, the new party's leader, leaned towards the revisionist tendency and Frank van der Goes, its Marxist theoretician, wanted to model the party on Kautsky's orthodox Marxism of the German Social Democracy. Troelstra completely dissociated the SDAP from the revolutionary tendency of Nieuwenhuis' socialism and instead, concentrated upon the immediate practical problems of a steadily growing working class. In spite of this trend, the impact of the Nieuwenhuis brand of socialism prevailed among the rank and file of the party, and the party made little progress in terms of electoral gains. In 1897 it won only two seats in Parliament.

Political culture in the Netherlands had its own unique character. The trade union movement was fractionalized into catholic, protestant, socialist-syndicalist and independent unions, corresponding to the religious and social divisions of Dutch society. Through Nieuwenhuis, the first upsurge of socialism in the Netherlands was strongly influenced by the French socialist tradition, which found expression in the initial vitality of syndicalist trade unionism. Nieuwenhuis had been strongly affected by Saint Simon, Fourier, Proudhon and Blanqui, and at the turn of the century he had been acclaimed as a spokesman for French socialism along with Paul Lafargue and Jules Guesde.⁶⁵

German influence established itself as a major force before the First World War; after the war also the impact of English Fabian socialism was felt in the Netherlands. Taken as a whole, the Dutch labour movement exhibited traits of particularism⁶⁶ which came to the fore in the tendency toward multiple party splits, numerous small parties and sectarianism.⁶⁷ The political culture of radical Dutch intellectuals, gathered around the journal De Nieuwe Tijd at the turn of the century, in no small measure reflected these characteristics.⁶⁸ One of them, P. Wiedijk, wrote as follows:

None of us were any more Marxist than could co-exist with the fact that we were half or quarter Fabians; all of us were more or less immersed in the spirit of English socialism although we swore by the German only. 69

The main attraction of the Fabians was their insistence that, "socialism could only be brought about on the basis of total democracy."⁷⁰

Under these socio-political conditions Pannekoek, in 1899, joined the Social Democratic Labour Party (SDAP). In 1903, he married Johanna Maria Nassau Noordewier, a teacher of Dutch literature; he had also become active in party politics in Leiden. He was instrumental in founding the SDAP's Leiden chapter on May 31, 1899. There were only eight people present, and this paucity of members made it necessary for Pannekoek to act as secretary, treasurer and chairman simultaneously. On February 12, 1900, with a sufficiently increased membership, an election was held--eight votes were cast for Pannekoek and five for De Graaf--whereby Pannekoek was officially made chairman.⁷¹ Along with L. Volkers, Pannekoek represented the Leiden chapter at the Rotterdam party congress, April 18-19, 1900. There he introduced a motion to establish a commission to investigate the problem of alcoholism among workers.⁷²

At the congress Pannekoek met the party notables for the first time, and this led to subsequent regular

meetings, particularly with Van der Goes and Gorter. In due course he became a frequent contributor to the party press Het Volk and its theoretical journal De Nieuwe Tijd; he became an adept debater and a popular socialist educator.

I. The Agrarian Question

Through Gorter, Pannekoek became involved in day-to-day party politics, which expressed the ideological divisions between the Marxist and revisionist tendencies. The current issue dealt with the agrarian question in which Gorter spoke for the left and Troelstra for the party majority. This question was important, not only in the Netherlands, but was given much attention in German Social Democracy at the end of the nineteenth century.⁷³

Troelstra argued that the party platform should provide for state support of agricultural workers, enabling them to acquire their own land by subsidizing its purchase. Gorter opposed the programme on the grounds that such a policy would turn a workers' party into a vehicle to be used in the defence of the interests of employers and entrepreneurs, and that it would create a rural class of "fanatic small property owners."⁷⁴ On this question, Troelstra endeavoured to win Pannekoek's support for his position, but the latter interpreted Troelstra's advances as a move to place him in opposition to Gorter.⁷⁵

The agrarian question had been discussed previously at party congresses April 5-6, 1896, in Utrecht, and April 18-19, 1897, in Arnhem. At the Utrecht party congress, this issue became a full-fledged debate.⁷⁶ Pannekoek took part in the discussions; pointing out that in his own district of Leiden marginal farmers and agricultural workers had an insatiable hunger for land, and that distribution of crown land would only create envy and competition at a time when they had just begun to demonstrate a measure of solidarity. He argued that the party should first turn its attention to more educational work, disseminating information to explain the deterioration of conditions in rural areas.⁷⁷

The question was referred to a commission whose findings were published in 1904.⁷⁸ The Marxists interpreted the findings of the commission as a victory for their position. One observer noted that Gorter had had his way, even though the report failed to find a trend towards concentration of landholdings. The findings of the commission did not terminate Social Democratic support for the small farmer.⁷⁹ Looking back on the issue in his memoirs, Troelstra felt that he had given in too completely to the commission.⁸⁰ His action was determined partly by the fact that his electoral district, at the time, was no

longer in the rural north but in industrial Amsterdam, where he had won an easy victory in the 1905 elections, without pressing the question of land policy.⁸¹

The agrarian question introduced Pannekoek to political life and to Social Democratic parliamentary politics. At the SDAP congress in April 1905, in the Hague, the agrarian issue was again on the agenda and Pannekoek participated in the discussions. Prior to this congress, the Leiden chapter of the SDAP had made proposals to the party in this regard.⁸² The issue also clarified, for the first time, the divergent views of the party's Marxist minority and the moderate majority. The most prominent Marxists: Gorter, Pannekoek, Roland-Holst, Van der Goes, Saks, Wijnkoop and Ceton were, in the words of one observer, "...revolutionary-minded Marxist proponents of inexorable class struggle." As the left faction in the SDAP, they were more determined than other members in the struggle against the bourgeoisie, and they opposed any compromise with the revisionists, the more moderate element which comprised the majority of the party.⁸³

II. The School Question

Another point of contention which emerged between Troelstra and his supporters; and Herman Gorter and the De Nieuwe Tijd group, was the school question. This issue set the SDAP's leader apart from the Marxists, who

supported public education as opposed to the Christian education advocated by the Kuijper government. As a strategem, Troelstra encouraged the principle of Christian education in order to seek the support of the large constituency of Christian Reformed workers; his action provoked criticism by the left, however, who interpreted his move as one more example of political opportunism.

Gorter again spoke on behalf of the left, defending the principle of universal public education. Although Pannekoek supported Gorter's fight against opportunism, he felt that the question of Christian education was not within the jurisdiction of any government. In his memoirs, Pannekoek refers to his position on this question as an early expression of the concept of self-government and self-management in all spheres of life.⁸⁴ He states that the type of education one should receive is not a matter for the state to decide, but a decision, "based on the conviction of the parents and teachers involved."⁸⁵

In 1901, a commission was appointed to study the relation between Christian education and Social Democracy, but in the intervening period Troelstra's point of view, which received daily coverage in the party press, had won general acceptance. At the party congress March 30-31, 1902, in Groningen, the school question was considered.

Perturbed at seeing the party newspaper being used to advance the ideas of Troelstra, Pannekoek moved that use of the lead article in Het Volk, for discussion of policy questions which had not been decided upon by the party, be prevented. After discussion, however, the Leiden motion was withdrawn.⁸⁶ Dissatisfied with the handling of the school question, Pannekoek strongly criticized the party.⁸⁷

The school question was a minor issue with few consequences, but it was yet another policy concern which set the Marxists apart from party moderates, whose first priority was to follow a strategy that would lead to their participation in Parliament, even if this meant compromising Marxist theories and principles.⁸⁸

III. The 1903 Railway Strike

Almost immediately following the debate on the school issue came the railway strike of 1903,⁸⁹ which again drew the battle lines between divergent factions in the party. Whereas, during the former policy disagreements between the Marxists and the moderates, Gorter had played the most active role in defending the views of the left, in this case it was Pannekoek who confronted the party's leader. With the spontaneously-developing strike, Troelstra followed a cautious approach; Pannekoek and the left, on the other hand, enthusiastically supported

the strike, seeing it as marking the dawn of a new revolutionary era. Van der Goes glorified this new solidarity and class unity, and warned against underestimating the power of industrial action.⁹⁰

For Pannekoek, the strike symbolized a breakthrough in class relations in the Netherlands, which might come to establish the SDAP as a revolutionary proletarian party, barring petit bourgeois elements and attracting larger numbers of industrial workers. He felt that the strike initiative would give their parliamentary representatives the active support of the masses, and that this would lead to an era of uncompromising socialist politics.⁹¹

On the front page of Het Volk, Troelstra, however, advised against a second planned mass strike.⁹² Pannekoek responded to Troelstra in words of "betrayal" of the workers' cause;⁹³ but the latter saw in Pannekoek's position an attempt to win the favour of the anarchists and syndicalists.⁹⁴ The strike committee, in spite of Troelstra's admonitions, continued the strike, which ended in total failure and in a legacy of reprisals.

The defeat of the strike was a defeat also for the revolutionary tendencies within the Dutch labour movement. The strategy of the anarcho-syndicalists, during

the strike, left Nieuwenhuis and the Dutch Labour Secretariat (NAS) at a loss and strengthened the prospects of the Social Democratic Labour Party (SDAP) as a credible parliamentary party. Following the failure of the 1903 general strike, the party at last gained a significant representation in the legislative assembly.

After the railway strike, Pannekoek was singled out as the "culprit" by Troelstra's supporters,⁹⁵ but his position was ardently supported by the entire De Nieuwe Tijd group.⁹⁶ The Marxists felt that Troelstra's hesitation in encouraging the strike at a critical moment had undermined the morale of the workers and contributed to their defeat. The response of the left to Troelstra was one of indignation and disappointment. In theoretical terms, the strike demonstrated that the SDAP had succeeded in developing the same ideological schism--revisionism versus Marxist orthodoxy--as prevailed in the German party. The strike resulted in the dismissal of all workers who had supported it, and the employers' backlash was felt for many years.⁹⁷

At the Enschede party congress in 1903, as a reaction to mounting criticism and ridicule from the anarcho-syndicalists, the party supported Troelstra and criticized the orthodox or left wing Marxists.⁹⁸ Then

came a time of apparent rest; Troelstra was less active in the party. His editorial duties were taken over by Peter Lodewijk Tak, and Pannekoek, for once, expressed his satisfaction with the operation of the Social Democratic newspaper.⁹⁹ He had no illusions, however, about the apparent calm. Confiding in Karl Kautsky, he wrote: "hard times will come upon us Marxists because our critique meets with fierce resistance; we are denounced as faultfinders who cause enmity among brothers in the party."¹⁰⁰

IV. The 1905 Elections

In 1904, it still seemed that disparate views within the party could be conciliated. At the 1905 party congress in the Hague, a Troelstra-Pannekoek motion stated that in case of by-elections, the SDAP would only support candidates of other parties who were in favour of universal male suffrage. For the Marxists this motion implied exclusion of both major bourgeois parties. In spite of the show of goodwill at the party congress, the 1905 election re-established the ideological divisions between the left and the moderates. The party executive issued a directive stating that in a by-election, voters should support candidates in favour of universal suffrage. Understandably, this excluded the major parties.

The Marxists felt that the directive should have stated, in addition, that Social Democrats should refrain from exercising the privilege to vote where candidates were opponents of the franchise. To the Marxists, this represented the essence of the Troelstra-Pannekoek motion accepted at the Hague party congress. The effect of the directive was that Social Democrats voted for the Liberal opposition party even though the latter opposed the general franchise. The desire to topple the unpopular Kuyper regime inclined Social Democrats to vote for any Liberal candidate, even if that meant a vote against the general franchise.

Indeed the result of the elections was that most of the Social Democrats overwhelmingly supported the Liberals to take revenge upon the man, Prime Minister Abraham Kuyper, who had presided over the ill-fated 1903 railway strike. As far as the Marxist left was concerned, the whole strategy of parliamentarism must be directed, as its first priority, towards the struggle for the general franchise. In the 1905 elections, however, the Marxists felt that the Social Democratic Party executive responded to latent feelings of vengeance among 'red' voters against Kuyper, to the exclusion of the principles they had just adopted at the party congress. Pannekoek was quick to

respond, explaining that parliamentary seats must be the means to bring about a revolution of the mind; that the development of class consciousness was the supreme aim of parliamentarism and that, in this case, this purpose had been sacrificed for the sake of political expediency.¹⁰¹

The ensuing polemic exacerbated the growing rift between the Marxists and the moderates.¹⁰² Troelstra anticipated the response of the Marxists towards the party's behaviour in the elections knowing that, "big things are in the offing again and that voluminous articles about our actions during the by-elections are ready for publication."¹⁰³ The editor of Het Volk, P.L. Tak, charged that, "for Dr. Pannekoek the party is a formula; ...we see in Dr. Pannekoek's allegations a lack of insight which makes his advice...in matters of party management totally useless."¹⁰⁴

The rank and file party members who, to Pannekoek, demonstrated a lack of class consciousness, easily identified with Troelstra's point of view and accepted it as their own. In a letter to the editor, several workers sided with the party executive: "...the workers' party cannot and never will flourish when the line to be followed is not established by the workers themselves, or at any rate...by those who know the life of the workers."

They felt confident that, "if sometimes action must be taken in accordance with the immediate circumstances...it is done...in the interest of the working class...."¹⁰⁵

Pannekoek was not alone in arguing that the party's principles had been forsaken. Van der Goes also engaged Troelstra in a polemic, and supported Pannekoek in his criticism of the executive.¹⁰⁶ The years 1905-1906

became a period of intense debate between the party executive and the De Nieuwe Tijd group. Not having Het Volk at his disposal, Troelstra built his case against the Marxists in a brochure detailing the infractions of party discipline since the agrarian question of 1901.¹⁰⁷ In these accusations Troelstra characterized Pannekoek more as an enfant terrible than as the serious opponent he saw in Gorter.¹⁰⁸

At the 1906 party congress in Utrecht, a motion was accepted which labelled the De Nieuwe Tijd group as harmful to the party. Troelstra now took over the editorship of Het Volk and, on the whole, Dutch Social Democracy increasingly reflected the reformist tendencies and the growing influence of the trade unions, which favoured legislative reform, leaving the Marxist intellectuals isolated from the mainstream of the party.

The editors of De Nieuwe Tijd, which had always been an independent journal, announced that henceforth

they would cease publishing articles, pamphlets and brochures on behalf of the party. As a result of the conflict between Marxists and reformists, and of the resolution directed against the Marxists, they refused to serve on the party executive. It was not until 1907, at the Haarlem party congress, that they withdrew their refusal to serve; however, the party congress declined to revoke its 1906 indictment of the Marxists.¹⁰⁹

The latter, in turn, responded to Troelstra's charges; but when a brochure entitled Wrong Party Leadership was finally completed in 1907, the author, Frank van der Goes, agreed, at Troelstra's suggestion, that only a limited number of copies should be distributed to a few party members.¹¹⁰ The younger Marxists, however, who had come to assert themselves in the party in recent years, including David Wijnkoop, Willem van Ravesteijn and J.C. Ceton, spurned the suggestion and felt the need to establish an independent publication to reach the rank and file of the party. They founded the opposition journal De Tribune,¹¹¹ on October 19, 1907, whose purpose was to combat the influence of revisionism in Dutch Social Democracy.

Pannekoek was not among those in the SDAP who felt the need to issue an independent newspaper to counter the

growth of opportunism.¹¹² He thought it more prudent to continue to work within the party and had clarified his position in several articles.¹¹³ Troelstra came to view the Marxists involved with De Tribune as "the enemy within," and he prepared the party membership for the harsh sanction he planned to take against them. Even though Pannekoek had very little to do with the Dutch party after 1906, Troelstra identified him personally with the Marxist party line.¹¹⁴

The growing ideological dissonance of revisionist and Marxist elements within the SDAP led to the expulsion of the Marxist minority by a special party congress, held February 13-14, 1909.¹¹⁵ At the 1906 Utrecht congress, it had already been noted that two distinct and opposing ideologies existed within the party, and a resolution had been accepted with a two-thirds majority, accusing the Marxists of "systematic accusations of party members."¹¹⁶ At the 1907 congress, at Haarlem, an anonymous resolution to the effect that each party member had an "inalienable right to freedom of critique,"¹¹⁷ within a larger Social Democratic frame of reference seemed to have re-established a sense of tolerance between the factions. However, it could not heal the divisions over a number of policy questions--the agrarian question, the school question, the 1903 general strike, tactics in the 1905 elections--and

party strategy in general. The subsequent establishment of the weekly De Tribune, ostensibly to generate interest among workers in the study of Marxism and to promote class consciousness was, in the opinion of the party executive, contravening the resolutions of 1906 and 1907.

In an executive meeting on December 5, 1908, the members demanded that the Tribunists "cease their attacks,"¹¹⁸ or be answerable to a special party congress to decide on their possible expulsion. On December 12, 1908, the editors of De Tribune formulated a declaration which satisfied the majority of the party executive, but in spite of this, J.H.A. Schaper, the most outspoken revisionist, soon afterwards, on December 27, 1908, convinced the party executive to use Article Ten of the statutes to declare a referendum on the question of calling a special congress to decide on whether to expel the Marxists. The referendum favoured convening such a congress--3268 votes to 1719 with 577 abstentions.¹¹⁹

The Dutch Marxists embraced two generations. As a member of the younger group most active in De Tribune, Pannekoek sensed that the, "older Marxists...would not want to leave the old party to which they had grown attached," and he considered, "the solidarity of the Marxists with their supporters," the most important consideration. In the interest of Social Democracy he,

"preferred that the Tribunists give in to the party demands," in order to gain more support for their position, and if they could not assert their point of view within the party, they ought at least to leave the party from a position of strength.¹²⁰

Before and after the special congress, Pannekoek had advised the Tribunists to comply with the party executive's demands, so as to maintain unity among the Marxists. He was not surprised, however, that his advice had gone unheeded, and he agreed reluctantly that, "they were right in not bowing to the pressure of the majority."¹²¹

As Pannekoek had anticipated, the outcome was that Henriette Roland-Holst and Frank van der Goes, both of the older generation, opted to stay in the party¹²² and to continue their work in a new weekly supplement to the party daily entitled Het Weekblad.¹²³ In his correspondence with Kautsky, Pannekoek criticized his passive attitude towards the expulsion of the Tribunists and he implied that Kautsky had "deserted" the Marxists and "supported" Troelstra's position. Pannekoek wrote to Kautsky:

If you had acted decisively it would have been questionable whether the party majority would have gone to extremes. But now that Troelstra sees that he has nothing to fear from you he takes the most extreme measures against the Tribune. 124

Even Gorter's attempt to have the secretary of the Second International, Camile Huijsmans, mediate the conflict failed,¹²⁵ and the first congress of the new Social Democratic Party was held on May 23, 1909, with only fifty members in attendance.¹²⁶ On behalf of the Sociaal Democratische Partij (SDP) executive and members, Pannekoek addressed the International to explain the reasons for the formation of the new party and to win support from the community of international socialists.¹²⁷ In the Netherlands, the SDP attempted to join the Second International, but the resolution for its entry at the eleventh sitting of the International Socialist Bureau, Brussels on November 7, 1909, was defeated by a margin of 16 to 11, with Lenin as the Russian Social Democratic Party (RSDP) Bolshevik representative voting in favour of admission.¹²⁸

Despite their isolation from the mainstream, reformist, Social Democratic movement in the Netherlands, and despite their failure to be admitted to the Second International, the Tribunists as a whole became one of the more influential splinter groups among independent left wing organizations. The group's importance, however, could not be inferred from the number of its followers. It remained primarily a left sectarian political group of Socialist Democratic workers and intellectuals, and

its membership before 1914 was never more than 500 in number, compared to 50,000 members and thirteen seats in Parliament for the SDAP by 1913.

Although Pannekoek had been in Germany during this stage of the development of socialism in the Netherlands, he remained, with Gorter, the leading theoretical spokesman¹²⁹ in the SDP, while Van Ravesteijn, Wijnkoop and Ceton, along with other young members, directed party business and the party press. In light of class relations in the Netherlands, at the turn of the century, Pannekoek analysed the events which had led up to the party split. Since the inception of the Social Democratic Party, Marxism had been considered the ideology of parliamentarism, and Troelstra had initially emerged as the most outspoken Marxist to oppose the predominance of the anti-parliamentary anarchism led by Nieuwenhuis.

As the franchise was in effect in the rural areas, where the economy was based on small property holdings, and in the urban centres where only workers in a high income bracket were eligible to vote, large numbers of industrial and agricultural workers were in effect disenfranchised. As a result, the Social Democratic Labour Party depended, to a large extent, on the rural lower middle classes--small farmers, shopkeepers, independent trades and craftsmen. Marxism and parliamentarism proved

to be mutually exclusive elements, and the party's efforts to win as many votes as possible came into conflict with the teachings of Marxism. It became an obstacle to the practical requirements of parliamentarism. Troelstra approached Marxism from the point of view of parliamentarism, and he eventually came to consider these unpragmatic exponents of Marxist teachings as his political enemies.¹³⁰

Social Democratic Politics in the Netherlands

The development of a theory of parliamentarism and extra-parliamentarism must be seen against the background of Social Democratic politics in the Netherlands. At the turn of the century, universal franchise had not been attained. The extension of the franchise to include unpropertied workers was a prime objective of the Social Democratic Labour Party. Pannekoek's ideas were generally in agreement with the declaration of principles determined at the first congress of the party held at Deventer, April 14-15, 1894. Its preamble had a decidedly Marxist tone and was based upon the Erfurt Programme of the SPD:

Under the influence of the economic revolution a part of the proletariat has united itself for the purpose of promoting a system of socialist production. In striving for this the proletariat meets the opposition of the possessing class which uses the state power to maintain the existing economic system, with the support of that part of the proletariat that has not yet become conscious of

its task as a revolutionary class. From these relations the class struggle has developed, which exhibits itself in the struggle of an independent labour party for political power, and the stimulation of class consciousness among the workers, as well as in the struggle of the trade unions for improved working conditions. The party shall support every economical or political movement of the workers to obtain a better standard of living in such a way as to stimulate their class consciousness and strengthen their power vis-à-vis the possessing class. 131

The struggle for political power, however, was perceived as having two components: the struggle for civil rights and the struggle for a majority of workers' representatives in Parliament.¹³² Such was the pre-occupation with civil rights that at the party congress, April 2-3, 1899, held at Leeuwarden, the decision was made, "to establish permanent bureaux with the task of securing universal suffrage for the...workers."¹³³ The party was adamant in its insistence upon the right of the working class, through the Social Democratic Labour Party, to have a voice in the affairs of state and, "to wage with all legal means at its disposal an untiring and unyielding struggle for an amendment to the constitution to establish universal suffrage."¹³⁴ To this end the party instructed, "all workers' organizations...to join committees for universal suffrage in order to wage a powerful campaign...."¹³⁵

In this context of civil rights agitation, "politics" for Pannekoek meant, "to work for, force and conquer the

whole state power," and to arouse, through the party, a powerful political movement for the general franchise.¹³⁶ Troelstra, the party leader, agreed with Pannekoek that, "the party must spend all its energy on agitation for the general franchise."¹³⁷ Such activities were part of a wider parliamentary strategy; but while "the conquest of state power" was a Marxist euphemism for parliamentary representation for Troelstra, for Pannekoek it meant an operative procedure in the revolutionary process towards acquiring class consciousness.

Pannekoek's views on parliamentary politics were less optimistic than those held by most Social Democratic politicians. He cautioned that, "in a country with a limited franchise, the centre of [political] gravity... cannot lie in parliament," and that in pursuing parliamentarism as an end in itself, there is a danger that the party will attach too much significance to parliamentary tactics, and that as a result, the party would serve political expedience rather than a political strategy to provoke class awareness.¹³⁸

If Pannekoek had reservations about the practical usefulness of parliamentarism alone, as a vehicle for working class emancipation, it was due to the fact that many workers were barred from participation in elections, and because, in the pursuit of parliamentarism, there

was a tendency to lose sight of the all-encompassing purpose of socialism; class consciousness and emancipation through education. In this context, Cajo Brendel rightly remarks that the difference between the Dutch Marxists of that time and the Social Democratic politicians of Troelstra's type was primarily this: "that the former resisted the immediate gains sought by the politicians in favour of what they considered 'the larger and general purpose of socialism' and that apart from that there were no ideological differences between them."¹³⁹

In emphasizing universal suffrage, the Dutch Social Democratic Party was merely imitating the success of the German Social Democratic Party. Pannekoek showed himself to be an avid proponent of aggressive party action in aid of universal suffrage, eager to emulate the parliamentary success of the German Social Democrats,¹⁴⁰ but he emphasized parliamentary strategy above all as a means to educate the masses.

From the time of Pannekoek's joining the Dutch Social Democratic Party, his thought reflected the Kautskyite Marxism of German Social Democracy, which in the Netherlands found its ablest spokesmen among the Marxists associated with De Nieuwe Tijd (and from 1907, De Tribune) and the left wing of the party. Like Kautsky,

Pannekoek opposed Bernstein's revisionism on the right, which in terms of the struggle of ideas, he saw as a Kantian bourgeois challenge to Marx's historical materialism.

Pannekoek saw the rise of revisionism and the crisis of Marxism to centre on the resurrection of the ideas of Kant. Ethical considerations and ideals, rather than the class struggle implied in the Marxist dialectic, had attracted many intellectuals to socialism who had little commitment to Marxism. The newest disciples of Kant based their critique of Marxism on his philosophical system.¹⁴¹ Pannekoek argued that the scientific representatives of the ruling class were in need of an ideology which could counteract the teachings of socialism. The philosophical system of Kant was revised to suit the changing economic conditions. The new followers of Kant-- Hermann Cohen, Paul Natorp, K. Vorlander and Franz Staudinger¹⁴²--emphasized the ideals of freedom and justice, making the new Kantians the proponents of an ameliorated ethical capitalism which could offer a viable alternative to the ideology of socialism.¹⁴³

In search of an ethical capitalist society the neo-Kantians soon were driven inexorably towards the socialist camp; however, because the practice of capitalism could not be reconciled with the Kantian demands for universal

freedom and human rights, neo-Kantians gave the impetus for a revision of Marxism in which the ethical demands of Kantianism could find expression. The formulation of Marxism had to be deprived of its historical materialist and dialectical base and replaced with Kant's ideal categories.¹⁴⁴ Theoretically, the neo-Kantians rejected the materialist basis of socialism in favour of an ethical, teleological world view, which emphasized the belief that design was immanent in nature, and that life was not exclusively determined by material causes, but has a spiritual foundation as expressed in religious doctrine. Bernstein's thesis that the transformation of society could be brought about gradually and legitimately through bourgeois institutions, and that Marx's prognosis of a revolutionary transformation of the modes of production had been invalidated by recent history, became the political expression of Kantian idealism and bourgeois values.¹⁴⁵

To counter the increasing influence of Bernstein's ideas, Pannekoek sensed the need for the study of Marxist theory, and as early as 1903 he felt compelled to take up the teaching of Marxism. Writing to van der Goes, Pannekoek expressed concern about the demise of Marxist science:

Through all this Bernsteinian nonsense, there has emerged among the younger generation...the notion that Marxism is not a very scientific

system. They are already somewhat hesistant and they have insufficient faith in the value of their own teachings. That attitude has to go. Confidence must come again. Young people have to be made aware what a solid building Marxism is. Then they will start to study again...and become practitioners with a solid theoretical foundation...I am convinced that after revisionism as an expression of reaction there will come a time of more appreciation for the theoretical and its study... Therefore above all else a new generation must be educated. Those who grow up must have confidence in the insights of political theory. 146

On the left, Pannekoek considered the influence of anarchism more harmful to the labour movement than Bernstein's revisionism. Unlike the revisionist, the advocates of anarchism would be a loss to the Social Democratic labour movement. His critique of the anarchist movement and its anti-parliamentary practice in the Netherlands was severe. He characterized the anarchist ideal and theory as "totally reactionary," representing the petit bourgeoisie and peasantry as hostile to the organization of the working class,¹⁴⁷ and its struggle for universal suffrage and parliamentary democracy. His critique of anarchism followed Kautsky's, who had characterized every form of class struggle aimed at the immediate overthrow of the existing order as a "children's disease."¹⁴⁸

The struggle for the franchise and the use of parliamentarism by the working class came to be known as revolutionary parliamentarism. Engels had alluded to the revolutionary potential of Parliament in 1895 when he out-

lined the basic features of parliamentarism.¹⁴⁹ He welcomed the example of the German Social Democratic Party to advance the cause of socialism by making use of the universal suffrage, and reiterated that the Communist Manifesto had proclaimed securing universal suffrage and democracy as one of the most important tasks of the working class. Quoting the preamble written by Marx to the programme of the French Workers' Party in 1880, Engels wrote:

The franchise has been, in the words of the French Marxist programme, transformé, de moyen de duperie qu'il a été jusqu'ici, en instrument d'emancipation--transformed by them from a means of deception, which it was before, into an instrument of emancipation.

Parliamentarism, Engels recognized, provided a platform to influence those workers who had stood aloof from the socialist movement. In terms of the education of the workers and the promotion of class consciousness, parliament gave a sense of authority to the socialist cause superior to the press or public assemblies. Universal suffrage disclosed a new dimension to the proletarian struggle as workers participated in elections, and with the bourgeoisie, contested every public office which affected their lives. Engels wrote that, "the bourgeoisie and the government came to be much more afraid of the legal than the illegal action of the workers' party, of the

results of elections than of those of rebellion."¹⁵⁰ He held that the latter had, to a considerable extent, become obsolete.

In this context, Pannekoek defined five characteristics of revolutionary parliamentarism. For Pannekoek Parliament should serve: first, as a conduit for propaganda; second, as a forum to expose the deceit of the bourgeois parties; third, as a public body which could enable the proletariat to gain experience through participation in the political struggle; fourth, as a legislative unit to enact useful and necessary legislation for the working class; and fifth, as a tribune on behalf of the workers in revolutionary times.¹⁵¹

According to Pannekoek, success in elections should not be sought solely in such tangible forms as the number of votes cast for the Social Democratic Party, or the size of the workers' organization, but rather in the subjective qualities of class consciousness, namely: energy, discipline, pride, self-sacrifice, and a spirit of inquiry. Organizations, he argued, could be wiped out and the positive effects and gains of parliamentarism could disappear with a simple change in the rules. What mattered was the cultivation of a revolutionary spirit or state of mind.

For Pannekoek these revolutionary values were indestructible and would grow with the development of the struggle. In the modern labour movement the guide to action is, "...that man can emancipate society only if he emancipates and ennobles himself."¹⁵² In itself, winning seats in Parliament meant very little; it must be a means towards the evolution of working class consciousness. This he considered the ultimate principle and "highest purpose"¹⁵³ of parliamentarism. The material world and the philosophical world were interdependent. One could not change the structure of society without changing the structure of consciousness, or vice versa. Parliamentarism was a means of advancing a fundamental spiritual revolution by waging a relentless battle against the steadfast traditional ideas of the ruling class.

This struggle Pannekoek saw as a necessary aspect of the social class struggle.¹⁵⁴ To use parliamentarism exclusively to introduce useful and necessary legislation rather than to have it serve as a rostrum for the ideological struggle against traditional ideas, Pannekoek saw as the major drawback of revisionism. He wrote to Kautsky, "Revisionists are opponents of everything principled."¹⁵⁵

The purpose of parliamentarism was not merely to gain a measure of influence, to force the ruling class to take into consideration the political demands of the workers, but also, "to conquer political power." With the limited franchise he considered securing power through Parliament an "extremely difficult" objective; therefore, "the struggle for the general franchise must be the first priority."¹⁵⁶ With other orthodox Marxists, Pannekoek looked to Kautsky for theoretical leadership and regarded Parliament as an institution which would, on balance, serve rather than obstruct the cause of the working class. He argued that, "in countries where the bourgeoisie has rooted out the remnants of feudalism...the long dominion of the bourgeoisie has developed many liberties and democratic institutions which now serve the working class well in its struggle."¹⁵⁷

Capitalism could not have developed, as it had, into a powerful economic system without the freedoms necessary to enter into competition. While these were specifically liberal demands, advanced long before the rise of a socialist party, the implementation and success of a socialist strategy depended on the full utilization of liberal choice and institutions. "In its fight for socialism the working class does not need any other means

than these in order to capture political dominion and force its way towards a socialist society."¹⁵⁸

By implication then, Pannekoek's Marxism, while emphasizing class consciousness as a revolution of the mind, saw Parliament as the legitimate instrument to bring about a socialist society. Violence was not needed as a revolutionary tactic, and he argued, as did Engels,¹⁵⁹ "that the power of the proletariat will grow as long as it uses the rights...which are inherent in capitalism and consequently are recognized as law by the bourgeois state."¹⁶⁰ Utilizing the methods of bourgeois legitimacy forces the adversaries of socialism into an illegal stance, "breaking their own laws and committing acts of violence, by which they lose the support of the large masses and cause a crisis of legitimacy which would draw the masses towards the socialist party."¹⁶¹

Although Pannekoek differed from many Social Democrats in that he did not see parliamentarism as an end in itself but as a means to the education of the workers, he shared many attitudes of the Social Democrats he was later to attack as paternalist. Pannekoek, in common with the mainstream of Social Democrats, opposed the anarcho-syndicalist repudiation of party politics and parliamentary strategies. In addition, he stood in marked contrast to the anarcho-syndicalist who saw no

role for intellectuals in the leadership of a working class movement. In drawing upon the Communist Manifesto,¹⁶² Pannekoek saw the usefulness of and need for those who had deserted the camp of the bourgeoisie to declare their solidarity with the proletariat, " to play a leading role in the movement."¹⁶³ Pannekoek recognized the dominant position of the intelligentsia in the Social Democratic movement, and with other Social Democrats he believed that knowledge equalled power:

The knowledge and science which the proletariat needs in its struggle ensures deserters from the intelligentsia a field of action and employment. The theoretical foundation of socialism is laid by members of the intelligentsia. Everywhere they have taken leading places among the writers and parliamentary representatives of the working class. 164

In many respects Pannekoek's views were as elitist as the parliamentary socialists and trade unionists he subsequently attacked. Like many intellectuals who had found their niche as leaders, teachers, functionaries, writers and parliamentarians in the Social Democratic movement, he too believed that the masses had to be exposed to a socialist education before the future could be theirs.

The future belongs to the workers, but most of them do not know it yet. To them we want to teach socialism to deliver them from stupor and indifference and despondency; to fight for a beautiful future, for liberation from misery and need. 165

It was anathema to most Dutch Social Democratic leaders of the time to think of the working class as being self-activated, as opposed to being led by 'working class' leaders, parliamentarians, and trade union officials. At this time Pannekoek shared these attitudes which he only repudiated after intimate contact with German workers from 1910-1914. His writings of 1905 and 1906 do not manifest any faith in the ability of workers to emancipate themselves, to formulate an independent ideology, and to construct institutions independent of Parliament and the unions, through which workers could govern themselves. Pannekoek appeared to think that only those who were educated and had received a middle class upbringing were predisposed by virtue of environment and social class to provide the leadership required to emancipate the proletariat. Excellence within the working class was the exception rather than the rule, Pannekoek believed, and he took for granted the necessity of leadership by an intelligentsia drawn from the middle class and the bourgeoisie:

Due to their deprived social stratum the qualities necessary for leading positions are to be found among members of the oppressed classes only, as an exception, and are to be found more easily among members of the ruling class on account of their education and upbringing. 166

Pannekoek's attitude reflected his middle class background and his university training, both of which predisposed him towards elitism. His contact with workers and working class life was reflected by the distance which separates the lecturer from his audience. In his first lecture, given in Germany, he boldly declared that, "we endeavoured to bring the political and economic power into the hands of the proletariat,"¹⁶⁷ and at one point he referred to, "persons who are only half-won for our cause," and therefore, "half of our work to make socialists out of them still has to be done."¹⁶⁸ The young Pannekoek's ideas of party functionaries bringing Social Democracy to the people were indicative of a conception of socialism which stands in sharp contrast to his later insistence that, "revolutionary movements cannot be party actions... but erupt spontaneously from the masses."¹⁶⁹

Much of Pannekoek's early writing was characterized by a conception of socialism as "conversions" made by an intellectual elite among the masses who were not yet convinced of the advantage of having socialist representatives fighting in Parliament for a "socialist society." The prevailing notion in Social Democratic circles, to which Pannekoek was no exception, was that, "the general franchise puts power in the hands of the people," in which

"the capitalist minority sinks away." Social Democrats believed that a parliamentary majority represented a defeat of the interests of capital and did not anticipate the difficulty of overthrowing capitalism in Parliament.¹⁷⁰

Over time, however, Pannekoek became increasingly critical of this naive vision of people's power. In 1906, he pointed out that in practice, "democratic forms offer an excellent protection for capitalist rule" because, "the masses are struck in awe by democratic form and content." However, Parliament leaves real power to the capitalists, and as a result, "the presentation of...democracy is one of the best means to deceive the workers and to prevent the emergence of...class consciousness."¹⁷¹

Pannekoek at this time supported parliamentarism because he thought the struggle for universal suffrage would raise consciousness and make possible the economic revolution from capitalism to socialism.¹⁷² By implication, universal suffrage had a lofty purpose: a revolutionary role in the development of class consciousness and social production. In many respects Pannekoek's analysis was constrained by a parliamentary paradigm as well, and like party officials and parliamentarians he also saw the realization of a socialist society by way of a socialist majority in Parliament which would enact socialist legislation:

The general franchise means an open door for the dominion of the masses... Without universal suffrage parliamentary action of our party can go no further than minority protests and propaganda ...; with universal suffrage parliament is the place where one has a good chance of success to contest the hegemony of the capitalist class.¹⁷³

In contrast with the emphasis of his approach at later stages in his career, Pannekoek at this time saw Parliament as the, "real domain of the class struggle where decisive battles are fought."¹⁷⁴ Parliament was an institution created and controlled by the bourgeoisie as a means to control the state apparatus, and through it the whole of society where different groups struggle for power and influence. Pannekoek argued that, as long as there are no socialists in Parliament, only the interests of the possessing class are brought forward. This creates the illusion that these interests represent the interests of the people as a whole.¹⁷⁵ The usefulness of Parliament to the working class, he argued, should not be overestimated. This would result in giving Social Democracy a bourgeois direction, in becoming enmeshed in the thought processes of bourgeois parliamentarism. This is how Pannekoek outlined the essential difference between the implications and meaning of parliamentarism for the bourgeoisie and the working class: for the former, he claimed that, "the struggle in parliament is pursued as an end in itself to provide for its general class interest...with the means of the state power at its disposal the bourgeoisie

carries through its objectives against all resistance."¹⁷⁶

For the working class, however, the struggle in Parliament cannot be an end in itself but only a means to an end.

Parliament is an alien institution to the working class, not of its creation, "which is used as a weapon to attain something else."¹⁷⁷ The bourgeoisie see Parliament as the institution through which it already rules; whereas, to the working class, Parliament is only a potential route to power, but not necessarily the only means to consolidate and maintain power.

Parliamentary representation alone does not achieve much for the working class. To further its own interests, and to abolish the use of state power in the service of the capitalist class, the workers, Pannekoek thought, must obtain a political hegemony which supersedes parliamentarism. However, at this stage of Pannekoek's intellectual and political development, he lacked a clear idea of how workers could institutionalize political hegemony. His primary concern was to emphasize the power of the collective consciousness of the working class. His departure for Germany and his consequent break with the Dutch Social Democratic Workers' Party after the expulsion of the Marxists in 1907 gave cause for Pannekoek's ensuing radicalism in the more propitious German political climate.

* Unless otherwise indicated, all English translations have been done by Marinus Boekelman.

¹ Anton Pannekoek, "Herinneringen" (unpublished manuscript, 1944), p. 2.

² In 1885, the star Sirius was Pannekoek's first introduction to astronomy. He returned to it later in one of his articles, "Sirius," Die Neue Zeit I (1907-1908), pp. 669-72. Cited in Anton Pannekoek, "Sterrekundige Herinneringen" (unpublished manuscript).

³ A. Kaiser, Sterrenhemel; Wilhelm Brünnow, Spherische Astronomy; and Friedrich Wilhelm August Argelander, Atlas des Nördlichen Gestirnten Himmels (Bonn, 1899). Cited in Pannekoek, "Sterrekundige Herinneringen," p. 1.

⁴ Although much has been written about the social and economic conditions in the Netherlands during this era, the only authentic document about the squalid social conditions was written by a pauper's child, Neel Doff. Her experiences in the 1870s were first published as Jours de famine et de détresse, in 1911. Several editions have been issued in French, Russian and English. Never having had the benefits of an adequate Dutch education, she wrote only in French. Only recently has a proper Dutch translation appeared in the Netherlands: Neel Doff, Dagen van honger en ellende (Amsterdam, 1970). The rural poverty of this period is also illustrated in van Gogh's early paintings, i.e., 'The Potato Eaters.'

⁵ Pannekoek, "Herinneringen," p. 1.

⁶ N.G. Pierson, Leerboek der staathuiskunde (Haarlem, 1884-1890). Cited in Pannekoek, "Herinneringen," p. 1.

⁷ Pannekoek, "Herinneringen," p. 1.

⁸ Ibid., p. 1.

⁹ Ibid., p. 1.

¹⁰ Edward Bellamy, Equality (Toronto, 1897), The Dutch translation is entitled Gelijkheid voor allen (The Hague, n.d.). Cited in Pannekoek, "Herinneringen," p. 2. Pannekoek had also read Looking Backward, Bellamy's first novel, in Dutch translation, In het jaar 2000, translated by Frank van der Goes (Amsterdam, 1890). He thought it superior to Equality as a literary work, but not as political economy. Cited in Pannekoek, "Herinneringen," p. 2.

¹¹ Bellamy, Equality, p. 18.

¹² Ibid., p. 115.

¹³ Ibid., p. 305.

¹⁴ Ibid., p. 329.

¹⁵ Ibid., p. 353.

¹⁶ Pannekoek, "Herinneringen," p. 2.

¹⁷ Ibid., p.. 2.

¹⁸ Ibid., p. 3.

¹⁹ De Nieuwe Tijd (1896-1921) was a Social Democratic monthly founded by Frank van der Goes. At one time its editors were Herman Gorter, Anton Pannekoek, W. van Ravesteijn and Henriette Roland-Holst. It was intended as an independent scientific and cultural voice for the newly founded SDAP in 1894. Later it became a revolutionary socialist journal. De Nieuwe Tijd was of particular importance in 1917-1918. Then Anton Pannekoek and Herman Gorter, for the first time, published their critique on the Comintern and the Russian Revolution. The journal reflects the development of socialism in the Netherlands and of the Dutch School of Marxism on the international scene. De Nieuwe Tijd ceased publication in 1921 due to irreconcilable political differences between Anton Pannekoek and Henriette Roland-Holst, who favoured continued support for the Bolshevik regime.

²⁰ Karl Marx, Het kapitaal I, translated by Frank van der Goes (Amsterdam, 1901). Cited in Pannekoek, "Herinneringen," p. 4.

²¹ Erick Adiches, ed., Kant-Studien (Kiel, 1895); Friedrich Paulson, Immanuel Kant, Sein Leben und seine Lehre (Stuttgart, 1898). Cited in Pannekoek, "Herinneringen," p. 5.

²² Wilhelm Windelband, Geschichte der Philosophie (Freiburg, 1892). Cited in Pannekoek, "Herinneringen," p. 5.

²³ Joseph Dietzgen, Das Akquisit der Philosophie und Briefe über Logik (Stuttgart, 1895); Joseph Dietzgen, Streifzüge eines Sozialisten in das Gebiet der Erkenntnistheorie (Zurich, 1887); and Joseph Dietzgen, Das Wesen der menschlichen Kopfarbeit (Stuttgart, 1869). The last work was later published in English as The Positive Outcome of Philosophy: the Nature of Human Brainwork, translated by E. Untermann, introduced by A. Pannekoek (Chicago, 1906).

Joseph Dietzgen, "Het wezen van den menschlijken hoofdarbeid," De Nieuwe Tijd (1902), pp. 285-88, 324-33, 501-13, 564-79 & 771-96. It was also issued as a brochure, Het wezen van den menschlijken hoofdarbeid, translated by Herman Gorter (Amsterdam, n.d.). It was republished by the Group of International Communists, Holland in 1935. Recently reissued: Joseph Dietzgen, Das Wesen der menschlichen Kopfarbeit und andere Schriften (Darmstadt, 1973), and as L'essence du travail intellectuel, edited by J.P. Osier (Paris, 1973).

²⁴ Dietzgen, Positive Outcome, p. 337.

²⁵ Ibid., pp. 63-4.

²⁶ Ibid., p. 181.

²⁷ Ibid., p. 180.

²⁸ John Gerber, "The Formation of Pannekoek's Marxism," Pannekoek and the Workers' Councils, edited by Serge Bricianer (St. Louis, 1978), p. 4. I am indebted to Gerber's insightful analysis of the philosophical foundations of Pannekoek's thought.

²⁹ Dietzgen, Positive Outcome, p. 48.

³⁰ Ibid., pp. 257-58..

³¹ Ibid., p. 79.

³² Frederick Engels, "Feuerbach and the End of Classical Philosophy," Selected Works 3 (Moscow, 1970), pp. 362-3.

³³ Ibid., p. 361.

³⁴ Dietzgen, L'essence du travail intellectuel, p. 8.
See also pp. 225-40.

³⁵ Cited in ibid., p. 227. The complete text of Dietzgen's works studied by Lenin, including his remarks in the margins, was published in L'essence du travail intellectuel, edited by J.P. Osier, pp. 113-221.

³⁶ Gerber, "Formation of Pannekoek's Marxism," p. 4.

³⁷ Pannekoek, "Herinneringen," p. 19.

³⁸ Anton Pannekoek, "The Position and Significance of J. Dietzgen's Philosophical Works," in Dietzgen, Positive Outcome, p. 15.

³⁹ Anton Pannekoek, "De filosofie van Kant en het Marxism," De Nieuwe Tijd (1901), pp. 549-64, 605-20 & 669-88; and Anton Pannekoek, De Filosofie van Kant en het Marxism (n.p., n.d.).

⁴⁰ Pannekoek, "De filosofie van Kant en het Marxism," p. 620.

⁴¹ Ibid., p. 683.

⁴² Anton Pannekoek, Untersuchungen über den Lichtwechsel algols (Ph. D. dissertation, Leiden, 1902).

⁴³ Pannekoek, "Herinneringen," p. 22.

⁴⁴Pannekoek's first contribution to Die Neue Zeit was "Historischer Materialismus und Religion," Die Neue Zeit 2 (1903-1904), pp. 133-42 & 180-6.

⁴⁵Diétzgen, Positive Outcome, p. 37.

⁴⁶Ibid., p. 17.

⁴⁷Ibid.

⁴⁸Ibid., p. 21.

⁴⁹Ibid., p. 15.

⁵⁰Ibid., p. 23.

⁵¹Ibid., pp. 24-5.

⁵²Ibid., pp. 27-8.

⁵³Ibid., p. 28.

⁵⁴Ibid., p. 32.

⁵⁵Ibid., p. 37.

⁵⁶I.J. Brugmans, De arbeidende klasse in Nederland in de 19e eeuw (The Hague, 1925), p. 59. Sombart characterized this form of early capitalist enterprise as "Werkmeistersystem," W. Sombart, Der Moderne Kapitalismus (Munich, 1922), p. 836; - and Otto Pringsheim, "Beiträge zur wirtschaftlichen Entwicklungsgeschichte der Vereinigten Niederlande im 17. und 18. Jahrhundert," Staats und socialwissenschaftliche Forschungen 10, no. 3 (Leipzig, 1890), pp. 1-120.

⁵⁷Martin Schouten, De socialen zijn in aantocht: de Nederlandse arbeidersbeweging in de negentiende eeuw (Amsterdam, 1976).

⁵⁸ Anton Pannekoek, "Van de Leidsche katoenfabriek," Het Volk, 10 August 1902.

⁵⁹ I.J. Brugmans, Paardekracht en Mensenmacht, Sociaal-Economische geschiedenis van Nederland 1795-1940 (The Hague, 1961), p. 190. In the Netherlands, 1850-1870 is a period of transition. Prior to 1850 and after 1870, one can speak of "two different worlds," ibid., p. 286. In this context, Henriette Roland-Holst remarks that, "one who reads the books and brochures in which the condition of the Dutch proletariat is recorded during the first 75 years of the 19th century feels the throat being throttled from grief." Henriette Roland-Holst, Kapitaal en arbeid in Nederland I (Nijmegen, 1973), pp. 88-9.

J.P. Kruijt's portrait of the Dutch workers in the second half of the nineteenth century is as follows: "They have poorly developed intellectual skills, an extremely high percentage of illiteracy, poor vocational skills, an inadequate sense of self-esteem, a passive acceptance of wretchedness." J.P. Kruijt, "Sociale tegenstellingen en democratisch socialisme," Volkseenheid (n.p., n.d.), p. 59. "Prior to 1874, child labour was not governed by any legislation whatsoever." B. Bijmolt, "Kinderarbeid voor 1874," De Socialistische Gids XI (March-September 1926).

⁶⁰ For the development of the early labour movement in the Netherlands see A.J.C. Ruter, "Hoofdtrekken der Nederlandse arbeidersbeweging in de jaren 1876-1883," Review for Social History II & IV (Leiden, 1938-1939); A.J.C. Ruter, "Arbeidersbeweging in Nederland," Winkler Prins Encyclopedie 12, 6th edition (Amsterdam), p. 340. One of the earliest labour history studies dealing with the period 1789-1891 indicates that the first signs of a labour movement were to be found in Amsterdam and from there spread throughout the Netherlands. B. Bijmolt, Geschiedenis der arbeidersbeweging in Nederland (Nijmegen, 1894).

⁶¹ Jacques J. Giele, De eerste internationale in Nederland, een onderzoek naar het ontstaan van de Nederlandse arbeidersbeweging van 1868-1876 (Nijmegen, 1973).

62 Pannekoek often returned to the Marx-Bakunin debate, "I think it must be clear that council organization forms the synthesis of the views that in the preceding century seemed to stand in complete antagonism. There, the goals of organization and freedom are combined into a harmonious unit." In the Marx-Bakunin dichotomy, "it was the problem how to unite organization and freedom into one form and method of revolutionary action." Anton Pannekoek to Kenafiek, 26 May 1949, Pannekoek Archive Map 108/8, IISG, Amsterdam.

63 B. Bijmolt, "Een halve eeuw geleden oprichting van de sociaal-democratische vereeniging in 1878," De Socialistische Gids XIII (July 1928). See also P. van Horssen and D. Rietveld, "De Sociaal Democratische Bond een onderzoek naar het ontstaan van haar afdelingen en haar sociale structuur," Tijdschrift voor Sociale Geschiedenis (May 1975), pp. 5-71.

64 Domela F. Nieuwenhuis, Le socialisme en danger (Paris, 1895). In this work he refers to the expulsion of the 'new left' (Die Junge). Also see Domela F. Nieuwenhuis, Les divers courants de la Democratie Socialiste Allemande (Brussels, 1892).

65 Domela F. Nieuwenhuis, Van Christen tot anarchist, edited by Albert de Jong (Utrecht, 1971), pp. 85-6.

66 The political theory which leaves each group, association, or state, within a larger organization or federation, free to promote its own particular interest without regard for the whole.

67 A.A. de Jong, "Splittings in de socialistische beweging in Nederland," Socialisme en Democratie (Amsterdam, 1971), pp. 337-43. This tendency has been no less pronounced in the development of Dutch communism after 1918. Frits Kool; "Communism in Holland: a Study in Futility," Problems of Communism IX, no. 5 (September-October 1960), pp. 17-24.

68 For a discussion of Dutch political culture see J.P. Kruijt, Het Nederlandse Volkskarakter en het socialisme (Arnhem, n.d.), p. 62.

⁶⁹ Cited in Sam de Wolff, En toch 1 (Amsterdam, 1951), p. 97.

⁷⁰ F.M. Wibaut, Levensbouw (Memoirs) (Amsterdam, 1936), p. 91. Wibaut promoted the introduction of Fabian literature into the Netherlands and was active in its translation. As a wealthy businessman he felt, as did the English Fabians, that socialist propaganda must, above all, be promoted among the privileged classes rather than among the workers.

⁷¹ "Notulenboek van de afdeling Leiden der SDAP, 1899-1903: huishoudelijke vergadering," 12 February 1900, IISG, Amsterdam.

⁷² Anton Pannekoek, "Arbeidskracht en rust," De Nieuwe Tijd (1899-1900). It was widely felt that alcohol had an affect on the emergence of class consciousness among workers and prevented them from fighting for the improvement of their social conditions. Emile van der Velde, "Het alcoholisme en de arbeidsvoorwaarden in België," De Nieuwe Tijd (1899-1900), pp. 257-74; F.U. Schmidt, "Alkoholisme en socialisme," De Nieuwe Tijd (1899-1900), pp. 179-92; H. Roland-Holst, "Arbeiders en alcohol: verslag der enquête over het drankvraagstuk. Gehouden door het maandschrift De Nieuwe Tijd," De Nieuwe Tijd (1902), pp. 525-36 & 601-18; D.J. Wijnkoop, "Arbeidende klasse en alcoholisme," De Nieuwe Tijd (1904), pp. 830-33; and Henriette Roland-Holst, Arbeiders en alcohol (St. Anna-Parochie Kuiken, n.d.). Uitgave der Nederlandsche vereeniging tot afschaffing van alcoholhoudende dranken.

⁷³ Karl Kautsky, Die Agrarfrage (Stuttgart, 1899); Massimo Salvadori, Karl Kautsky and the Socialist Revolution, 1880-1938 (London, 1979), pp. 48-59.

⁷⁴ The polemic in regard to the agrarian question can be found in the following: P.J. Troelstra, "Het agrarisch program," De Nieuwe Tijd (1901), pp. 244-50; H. Gorter, "Troelstra tegen Kautsky," De Nieuwe Tijd (1901), pp. 251-55; and P.J. Troelstra, "Repliek," De Nieuwe Tijd (1901), pp. 251-55.

⁷⁵ Pannekoek, "Herinneringen," p. 6.

⁷⁶W.H. Vliegen, Die onze kracht ontwaken deed, een geschiedenis van de SDAP I (Amsterdam, 1924-1938), p. 130.

⁷⁷Jaarverslag SDAP (1901), p. 21.

⁷⁸The commission consisted of Gorter, Melchers, Tak, Troelstra, M. Kalsbeek and Vliegen. Het rapport van de commissie benoemd tot herziening van het agrarisch program der SDAP, 19 February 1904. It was also published in Het Volk, 2 March 1904.

⁷⁹Vliegen, Die onze kracht ontwaken deed, een geschiedenis van de SDAP 2, p. 40. See also Frank van der Goes, Verkeerde partijleiding (Rotterdam, 1907), pp. 11-35.

⁸⁰P.J. Troelstra, Gedenkschriften II (Amsterdam, 1928), p. 251.

⁸¹Troelstra, Gedenkschriften III (Amsterdam, 1929), p. 35.

⁸²Jaarverslag SDAP (1904), p. 7. Anton Pannekoek, "Het Agrarisch Program," Het Volk, 24 March 1904.

⁸³K.F. Proost, Henriette Roland-Holst (Arnhem, 1937), p. 35.

⁸⁴Pannekoek, "Herinneringen," p. 7.

⁸⁵Anton Pannekoek, "De School," De Kroniek, 27 April 1901, pp. 131-2.

⁸⁶Jaarverslag SDAP (1902), pp. 21-2.

⁸⁷Anton Pannekoek, "De strijd over de vrije school," Het Volk, 31 January 1902.

⁸⁸Troelstra, Gedenkschriften II (Amsterdam, 1927-1929), pp. 251-8; Vliegen, Die onze kracht ontwaken deed, een geschiedenis van de SDAP I, pp. 450-62.

⁸⁹ Much has been written about the railway strike. The most definitive study is A.J.C. Ruter, De spoorwegstaking van 1903 (Leiden, 1935); see also Albert de Jong, De staking van 1903, een onderzoek van de overwinning in januari en van de nederlaag in april (The Hague, 1953). For a leftist point of view see Anton Pannekoek to Karl Kautsky, 22 April 1903, Kautsky Archive BXVIII 385, IISG, Amsterdam; Henriette Roland-Holst, De groote spoorwegstaking, de vakbeweging en de SDAP (The Hague, 1903); Herman Gorter, "The Great Strike on the Railways in Holland," International Socialist Review 3. (1902-1903), pp. 587-91; and Henriette Roland-Holst, "De beteekenis der spoorwegstaking voor de Nederlandsche arbeidersbeweging," De Wekker, no. 47, 14 February 1903.

⁹⁰ F. van der Goes, "Tè Wapen!," De Nieuwe Tijd (1903), pp. 143-51.

⁹¹ Anton Pannekoek, "Een belangrijk oogenblik," De Nieuwe Tijd (1903), pp. 162-71.

⁹² P.J. Troelstra, "Wat nu?," Het Volk, 17 March 1903.

⁹³ Anton Pannekoek, "Waarom afkeuring," AP Archive Map 209/6, IISG, Amsterdam. This letter was first refused for publication by Troelstra, but was published later as "Wat nu?," Het Volk, 20 March 1903.

⁹⁴ Troelstra to Pannekoek, 2 March 1903, AP Archive Map 209/10/11, IISG, Amsterdam.

⁹⁵ M.S. Hamel, "Wat nu?," Het Volk, 28 March 1903.

⁹⁶ H. Gorter, "De toestand," Het Volk, 21 March 1903; H. Roland-Holst, "Verandering van taktiek," Het Volk, 24 March 1903; F. van der Goes, "De reaktie begonnen," De Nieuwe Tijd (1903), pp. 232-42; and H. Gorter, "De Politieke Toestand," De Nieuwe Tijd (1903), pp. 243-9.

⁹⁷ Many SDAP members and white collar workers were absorbed into a co-operative insurance company founded by the SDAP, after having lost their jobs-- (De Centrale Arbeiders Verzekerings en Depositobank), founded by Nehemia de Lieme.

⁹⁸ Jaarverslag SDAP (1903), p. ?.

- 99 Jaarverslag SDAP (1904), p. 12.
- 100 Anton Pannekoek to Karl Kautsky, 22 April 1903, Kautsky Archive KDXVIII, 385, IISG, Amsterdam.
- 101 Anton Pannekoek, "De herstemming," Het Volk, 1 July 1905.
- 102 P.J. Troelstra, "Herstemming," Het Volk, 24 June 1905; Anton Pannekoek, "De Herstemming," Het Volk, 1 July 1905; P.J. Troelstra, "Over de herstemming en nog wat," 3 parts, Het Volk, 13, 15 & 18 July 1905; and Anton Pannekoek, "De herstemming," Het Volk, 13 July 1905.
- 103 P.J. Troelstra, "Een bescheiden raad," Het Volk, 29 June 1905.
- 104 "De herstemming," Het Volk, 8 July 1905.
- 105 J. Onderdijk, G. Wolders, G. van der Weel, L. Onderdijk, and M.J. Schroevers, "Over de herstemming en nog wat," Het Volk, 8 August 1905.
- 106 F. van der Goes, "Een te voorkomen ramp," Het Volk, 27, 29 July & 1, 4 August 1905; P.J. Troelstra, "Een krijgslust geen weerlegging: antwoord aan F. v.d. Goes," Het Volk, 10 August 1905; F. v.d. Goes, "Het verscheurde karikatuur," Het Volk, 16 August 1905; P.J. Troelstra, "Het incident gesloten," Het Volk, 17 August 1905; F. v.d. Goes, "Mijn laatste woord," Het Volk, 22 August 1905; P.J. Troelstra, "Een voorstel," Het Volk, 23 August 1905; F. v.d. Goes, "Troelstra's tegenvoorstel," Het Volk, 17 & 31 August 1905; P.J. Troelstra, "De Kommissie," Het Volk, 1 September 1905; and F. v.d. Goes, "Een eis van recht," Het Volk, 2 September 1905.
- 107 P.J. Troelstra, Inzake partijleiding (Rotterdam, 1906).
- 108 Pannekoek, "Herinneringen," p. 28.
- 109 Jaarverslag SDAP (1907), p. ?

110 F. v.d. Goes, Verkeerde partijleiding (Rotterdam, 1907).

111 De Tribune (1907-1937) continued to be published under the title Het Volksdagblad. On April 17, 1916, De Tribune became a daily newspaper and party organ for the Revolutionaire Socialistische Verbond (RSV) and the SDP. On this occasion, Henriette Roland-Holst joined the editorial board. Anton Pannekoek is mentioned, on April 18, as a regular contributor to the paper, but as of February 20, 1917, his name no longer appears. The paper was then edited by H. Roland-Holst, W. van Ravesteijn and D.J. Wijkoop.

112 Anton Pannekoek to W. van Ravesteijn, n.d., Van Ravesteijn Archive 15, IISG, Amsterdam.

113 Anton Pannekoek, Theorie en beginsel in de arbeidersbeweging (Amsterdam, n.d.); Anton Pannekoek, "Theorie en beginsel in de arbeidersbeweging," De Nieuwe Tijd (1906), pp. 602-28. See also A. Pannekoek and H. Gorter, Marxisme en revisionisme, rev. ed. (Amsterdam, n.d.).

114 Pannekoek was invited, but was unable to participate in a debate on party tactics. P.J. Troelstra, "Onze taktiek," Het Volk, 24 January 1907. See also P.J. Troelstra, "Eenheid en verscheidenheid in de SDAP," Het Volk, 9 February 1907.

115 "Die neueste Krise der Niederländischen Partei," Leipziger Volkszeitung, 13 February 1909. For a verbatim report on the proceedings see "Ausserordentlicher Parteitag der sozial-demokratischen Arbeiterpartei Holland," Deventer, 13 & 14 February 1909, Leipziger Volkszeitung, 1 March 1909; also "Die Hinausgeworfenen Marxisten," Der Volkswacht, 17 March 1909; Anton Pannekoek, "Die Spaltung in der holländischen Sozialdemokratie," Bremer Bürgerzeitung, 4 March 1909.

116 Huijsman's report, "Rapport van het uitvoerende comite van het international socialistische bureau over de geschillen in de Nederlandsche socialistische partijen en de ondernomen onderhandelingen om het conflict op te lossen," Het Volk, 10 & 11 April 1909.

117 Ibid.

118 Ibid.

119 The Deventer special congress, held February 13-14, expelled the Marxists--209 to 88, with 15 abstentions. Huijsman, "Rapport van het uitvoerende comite."

120 Anton Pannekoek to W. van Ravesteijn, n.d., Van Ravesteijn Archive 15, IISG, Amsterdam.

121 Anton Pannekoek to F. v.d. Goes, February 1909, Van der Goes Archive, IISG, Amsterdam.

122 F.M. Wibaut, "Die Stellung des marxistischen Minderheitsorgans der socialdemokratischen Arbeiterpartei in Holland," Die Neue Zeit 1 (1910), pp. 948-54; and Henriette Roland-Holst, "Parteiverhältnisse und parteikämpfe in Holland," Die Neue Zeit 1 (1910), pp. 796-806.

123 Het Weekblad was a supplement to Het Volk, edited by F.M. Wibaut, F. van der Goes and H. Roland-Holst, 1909-1919. The first edition, with articles by F. van der Goes, H. Roland-Holst and J.W.A., appeared on April 17, 1909. This supplement was established as a concession to van der Goes and Roland-Holst.

124 Anton Pannekoek to Karl Kautsky, 4 February 1909, Kautsky Archive, KDXIII, 408, IISG, Amsterdam.

125 See "Brief aan de redactie van de Tribune van Cam Huijsman Brussels 18 February 1909," Het Volk, 18 February 1909.

126 "Het congress der SDP," Het Volk, 25 May 1909; "Kongres der sozialdemokratischen Partei Hollands," Leipziger Volkszeitung, 29 May 1909; and "Het congres der SDP: het strijdprogram," Het Volk, 25 April 1909.

127 Anton Pannekoek, La fondation du parti social-démocrate des pays-bas adressée à l'internationale éditée par la direction du SDP, brochure (n.p., n.d.). See also Herman Gorter, Die Grundung der sociaal democratische partei in Nederland (Berlin, 1909).

128 See A.S. de Leeuw, De Communist, no. 13 (February 1930) for excerpts of Lenin's report.

The opportunists undertook to revise the traditional Marxist programme of the Dutch Social Democratic Party and defended...notions commensurate with revisionism, for example: the rejection of the theory of the collapse of capitalism (the well-known Bernstein theory)... The acceptance of the party programme would oblige members to accept the political economic but not the philosophical tenets of Marx. The struggle of the Marxists against revisionist politics became increasingly bitter.

Cited in Louis de Visser, Herinneringen uit mijn leven (n.p., 1939), pp. 142-3.

129 Gorter remarked that, "We felt like, and perhaps we were more like German than Dutch Marxists. Personally, we were connected with most of the best German Marxists and Pannekoek was our best fighter, who for years took up the practical and theoretical struggle in Germany." Herman Gorter, "Die marxistische revolutionaire Arbeiterbewegung in Holland," Proletariat 11, 1 February 1922, p. 16.

130 Anton Pannekoek, "Die Spaltung in der holländische partei," Pannekoek Archive Map 207/3/5, IISG, Amsterdam.

131 Verzameling van congresbesluiten genomen sedert de oprichting der SDAP tot en met het congres van 1924 (n.p., 1925). See also Pannekoek, ibid., "In the 1890s Marxism was the ideology of parliamentarism...."

132 This view is best explained in the introduction by Frederick Engels to Karl Marx, "The Class Struggles in France, 1848-1850," Selected Works I (Moscow, 1969), pp. 186-204. It also appeared in Die Neue Zeit 2 (1894-1895). Pannekoek claimed that, "In the second half of the nineteenth century the opinion spread widely among the workers that socialism can and must be won by a parliamentary conquest of political power; and it seemed well on the way." Anton Pannekoek, "Some Remarks on Parliamentarism," n.d., Pannekoek Archive Map 247, IISG, Amsterdam.

- 133 Verzameling van congresbesluiten genomen sedert de oprichting der SDAP tot en met het congres van 1924 (n.p., 1925), p. 122.
- 134 Ibid., p. 122.
- 135 Ibid., p. 123.
- 136 Anton Pannekoek, "Het NAS en het AK," Het Volk, 22 March 1902.
- 137 cP.J. Troelstra, "De Kiesrechtbeweging," Het Volk, 11 April 1902.
- 138 Anton Pannekoek, "De Reorganisatie der Partij," Het Volk, 30 August 1902.
- 139 Cajo Brendel, Anton Pannekoek, Theoretikus van het Socialisme (Nijmegen, 1970), p. 23.
- 140 Anton Pannekoek, SDAP Leiden to SDAP party executive, 7 November 1902, Archive SDAP Leiden, IISG, Amsterdam.
- 141 Anton Pannekoek, "De filosofie van Kant en het Marxism," De Nieuwe Tijd (1901), pp. 549-64, 605-20 & 669-88.
- 142 Hans Jürg Sandkühler and Rafael de la Vega, eds., Marxismus und Ethik (Frankfurt, 1970).
- 143 Anton Pannekoek, "De filosofie van Kant en het Marxism," De Nieuwe Tijd (1901), p. 678.
- 144 Ibid., p. 679.
- 145 Ibid., p. 684.
- 146 Anton Pannekoek to Frank van der Goes, 9 August 1903, Van der Goes Archive Map 701/57-701/58, IISG, Amsterdam.

- 147 Anton Pannekoek, "Het anarchistische ideaal," Het Volk, 17 November 1903.
- 148 Karl Kautsky, The Class Struggle (New York, 1971), p. 198.
- 149 Karl Marx, "The Class Struggles in France, 1848-1850," Selected Works I, introduced by Frederick Engels (Moscow, 1969), p. 196; and, Anton Pannekoek, "Notes on Parliamentarism," n.d., Pannekoek Archive Map 263, IISG, Amsterdam.
- 150 Marx, "Class Struggles in France," pp. 195-6.
- 151 Anton Pannekoek, "Theorie en beginsel in de arbeidersbeweging," De Nieuwe Tijd (1906), pp. 613-22.
- 152 Anton Pannekoek, "Marx oder Tolstoi," Leipziger Volkszeitung, 25 May 1905.
- 153 Anton Pannekoek, "De herstemming," Het Volk, July 1905.
- 154 Dietzgen, Positive Outcome, pp. 12-3.
- 155 Pannekoek to Karl Kautsky, 25 October 1904, Kautsky Archive KDXVIII, 392, IISG, Amsterdam.
- 156 Anton Pannekoek, "Algemeen kiesrecht en sociale hervorming," Het Volk, 23 January 1906.
- 157 Anton Pannekoek, "Politieke beschouwingen," De Nieuwe Tijd (1905), p. 571.
- 158 Anton Pannekoek, "Sociaaldemokratie en geweld," Het Volk, 22 February 1906.
- 159 Marx, "Class Struggles in France," p. 202. In the introduction, Engels states:

The irony of world history turns everything upside down. We the 'revolutionists', the 'overthrowers' --we are progressing far better through legal methods than through illegal methods and overthrow. The parties of order, as they call themselves, are perishing under the legal conditions of their own creation.

160 Anton Pannekoek, "Sociaaldemokratie en geweld," Het Volk, 22 February 1906.

161 Ibid.

162 Dirk J. Struik, ed., Birth of the Communist Manifesto (New York, 1971).

163 Anton Pannekoek, "Entartung," Leipziger Volkszeitung, 5 July 1907.

164 Ibid.

165 Anton Pannekoek, "Wat wij willen," De Wakker, 20 December 1902, p. 3.

166 Anton Pannekoek, "Entartung," Leipziger Volkszeitung, 4 July 1907.

167 Anton Pannekoek, Religion and Sozialismus (Bremen, 1906), p. 5.

168 Anton Pannekoek, "Politieke beschouwingen," De Nieuwe Tijd (1905), p. 573.

169 Karl Horner = Anton Pannekoek, "De derde internationale en de wereld-revolutie," De Nieuwe Tijd (1920), pp. 167-8.

170 Anton Pannekoek, "Algemeen kiesrecht," De Nieuwe Tijd (1906), p. 1.

171 Ibid., pp. 1-2.

172 Ibid., p. 6.

173 Anton Pannekoek, "Algemeen kiesrecht," De Nieuwe Tijd (1905), p. 583.

174 Ibid.

175 Anton Pannekoek, "Theorie en beginsel in de arbeidersbeweging," De Nieuwe Tijd (1906), pp. 616-7.

176 Ibid., p. 620.

177 Ibid., p. 619.

CHAPTER II

PARLIAMENTARISM AND MASS ACTION, 1907-1914

Berlin Interlude: the Party School and Political Journalism

In 1906, Pannekoek received an invitation from August Bebel to work for the Social Democratic Party in Germany.¹ There had been a history of interaction among the orthodox Marxists in both the Dutch and German parties. In practice this meant that the Dutch left--Henriette Roland-Holst, Herman Gorter and Anton Pannekoek--regarded Kautsky as their source of inspiration.

Pannekoek's first lecture in Germany was given on invitation from Heinrich Schultz.² Prior to his formal acceptance of a teaching post at the newly established SPD party school in Berlin, Pannekoek had urged Kautsky to consider the importance of political education in their struggle with the revisionists. In the aftermath of the Dutch railway strike, he emphasized the necessity of a Marxist education and the political consequences of its neglect. In writing to Kautsky, with reference to the strike, Pannekoek stated that the failure of the strike demonstrated the lack of class consciousness amongst workers--"blind and unconscious forces were at work...almost as if Marxist theory, which scientifically explains the social forces at work, did not exist."³ He called upon

Kautsky to expound a scientific theory of socialism to aid the workers in their opposition to revisionism and to clarify the aims of the class struggle. He counselled Kautsky not to fear controversy within the party because, "...only through theoretical struggle can we make progress in the realm of ideas."⁴ In the ideological struggle with revisionism, Pannekoek saw his own task as that of teacher and educator, specifying that, "my nature is not that of a fighter.... I tend to be more like a school teacher; being in the political arena is not my vocation, I prefer to teach, learn, explain and enlighten wherever they want to hear me."⁵

In his correspondence with Kautsky, Pannekoek considered education as the most urgent responsibility of Social Democracy: "Education [Aufklärung] above all...is now most necessary to save for our cause many uncertain unklare but revolutionary minds."⁶ On many occasions he alluded to the prospect of coming to work in Germany with Kautsky, and he himself invited Kautsky to work in the Netherlands, where he "would have a number of excellent Marxists around him."⁷

Through his contacts with Kautsky and Mehring, and while still in the Netherlands, Pannekoek had already contributed several polemics to the German Social Democratic press, for which there was little demand at home. "Here

in Holland the theoreticians are the object of mistrust," he explained in a letter to Kautsky.⁸ It followed, then, that he now saw that his future was in Germany, rather than in the Netherlands. This he made known to Kautsky in a definitive statement:

I would consider it an honour to be able to live in your vicinity, to assist you in your work and have the benefit of your counsel. However, it seems that spokesmen for the cause of the proletariat...cannot see their way clear to spend more than a couple of thousand on theoretical schooling, for which purpose the bourgeoisie has at its disposal a vast number of professors and lecturers.

Pannekoek had been invited by Franz Mehring to work in Leipzig as well, but he expressed a clear preference to go to Berlin, where he could encounter more prominent Marxists, further his own education and, in general, live in an intellectually stimulating environment.¹⁰ For some time now, he had considered a teaching career, because his interest had unmistakably shifted away from astronomy towards the study of Marxism and political theory. "My position at the observatory I would sacrifice because, in all my thinking, I feel Marxism is on my mind...."¹¹

Pannekoek arrived in Berlin on November 15, 1906.¹² The primary teaching objective of the party school, headed by Heinrich Schultz, was to train party functionaries and journalists, and generally enhance the ideological level in the party.¹³ Courses of study included political

economy with Rudolph Hilferding, political theory with Anton Pannekoek, the history of political parties with Franz Mehring, law with Arthur Stadhagen, Hugo Heineman and Kurt Rosenfelt, and journalism with Heinrich Schultz.¹⁴

As he had hoped, because of his close relationship with Kautsky, Pannekoek was able to meet Rosa Luxemburg and many other prominent figures of the SPD while in Berlin.¹⁵

Pannekoek's career at the Berlin party school ended prematurely, however. On his return from summer vacation, in September 1907, he learned that the security police had barred Rudolph Hilferding and himself from teaching at the party school, ostensibly due to the fact that they were not German citizens.¹⁶ The party executive replaced the two 'foreigners' with Rosa Luxemburg and Heinrich Cunow, who were both German citizens, and Kautsky suggested to Pannekoek that he should consider returning to his post at the Leiden observatory.¹⁷ Other than his six months severance pay from the party and the small income he received from contributions to the Leipziger Volkszeitung and Die Neue Zeit, Pannekoek had no regular source of income.

Having refused a party teaching position in Bremen,¹⁸ it was suggested that writing a regular newspaper column ("Zeitungskorrespondenz") would help solve his dilemma by providing him with an income on a free lance basis and also

facilitate his access to the entire party membership through the press.¹⁹ On accepting this offer Pannekoek initially felt disappointed, since this new enterprise lacked the excitement and prestige associated with teaching at the party school, and the absence of daily contact with party colleagues left him with feelings of doubt and discouragement as to the political or social significance of his work.²⁰

Louise Kautsky had suggested that he also review foreign magazines for Die Neue Zeit.²¹ and make himself available for lecture tours sponsored by the SPD.²² This latter endeavour took him to Frankfurt, Leipzig and Stuttgart, and familiarized him with party life, its congresses and its notables, while maintaining a certain detachment from intrigues and internal squabbles.²³

Pannekoek was now at the heart of international Social Democracy and became well versed in German and international political strategems, and yet he was not satisfied:

...we only saw the notables but not the workers themselves. We spoke to writers, editors, party secretaries and executives, and parliamentarians ...but it was as if we lived among the gods...and not among the people. It gave the whole movement an aura of abstraction and rendered a sterility to all thought and argumentation. The world we lived in was a world apart...not the real world. I always felt this was ungratifying, as if I lived ...in a phantom world. 24

In addition to a growing dissatisfaction with his isolation from the workers and their everyday life in Berlin, the uncertainties of being a political free lance writer made him aware of the insecurity of wage earners and small businessmen for the first time in his own hitherto secure professional life.²⁵ Under these circumstances, Wilhelm Pieck and Heinrich Schultz asked Pannekoek, for the second time, to consider a teaching position in Bremen. On this occasion he found the offer attractive. It meant a salaried position²⁶ and day-to-day contact with the rank and file of the Bremen party chapter in a more practical environment--that of an industrial port city with a tradition of bourgeois radicalism going back to the era of free Hansa cities. And so, after almost four years of writing and teaching in Berlin, Pannekoek moved to Bremen on April 1, 1910.

German Social Democracy in the period 1907-1914 had been influenced by the 1905 Russian Revolution. Theoretically and tactically, Rosa Luxemburg had defined the parameters of the mass strike debate and the emergence of a new radicalism among orthodox Marxists. In terms of Pannekoek's intellectual development this stage is most important for an understanding of his work.²⁷ The ideas, which he proposed and expounded after 1921, had their origin

in the politics of the radical left of German Social Democracy, or were based upon his own experiences in German left wing politics prior to World War One. In particular, his work in Bremen as a teacher for the local Social Democratic chapter exposed him not only to radical colleagues, but also gave him an opportunity to share in the daily experiences of the rank and file workers. The radicalism of the Tribunist group in the Netherlands, which in 1909 formed a new socialist party, emerged parallel to the new radicalism of the Bremen Social Democrats. Pannekoek had found his ideological niche in writing for the left wing of the SPD, in the Bremer Bürgerzeitung. These articles he translated for the Dutch Marxist organ, De Tribune. Working amongst the most radical of German workers, Pannekoek articulated this radicalism and earned himself a reputation as a spokesman of the left wing of German and Dutch socialism. The radicalism of the Bremen workers led Pannekoek increasingly to question the desirability of working strictly within legal channels or the framework of parliamentarism. His weekly column of political analysis ("Zeitungskorrespondenz") provided Pannekoek with a large forum, and offers valuable insight into pre-World War One German Social Democracy and Pannekoek's own radicalization.

Critique of Parliamentarism

Pannekoek's views on parliamentary tactics were, in 1907, markedly different from those he held in 1903. In the shadow of Kautsky's Marxism, he defined the development of parliamentarism, as a working class tactic, to have been the result of the failure of the Paris Commune, which led to the phenomenal growth of Social Democracy and established it as a major political force. The failure of mass action as a revolutionary strategy was due to the "political immaturity" of the working class and its "incapacity to defend itself." The working class cannot suddenly acquire substantial political power without the corresponding political experience, struggle and organization.²⁸ Pannekoek saw the powerful extension of Social Democracy over the last thirty years as a consequence of a political movement for the franchise and for parliamentary democracy.

By 1908, however, Pannekoek had come to reconsider past Social Democratic strategy, and he advocated new strategic "means of struggle."²⁹ He thought that, "the arduous siege, the inch by inch conquest of small concessions, the parliamentary and trade union struggle," would not inevitably lead to socialism. For, as workers made gains in the trade unions and Social Democratic

parties, the bourgeoisie had increased its power, in part because of the very incorporation of working class institutions within a capitalist society and parliamentary state. Given this perception, Pannékoek became more favourably disposed to extra-parliamentary action.³⁰ It was necessary to remind Social Democratic parliamentarians that they "do not sit among friends" in Parliament; that they must "struggle against a majority of enemies, the representatives of our exploiters...;" and that the purpose of all Social Democratic propaganda is, "the spiritual and moral emancipation of the proletariat, to make it capable of fighting for dominion," whether the forum of this struggle is inside or outside Parliament.³¹

The foremost aim of Social Democracy, as Pannekoek saw it, was the eradication of the worst elements of oppression and domination--"the attitude of subservience which has led the working class to believe that these traits are virtues instead of vices." He charged that parliamentarians were too pre-occupied with counting votes. Pannekoek thought the basic task of Social Democracy was:

Not only to win votes, but to make other men of them [Social Democratic supporters] is our task. Servitude and simple-mindedness is our worst enemy. Only when we have eradicated this from the working class will we be ready to realize our ideals. 32

It had become an article of faith that only through the practice of parliamentarism could the working class emancipate itself and that revolutionary anti-parliamentary anarchists pursued a strategy of futility. Pannekoek recognized this as a Social Democratic platitude which, undoubtedly, had its limitations. He argued that, "the more the labour movement develops along parliamentary lines, the more the imperfections of this strategy become apparent."³³ The practice of parliamentarism was wholly inadequate to the tasks of Social Democracy--the conquest of power--and he began to advocate revolutionary mass struggle.³⁴

Pannekoek supported parliamentarism within its limited framework; but in addition to parliamentary and trade union struggles, extra-parliamentary action was necessary.³⁵ "Struggle means to do something oneself; to act oneself, however, for the workers can only be organized action."³⁶

For Pannekoek, the great weakness of the "illustrious" parliamentarians was the fact that, "they wanted to substitute their personal talents for the action of the masses."

In the liberation struggle of the proletariat ...not its leaders but the working class' own insight and its mass organizations...must build the decisive power factors. 37

He characterized the traditional relationship between officials and the masses in Social Democracy as "political philanthropy" and argued that, at best, it represented a totally inadequate conception of socialist education for the proletariat.³⁸ Social Democracy had grown into a movement of others who lacked an organic class connection with the proletariat. In developing a dependent relationship vis-a-vis the leaders of Social Democracy, the proletariat had been unable to "emancipate itself to the point that it felt capable of being the hegemonic class of the future." In such a relationship, "the proletariat would willingly surrender its affairs to prominent men to be represented and led by them."³⁹

Such a view of the proletarian revolution--the dominion of benevolent directors over obedient masses--represented, for Pannekoek, an "inadequate conception of socialism by the leaders themselves."⁴⁰ What was at stake here was, "whether the parliamentarians or the workers themselves would rule in the party."⁴¹ In this respect the question of democracy could not be separated from the question of socialism, which he saw as a radical revolution towards a self-activated democracy.⁴² Parliamentarism, in this context, was the very antithesis of democracy. To pursue the political revolution exclusively in Parliament was nothing "but a "utopian dream."⁴³

Pannekoek considered the Fabians the "greatest illusionists,"⁴⁴ who viewed parliamentarism and revolution as opposites. In this dichotomy the socialist parliamentarians were regarded as "practical reformers,"⁴⁵ whereas the revolutionaries were characterized as "impractical dreamers" who were filled with illusions but who accomplished nothing.⁴⁶ Revolutionary parliamentarism implied a relationship between parliamentary reform and revolution as a unity of opposites.

Through the struggle for reforms the power of the working class grows until it is able to capture the state power. In this lies the unity of present social reform and revolution. In this sense, we⁴⁷ can say that we build the revolution every day.

Pannekoek analyzed Fabian socialism as "a socialism of enlightened bureaucrats," a middle class political strategy which would lead to an expansion of the state bureaucracy and the coveting of state positions for their own benefit.⁴⁸ In supporting parliamentarism, the proletariat must consider Parliament as a "battle field on which the class struggle may unfold." By themselves democratic institutions are a means for the "asphyxiation of the working class,"⁴⁹ and Parliament is nothing more than an "institution of domination" for the ruling class.⁵⁰ With the realization of political democracy, based on

bourgeois parliamentarism, in countries with democratic governments--Switzerland, France and the Netherlands--this achievement had been equated with the realization of socialism itself. The working class had been led to believe that the struggle for political democracy had been won, and that political democracy was the means to the inevitable attainment of Social Democracy. However, Pannekoek thought that Social Democrats overlooked the fundamental Marxist principle that, "Politics is a function of the productive process."⁵¹ Without an awareness of the economic basis of capitalist domination, trade unionism and parliamentarism merely legitimized the exploitative capitalist system that they were supposed to oppose.

From a revolutionary point of view, the victories and triumphs of parliamentarism and trade unionism were counter-productive--reforms were mere concessions which stabilized and legitimized the capitalist system of production and the hegemony of the bourgeoisie. A movement for political reforms (i.e., the franchise) could be led in such a fashion, but revolution could not. It would only arise from the most oppressed social strata. Therefore, Pannekoek wrote that revolution would find its most fervent opponents among socialist parliamentarians and trade unionists.⁵² For them the revolution had already

been won. Their own victories symbolized to them the triumph of socialism, and revolution would totally undermine the organization they had built over the last thirty years. The nature of parliamentarism and trade unionism was directed towards the struggle against the individual entrepreneurial and corporate elements of capitalist society. Revolution, on the other hand, found its origin in the mass strike.

The mass strike, as Luxemburg had argued as well, would utterly destroy the organization of Social Democracy. It would neutralize the effect of such concepts as mediation, conciliation, contract, rules of order and legal strikes. And Pannekoek believed it was the Social Democratic leadership, the parliamentarians, trade unionists, party functionaries and the entire organizational apparatus that prevented the development of the revolution in Germany.⁵³

Pannekoek argued that parliamentarism as a means of representation was different in Germany than in the rest of Western Europe where a more 'ideal model' was pursued in which the electorate, through their representatives, controlled the government, and the executive was only a committee of the parliamentary majority. Here Parliament symbolized the immediate sovereignty of the state power, with the bureaucracy its attendant.⁵⁴ Germany, on the other hand, had only "a make-believe parliamentarism,"⁵⁵ Pannekoek

thought, where the military and civil service were subordinate to the kaiser, chancellor and cabinet, rather than to the Reichstag.⁵⁶ While his critique extended to parliamentarism as practised in all Western European states, he singled out German parliamentarism as the most important expression of democracy operating within one of the most authoritarian states.

Politics and Ideology of Trade Unionism

Trade unionism acted as complement to parliamentarism in Social Democratic theory and practice. In the "twin pillar theory," parliamentarism and trade unionism were subject to a leftist critique, directed against the whole process of "embourgeoisement" and "bureaucratization," which removed effective control of national institutions from the people.

During the period, 1909 to 1914, Pannekoek entered into a debate with the labour union hierarchy about the nature of trade union democracy and the dependence of the masses upon the officials of the working class movement. Pannekoek had continuously singled out trade unionists as the representatives of revisionism and his critique had become provocative, particularly after the publication of an article which compared trade unionists with subordinate officers in the Prussian army. Leaders in the trade unions

had been the most vocal exponents of reformism. As a quasi-elite of labour, these officials had lent a strong voice to the undercurrents of conservatism which plagued the 'revolutionary' party. Pannekoek characterized the conflict between insubordinate masses and the major trade unionists as an "irreconcilable opposition between revolution and authority, between subversion and order."⁵⁷

For Pannekoek the trade union movement was a movement of leaders, not of workers:

They are the prominent comrades, the spokesmen, the delegates, the staff and employees, the officials. What they want will become law. They have at their disposal the office of the trade union administration. Their opinions determine the course of the movement. They are the leaders whom the masses follow. 58

Pannekoek suggested that what capitalism and, to a greater extent, the leaders of the socialist movement fear most, "is the self-government of the unpolitical masses...."⁵⁹ The leading Social Democratic trade unionists, he thought, would succeed in what the Prussian autocracy had failed to achieve, "to force the insubordinate masses to discipline and obedience and to keep them from subversion."⁶⁰

For Pannekoek, "as long as the masses would let their politics be made by the officials and the delegates, as long as they let themselves be led, there could be no hope for revolution."⁶¹ Experience had shown repeatedly that,

as soon as extra-parliamentary trade union action had exceeded the legal structure of authorized demonstrations, the trade union bureaucracy would disclaim any responsibility. In this respect:

Revolutionary movements cannot be made by leaders, not even the most revolutionary; they can only spring from the masses. As long as a bureaucracy controls power in the labour movement and can determine labour politics, bourgeois society can relax its vigil.... The great revolutions in society were made by the masses themselves. The politics of class struggle assumes that the masses must be political. In the class conscious proletariat, the masses themselves determine the course of politics. 62

He criticized the trade unionists' emphasis on the uncertain principle of "trust" in their executives.

The response of the unionists to Pannekoek's criticism of the conservative nature of trade unionism was argumentative and characterized by ridicule.

Pannekoek is a theoretical rope dancer, a quarrelsome person and an incorrigible grumbler.... The trouble is that Pannekoek fashions his persons and officials in such a way as required for his theory. In reality there are neither such officials nor such workers. 63

When Pannekoek's provocative 1909 article "Unteroffiziere" ("Subordinate Officers")⁶⁴ appeared, which delineated the function of the trade union bureaucracy to maintain capitalist class hegemony, a storm of protest from the trade union officials followed. Pannekoek could see that the erosion of democracy in the trade union movement had become increasingly pronounced.⁶⁵

Rank and file discord, according to Pannekoek, reflected a deeply rooted dissonance between the union executives and the membership. The latter felt that the trade union had developed into a powerful bureaucracy, estranged from the workers. The former insisted that, to continue to function effectively, bureaucratic development was unavoidable and necessary.⁶⁶ In the trade union hierarchy it was widely felt that, "the masses are incapable of judgment: therefore, the leaders, who alone are capable of making decisions, must also have the power to do so."⁶⁷

Pannekoek charged that 'Power to the leaders--Beware of the ignorant masses!' had become the rallying cry of the trade union officials. A. von Elm, a notable trade unionist had argued, as Pannekoek wrote:

that the masses are capricious and unpredictable and that, therefore, it is dangerous to leave them to make important decisions...above all it is necessary that the masses faithfully obey the leadership of the executive; wherever the masses are revered...it harms the trade union movement as much as do those who preach mistrust of the leaders. 68

Pannekoek sought the basis for the conflict in the attitude of the trade unionists who, in terms of fundamental ideology, were far removed from the rank and file workers. He alleged that the union officials represented not the point of view of the workers themselves, but that of

bourgeois interests.

The majority of the trade union functionaries...are dependent on the politicians who work towards a reconciliation with the bourgeois world; educational work is controlled by elements who have made themselves unpopular in the party because of their bourgeois world view, and the party executive resists the teaching of Marxist theory to the workers. 69

The essential reason for the discontent, Pannekoek thought, was the conflict between the aims of the workers and those of the trade union bureaucrats. He argued that the bulk of prominent workers in the movement were revolutionary and in favour of initiating an uncompromising struggle against bourgeois society, but that, "the mass of the trade union officials are revisionist-minded."⁷⁰

While recognizing that the workers may lack certain administrative skills which are evident among the union functionaries, Pannekoek held that, in terms of revolutionary perception and insight into the social class stratification, and in terms of a proletarian class consciousness, the workers were far more radical than the union directors.⁷¹ He thought that union functionaries became separated from the aspirations of the rank and file in their new administrative positions, but did not explain why the more radical workers would continue to elect their more conservative leaders. Pannekoek advocated that the rank and file should determine policy matters, leaving only routine

administrative or technical matters to the leadership. Further, Pannekoek thought that, "the rank and file...on the question of the mass strike must assert their will against the officials."⁷² That is, strike action is not to be guided or curbed by union functionaries.

Skirting the periphery of the legitimate framework of the party and trade union movement, he advocated that the more they "assert their ideas at the level of trade union leadership, the better and easier these organizations adapt to new strategies of struggle."⁷³ In the trade union and party hierarchy, middle class and bourgeois intellectuals "conceive the dominion of the masses as the end of our civilization."⁷⁴

The exponents of the beleaguered trade union point of view, men like Adolf Braun and A. von Elm, reiterated the prejudices that already existed against the masses and their revolutionary impulse to initiate the mass strike. They argued that, "in order to lead the struggle...knowledge is required, about conditions in society and the economy, which the masses cannot possibly possess and which can only be judged by the experts, the leaders, the functionaries who have studied the subject in detail."⁷⁵ Braun and von Elm believed that the masses were incapable of independent thought, and so advocated union solidarity and

disciplined obedience to union leaders.

In view of the prevailing authoritarianism among the trade union leadership, Pannekoek thought it impossible that mass action could be led and organized by a party executive. To combat the anti-revolutionary tendencies in the labour movement he favoured the establishment of independent units made up of workers who would choose their representatives from amongst themselves. Even though the term itself, "Arbeiter-Räte" ("Workers' Councils") was not used by Pannekoek at this point, the notion of workers' sovereignty as "self-actualization," the "workers for themselves," and "self-determination of the masses," foreshadowed the theory of council communism and direct democracy, which, after 1919, became the most prominent aspect of his political thought. Anweiler correctly notes that, "only a few socialists such as the Dutchman Pannekoek in his critique of the parliamentary system and bourgeois state, came close to the later council idea as advocated by the Bolsheviks in 1917."⁷⁶

These independent organizations that Pannekoek favoured in 1910 comprised only workers chosen from the masses who would be able accurately to convey the mood and the will of the people and, "...form the ideal organs to lead and build the political mass strike."⁷⁷

A political struggle waged by purely parliamentary forms increasingly leads to mass action, and for the most solid and efficient leadership of such mass struggle the representative bodies will... offer the best guarantee for success. 78

At the 1912 Chemnitz party congress, Pannekoek presented a motion on behalf of the Bremen Social Democratic organization to gain support for the formation of organizational councils which would be responsible for advising the ~~party~~ executive and carrying out a programme of mass action in support of political demands, "...which mediates the will of the masses vis-à-vis the party executive."⁷⁹ The motion was formulated as follows:

We consider it desirable that a body consisting of representatives from the large cities and the large industrial districts will be established, which, in a strictly advisory capacity, will keep the party executive in touch with the mood of the masses on whose shoulders rests the execution of possible mass action. 80

This formulation came closest to the concept of workers' councils in the context of pre-World War One German Social Democracy.

In this sense, mass action did not imply disorganization or spontaneous mass outbursts in response to repression and exploitation by the state power. If mass action were to be successful, there was a need for discipline and for the subordination of individualism to the collective task of defeating the state power. But the discipline

propagated by the trade union bureaucracy was a discipline of restraint, of orderly withdrawal from the struggle, of adhering to the strictly legal considerations of parliamentarism.

For Pannekoek mass action implied a different order, in that the working class can only carry out its will against the organized armed minority of the exploiting class when it subordinates its power, as one universal will, to the task at hand.⁸¹

In the working class a new world emerges, where the self-created organizations of the masses as organs of self-management, Selbstverwaltung... replace and eliminate the old state and its tools of violence. 82

Prior to 1914 Pannekoek was among the few socialists who, in their critique of the bourgeois state, parliamentarism and trade unionism within the context of German Social Democracy, postulated the organization of the working class in terms of "self-management" as the "principle of the new order and the basic element of socialism."⁸³ As a proclamation of Marxism for the masses, his views represented a minority position in the face of the majority Kautskyite centre and the revisionist wing of the Social Democratic Party.. In contrast to the prevailing tendency within the party toward a form of state intervention in the economy, Pannekoek believed that the "founding principle"

of Social Democracy must be sought in the idea of:

...the self-determination of the masses.... For socialism is not a new economic system imposed from above, bringing freedom to the masses. In the first place socialism is the self-liberation of the masses, which destroys the exploiting class, and therefore, automatically abolishes exploitation. Every liberation 'from above' is out of the question. This applies not only to the whole but to each individual action as well. 84

The Mass Struggle for Socialism

Prior to the First World War political power in Germany was monopolized by the Prussian aristocracy, the Junkers. The three-class system in Prussia and the antiquated division of electoral districts served as barriers to the attainment of a "genuine parliamentarism."

The three tiered system--Reichstag, Landtag and Bundesrat--had been the legacy of Bismarck's policy to unite Germany and to establish Prussian ascendancy. Bismarck created a Reichstag, elected by universal male suffrage, to appease liberalism, but it had no real powers; it had no control over the Bundesrat and the military, but dealt only with non-military expenditures.⁸⁵ William Carr remarked that the Reichstag was inconsequential in public life. Whereas the British Parliament and its relationship to the executive embodied real power, the German Reichstag did not.⁸⁶

Pannekoek, like Kautsky, believed that, "with a truly general franchise," which provides for regular review of electoral districts, peaceful social change would be possible. An equitable parliamentary system would reflect the growing class consciousness of the masses in parliamentary power relations.⁸⁷ Although Pannekoek had become increasingly sceptical of parliamentarism, especially in Germany, he continued to think that by pressing for electoral and social reform, electoral politics and parliamentary activity could be used to develop a heightened class consciousness amongst the masses. Where he differed from Kautsky was in his unwillingness to accept that all initiatives for social progress must come from party leaders and parliamentarians.

With regard to the manner of winning parliamentary reforms, Pannekoek foresaw that, "the masses would increasingly" take their destiny in their "own hands."⁸⁸ Such spontaneity was rooted in the development of society itself, and would assert itself regardless of the party's guidelines on organization. At best party policy could give an approximate expression to these developments,⁸⁹ but only the masses themselves were capable of self-liberation.⁹⁰

As with every other practical task, the revolution must be established in the mind; all the chains of ideolo-

gical dependence must be severed and new ties of solidarity must be forged before the masses can conceive of this self-liberation.⁹¹ Under bourgeois rule, subordinate attitudes and ego deprecation were only impediments.

The masses must be guided by their own thoughts in their struggle for liberation and socialism, and, for Pannekoek, Marxist theory itself must be approached with a great deal of scepticism, because "Marxism not only provides the proletariat with a theory of action against the bourgeoisie...", but bourgeois scholarship has tended to obscure the revolutionary significance of Marxist theory and it has, "been put in the service of the bourgeois class and bourgeois interest."⁹² Socialism is genuine only when the masses wage the class struggle themselves.

The struggle for socialism is the struggle of all who are exploited against exploitation. All those who participate in one way or another in exploitation and live from a part of the surplus value, including large and small capitalists, landowners, large agro-businesses, higher echelons of the civil service, and the clergy have an interest in opposing the masses. In spite of all political constellations of the moment this is the basis of the class struggle and politics. 93

Pannekoek's emphasis on the educational aspects of Social Democracy during his initial involvement in the German movement had developed towards a view which stressed proletarian initiative. Social and political conditions



in pre-World War One Germany had been more conducive to thinking about the revolution than was the case in the Netherlands. During this time, Pannekoek had moved to the left of Kautsky, and now proposed a view of proletarian emancipation that contradicted the middle class leadership style of the Social Democratic organization. These socialist contradictions erupted in the Pannekoek-Kautsky debate, which set the stage for a political shift from two factions--orthodox Marxist and revisionist--to a third faction, in German Social Democracy.

The Problem of State Monopolies

For Pannekoek, exploitation was inherent in capitalism, while socialism presupposed the abolition of exploitation, and of the state as the instrument of that exploitation. State power was not merely seen as a representative of the capitalist class, but it formed, "in the persons of this body, its own class."⁹⁴ He characterized bureaucrats, "as a subordinate class of exploiters," and argued that, "the management of state monopolies under capitalism by parasitical bureaucrats necessarily must lead to mismanagement."⁹⁵

The most important objective of Social Democracy was still the pursuit of democracy, understood as the hegemony of the working class over the state and the

abolition of exploitation.⁹⁶ It followed that socialism could not be sought within the parameters of state-directed enterprises, state monopolies, or through nationalizing private enterprises. State corporations and state enterprise would merely intensify the exploitation of labour inherent in the capitalist system.

Pannekoek characterized the function of the capitalist state as public entrepreneurship based on mass exploitation, making it immensely more powerful than private entrepreneurship.⁹⁷ In Pannekoek's system of thought; the equation of socialism with the nationalization of private enterprise wholly contradicted what he considered the essential element of socialist aspirations--the abolition of exploitation. Yet, much of European socialism, influenced by the  of revisionism, he noted, had become synonymous with  policy of progressive nationalization of private enterprise by Social Democratic or labour party parliamentary majorities. The notion of socialism as state ownership of the means of production had gained adherents, particularly in England and among Fabian socialists throughout the English-speaking world, including those colonies where English institutions, culture and education had become an extensive influence:

For English socialists the nature of socialism lies in the socialization of the means of production; to bring the means of production into the hands of the state or some other body which represents society as a whole. For English socialists it seems almost a matter of course that the essence of socialism lies in the nationalization [Verstaatlichung] or the socialization of the means of production.... The socialized enterprise represents only an exterior form. The inner essence of socialism lies in the abolition [Aufhebung] of all exploitation. It seems then that to the outside observer the nature of the present order lies in the private character of business enterprise and corporations. Only the workers know that the exploitation of their class lies at the heart of capitalism. For them it does not make much difference whether exploitation takes place by private capitalists or by a collectivity. And even when this collectivity is a joint stock corporation of private capitalists, the state, or the community itself, for the workers the basic character of this business corporation will be changed but little. 98

Pannekoek explained that when revisionists talk about state or community socialism, they may equally well speak of "state or community capitalism." Neither "nationalization" (Verstaatlichung) nor "communalization" (Kommunalisierung) are yet the same as "socialization of the means of production" (Vergesellschaftlichung), because "the class state is not an organ of the community [Gemeinschaft] but the organization of the exploiting class."⁹⁹

State monopolies "represent a powerful and dangerous form of capitalism,"¹⁰⁰ and do not promote the struggle for socialism, but may even undermine the struggle if socialists conceive of socialism to be simply state enterprise, as many socialist opponents of capitalist enterprise

did. However, for Pannekoek, "The socialization of production, that is, the nationalization of the means of production has nothing in common with socialism."¹⁰¹ A state monopoly can only be commensurate with socialist objectives and aspirations if such a concern, "can be characterized as a state monopoly of all important industries in which the state...or another political organ representing the community through a pervasive democratization, is in fact an organ of the working people."¹⁰²

This "organ of the working people" foreshadowed Pannekoek's support for a council system, but the question of how such a socialist society could be made operative in terms of either private or public enterprise, Pannekoek failed to resolve. In this respect Pannekoek's ideas about workers' control represents only the nucleus of the theory of council communism he came to espouse after 1921.

Both state and private monopolies were capable of being transformed by workers into socialist systems of production depending upon the degree of workers' control. Socialism, for Pannekoek, meant the abolition of domination and exploitation through workers' control of the allocation of resources and of policies concerning the organization of work. In this sense, Pannekoek felt that the question of private versus public ownership had little

relevance for a socialist society. Already prior to 1914, he expressed an anti-statist point of view which became more pronounced after 1921, although by state, Pannekoek meant an authoritarian rather than a democratic political form. Pannekoek did not, however, resolve the question of how private or public enterprise can serve a socialist objective within a market economy and abolish exploitation and domination.

For Pannekoek, the crucial question is who controls the state, not whether the economy is in the hands of the state or private capitalists. Nationalization is a juridical device which merely brings the corporation formally under state control, without significantly altering the means of production. For only when the state incorporates the means of production and at the same time democratizes itself into a people's state [Volksstaat], is it possible to speak of socialism. Nothing short of this objective would vitalize the proletarian class struggle.¹⁰³

The struggle for socialism is not necessarily conditional on the growth of state monopolies. Workers can strive to democratize the work place as easily, and perhaps more easily, in private than in state enterprises. Pannekoek writes that, "a private or a state monopoly makes little difference for the democratic organization of the economy on the basis of socialist principles,"¹⁰⁴ that is

workers' control. By this, he did not mean that a socialist revolution would leave the economy in the hands of the capitalists but that the preparation for revolution in the struggle for socialist ownership and control of the economy could proceed in small independent enterprises as well as large or state enterprises.

In the absence of a pervasive democratization of the work place which allocates real control over production to the producers, Pannekoek believed that state monopoly "enslaves the workers even more," than enterprises run by private capital.

The essence of socialism is the class struggle, the capture of dominion by the proletariat which will bring about the abolition of exploitation. Capital and the working class are in opposition to each other...and fight for the control of production. The state cannot be our auxiliary... for the struggle against the state and against big monopoly capital is one struggle.... The destruction of this political and economic organization will open the possibility of carrying out the organization of work in a socialist sense. 105

Ideological Hegemony--the Concept of Spiritual Power

The tendency of the possessing class to keep effective political power in its own hands, in spite of universal suffrage and the success of the socialist parties at the polls, indicated to Pannekoek the strength of the traditional ideas, customs and mores of the bourgeois class.

The observation of German parliamentary socialism during its golden era led him to a gradual disenchantment with the parliamentary phase of the liberation struggle and to a rejection of the concept of revolutionary parliamentarism. The tactical assumption among orthodox Marxists was that, "the revolutionary significance of Parliament consists in the fact that it constantly increases the power of the proletariat, namely its class consciousness, its knowledge, its unity, and hence creates the conditions pre-requisite to revolution...."¹⁰⁶

The concept of revolutionary parliamentarism for Pannekoek, however, had not only become historically superfluous and wasteful of working class energy, but had also been rendered inappropriate by change in the social conditions. The practice of revolutionary parliamentarism could only be effective when conducted as the class struggle of the workers and the political enlightenment of the masses. Where socialist parties practised reformism and became integrated into bourgeois society, parliamentarism could not be an effective instrument of a revolutionary strategy.

Where parliamentarians look upon themselves as little-gods who, because of their 'higher political capacity', forge victories for the workers and make deals with the other parties behind the scenes or become quite openly the tail of a bourgeois party--there the effect of parliamentarism is just the reverse, it is injurious. In this case it arouses in the workers illusions as to their enemy, the bourgeois class; it destroys their self-confidence, their consciousness that they can be emancipated

through their own strength; it brings disillusionment and discouragement, and creates an anti-parliamentary tendency in those very workers whose feelings are revolutionary. 107

As a bourgeois institution, Parliament had served the working class well in its struggles. As a democratic idea, Pannekoek wrote much later, "Parliament is the expression of the supremacy of the people, the citizens, and of the dependence of the government upon them...."¹⁰⁸ The demise of parliamentarism as a viable institution in the class struggle came with the growth of opportunism in Social Democracy.

One student of German socialism prior to World War One argued that the rapid growth of the party and the labour union organizations had produced an army of parliamentarians, functionaries and officials who, as a cast of political specialists, "have openly converted themselves into an oligarchy, leaving to the masses who provide the funds no more than the duty of accepting the decisions of that oligarchy."¹⁰⁹ The central problem with parliamentarism was that as soon as representation for the revolutionary masses had been won, the party would broaden its political appeal in order to attract the wider middle class strata, and the policies of the labour party would be almost indistinguishable from those of the (other) bourgeois parties.

Other critics of the socialist labour movement have contended that it is the "curse" of the workers' movement that as soon as it has obtained some power it seeks to extend this power through means that violate the theories of Marxism and the principles of socialism.¹¹⁰

For Pannekoek the antidote was to carry on the struggle for socialist parliamentary action and not to reject parliamentarism outright, but to criticize those who imitated the practices of bourgeois parties.¹¹¹ He argued that the ultimate value of parliamentarism lay in the fact that it had historically proved itself to be the most advantageous strategy for developing the power of the proletariat, but that the conquest of parliamentary political power did not preclude further revolutionary struggles.¹¹² Power is not won in Parliament itself through increased representation; it merely provides the means to boost the spiritual power of the working class, because without spiritual power any revolutionary transformation is ephemeral.

Spiritual power meant the class consciousness of the workers and recognition of their collective power as a prominent force in industrial society. Therefore, socialists speaking in Parliament on behalf of the workers, provide an enormous incentive for the generation of class

consciousness. Where the representatives of bourgeois parties maintain the illusion that their point of view represents the consensus of society as a whole, Parliament provides a forum where such parliamentarians are exposed as enemies of the working people.¹¹³

The analysis of the nature of spiritual power (geistliche Macht), of ideological predominance or hegemony, remained a constant theme in Pannekoek's social and political thought. The study of the function and outcome of hegemony in capitalist society can be found in both his earliest and in his later writings. When referring to working class power he meant, above all, spiritual strength, which in the face of other manifestations is amorphous, indelible and underlies actual material power. Pannekoek showed how the working class was spiritually and ideologically dominated, but he also illustrated how it could resist the encroachment of bourgeois ideas. The history of philosophy, he believed, was nothing but an exposition of the modes of reasoning of the ruling classes through the ages. It expounded their views on society, life and the world at large.¹¹⁴

This heritage of ideas originated in the West, in the social and political literature of classical Greece, but it assumed its clearest and most visible class trait in terms of content and form when the modern bourgeoisie

had become the ruling class in Western Europe and the intellectuals gave expression to the ideas of the class.¹¹⁵ Thus, what men think does not emanate from some "supernatural and spiritual power," nor are men themselves "independent supernatural powers;"¹¹⁶ rather, the thoughts and views of men are the result of "material economic conditions."¹¹⁷ In other words, theoretical and mental constructs do not originate in our minds independent of the physical world; they always rest on experience, practice and material phenomena.

The relationship of the ideological superstructure to social class formation remained the most constant feature in Pannekoek's thought. From pre-1914 to post-1945, the theme of ideological hegemony was implicit in all his writings, and can be traced to his study of the writings of Joseph Dietzgen at the turn of the century. The subjective element, as a revolution of the mind, provided the basis of all social change in Pannekoek's thought.¹¹⁸

Accordingly, a primary consideration for workers everywhere was to develop a proletarian world philosophy, because the ideological struggle was a part of the social class struggle; and a practical struggle needs to be complemented by a theoretical struggle, in which the arguments of the class enemy would be invalidated.¹¹⁹

In order to become masters of the means of production, and of their own destiny, workers must break the cycle of ideological dependence on the capitalist class. A fundamental transfer of power must be accompanied by a change in thinking, away from the dominant modes of reasoning which see the world in terms of income or profit, toward thinking in terms of the productive process itself. Thus, "capitalist power" was first of all "spiritual power" over the minds of workers imposed by liberal education and propaganda through the influence of schools, church, press and literature. 120

In retrospect, commenting on the failure of the revolution and on the strength of the hegemony of bourgeois ideas, Pannekoek wrote in 1948:

What hampers...the working class...is chiefly the power of the inherited and infused ideas, the formidable spiritual power of the middle class world enveloping their minds in a thick cloud of beliefs and ideologies, dividing them, and making them uncertain and confused. The process of enlightenment, of clearing up and vanquishing this world of old ideas and ideologies, is the essential process of building working class power.... 121

A tactic which could generate a working class consciousness and spiritual power capable of subduing an historically entrenched world view would be supportive of parliamentarism only as long as it had the capacity to contribute towards this end.

Tactical Differences in the Labour Movement

Pannekoek upheld a radical and revolutionary view of socialism which was increasingly at odds with the growing conservative reformist tendency in Germany as well as in the Netherlands. The ideas advanced in his weekly political column ("Zeitungskorrespondenz"), were a response to political developments and events within German Social Democracy.¹²² These popularized serial articles were, theoretically, not fully developed, but they formed the basis for a sequel to his first published booklet dealing with the theory and practice of the Dutch labour movement, Theory and Principle in the Labour Movement (1906).¹²³

The sequel, Tactical Differences in the Labour Movement (1909),¹²⁴ summarized the theoretical divisions in the German labour movement and sought to develop a "Marxism for the masses."¹²⁵ Pannekoek's contributions continued the debate initiated by Bernstein within German Social Democracy.

Major responses to Bernstein's position included: Karl Kautsky, Bernstein and the Social Democratic Programme: an Anti-Critique (1899), Rosa Luxemburg, Social Reform or Revolution (1900), Kautsky, The Social Revolution (1902), Luxemburg, Mass Strike (1906), Anton Pannekoek, Tactical Differences in the Labour Movement (1909), Kautsky, Road

to Power (1909), and Parvus, The Class Struggle of the Proletariat (1911).¹²⁶

In Tactical Differences in the Labour Movement, Pannekoek countered Bernstein's dictum with, "The movement without anything further is nothing to us--an empty slogan without meaning," ("Die Bewegung ohne weiteres ist uns nichts, ein leeres Wort ohne Bedeutung.")¹²⁷ The object of class struggle was to further the power of the proletariat. Pannekoek emphasized that workers should understand their economic significance in industrial society; through education in the natural and social sciences, workers will become aware of their environment and of themselves; and with the acquisition of class consciousness, the forms of organization and discipline necessary to socialist objectives will be achieved.¹²⁸ Class struggle is not to be directed to the attainment of social reform per se, but to the growth of working class power.

Since the Erfurt party congress there had been no abatement in the tactical struggle between those favouring a commitment to a Marxist programme of class struggle and those who favoured reform. Theoretically, this division in Social Democracy was between Marxism and revisionism. Philosophically, it was between Marxist philosophy and neo-Kantism. Politically, these rifts were expressed as radicalism and reformism. At this time, Proudhon's anarchism

also re-surfaced in France and Italy as syndicalism, and in Germany as anarcho-socialism. These tendencies further aggravated the divisions in the labour movement.¹²⁹

Pannekoek searched for the origin of these labour movement trends in the dialectical character of social development, and in the contradictions between the lower middle classes (Kleinbürgertum) and labour (Arbeiterschaft). While traditionally the petit-bourgeoisie and the workers had been united in the struggle for democracy, Marxism, as the theory of the revolutionary proletariat, had superseded this alliance and was destined to cause a revolution in consciousness. The dialectical relationship between reform and revolution defined the two sides of the labour movement, but, to Pannekoek, anarchism and revisionism were identical in so far as they represented a distortion in Social Democracy.¹³⁰ Both political theories were expressions of a petit-bourgeois world view in opposition to that of the proletariat.¹³¹

In practice, revisionism and anarchism aligned themselves with the proletariat without experiencing a revolution of mind and science which characterized scientific socialism. Anarchism continued the tradition of bourgeois revolution by hypothesizing the coming of revolution, while revisionism found its cause in the

theory of peaceful evolution of a declining bourgeoisie. The former represented the tempestuous side of bourgeois civil society, and the latter the domesticated side.¹³²

In Tactical Differences in the Labour Movement, confidence in the ability of parliamentarism to enlighten the masses as to the nature of the capitalist production system and their role in it, expressed itself in a procedural and theoretical aversion to the anti-parliamentarism of the syndicalists and anarcho-socialists. Up until the First World War, Pannekoek continued to combat syndicalist anti-parliamentary tendencies with the same fervour as revisionism. Syndicalist rejection of parliamentary action, he argued, was tantamount to renouncing one of the most important and mandatory means of proletarian power.¹³³ But parliamentarism, as a Marxist tactic which furthered the power of the proletariat through revolutionary parliamentary practice, would negate the anti-parliamentary position of anarcho-socialism.

Revisionism, on the other hand, supported the accepted form of bourgeois political hegemony, to the exclusion of extra-parliamentary tactics.¹³⁴ In order to prevent a Social Democratic parliamentary victory, the German bourgeoisie merely had to maintain their traditional electoral districts and the three-class voting system.¹³⁵

Parliamentarism was completely within the sphere of bourgeois politics; it affected the Social Democratic parliamentary faction to the extent that it placed itself above the masses and destroyed party democracy. Pannekoek characterized the political behaviour of Social Democratic parliamentarism as follows: "Today they defeat a minister whom they supported yesterday, in order to become ministers themselves tomorrow."

Parliamentarism destroyed working class organization because it created a political environment of dependency. The concept of the workers "for themselves" was subverted to make way for the theory of universal franchise. Where such a mentality prevailed, working class organization had no raison d'etre.¹³⁶

In the trade unions the same tendencies prevailed as in Parliament. The hallmark of trade unionism became ever greater bureaucratization and a stratified leadership, with the workers themselves playing a very subordinate role, forced into a dependency relationship with the trade unions which paralleled their dependency on their employers.

As a counter-weight to the oligarchical tendencies in the labour movement, Pannekoek saw the revolutionary significance of trade unionism in its educational role. Trade unionism had the potential to transform weak, dependent workers into men capable of confronting the capitalist

state. He proposed a strictly Marxist interpretation of the trade union movement, in opposition to the reformist notion that the trade union struggle served to improve the working conditions and living standards of workers under capitalism.

Tactical Differences in the Labour Movement urged

Social Democratic workers to prepare themselves for a new era of mass strikes. The parliamentary phase of the class struggle had ended, according to Pannekoek, and a new age of extra-parliamentary class struggle had begun.¹³⁷ In the mass strike, working class organizations act politically and the contradiction between the political and trade union practice would disappear in a union struggle with a political goal. Workers must not only act within the context of the party, but, at the same time, they must act as mass organizations in which the trade unions must actively participate. Workers must force the trade unions towards a political goal and strike against the state power. Pannekoek proclaimed that the old political and trade union methods of the labour movement were obsolete. The organized masses themselves must act and bring to bear the qualities of class consciousness, organization, discipline, and energy, which they had attained in the preceding stages of the class struggle.¹³⁸

Revisionism presented an obstacle to this mass action strategy. Pannekoek defined the significance of working class revisionism with reference to its relation with other classes. All theories of revisionism were based on the idea of collaboration of the proletariat with other classes. This collaboration maximized its effect with the lower strata of the intelligentsia, the petit-bourgeoisie, the agricultural workers and the labour aristocracy. Revisionism, to Pannekoek, was an admission that the workers were politically undeveloped and an 'inferior' class, which was dependent upon the 'higher' political skills of the middle class to lead it to victory. Revisionism made its strategy commensurate with gaining such middle class access to Parliament, where, in the name of proletarian emancipation, middle class interests were made the focus of the struggle of small against large capital.¹³⁹

Both proletariat and middle classes had in common an interest in the advancement of political democracy, making the Social Democratic Party the champion of democracy rather than of the proletariat per se. Middle class interest was often opposed to capital, without the middle class ever becoming a reliable ally of the working class. Revisionism endeavoured to reconcile opposing class

interests by serving both middle and working classes concurrently, with the result that the concerns of the workers were sacrificed and the preservation of the middle class interests was maintained at the expense of the proletariat.¹⁴⁰

Social Democracy itself represented a number of different classes which had a mutual opposition to the status quo. But within Social Democracy the struggle for different class interests was expressed as differences in party strategy and ideology.¹⁴¹ Revisionism represented within Social Democracy an alliance of the petit-bourgeoisie and the educated, skilled labour aristocracy.¹⁴²

To summarize, in 1909, Pannekoek identified and unmasked Social Democracy as a party that advocated political programmes which represented the interest of the bourgeoisie instead of the proletariat, in which bourgeois interests dominated, and in which bourgeois classes determined the character of the party.¹⁴³ He concluded that the trend towards reformism attested that Social Democracy had reneged on the revolutionary struggle for power.

Looking back on this development Pannekoek wrote:

As Social Democracy grew in parliamentary strength the tendency to join hands with portions of the capitalist class for the purpose of winning reforms became more marked. The middle class idea of making capitalism more tolerable by means of small reforms was adopted in the place of revolutionary struggle for power. This reformism, which refused to have anything to do with the class struggle of

✓ the proletariat gained the upper hand in the Social Democracy of most of the West European nations-- France, Belgium, Holland, Denmark--while in England the Labour Party showed the same tendency without using socialist phrases. 144

Pannekoek's theoretical work on the class nature of ideologies in European Social Democracy, set forth in Tactical Differences in the Labour Movement, was noted by Lenin in a similarly entitled article.¹⁴⁵ Lenin familiarized his readers with "Pannekoek's conclusions" which he saw as being "absolutely correct."¹⁴⁶ Lenin expressed some disappointment, however, and he charged that Pannekoek's study dealt exclusively with the Western European experience, particularly with Germany and France, "without the slightest concern about Russia."¹⁴⁷ He argued that, in spite of the vast cultural, historical and economic differences between Russia and Western Europe, the Russian labour movement reflected the same ideological tendencies as did that of Germany and France, in opposition to Marxism, i.e., revisionism and anarcho-syndicalism.¹⁴⁸ Pannekoek's work showed similarity to an article by Lenin at this time; it clarified the nature of Marxist tactics and distinguished, for the benefit of developing countries, between the several ideologies within the labour movement, and combated any deviations from Marxism.¹⁴⁹

The Bremer Left in German Social Democracy

Pannekoek moved to Bremen on April 1, 1910. There he joined the most radical faction of the German Social Democratic Party. Since 1905, the Bremen party organization acted as focal point for the 'new radicalism' of the left, which exposed Kautsky's Marxism as a conservative middle class ideology. By the outbreak of the First World War, Pannekoek, through the influence of his work in political theory, had become one of the most prominent members of the Bremer Left, together with such socialist educators as Heinrich Schultz, Alfred Henke, Wilhelm Pieck, Johan Knief, and Karl Radek.¹⁵⁰

His prominence within the Social Democratic Party and his intimate knowledge of its ideological rifts and currents, gave Pannekoek a decisive effect on the editorial policy of the Bremer Bürgerzeitung, edited by Johan Knief. Under Henke's leadership and with Pannekoek's collaboration, this daily became a leading voice for radical opinion within the party, i.e., the views of, most notably, Rosa Luxemburg and Franz Mehring. As one student notes, under the tutelage of Pannekoek and Radek, Bremen became a "fortress of the left" in Germany.¹⁵¹ Whereas in the Berlin party school the students had been selected, upcoming functionaries,¹⁵² who received a stipend to attend the

school full-time, in Bremen they were, in the majority, workers who attended the party school on a part-time basis in the evening.¹⁵³

On Henke's insistence Pannekoek continued his weekly political column, "Zeitungskorrespondenz," to continue his access to the entire party machine.¹⁵⁴ His invitation to Bremen, the party activists had hoped, would strengthen the position of the radical Marxists, internally, vis-à-vis the revisionists, and externally, in relation to the party as a whole. In addition to teaching and writing for the party press in Bremen, Pannekoek immersed himself in daily routine party activities and participated, as an ordinary member, in all party meetings and political functions. He was chosen to represent the Bremen Social Democrats at the SPD party congress in Magdeburg, September 18-24, 1910. No longer feeling like an outsider, he entered into the congress with partisan intensity, defending the position of the Bremer Left.¹⁵⁵

The period 1909-1910 is of marked interest here. It was the time of publication of Tactical Differences in the Labour Movement by Pannekoek and Lenin's recognition of its significance;¹⁵⁶ but it also marked the split in the party, between Pannekoek and Kautsky, over the nature of mass action.

For Pannekoek mainstream Social Democratic politics was directed overwhelmingly towards obtaining liberal reforms, in that it sought to establish a liberal parliamentary democracy. The Social Democratic movement in Germany was alone in its struggle to found a modern parliamentary regime, and to destroy absolutism and the vestiges of feudalism, which were still powerful among the German Junker class--the aristocracy. Pannekoek expressed the heretical view that the struggle against absolutism and feudalism in Germany was "not something specifically socialist," and that this aim of German Social Democracy had been achieved in other Western European countries.

In the Western European parliamentary democracies, ministers cannot overrule the parliamentary majority; as soon as they receive a vote of non-confidence they have to resign, and the sovereign must appoint new ones. Therefore Parliament, the people's representative assembly, controls the government and the ministers. Without its cooperation and responsibility the sovereign is powerless. In Germany, on the other hand, the sovereign appoints the Prime Minister (Reichskanzler) and the ministers arbitrarily; they are his servants and therefore the government forms an independent force over and above Parliament, which commands...over the army, war and peace, and foreign policy. The dependence of the leading ministers on Parliament determines the difference between parliamentarism and dictatorship. 157

For Pannekoek the present practice of Social Democracy in Germany was a struggle for parliamentary democracy, the pursuit of liberalism and bourgeois ideals--not a proletarian democracy through revolution, but a bourgeois liberal parliamentary state. In advocating mass action

Pannekoek and the radical Bremer Left had, however, come to see themselves as the exponents of what they considered to be the real revolutionary principles of the party.¹⁵⁸ Their objective was not to win a parliamentary majority but to "capture state power as a fundamental condition for the socialization of the means of production."¹⁵⁹ Different conceptions of the conquest of power and the role of mass action led to an ensuing conflict between Kautsky and the left and showed that Kautsky's Marxism, as practised in German Social Democracy, had come to have more in common with revisionism than with revolutionary Marxism.

This conflict became more pronounced and first expressed itself as "verbal agitation"¹⁶⁰ between Karl Kautsky and Rosa Luxemburg at the mass demonstrations for universal suffrage.¹⁶¹ In these demonstrations in support of the franchise, Pannekoek and Luxemburg saw "an important step in the liberation movement of the proletariat," because the "workers have finally conquered their rights on the street...by taking them."¹⁶² With Luxemburg, Pannekoek went beyond advocating extra-parliamentary action, organized and led by the party, to the concept of self-directed activity, after the party executive had decided against the mass strike.

In the subsequent Luxemburg-Kautsky polemic Pannekoek emerged as her strongest ally. She had been severely criticized in Die Neue Zeit.¹⁶³ At first an attempt was made by the party executive to prevent discussion of the mass strike altogether; and her submission to the paper was rejected. But after Luxemburg's position had found a strong response in the provincial party press,¹⁶⁴ Kautsky, as party theoretician, agreed to engage in a debate on the mass strike. It continued until 1912.

Pannekoek's years in Bremen coincided with a gradual re-alignment of ideological factions within the Social Democratic Party. What had been an undifferentiated Marxist majority under Kautsky's leadership now showed signs of disintegration over the question of the nature of mass action and its implications. The differences between Kautsky and his supporters were first highlighted at the 1910 Treptow Park demonstration in support of universal suffrage, and in the subsequent discussion on the nature of mass action, in which Kautsky and Luxemburg differed.

Luxemburg insisted that such action must evolve outside the control of the party executive, and must be initiated by the masses themselves, commensurate with their needs. Kautsky, on the other hand, saw mass action as a strategy which must remain as an "absolute necessity" under

"strict control" by the party executive. Pannekoek notes in his memoirs:

I supported Rosa Luxemburg and defended the same point of view with further arguments. But the two of us remained alone...all the others agreed with Kautsky. I noticed here clearly, for the first time, that among the Marxist defenders of the notion of mass action there had come a parting of minds, which later became ever deeper and more pronounced. This was the beginning. 165

Luxemburg-Kautsky Debate

The debate that followed between Luxemburg and Kautsky delineated the divisions in the Marxist bloc and strengthened the revisionist wing by enabling them to reconcile their ideological differences with the moderate supporters of Kautsky. 166

The Prussian universal suffrage issue had been a point of contention for over half a century. Luxemburg was adamant that Prussian electoral reform could not be solved by parliamentary action alone, but that only a national civil rights movement of mass action could provoke democratic reforms. She challenged the party to expand the demonstrations for universal suffrage into a mass strike movement. Street demonstrations, she argued, had created a political climate and a psychology favourable to the growth of mass action. The street demonstrations themselves were a manifestation of the political struggle of the democratic bourgeois classes against the remnants of

absolutism and feudalism, and could not possibly meet the needs of the Social Democratic left. "Only as an expression of the will of the party masses can our struggle have consequences."¹⁶⁷

It was not enough that the Jena party congress had supported the mass strike strategy as a defensive action to obtain universal suffrage. For Luxemburg, the Prussian demonstrations were a prelude to the development of a mass strike movement and she urged the party and trade unions to support it. The notion that a mass strike movement can be organized by the party executive and the general commission of the trade unions in the same manner as a street demonstration, she thought wholly absurd. "The action of the masses can only come from the masses themselves."¹⁶⁸

Kautsky's Position

In the debate, Kautsky distinguished between the demonstration and the confrontation strike, the former to lend support to a specific policy, the latter to overthrow the state.¹⁶⁹ While supporting the demonstration strike he rejected the confrontation strike which was based, in his opinion, on the model of the 1905 Russian Revolution.

In Prussia we do not have a revolution on our hands. Up to this point in the struggle for universal suffrage, economic and political factors have been strictly separated. 170

In drawing an analogy between politics and war, Kautsky equated the demonstration strike (Demonstrationstreik) with Ermattungsstrategie, and the confrontation strike (Zwangstreik) with Niederwerfungsstrategie. He argued that in politics the era of confrontation had been replaced by an era of political guerilla tactics (Ermattungsstrategie). 171

In defending this strategy, Kautsky based his argument on Engels' Preface to Marx's The Class Struggle in France, where Engels rejected the "old revolutionary strategy" of the politics of barricades in favour of a "new strategy" identified with the success of parliamentarism in German Social Democracy. The social and intellectual basis for the "new strategy" had been the bourgeois freedoms of universal suffrage, the freedom of the press, and the freedom of assembly. 172 Revisionism had identified Engels' "Testament," as it had been called, with a policy of Nurparlamentarismus, that is parliamentarism, to the exclusion of extra-parliamentarism.

For Kautsky, Engels' Ermattungsstrategie differs from the theory of revisionism in as far as it takes the class struggle--the contradiction between the proletariat and the possessing class--as its point of departure.

Revisionism anticipates the amelioration of the class struggle and the end of ideology. Engels' Ermattungsstrategie was based on the working class itself, excluding the bourgeois parties.¹⁷³ The demonstration strike had been accepted by the party since 1890. But the mass strike as a last resort, under certain circumstances, could only be a means to transform an Ermattungsstrategie into Niederwerfungsstrategie, in the political struggle of the proletariat.

Luxemburg's insistence that the party work toward the outbreak of the mass strike, called into question, as Kautsky considered it, traditional Social Democratic policy. In calling for mass strike action, she rejected his view of an equilibrium between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat. In support of the mass demonstrations for universal suffrage, Kautsky had expressed satisfaction over the results of the civil rights movement and saw no need for further mass action beyond these party-sponsored civil rights demonstrations. Kautsky's Germany did not show signs of disintegration, enough to warrant a call for a Niederwerfungsstrategie.¹⁷⁴

The struggle for universal suffrage had been synonymous with the struggle against "Junkertum" and absolutism.

His standpoint, since the 1905 revolution, had been in opposition to the mass strike strategy as a prelude to revolution and the collapse of state power. German Social Democracy had never supported the slogan "Down with the Regime." Its line had been, "No rest and tranquility in Prussia until an equal, secret, direct, election law has been secured."¹⁷⁵

In Kautsky's view, German Social Democracy had no responsibility to "go forward at any cost," or to view street demonstrations as a prelude to mass strike action and social revolution. The question that Luxemburg raised carried the implication that the alternatives were either to strike down the Junker regime, or to be stricken down by it. The dilemma of which she spoke, to Kautsky, did not exist. For Social Democracy there was no political base for the renunciation of Ermattungsstrategie in favour of Niederwerfungsstrategie.¹⁷⁶ In defending parliamentarism, Kautsky emphasized the success of German Social Democracy's electoral strategy from 1887-1907, by which the party's supporters had quadrupled. In the upcoming elections he anticipated another doubling of Social Democracy's electoral support, to "reach the absolute majority of all votes cast."¹⁷⁷

To Kautsky, such an electoral victory would spell disaster for the entire ruling government system. To engage in a mass strike action prior to an anticipated absolute victory in Parliament would, he thought, be to provide the ruling classes with an opportunity to defeat the working class as a major political force.¹⁷⁸ The prospect of a mass strike, he feared, would create a situation in which the Social Democratic Party would not control events, but events would control it. He categorically rejected Luxemburg's strategy.

If she wants to lead an action in the sense of Niederwerfungsstrategie we will not be able to follow her...but if her ideas serve to make the masses familiar with the idea of the mass strike, she has taken a format and rhetorical style which, under the present circumstances, is unfortunate. However, it will not prevent us from supporting her ideas in this sense only. 179

Kautsky's criticism was equally directed against Pannekoek; "his entire analysis bears the stamp of the Russian strike movement adapted to Prussian conditions."¹⁸⁰ Kautsky was convinced that the example of the Russian strike movement held nothing for the future, because in Germany the strike was a strictly juridical instrument which could be discussed freely and organized openly. "For German conditions...the schema of the Russian mass strike prior to and during the revolution does not fit."¹⁸¹

Kautsky's slogan, "One does not fight outpost skirmishes with heavy artillery," is an accurate statement of his attitude towards Luxemburg and Pannekoek and the mass strike issue. Kautsky writes of the left:

They expect a period of mass strikes. I anticipate under conditions as they are in Germany, a political mass strike waged as a once and for all occasion in which the entire proletariat of the Reich enters with its entire power in a life and death struggle which will either defeat our enemy or our entire organization and the political power we have built up over the years will be smashed or at least paralysed. 182

Kautsky countered Luxemburg's denunciation of his strategy as pure parliamentarism by pointing out that his strategy embraced the totality of the contemporary praxis of the Social Democratic proletariat since the late 1860s--street demonstrations and strikes for wages as well as the Prussian civil rights campaign--as an example of a successful application of Ermattungsstrategie. "I am far removed from preaching 'Nurparlamentarismus'. "183

For Kautsky, Germany lacked the pre-conditions which facilitated the development of the political mass strike movement in Russia. He argued that the more democratic the rule of law in a country, the less the pre-conditions are present for a mass strike and the more difficult it is to win the masses for such an action. Where a system of suffrage exists, which to some extent satisfies the

political demands of the proletariat, a mass strike can only be acceptable as a means of defense; to lend credence to the political demands for universal suffrage and parliamentary rights, and as a warning to a government which refuses to govern in accord with the will of the people.¹⁸⁴

Luxemburg's Response

In response to Kautsky's critique of her mass strike strategy, Luxemburg referred to the increasing backwardness of the party leadership's idea of class consciousness, and called it incongruent that the so-called theoretician of radicalism had rejected the strategy of the mass strike in view of the upcoming elections. Such a conservative gesture, she argued, would play into the hands of the revisionist general commission of the trade unions.

In sounding the alarm in order to protect the party from the profane masses,¹⁸⁵ Kautsky had taken a political position which seemed "very peculiar" to Luxemburg.¹⁸⁶ In exposing Kautsky as a socialist pragmatist she challenged his theoretical interpretation of the separation of politics and economics. She accused Kautsky of confining the Prussian civil rights movement within an ideological framework of bourgeois-liberalism, and of collaborating with the latter by seeing the civil rights movement as a mere struggle for constitutional and political reform.

From a bourgeois-liberal point of view, social reform required the strict separation of political and economic struggles against capital. In defending a policy of moderate extra-parliamentary agitation for political reform divorced from the economic struggle against capital, Kautsky had put forward a "pedantic narrow-minded interpretation of the civil rights movement," supporting the prejudices and provincialism of the party hierarchy.¹⁸⁷

For Luxemburg, a Marxist strategy precluded the separation of politics and economics. The unity of Marxist political economy depended upon waging the civil rights struggle as a phenomenon of universal socialist class struggle, and upon the political and economic relations of social classes.

Fundamental to Kautsky's theoretical point of departure was an analysis of dual strategies in the labour movement--Ermattungsstrategie and Niederwerfungsstrategie. By identifying the former with Engels' political "Testament" Kautsky sought to legitimize his moderate position. For Luxemburg, however, Engels' Preface to The Class Struggle in France criticized not extra-parliamentary tactics but utopian socialism, which conceived of the establishment of a socialist society as a struggle on the barricades ("Barrikadenkampf"), and which opposed the modern Social

Democratic struggle both in its parliamentary and extra-parliamentary phase.¹⁸⁸ "I ask Kautsky," she wrote, "What in the world has Engels' Testament to do with the present situation and with the question of the mass strike?" It was obvious, Luxemburg argued, that Kautsky had re-discovered the red herring of the anarchist menace, and tried to taint the Marxist Social Democrats by association with the anarchist tendency of Domela Nieuwenhuis.¹⁸⁹

Luxemburg charged that, at the same time, when Kautsky condemned the mass strike strategy, Bernstein had raised similar arguments against the mass strike in the Sozialistische Monatshefte. For Luxemburg, Bernstein, not Engels, defended the Ermattungsstrategie advanced by Kautsky. She concluded that, "Kautsky's theory is not in opposition to utopian barricade socialism, as in Engels, but in opposition to Social Democratic mass action of the proletariat itself to obtain and exercise their political rights."¹⁹⁰ When Kautsky declared that the mass strike strategy was a "dangerous tactic," Luxemburg interpreted the statement to mean that the party had reneged upon its extra-parliamentary strategy and taken a step backwards by committing itself to "reinen Parlamentarismus" ("pure parliamentarism").¹⁹¹

Luxemburg characterized Kautsky's analysis of Russian conditions as "totally incorrect," especially his notion of the Russian Revolution of 1905 as an "amorphous, primitive" strike movement.¹⁹² The St. Petersburg council of workers' delegates, she argued, which assumed leadership of the strike movement, was far superior in terms of power, class solidarity, expertise, progressive goals and organizational ability, to any Western European trade union movement.

The strike movement in Russia in a few years of revolution in socio-political terms has accomplished more than the German trade union movement in its entire existence. 193

Luxemburg charged that with the emasculated strategy that Kautsky now proposed, one could lead neither mass action nor the trade union movement.¹⁹⁴ His position on the mass strike, she countered, rested on the false assumption that the contradiction between revolutionary Russia and parliamentary Western Europe hampered the development of mass strike movements in Germany, and that the political mass strike movement was a product of Russian political and economic backwardness.¹⁹⁵ Taking this position, for Luxemburg, would deprive the Social Democratic movement of its most profound theoretical stimulus in the development of a proletarian strategy, and constituted a thorough

revision of the Jena party congress' mass strike resolution.¹⁹⁶

The more Kautsky sought to defend his position concerning the mass strike, the more he removed himself from a general perspective on the development of the class struggle in Western Europe and in Germany. The incongruence between Kautsky's previous theoretical perspective and his present one, she stated, must make even him feel uncomfortable.¹⁹⁷

"To bother any further with Comrade Luxemburg is superfluous," wrote Kautsky.¹⁹⁸ Toward the end of their emotionally charged polemic, the personal friendship that had existed between Kautsky and Luxemburg had disappeared as a result of their political differences. Kautsky was adamant that the next party congress would go down in history as the congress of the triumph of the national elections (Reichstagswahlen), and not the mass strike. This issue of electoral victory occupied the minds of most Social Democrats, not the mass strike.¹⁹⁹

Pannekoek-Kautsky Debate

Following the Luxemburg-Kautsky polemic, Pannekoek engaged Kautsky in a debate on mass action which resulted in a cooling off also of their long-standing friendship. In the Luxemburg-Kautsky debate Pannekoek noted that, "differences between them had become apparent," but he felt that sufficient common ground remained to discuss these differences:

It appears to me even more important to have an in-depth discussion about our differences which will show us how we can approach each other....²⁰⁰

Kautsky felt that the differences that had surfaced in the debate with Luxemburg did not have anything to do with a different political view, but to Pannekoek it became clear that a "dissimilarity of theoretical and political views" (Pannekoek's emphasis) was at the root of the controversy between them.²⁰¹ The differences were greater than Kautsky seemed to imply:

Although you write often that you don't know in which respect our position differs, I have used your statement about mass action to expose your views. Now it should perhaps become clear to you in which respect your views differ from mine.²⁰²

In the following debate, instead of rapprochement, a sometimes bitter polemic illustrated how far Pannekoek had moved from the Kautskyian interpretation of Marxism,²⁰³ which he had embraced so fervently in 1902, when he joined the Social Democratic movement. He deeply regretted Kautsky's expression of views that belied the Marxism Kautsky had taught him over the years.

Your views as opposed to mine appear so bourgeois and un-Marxist that I, more than anybody else, regret to have to find your name under something like that. ²⁰⁴

As I will outline below, the Pannekoek-Kautsky debate, in 1911-1913, dealt with the central issues concerning the

radicals of the Kautsky camp and the Bremer Left--mass action and Marxism, revolutionary tactics and liberalism, and the nature of parliamentary democracy.

Mass Action and Marxism

The followers of Kautsky, the so-called radicals, considered electoral strategy, parliamentarism, mass demonstrations and mass strike tactics contradictory, while Luxemburg, Pannekoek and others of the Bremer Left saw parliamentarism and extra-parliamentarism as complementary tactics. The latter, because of their views, were denounced by the party notables as "revolutionary hotheads," Pannekoek in turn characterized his critics as pseudo-Marxists:

It is totally false and shows the worse kind of confusion when from several sides it has been proclaimed that there is a contradiction between the traditional tactic of parliamentarism...and the tactic of the mass strike.... 205

The prospect of spontaneous political or economic action of unorganized masses--the action of the "street" loomed as a considerable threat to Kautsky's wish for an absolute majority in Parliament. He accused his opponents of indiscriminately lumping together the mass action of organized labour with that of a shapeless, unorganized body,²⁰⁶ as seen in the French Revolution and the Russian Revolution of 1905--not the proletariat proper, i.e., an

industrial working class, but elements which are referred to as the "People" or Das Volk.²⁰⁷

Thus Pannekoek saw the dichotomy--organized/unorganized workers--no longer as a crucial distinction based on class differentiation, but rather as a minor distinction within one class, the proletariat.²⁰⁸ Contemporary unorganized masses were thoroughly proletarianized in the urban centres of Western Europe. Furthermore, he argued, the action of organized masses attracts large segments of unorganized masses, and consequently, mass action would tend to become action by a united proletariat. The task for Social Democracy, from the point of view of the Bremer Left, was to give expression and concrete form to the ideology of the proletariat, to provide leadership and unity; that is, to build class solidarity.

Kautsky's views were in stark contrast to what he considered a new left wing interpretation of mass action. He anticipated enormous social disruption, jeopardizing the traditional functions of the labour movement, the trade unions and Parliament. Kautsky emphasized the continuation of the "twin pillar" theory--through the use of elections, education, publishing, public forums, legislative drafting of contractual negotiations and legal demonstrations and strikes.

Kautsky argued that, historically, the masses had themselves never reaped the fruits of their victories. Instead they had been condemned to sacrifice themselves for the cause of others. In victory, the masses had brought to power reactionary as well as revolutionary figures.²⁰⁹ The historical model of mass action in the last decade had been considerably modified by the rise of parliamentarism and the demands for universal suffrage. The election campaign in the major urban centres had given an incentive for the first expression of simultaneous action of the people as a whole throughout the entire nation.²¹⁰

Any deviation from a parliamentary concept of mass action meant a new tactic against the policies and traditions of Social Democracy. For Kautsky, tactical innovation must lead to a continuation and strengthening of the traditional Social Democratic policies, which had led the party from "victory to victory."²¹¹

For Pannekoek, imperialism had undermined the labour movement in its struggle for political power in as far as it deflected a concentration with the class struggle onto international rivalries. From the standpoint of domestic politics, imperialism demanded a war economy which suppressed wages, emphasized heavy industry rather than consumer goods, and generally increased the power of capital over labour,

under the pretext of national security. Imperialism undermined the labour movement in as far as workers bore the burden of a war economy. Also, since Pannekoek saw Parliament to be a forum concerned with "the national interest" in a climate of international hostilities, he increasingly emphasized extra-parliamentary action, calling upon workers to act for themselves rather than through their "national" representatives.²¹²

This interpretation of mass action contradicted the examples of mass action which Kautsky had identified with utopian socialism, or the politics of the barricades. As one of Marx's foremost students, Kautsky had never lost sight of the social phenomenon of a class society and its ramifications in terms of class interest and proletarian ideology. But in the mass strike debate Pannekoek felt that Kautsky had shown a decided lack of Marxist analytical insight in defining the action of the masses:

Nowhere in his historical analysis is there a reference to the particular class character of the masses. Instead he indiscriminately lumps together the action of Lumpen-proletarian masses, and the action of petit-bourgeois elements, ignoring the entirely different class composition of the modern masses. 213

The Kautskyian theory of the mass strike as a cataclysmic social upheaval leading to authoritarian or militaristic action, Pannekoek saw as a misperception,

intended to pressure the labour movement into a position of "actionless waiting."²¹⁴ Such "passive radicalism" represented the anti-revolutionary sentiment of the party executive and the trade union hierarchy, and was not in sympathy with Marx's teachings on the revolutionary activity of the proletariat. The Kautskyist "theory of passive radicalism," stood in marked contrast to Pannekoek's activist interpretation of Marxism, that only through revolutionary struggle would the workers consciousness be elevated to make the transition from capitalist to socialist society.

The left understood revolutionary Marxism to lead to a prolonged era of mass action undermining the legitimacy of the state power, while at the same time, establishing a working class hegemony. For Pannekoek the "theory of passive radicalism" was synonymous with the theory of revisionism. It had exhausted the revolutionary potential of parliamentarism and trade unionism in favour of revisionist tactics. As such, orthodox Marxism had become distinct from revisionism only in so far as the latter maintained that the socialist order would emerge as a result of reform-oriented politics in Parliament and a result of trade unionism.

Pannekoek postulated that "passive radicalism" was predicated on a belief in economic determinism which implied that the vagaries of economic development rather than human will informed by class consciousness would trigger revolutionary action. The theory of economic determinism was responsible for "actionless" expectation of revolution as opposed to Pannekoek's strategy of active preparation for revolution as a means to promote working class consciousness. Pannekoek's "new tactic" which he distinguished from the "old preserved tactic" of Kautsky, emphasized extra-parliamentary action to build up the moral and intellectual muscle of workers.²¹⁵

In wartime, Pannekoek believed the masses would not express their discontent in nationalist frenzy but in revolutionary solidarity, turning against governments and converting a European war into a European revolution. To him, the task of the party was to anticipate this development and give form to the action of the proletariat.²¹⁶

Kautsky suggested that Pannekoek and his associates praised the infallibility of the instinct of the masses, which they wrongly assume to be undifferentiated, without any significant differences of interest or outlook. There had been a tendency in the Bremer Bürgerzeitung, the organ of the left, he argued, to infer, "that the instinct of

the masses is more fundamentally sound than the insights of educated men." Kautsky held that the instinct of the proletarian masses is not necessarily directed towards radicalism, nor does it imply a higher state of consciousness.²¹⁷ He had respect for the views of the proletariat only when their instinct was informed by class consciousness.

It remained to be seen whether the masses had acquired a degree of class consciousness which enabled them to rise above the nationalistic propaganda of the Junker regime. In Kautsky's view, Pannekoek had underestimated the influence of patriotism. It was a mistake to assume that a mass strike strategy would cripple the economy and prevent the outbreak of the war.²¹⁸ In defining Marxism as a contradiction between proletariat and bourgeoisie--a struggle between labour and capital--Pannekoek had identified the former with peace and the latter with war.

Such an analysis, Kautsky argued, represented a system of "simplified Marxism" (Vereinfachter Marxismus), which must be questioned in light of the contemporary class relations in Germany. Kautsky, rather than Pannekoek, grasped the significance of the extent of nationalistic sentiment prevailing in pre-World War One Germany, which had captivated the Social Democrats themselves.

If Pannekoek thinks that under all circumstances ...the masses will hinder mobilization I can point out to him that among Social Democrats themselves there are not many who share his point of view. 219

Pannekoek and the radical left were seen as representatives of the ultra-leftist tendency in the labour movement.

Vulgar Marxism rears its ugly head when economic conditions are favourable for its development, making simplified Marxism receptive to mass instincts. 220

In raising the question of simplified or vulgar Marxism (Vulgar-Marxismus), Kautsky had touched upon the vulnerability of the left. It was not the first time that he had dealt with new left radicalism. In 1889, in the Preface to the second edition of his Abhandlung über die Klassengegensätze im Zeitalter der französischen Revolution, Kautsky had taken up the theoretical struggle against vulgar Marxism, as represented by Max Schippel, Hans Müller and Paul Ernst. The left of 1889 accused the party executive of abandoning the revolutionary and proletarian nature of the party and of causing its transformation into a "petit-bourgeois-possibilistic" reform party (Kleinbürgerlich-possibilistische Reform Partei). 221

Kautsky thought that the trade crisis or recessions in the first decade of the twentieth century had produced an instinctive desire, among the masses, for Marxism in its most primitive, absolute and simplified form. Kautsky

characterized the new forms of left Marxism as grotesque "Übermarxismus" ("super-Marxism"), casting Pannekoek as the most adept exponent of "clear and simple Marxist thought," who cared little for the real working class organizations--the trade unions and the party--but instead anticipated the growth of real proletarian organization in spite of them.²²² Kautsky suggested that Pannekoek's concept of organization went beyond the parameters of working class institutions. Pannekoek, following Michels, differed from Kautsky in that he had come to view traditional Social Democratic organizations as middle class institutions patterned after Prussian militarism.

Kautsky castigated Pannekoek's analogy as a "far-fetched piece of social alchemy," ("Kunststück sozialer Alchimie"), and said he failed to see how, after all concrete organizations of the proletariat had been destroyed (aufgelöst), the masses could represent the "highest form of organization," capable of controlling production and distribution in society.²²³ "It is the real organization of the proletariat which obstructs the realization of Pannekoek's theoretical conclusions."²²⁴

Not only did Pannekoek simplify the Marxist method, countered Kautsky, but he also spiritualized the concept of organization (Spiritualisierung der Organisation).²²⁵

In a single succinct, political metaphor Kautsky captured what he thought to be the essence of Pannekoek's Marxism.

Up to now the difference between Social Democrats and anarchists was that the former want to conquer state power and the latter to disrupt the state power. Pannekoek wants to do both. 226

Kautsky defended his own vision of revolutionary Marxism as a quasi-corporate shuffle of the board room personnel (proletariat incorporated):

None of the present ministries will be removed by us as a result of our political struggle against the government. If we will dismantle some government functions we will no doubt add others to the existing government departments and institutions. 227

Pannekoek, in reducing the entire political manifestation of the proletariat to the action of mass strikes, aiming at the disruption of state power as a prelude to the building of independent proletarian institutions, had more closely approximated a vision of revolutionary Marxism than the "board room antics" of Social Democratic policy makers. Pannekoek insisted that Kautsky's Marxism had degenerated into a slogan-contest to intoxicate, deceive and frustrate the aspirations of working class people.

Revolutionary Tactics and Liberalism

Fundamental to Pannekoek's analysis of German civil society, on the eve of the First World War, has been the nature of ruling class power based on economic, ideological

and organizational hegemony, exemplified in the civil service (the non-violent means of hegemony) and the army and the police (the violent means of hegemony). In a bourgeois society, Pannekoek had hypothesized that social revolution was defined by the growth in the power of the proletariat to the point whereby it surpassed the state power.

But Pannekoek argued that to accomplish this goal, Social Democracy requires equitable election legislation and universal suffrage. Pannekoek asked, how do we win the political rights to enable Social Democrats to form a parliamentary majority? His answer was, through unrelenting mass action:

Through mass action the ruling class must be forced to the point that the entire state has been paralysed. The disruption of the means of state power is not a predetermined goal but an inevitable result of the struggle. 228

Furthermore, Pannekoek argued that the question is not whether I want something else, but rather, what will it be?

Where the organization of state power disintegrates and its power is curtailed there grows simultaneously the new organization of civil society, the self-created democratic fighting organization of the proletariat, as an ever growing civil power which overtakes the functions required for universal regulation of production. 229

In defining the political and ideological realignment in German Social Democracy, Pannekoek had noted increasing differences among the same Marxists who formerly had waged the struggle for a radical Marxist tactic and against revisionism. These differences had first come to the fore in the mass strike debate between Kautsky and Luxemburg, but had taken on more serious dimensions over the question of imperialism and disarmament. As well, additional points of contention came up with other issues of concern to Social Democratic policy makers. These included issues of election strategy, attitude to liberalism, and other questions relating to parliamentary politics.²³⁰

For Pannekoek the development of such tactical differences had been prompted by modern forms of capitalist development in the last decade. Mass action developed independently of Social Democracy, as a response to rapid but crisis-ridden capitalist development. When, however, extra-parliamentarism developed into revolutionary practice, the question of a future social revolution emerged as a contemporary issue among radical workers.²³¹

Therefore, two ideological perspectives evolved. The first endeavoured to come to terms with the revolutionary imperative. The second perspective saw the disintegration of the Social Democratic movement; and a tendency

towards anarcho-syndicalism, raising the necessity to reaffirm traditional Social Democratic forms of parliamentary action and trade union activity. Among the adherents to the former 'radical Marxist party line' an ideological schism had developed which produced three factions--left radical Marxism, represented by Pannekoek and Luxemburg; moderate orthodox Marxism, represented by Kautsky and Hilferding; and conservative or revisionist Marxism of Bernstein and trade union leaders, like R. Legien.²³²

Radicalism (Kautsky's Marxism to 1910) predicted the inevitability of a future revolutionary struggle leading to the conquest of power. A radical tactic implied raising the class consciousness of the proletariat. In contrast to revisionism, Kautsky's Marxism maintained the primacy of the coming revolution. Theoretically, the revolution as a concept represented the ultimate in Kautsky's Marxism. Interpretations of this revolution became a source of contention among his followers. Its theoretical exponent, Karl Kautsky, maintained that if revolution were to erupt it would be a political and social upheaval taking place when society was ripe for it, and the task for Marxists was to consolidate their position and prepare themselves for that decisive revolutionary

moment in history. The immediate task for Marxists, however, as seen by Kautsky, was to exploit all the potential of parliamentarism and trade unionism in the quest for proletarian emancipation. Society was not yet ready for revolution; but Kautsky subscribed to the Zusammenbruchstheorie, the inevitable collapse of the capitalist system.

Pannekoek and the new left, however, saw the revolution as a political process, the first stage of which they had already embarked on, and they believed society was now ripe for revolution. Mass recruitment of the proletariat and revolutionary struggle, organization and the growth of political competence could only materialize through their immediate struggle for hegemony.

While Kautsky accused Pannekoek of promoting a method of simplified Marxism, Pannekoek retorted that Kautsky's method was neither simplified nor complicated, but "not Marxism at all."

Rather than strengthening it, the existence of the relationship between the masses and the party provides an obstacle towards the development of the revolutionary power of the proletariat. 233

In 1912, as the party notables had anticipated, the German Social Democratic Party gained an important electoral victory--110 seats in Parliament, representing thirty-five percent of the votes cast. It was the first

time that the combined opposition parties had gained a majority in Parliament.²³⁴ For Pannekoek, however, this success confirmed that German liberalism and capitalism had come of age under the banner of imperialist expansion. He characterized the event, unlike Kautsky, not as the dawning of a socialist era, but as the "election of imperialism."²³⁵

Liberalism was best defined as a form of developing capitalism, wrote Pannekoek. It represented the progress of the moment and, therefore, found universal support from classes other than the bourgeoisie. For its development, capitalism required absolute freedom to dispose of body and property, and equality before the law for all people. Liberalism presented a political system in which all could participate competitively.

Accordingly, 'Freedom' was its ultimate banner.

"'Away with all classes and privileges of birth!'; 'Make room for the able and the fit.'" Its political task was to combat absolute power, absolute sovereignty and feudal aristocracy. All men who felt oppressed by the old social forces, all men who saw the possibility through skill and energy of emancipating themselves and accumulating wealth, adhered to the teachings of liberalism.²³⁶

The electoral victory of 1912 however, for Pannekoek, did have "very little to do with socialism." He noted that, in spite of the fact that the Social Democratic Party was the strongest in Parliament, everything continued as before. In particular, the phenomenon of imperialism continued to dominate German politics, leading to increased armaments and taxation. In his analysis of imperialism, Pannekoek was influenced by Karl Radek and Paul Lensch, his colleagues at the Bremer Bürgerzeitung. With many other socialists, Pannekoek typified "imperialism...as the last stage of capitalism," before Lenin popularized the concept.²³⁷

While the new left, including Pannekoek and Radek, viewed imperialism as an inherent part of the development of capitalism, Kautsky and the majority of the Social Democratic Party viewed it as an aberration of German policy makers, and believed that the growing arms race, the heavy taxation and the dangers of war could be averted by applying more judicious pressure in Parliament.²³⁸ "The government will come to an understanding...and cut down on arms production."²³⁹

According to Pannekoek, Kautsky's argument was based on the assumption that, in not yielding to Social Democratic pressure in Parliament, the bourgeois parties would be

defeated in elections and the Social Democratic Party would become the "party of the people and the sole representative of its interests."²⁴⁰ Pannekoek and Radek; on the other hand, held that the scientific recognition of the roots of imperialism showed that it was impossible to stop its development and return to an older form of small-scale capitalism.²⁴¹ For Pannekoek, the fight against imperialism had to be, simultaneously, a fight for socialism. Only by defeating the capitalist mode of production and by establishing a system of socialized production could the development of imperialism be averted. Wars were the final expression of enormous conflicts of interest amongst the ruling class which took the form of international conflict as the state had become integrated into monopoly capitalist economies.²⁴² The life interest of the majority of the people, on the other hand, was to be expressed in mass action.²⁴³

The Nature of Parliamentary Democracy

Imperialism and mass action were the cause and effect of ideological divisions among the orthodox Marxists. Heretofore, they had presented a united front in the class struggle, both against revisionism within the party and against bourgeois civil society.²⁴⁴ In Mass Action and Revolution, Pannekoek defined the position of the left and

illustrated how advanced the schism among the orthodox Marxists really was:

The struggle of the proletariat is not simply a struggle against the bourgeoisie with the state power as object but a struggle against the state power. The problem of the social revolution is for the proletariat to become more powerful than the state and the content of this revolution is the dissolution [Auflösung] of the state power by the power of the proletariat. 245

Pannekoek attacked the idea of parliamentary victory and Social Democratic hegemony, as an illusion based upon the idea that Parliament was elected by the people as the single executive and legislative authority. Pannekoek did think that where universal suffrage prevailed, the struggle for socialism could be waged within, but not exclusively within, a parliamentary-democratic framework. In its absence, the struggle for socialism and political power, whether conducted inside or outside the Reichstag, was synonymous with the struggle for civil, political and human rights. This struggle could be victorious only if it led to the "complete dissolution of the state power."²⁴⁶

For Kautsky, concessions to working class radicalism had to stop somewhere. A mass strike at most could be a strategy to facilitate a temporary disruption of government functions, not to disrupt state power but to coerce the government into yielding its position on a specific

political, social or economic issue, or to replace an anti-labour with a pro-labour government. The concept of the "conquest of power" as a "revolutionary" slogan of orthodox Marxism meant, for Kautsky, winning a majority in Parliament. What was wrong with Parliament, in Kautsky's view, was that the voice of the majority represented bourgeois interests which, he said, obstructed the proper function of Parliament.²⁴⁷

Within this context of "revolutionary Marxism" Pannekoek's notion of extra-parliamentarism, as Kautsky argued, was directed at replacing the parliamentary decision-making process or suppressing its function. Pannekoek's contention, that parliamentarism had only historical significance and served neither the interest of the working class nor its emancipation, was a betrayal of the heart of Social Democratic theory.

In the debate with Pannekoek, Kautsky confirmed the political credo of Social Democracy--strengthening working class organizations, winning a parliamentary position of power, studying state and society and educating the masses. Any other objective outside this framework, Social Democracy could not determine for itself.

The 1912 Basel congress, which was called by the International Bureau to protest and support the workers'

struggle against the prospective war, confirmed to Pannekoek, at this time, that organized labour had maintained a truly "international character"--the universal fraternity of the oppressed masses.²⁴⁸ He had great expectations for the outcome of this conference. It was the first genuine "war council of the International."²⁴⁹

Pannekoek had coupled the mass action strategy used to secure the franchise in Prussia, first advanced by Rosa Luxemburg, with a strategy of opposition to imperialist wars, transforming them into proletarian revolutions. None of the left wing Social Democrats who supported Pannekoek's theory had viewed the mass strike strategy as an exclusively syndicalist method of struggle.²⁵⁰ Pannekoek contended that political pressure on the government through a united working class action was the only viable alternative to the exercise of winning political influence in Parliament.²⁵¹ In the debate with Kautsky, he had emphasized that mass action was nothing new, and that every class which had used Parliament to advance its interest, at times had used mass action as a corrective for parliamentarism; as well.²⁵²

The period prior to World War One Pannekoek had viewed as a time in history which required the action of the masses to augment and correct the approach of parliamentarism; on the one hand, in support of the democratic

right to vote, and on the other hand, in opposition to imperialism and war. Thus, Pannekoek had suggested that the coming struggle for power, from the point of view of the proletariat, would be a mass struggle exemplified by mass strike movements. At best, when parliamentarism and democracy had been developed to the fullest, they constituted an insidious form of class rule.²⁵³

Parallel to the development of capitalism and its political instrument--parliamentarism--new forms of action were developed in the labour movement within the parameters of the liberal capitalist society itself. Mass action had been provoked by the campaign for universal suffrage, the issue of inflation and the danger of war. In the form of an uprising or revolution, mass action was yet a corrective, to bring the people's assembly and civil society into agreement with each other.²⁵⁴

While maintaining a tenuous support for the parliamentary process, Pannekoek had announced in his debate with Kautsky that the workers' "...struggles...will not take place exclusively in Parliament;" "the masses themselves will act directly to oppose the oppression and the dangers of imperialism until it is finally and completely defeated...until the proletariat is victorious, until we have a revolution."²⁵⁵ The fact that the working class had Social Democratic representatives in Parliament during periods of mass action was irrelevant because, for Pannekoek,

"the deciding and crucial power lies outside" of Parliament.²⁵⁶

The 'illusion' of the parliamentary conquest of power was, to Pannekoek, based on the belief that the popularly elected Parliament was the most important instrument in deciding the course of the nation through the legislative process. Pannekoek opposed this Kautskyian view, arguing that in the world of "Real-Politik", imperialist policies had their origins only partly in Parliament and, therefore, could only be partly combated in Parliament. More fundamentally, policies pertaining to the national economies which resulted in international conflict emanated from the board rooms of large capitalist corporations. The real sources of power which determined capitalist development were independent of Parliament, and thus are to be combated in extra-parliamentary action.

Mass action appeared as the effect of a severe state of distress among the people; it was to pressure Parliament into taking relief measures. The fear of a mass uprising and its consequences often compelled the parliamentary ruling class to act in the interest of the masses which, without mass action, they would not have done.²⁵⁷ This did not mean, however, that parliamentarism had to be abandoned. The parliamentary representatives must agitate to unite the masses, as well as to make the voice of Parliament

the voice of the working class.²⁵⁸

Since the Social Democratic Party in the Reichstag, in the years prior to World War One, had ceased to express the strategy of "revolutionary parliamentarism," Pannekoek felt that in the era of imperialism it had a strictly limited function in terms of advancing working class objectives. Its real power had declined, as policies of the state increasingly were developed behind closed doors by small groups of aristocrats and ministers. The only force that could subvert autocratic government was the openly demonstrated power of the masses themselves.²⁵⁹

During this period of his development, Pannekoek's attitude on this issue was at times ambiguous, vacillating between parliamentarism, extra-parliamentarism, and anti-parliamentarism. After the Social Democratic Party victory, Pannekoek's disillusionment with parliamentarism increased. The German Parliament, in the face of a majority control by the opposition parties, was utterly impotent. In contrast to Western Europe, the German empire was not governed by Parliament, but by a cabinet which was not elected.²⁶⁰ Pannekoek's greatest disappointment, however, was to witness the inability of the Social Democratic parliamentarians to effect even a minimum of social change through Parliament. "How is it possible,"

he asked, "that such an overwhelming landslide has brought so little change in politics?"²⁶¹

In his opinion there was no longer any reason to strive for a more ideal parliamentary system, one patterned after the English style, in Germany.

In reality there is not as much difference between the German and English governmental systems as appears on the surface. In England, as in Germany, it is not Parliament that governs, but a small group of politicians and bureaucrats who can either count on the support of the parliamentary majority or do not have to take Parliament into consideration at all. It may, therefore, appear as an enormous difference that in England, these governing groups are elected from the people, and in Germany are appointed from above by the sovereign. But this contradiction becomes a contradiction of mere external appearances when one considers that the voters in England only have the choice between two cliques, who, despite their somewhat dissimilar programmes, with respect to their reliability from the point of view of big capital, do not make concessions to each other. 262

According to Pannekoek the erosion of the traditions of parliamentary democracy in other Western European countries had kept pace with conditions in Germany. He argued that, more openly than ever, Parliament and cabinet were the voice of the ruling class and not of the people.²⁶³ Under the threat of an impending war, the German left had become more isolated from the majority of Social Democratic notables. They raised the slogan, "...mobilize the masses against imperialism."²⁶⁴ The mass strike strategy,

initially advocated by Rosa Luxemburg, Pannekoek and others on the left, to form the backbone of the universal suffrage movement, had now taken the form of a defensive tactic in recognition of the necessity of protecting the rights of the working class which had already been won.²⁶⁵

As a defence against the onslaught of reaction, the mass strike tactic was in accordance with the resolutions passed at the 1905 Jena party congress. These resolutions had been passed with the support of both reformists and orthodox Marxists but, like so many of the Social Democratic pronouncements, they had become mere verbal expressions of radical maxims. While the successful employment of mass action in the 1905 Russian Revolution had accelerated the recognition of extra-parliamentary tactics among German workers, the intensification of the class struggle just prior to World War One, the growing number of radical class conscious workers, and the recognition that the traditional parliamentary methods were wholly inadequate for the task at hand, had given mass action an aura of legitimacy which it had never had before among the rank and file workers.

For Pannekoek the absolute necessity of the mass strike was to defend the life interest of the proletariat.²⁶⁶ He noted, however, that the party-directed Prussian

electoral and civil rights movement had already collapsed.

The party endeavours above all to co-operate in a positive manner and everywhere...throughout the whole International, reformism and bureaucratism increasingly prevail, stifling all revolutionary impulses. At times it looks as if the whole movement will get bogged down and suffocate. 267

Summary

In the Pannekoek-Kautsky debate, Kautsky, as editor of Die Neue Zeit, brought to an end the polemic initiated by Rosa Luxemburg and continued by Pannekoek, which had lasted from 1910 to 1913. What had begun as a discussion about the nature and tactic of the mass strike had ended in the exposure of orthodox Marxism as a conservative ideology of parliamentary and trade union emancipation, and revolutionary Marxism as a process aiming at "Auflösung," the dissolution of the state.

Kautsky characterized the new left phenomenon as the "youngest radicalism," and a new sort of "revolutionary gymnastics," which represented the "unity of what cannot be unified," (Vereinigung des Unvereinbaren). Kautsky's parliamentary "conquest of state power," as a Social Democratic objective, had been given a new theoretical élan by Pannekoek. "Conquer and disrupt state power at the same time" had become the new revolutionary slogan. 268

To Kautsky's methodology, Pannekoek's position had become indistinguishable from syndicalism, although

Pannekoek insisted, "that his theories were not anarcho-syndicalist but Marxist." This aspect of Pannekoek's thought remained an enigma to Kautsky:

I have more important things to do than to get involved in an anarchist debate, and I want to leave aside the argument of anarchism versus Marxism. I do, however, take note that Pannekoek's theories about the disturbance of state power, a form of revolutionary gymnastics, is wholly synonymous with anarcho-syndicalism. But with this statement I do not want to suggest that Pannekoek is a complete vollendeter anarchist. The difference is that he does not condemn Parliament and elections--why he does not do that is a mystery. 269

Kautsky noted with regret that the words, "mass action," had been distinctly absent from Pannekoek's political vocabulary and replaced by "mass strike." The consequences of the mass strike position made Pannekoek's loyalty to parliamentarism--the participation in elections, the struggle for universal suffrage and parliamentary action--almost irrelevant. The new direction of radicalism, as illustrated by Pannekoek and his new left colleagues, Kautsky argued, had definitely moved towards syndicalism. As a result, he thought it not surprising that, to Pannekoek and the new left, "orthodox Marxism appeared as revision appears to us."

The success of mass action required a united front among Social Democrats: to subordinate internal divisions to a political objective. Kautsky accused Pannekoek of

dividing and weakening the party, and he anticipated that Pannekoek and his followers would isolate themselves more and more from the party and the masses.²⁷⁰

Following the Pannekoek-Kautsky debate in Die Neue Zeit, Pannekoek's exposure in the party press was drastically reduced. Leading the Bremen radicals, Pannekoek kept a vigil for the mass strike and revolutionary action; but, the party had heightened its control over the workers' movement and had come to an understanding with the government. Pannekoek had a suspicion of impending doom, anticipating a collapse of the labour movement. Immediately prior to the outbreak of the war he noted that the labour movement had become "completely dormant," and that the contradiction between the offensive of the class enemy and the immobility of the organized labour movement had become ever more obvious.²⁷¹

NOTES

* Unless otherwise indicated, all translations have been done by Marinus Boekelman.

¹Anton Pannekoek to Karl Kautsky, 16 October 1906, Kautsky Archive KDXVIII, 404, IISG, Amsterdam.

²The lecture was given September 14, 1905 in the 'Casino'; approximately one thousand people were present. The event was sponsored by the Bildungsausschuss des Gewerkschafts-Kartells. Anton Pannekoek, "Religion und Sozialismus," Bremer Bürgerzeitung, 16 September 1905. In English translation it appeared as Anton Pannekoek, Religion and Socialism (Detroit, n.d.).

³Anton Pannekoek to Karl Kautsky, 22 April 1903, Kautsky Archive KDXVIII, 385, IISG, Amsterdam.

⁴Anton Pannekoek to Karl Kautsky, n.d., Kautsky Archive KDXVIII, 375, IISG, Amsterdam.

⁵Anton Pannekoek to Karl Kautsky, n.d., Kautsky Archive KDXVIII, 374, IISG, Amsterdam.

⁶Anton Pannekoek to Karl Kautsky, n.d., Kautsky Archive KDXVIII, 370, IISG, Amsterdam.

⁷Anton Pannekoek to Karl Kautsky, 4 October 1904, Kautsky Archive, KDXVIII, 390, IISG, Amsterdam.

⁸Anton Pannekoek to Karl Kautsky, n.d., Kautsky Archive, KDXVIII, 374, IISG, Amsterdam.

⁹Anton Pannekoek to Karl Kautsky, 4 October 1904, Kautsky Archive, KDXVIII, 390, IISG, Amsterdam.

¹⁰Anton Pannekoek to Franz Mehring, 3 May 1906, Kautsky Archive, KDXVIII, 400, IISG, Amsterdam.

¹¹Anton Pannekoek to Karl Kautsky, n.d., Kautsky Archive, KDXVIII, 380, IISG, Amsterdam.

¹²Anton Pannekoek to Karl Kautsky, 16 October 1906, Kautsky Archive, KDXVIII, 404, IISG, Amsterdam.

¹³Dieter Fricke, "Die sozialdemokratische Parteischule (1906-1914)," Zeitschrift für Geschichtswissenschaft 5 (1957), pp. 229-47. See also Anton Pannekoek, "Parteischule," Leipziger Volkszeitung, 29 June 1907.

¹⁴Franz Osterroth and Dieter Schuster, Chronik der deutschen Sozialdemokratie (Hannover, 1963), pp. 117-8.

¹⁵Anton Pannekoek, "Herinneringen," p. 37.

¹⁶For more detail on the circumstances of the police intervention refer to Fricke, "Die sozialdemokratische Parteischule," p. 237; and Karl Ernst Moring, Die sozialdemokratische Partei in Bremen, 1890-1914 (Hannover, 1968), p. 114. In the party press the announcement appeared as, "Ein Schlag ins Wasser," Vorwärts, 26 September 1907.

¹⁷Pannekoek, "Herinneringen," p. 41.

¹⁸Ibid.

¹⁹Pannekoek suggests that it was probably Otto Geithner who came up with the idea, although either Mehring or Schultz could have made the suggestion, "Herinneringen," p. 43. The "Zeitungskorrespondenz" was a weekly column the party press could subscribe to.

²⁰Pannekoek, "Herinneringen," p. 43.

²¹See Bibliography for Pannekoek's reviews of articles in Die Neue Zeit.

²²In his memoirs, Pannekoek recalls little of the politics of Marxism on these trips. What stands out is a detailed and lengthy description of German fauna, architecture and topography.

²³Pannekoek, "Herinneringen," p. 48.

²⁴Ibid., pp. 51-2.

²⁵Ibid., p. 52.

²⁶His salary was to be paid jointly by the local party organization and the trade union organization.

²⁷Hans Manfred Bock, "Anton Pannekoek in der Vorkriegs-Sozialdemokratie: Bericht und Dokumentation," Jahrbuch Arbeiterbewegung 3 (Fisher Taschenbuch: n.p., 1975), pp. 103-67. This study deals in particular with Pannekoek's role in the pre-war German Social Democracy.

²⁸Anton Pannekoek, "De Commune van Parijs," De Wekker, no. 52, 21 March 1903, p. 2.

²⁹Anton Pannekoek, "Voor zestig jaren en thans," De Tribune, 8 February 1908.

³⁰Ibid.

³¹Anton Pannekoek, "Verkehrte Propaganda," Leipziger Volkszeitung, 23 March 1908.

³²Ibid.

³³Anton Pannekoek, "Joseph Dietzgen," De Tribune, 18 April 1908.

³⁴Ibid.

³⁵Ibid.

³⁶Anton Pannekoek, "Jeugd-Organisatie," De Tribune, 18 July 1908.

37 Anton Pannekoek, "Ein Bankrott des Parlamentarismus," Bremer Bürgerzeitung, 3 August 1908.

38 Ibid.

39 Ibid.

40 Ibid.

41 Anton Pannekoek, "Suddeutsche Politik," Bremer Bürgerzeitung, 15 August 1908.

42 Anton Pannekoek, "Die Politische Revolution," Bremer Bürgerzeitung, 24 March 1908.

43 Ibid.

44 Anton Pannekoek, review of "Socialism and Parliamentarism," The Social Democrat by J.B. Ustuw, Die Neue Zeit 1 (1907-1908), pp. 848-50.

45 Ibid.

46 Ibid.

47 Anton Pannekoek, "Zweierlei Recht," Bremer Bürgerzeitung, 24 October 1908.

48 Pannekoek, review of "Socialism and Parliamentarism," pp. 848-50.

49 Anton Pannekoek, "Die Demokratie als Reaktion," Leipziger Volkszeitung, 9 May 1908.

50 Anton Pannekoek, review of "The Future of Parliament," The Socialist Review by H. Russell Smart, Die Neue Zeit 1 (1908-1909), pp. 445-7.

51 Pannekoek, "Die Demokratie als Reaktion."

52 Anton Pannekoek, "Over de Duitse Revolutie," De Tribune, 21 March 1908.

53 Ibid.

54 Anton Pannekoek, "Der deutsche Parlamentarismus," Bremer Bürgerzeitung, 24 June 1909.

55 Ibid.

56 Ibid.

57 Anton Pannekoek, "Sozialdemokratische Unteroffiziere," Leipziger Volkszeitung, 27 November 1909.

58 Ibid.

59 Ibid.

60 Ibid.

61 Ibid.

62 Ibid.

63 "Gewerkschaftliche Demokratie," Bremer Bürgerzeitung, 27 March 1911, Debates took place between Anton Pannekoek and August Winnig, "Radikalismus und Revisionismus," Bremer Bürgerzeitung, 30 March 1912; A. Pannekoek and W. Elm, "Massen und Führer," Leipziger Volkszeitung, 4 March 1911; A. Pannekoek and R. Legien, "Massen und Führer," Hamburger Echo, 3 March 1911.

64 Pannekoek, "Sozialdemokratische Unteroffiziere."

65 Trade union democracy had been an ongoing discussion in the SDP press. Anton Pannekoek, "Gewerkschaftliche Demokratie," Bremer Bürgerzeitung, 17 December 1910; and "Gewerkschaftliche Demokratie," Bremer Bürgerzeitung, 27 March 1911. Anonymous articles on the subject include, "Die Demokratie in den Gewerkschaften," Holzarbeiter

Zeitung, 14 January 1911; "Gewerkschaftliche Demokratie," Bremer Bürgerzeitung, 26 April 1911; and "Gewerkschaftliche Demokratie," Bremer Bürgerzeitung, 7 April 1911.

66 Anton Pannekoek, "Gewerkschaftliche Demokratie," Bremer Bürgerzeitung, 10 December 1910.

67 Ibid.

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148 Compare Lenin, "Die Differenzen in der europäischen Arbeiterbewegung," with Pannekoek, Taktische Differenzen.

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150 Moring, Sozialdemokratische Partei in Bremen, pp. 114-5. Also Erhard Lucas, Die Sozialdemokratie in Bremen während des ersten Weltkrieges (Bremen, 1969), pp. 14 & 30.

151 Lucas, ibid., p. 16.

152 Although the students in Berlin all came from a working class background and had worked at a trade, their function in the party organization could be characterized as middle management and professional cultural workers. Even the few who returned to their old trade were encouraged to become teachers, at work in the interest of the party. See Fricke, "Die Sozialdemokratische Parteischule," p. 233.

153 Pannekoek held classes three times a week. His first course dealt with the history of the proletarian class struggle. "Herinneringen," p. 58.

154 Ibid., p. 59.

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156 V.I. Lenin, "Die Differenzen in der europäischen Arbeiterbewegung," p. 36. In his correspondence Lenin urged others of the Russian left to establish contact with Pannekoek, and he recommended Pannekoek's work on Social Democracy. See Lenin, Briefe 1910-1914 (Berlin, 1967), pp. 91 & 166.

157 Anton Pannekoek, "Absolutismus und Parlament," Bremer Bürgerzeitung, 3 December 1910.

158 Anton Pannekoek, "Pseudo-marxistische Konfusion," Bremer Bürgerzeitung, 23 September 1911.

159 Ibid.

160 Rosa Luxemburg, "Ermattung oder Kampf," Leipziger Volkszeitung, 28 May 1910. "As a result of the verbal agitation I have finally, after considerable delay, been able to answer Conrade Kautsky." This was later published in Die Neue Zeit.

161 For a considerable time mass demonstrations had been erupting throughout Germany, but February 6, 1910 was the beginning of the mass demonstration movement in Halle, Bielefeld and Solingen. On February 13, 1910 mass demonstrations erupted over the whole of Prussia. In Frankfurt, Halle, Duisburg and Berlin-Rexdorf mass action led to a violent confrontation with the police. The announcement of forty-two mass meetings and demonstrations in Berlin leads the Berlin Chief of Police, A. Traugott v. Jagow, to make the following statement: "The streets are solely for traffic; for resisting the state authority we will use weapons. I warn curious bystanders."

On March 6, 1910 the Berlin party executive had called a large mass demonstration which was considered illegal. The party decided to hold a Wahlrechtsspaziergang in Treptow Park, but the police closed all entrances to the park. The party succeeded in re-directing the entire demonstration to the zoo. One hundred and fifty thousand people protested against the present franchise and police repression. Two hundred and fifty thousand participated in three public mass meetings in Berlin, on April 10, 1910, which had been approved by the police. This was the climax of the mass movement for the general franchise--Wahlrechtsbewegung--as well as its end, since the party had already come to an agreement in March with the authorities not to proceed with mass strikes in support of the general franchise demands.

At this point the polemic in the party between Rosa Luxemburg and Karl Kautsky, and between Pannekoek and Kautsky began. Luxemburg held that a solution to the question of voting rights was only possible through the mass strike. Kautsky opposed Luxemburg's Niederwerfungstaktik to the party's Ermattungsstrategie. See F. Osterroth and Dieter Schuster, Chronik der deutschen Sozialdemokratie (Hannover, 1963), p. 133.

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CHAPTER III

IMPERIALISM, WAR AND REVOLUTION, 1914-1918

The outbreak of the First World War found Pannekoek at home in the Netherlands, ending his work for the Social Democratic Party in Germany, causing a rift between him and the men who had built the strongest and largest labour movement in Western Europe. At this time the vast majority of SPD members voted in support of the war effort of their bourgeoisie. The collapse of the Second International had become a fait accompli; but in Bremen, Pannekoek's supporters initiated a break with the SPD, and outlined the framework for a new International.¹

Pannekoek's old colleagues at the Bremer Bürgerzeitung and the party headquarters had agreed that, "during the war all ties with the 'SD Verein' & Social Democratic chapters would cease...",² and Pannekoek's memoirs do not indicate that he played an active role in the affairs of the Bremer Left during this period.³ He began to correspond with Robert Grimm, the editor of the Berner Tagwacht, the left opposition publication of Social Democrats from 1914-1918 and the organ of the Swiss Social Democratic Party since 1893; and during the war Pannekoek saw his articles published in Switzerland.

At this time Pannekoek's own writings dealt with the collapse of the International, the war and the future of

the various factions within the German labour movement.⁴ He worked briefly as a journalist for De Nieuwe Rotterdamsche Courant⁵ and for the radical journal De Groene Amsterdammer.⁶

As it was not possible, in his eyes, to earn a satisfactory living as a political columnist in the Netherlands, Pannekoek chose to pursue a career in teaching natural science, first in Helmond, then from 1915-1917 in Hoorn, and from 1917-1919 at Bussum.⁷ During the war years and the German revolution, Pannekoek contributed to the opposition journals Lichtstrahlen and Arbeiterpolitik, which became the locus of the International Socialists of Germany (ISD).⁸

Prior to 1914 Pannekoek's critique of the direction of Social Democracy, revisionism and orthodox Marxism had been characterized by a certain ambiguity as to the function of parliamentarism. His criticism had been circumscribed by his membership in and allegiance to the party and its principles. With the collapse of the Second International the need to further his thesis within the party structure no longer existed. On his return to the Netherlands he resumed active membership in the Dutch (SDP) party.

In retrospect, the Dutch (SDAP) party split, which had led to the formation of the SDP was, from its inception, influenced by the struggle between revisionism and left radicalism in the German party and throughout the period of the Second International. Pannekoek had argued that

the struggle in the Netherlands had been a part of the international struggle between Marxism and revisionism and not, as was often assumed at the time, a product of a typically Dutch environment. In terms of ideology, personalities and politics, the SDP had a close association with the left in the German party (including Rosa Luxemburg, Karl Liebknecht, George Ledebour, Alfred Henke, Paul Lensch, Johan Westmeyer and Karl Radek) which, at the 1912 Party Congress, still comprised a third of the party delegates.⁹

The collapse of the Second International meant that the conflict between Marxists and revisionists was no longer one which took place within the German Social Democratic Party. The Marxists worked towards the founding of a new International, proposing to develop proletarian class consciousness and authority in order to pursue the revolutionary and socialist objective of capturing state power. The revisionists had pressed for the establishment of bourgeois liberties where they had not yet been fully developed, and for legislative reforms for the working class within the context of parliamentarism. In the Netherlands, however, unlike in Germany, the party leadership had expelled those who dissented over these issues.¹⁰

Pannekoek regarded this as an early manifestation of a political trend that had been affirmed throughout the international labour movement. De Tribune, as the organ of

the Dutch SDP since 1909, and as the left journal of the Marxists in the Dutch SDAP since 1907, had become the voice of a developing international revolutionary Marxism, which sought to turn the imperialist war into a socialist revolution. To Pannekoek the eruption of the war had distinguished the "Weakness of the Social Democratic labour movement and the enormous power of imperialism;" and it also prompted a series of related questions which had hitherto not been explored.¹¹ The first was the question of imperialism, its connection with the export of capital and the procuring of raw materials, its influence on bureaucracy, politics and the bourgeoisie. Then there were doubts related to the proletariat, the root of its weakness, its psychology and tactics--the significance and possibilities of parliamentarism and mass action, the future role of labour organizations, and the more immediate demands of nationalism, militarism and colonial policies.¹²

These issues begged new theoretical models to rationalize the existence of imperialism. The theories developed by Pannekoek, Luxemburg, Hilferding, Lenin, Bukharin, Radek and others gave Marxism a vital reorientation which emphasized the revolutionary imperative.¹³ Also a liberal work on imperialism by J.A. Hobson had been one of the earliest studies and attacks on the new form of capitalism in 1902.

Viewpoints of the Social Democratic Left on Imperialism

Among Marxists, Rudolf Hilferding in 1909 had initiated the subsequent flood of Marxist intellectualizing on the phenomenon of imperialism with his Das Finanzkapital-- a study on the latest development of capitalism. He defined modern capitalism as a concentrated process which disposed of the concept of competition through the building of cartels, and consequently, resulted in a closer connection between bank and industrial capital. Hilferding saw the role of finance capital as the primary impetus in the growth of imperialism.¹⁴ The expansion of political influence in non-industrialized regions had become the primary government function to advance finance capital.

The history of the Wilhelminian Reich provided an excellent illustration for his thesis. Hilferding noted that such an expansion would exacerbate the contradiction between England and Germany and lead to a violent solution-- an international war--where English and German imperialism were the main antagonists in the struggle for the hegemony of national finance capital.¹⁵ For Hilferding, capital accumulation was a process of world conquest, and with every additional country subdued, its inexorable momentum was increased in such a way that the whole world must become

absorbed by it as a matter of sheer economic necessity.¹⁶

Similarly, Rosa Luxemburg had, in her 1913 The Accumulation of Capital, advanced the theory that the capitalist system derives its dynamics from the invasion of primitive economies. In a damning account of the manner in which the Western capitalist system, by trade, conquest and theft, incorporated non-capitalist nations, she argued that the capitalist invasion into a primitive economy displaced the cottage-style production and ruined their self-containment. The markets created for Western European manufactured goods provided for incremental capitalist expansion in the urban centres without raising the standard and quality of living of the workers--who were both producers and consumers. Imperialism was seen as the expansion of industry based on the consumption of goods, produced in the industrial West, by the non-capitalist strata.¹⁷

Rosa Luxemburg, in this book, argued that capital accumulation depends upon the ability to sell products, or realize the value of the products produced. The workers lack the buying power to purchase what has been produced--otherwise there would be no profit for capitalists. Capitalists do not consume all their profits in luxury consumption; they save for future profitable investment. Since both workers and capitalists together do not consume

all that is produced, capitalists are forced to find external markets to realize the values produced. Luxemburg thought the model that Marx provided, in volume two of Capital, for the realization of value was inadequate as it assumed that the value of produce was realized exclusively by capitalists and workers and as it did not provide any motive for expanded production inherent in the requirements of the capitalist system.¹⁸

Thus Luxemburg concluded that a capitalist society which produces on an expanding scale cannot survive in isolation. Surplus value could not be realized; and capital could not be accumulated because of the absence of increased demand. She believed that expanding capitalist production is impossible without a large surrounding market, which represented the basic economic explanation of capital expansion; the politics of imperialism as the violent global extension of West European capitalism was caused by economic necessity.¹⁹

The notion of necessity in imperialism had been at the centre of The Accumulation of Capital; the theoretical basis for the phenomenon of capitalism-imperialism. While Luxemburg and Pannekoek had been the most vocal exponents of the left before the First World War, and while very few policy differences had existed between them, they understood

the necessity of imperialism differently. While they both held imperialism to be a necessity, Pannekoek presented different reasons for this necessity than Luxemburg had advanced.

The basic difference between Luxemburg and Pannekoek was that the former understood imperialism to be an economic necessity and the latter, as a political necessity. Pannekoek denied that there was any economic necessity for capitalists to find markets outside the relationship of capitalists and wage-labourers.²⁰ Indeed, capitalist economies have developed within a context of international trade with non-capitalist sectors, but capitalist growth is not dependent upon these external markets.²¹ Pannekoek thought that imperialism was only necessary in the sense that it served to increase profits and secure capitalist domination.²² Pannekoek asserted that, "imperialism is a question of power relations and therefore a necessity."²³ The rapid growth of capitalist expansion around the world at the end of the nineteenth century, Pannekoek thought, was attributable to the increasing importance of the production of capital goods in relation to consumer goods, but, unlike Luxemburg, did not think imperialist expansion was inherent in the structure of capitalist production, distribution and consumption.

Kautsky's Theory of Imperialism

For Kautsky and his followers imperialism was not considered a necessity. They had emphasized that imperialism was synonymous with the politics of the capital goods-producing sector (heavy industry). The politics of imperialism implied a political and economic collusion of cartels and syndicates which sought to gain control of world markets through violent means. Firms marketing consumer goods internationally, on the other hand, required stable markets and would be interested in opposing an imperialist design.

These writers reasoned that the politics of imperialism and its violent manifestation had undermined the consumer goods-producing sector, and they favoured an economic policy that was more considerate of this sector and of labour. The same position also found strong support among liberal anti-imperialist bourgeois elements.

The left, including Luxemburg and Pannekoek, subscribed to the notion that imperialism expressed competition among capitalist interest groups. The right, the supporters of imperialism among the bourgeoisie as well as its supporters among Social Democrats--the so-called social imperialists or social patriots--also supported the theory of the inevitability of imperialism, but for different reasons. They saw the necessity of imperialism as a natural development towards socialism--a rationalization of capitalism and

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increased production. The followers of Kautsky, on the other hand, asserted a moral imperative and saw imperialism as an unnecessary aberration of capitalist development.

Kautsky, like Pannekoek, had not developed a comprehensive theory of imperialism in any single work. Both Luxemburg and Hilferding had established themselves firmly as theoretical critics of the new imperialism before the outbreak of the war. Pannekoek supported Luxemburg's conclusion that imperialism was necessary, although he conceived of this necessity in a different fashion. In addition, Pannekoek was receptive to Hilferding's theory, because it concurred with his view that capitalist development supported the monopoly of cartels and trusts and the pursuit of super profits mediated by the role of finance capital.

Kautsky had written several articles on the subject in Die Neue Zeit during the war years but, overall, he remained aloof from the theoretical pre-occupation of the left with imperialism. He felt that imperialism had become a worn-out concept, and he sought to explain his interpretation of it as the exchange of goods between industrially developed nations and agriculturally-based underdeveloped nations. This exchange within the context of capitalism, he felt, was the basis for the development of imperialism.

Kautsky maintained that imperialism was one of several strategies to resolve the necessity of capitalist development. Capitalism must maintain access to the agrarian hinterland to supply industry with raw materials and food stuffs.²⁴

Kautsky criticized the over-use of the imperialist concept as an all-embracing umbrella term to cover the modern phenomenon of capitalism - cartels, protective customs, financial monopoly and colonial politics. He developed two broad interpretations of imperialism: the English and the continental. The English incorporated an attempt to connect all the expansive colonial possessions with the mother country and to integrate these units into a cohesive and infinitely expanding empire. The continental view was synonymous with territorial expansionism.²⁵

For Kautsky imperialism was an aspect of the political behaviour of industrialized nations exerting pressure on each other to expand, subjugate and annex agrarian territories without regard to the national sovereignty of the inhabitants of Third World countries.²⁶ He emphasized the division between industry and agriculture. Whereas in modern economic systems, agriculture had become dependent upon industry, in primitive economic systems, industry had been an integral part of agrarian production.

This relationship had superseded the policy of free trade which heretofore had been regarded as the definitive form of capitalism.²⁷ Kautsky reasoned that with the industrial revolution in England, the continental European states and the eastern American states developed, in competition with English industry, and these newly industrialized states claimed the remaining global agricultural territories. Industrial capital financed the development of the infrastructure to facilitate trade relations between the metropolis and the hinterland--harbours, plantations, mines and railways. When speaking of the "necessity of capitalism" or "Lebensnotwendigkeit", Kautsky refers to the export of capital from the industrialized nations to agrarian territories intensifying the development of imperialism with the exchange of raw materials for manufactured products.²⁸

But capital export to non-industrialized countries facilitated the growth of local industry as well. This development undermined the metropolis-hinterland relationship and aggravated the need to annex these territories by force of arms, to coerce the hinterland to focus on the development of agricultural products and raw materials for export and to obstruct the growth of domestic industry.²⁹

The oppression inherent in European imperialism, Kautsky argued, could be broken when either the native population or the proletariat of the industrialized countries

would overthrow the capitalist system and establish a socialist republic. In many respects Kautsky's analysis of imperialism conformed to the views of the left. He differed, however, in seeing the momentum for imperialism within the self-interest of only one segment of capitalist production--armaments and heavy industry--and he believed that the pursuit of their self-interests would be opposed by every "progressive" capitalist. Kautsky raised the slogan, "Capitalists of all nations unite!" because he believed that, "The economic necessity for a continuation of the armament race was not intrinsic in capitalism itself but represents the self-interest of the armament industry."³⁰ The state, in collusion with the armament industry, had become a threat to the capitalist class economy as a whole, and while Kautsky agreed that, "the politics of imperialism [was] indispensable for the continuation of the capitalist production process," he urged the "ruling class to give its imperialist tendencies another direction," away from, "the producers of the means of violence."³¹

During the war years Kautsky had to confront the realization that the resistance of Social Democracy had proved to be weaker than expected.³² He rejected the concept of imperialism as a revolutionary force--advanced in different ways by bourgeois and proletarian writers alike--

and sought a middle ground bordering on pacifism. Ironically, one student of Social Democracy writing in Die Neue Zeit, had facetiously predicted these future developments in Social Democracy:

German Social Democracy is finished. Bebel will be Reichskanzler, Scheidemann will be Minister of Colonial Affairs. Gerhard Hildebrand will be rehabilitated to represent the colonies, Noske will head the Ministry of War. Leathner has to give up his Austrian nationality to take over the leadership of the Norddeutsche Allgemeine Zeitung. Military expenditures, colonial expenditures and marine expenditures will be approved by the socialist faction in Parliament without opposition and with happy hearts. Kautsky will have to lay the theoretical foundations for the necessity of imperialism. And when World War finally erupts, the General Staff of the armed forces will be replaced by the party executive of German Social Democracy. 33

At the beginning of 1917 Kautsky again stressed the differences within capitalism, between heavy industry and the consumer goods-producing sector. To understand the war, it was necessary to see imperialism as the force behind capitalist state politics. Imperialism alone, however, did not define capitalism; there were other elements as well. Imperialism was at present a component of capitalism, but it was not indispensable for its further development. The most important variable in the growth of imperialism was the pursuit of super profits which dominated the early stage of industrial capitalism:

Imperialism is a form of modernized mercantilism on a larger scale. It is not a necessity for the continuation of industrial production under capitalism, but only one of the methods of extracting extra profit. The fight against imperialism and its consequent decline obstructs the capitalists in the same way as the eight hour working day. The spokesmen of industry also declared it would ruin industries and the workers themselves in the process. The difference between the two cases is that in the latter case the workers recognized the bankruptcy of these claims whereas in the former case prominent trade unionists led by prominent Marxist theoreticians 'prove' that the imperialist methods of winning extra profits by the capitalist magnates are a necessity for the workers themselves. 34

Kautsky added that imperialism was not the politics of all capitalist countries, as had been implied in the concept of "necessity," but only the politics of major capitalist states. This extra profit was not only extracted from the underdeveloped countries, but had been extracted at the cost of other less powerful capitalist states. To monopolize trade and investment relations, the pursuit of global hegemony was the essence of imperialism. 35

Pannekoek's Analysis of Imperialism

Pannekoek did not think that the necessity of imperialism implied that capitalism could not be a viable economic system of production without expansion. Capitalist society could function without buyers or markets outside Western society. He argued that expansionism had always been an integral part of capitalist development in an era of prosperity and growth. It was not a new phenomenon, but

inherent in the historical development of capitalism itself, which was only one aspect of imperialism. "Imperialism is the particular form of capitalist expansion in an era in which the production of goods has become the most important all embracing branch of capitalism."³⁶

Practically speaking, the difference between Pannekoek and Kautsky primarily related to the ways and means of overcoming imperialist oppression. While they both agreed that only through socialism can imperialism be overthrown, Pannekoek supported the revolutionary initiative of the proletariat, as did Rosa Luxemburg, while Kautsky supported the historical Social Democratic policy of parliamentary action. The former urged mass action while the latter assumed a pacifist attitude. In addition, Pannekoek saw a connection between imperialism and the raising of class consciousness. The opposition to imperialism represented, to Pannekoek, a concrete manifestation of the relationship of mind to social reality.

Pannekoek's analysis of imperialism emphasized the interrelationship between the material world and human consciousness and volition. In retrospect, Pannekoek wrote in World Revolution and Communist Tactics (1920):

The transformation of capitalism into communism is brought about by two forces, one material and the other mental, the latter having its origins in the former. The material development of the

economy generates consciousness, and this activates the will to revolution.... World war and rapid economic collapse now make revolution objectively necessary before the masses have grasped communism intellectually.... Nevertheless, theory itself now gains new momentum.... 37

Thus, Pannekoek differed from Kautsky primarily in conceiving of imperialism as an opportunity to educate the masses or raise the class consciousness of workers in extra-parliamentary opposition to imperialism and militarism. Pannekoek thought that the inability to conceive of a strategy to oppose imperialism would lead to the collapse of the socialist movement. The parliamentary strategy, together with trade unionism, was explicable for periods of stable capitalist growth, but had been superseded with the economic and military crisis attendant on the new age of imperialism. The leadership of the socialist movement was ill-prepared to confront the state power in an age of imperialism and thus, the left opposition was increasingly justified in using extra-parliamentary agitation to incite the working class to make a stand against imperialism.³⁸

The revival of radicalism was, above all, fostered by the development of imperialism. Analysing imperialism, Pannekoek categorized it not as a specific policy of aggression to acquire colonies; nor as a specific strategy to expand spheres of influence and markets for the home country; but rather as a struggle for world power.

During the war Pannekoek's concern was primarily directed towards the study of imperialism and its implications. It had depressed the workers' standard of living, strengthened the forces of reaction, paralysed the trade union movement, increased the power of big capital, increased taxation and demanded the highest sacrifice in life and property. This situation provided an excellent opportunity to develop working class consciousness, but parliamentarism prevented the educative experience of radical opposition to imperialism:

In the face of imperialism Parliament became ever weaker. Parliamentarism, which once was the best means to enlighten the masses, a tribune to arouse the masses, had become a means to dazzle and lull the masses to sleep. 39

The teachings of Marxism, which had once been the strength of the workers' movement, had, in the hands of their foremost theoretician, Karl Kautsky, become a "fatalist theory of passive waiting." For Pannekoek the war symbolized the beginning of a new era both for capitalism and for socialism, "in which the will and action of man will be primary;" and he believed that opposition to imperialism would at the same time be a struggle for socialism.⁴⁰

Marxism had been the theory of the development of capitalism; but under Kautsky, "Marxism had been turned into a theory of parliamentarism in opposition to anarchism." Kautsky

had, in Pannekoek's opinion, represented the theory that it was un-Marxist to urge the proletariat to take action; that only anarchists and syndicalists take action and that the true Marxist knows that he has to wait until social conditions are ripe.

Pannekoek charged that, "by the pens of the theoretical spokesmen of Marxism, its revolutionary teachings had become petrified and turned into a barren fatalism."

On the other hand, Pannekoek agitated for action:

The international historical significance of imperialism must be sought in the urgency by which this development mobilizes the masses against capitalism.... The struggle against imperialism has not as its aim to halt its development but to mobilize the masses against it.... Through the struggle against imperialism the organized power of the masses grows to the point where it will be able to confront capitalism itself. 41

Pannekoek integrated his own interpretation of imperialism, based primarily upon the work of Rosa Luxemburg, Karl Kautsky and Rudolf Hilferding, with the mass action strategy he and Rosa Luxemburg had expounded on earlier in connection with the Prussian civil rights movement.

H. Schurer has suggested that the origins of Leninism are to be found in the writings of Anton Pannekoek. While Lenin was aware of Pannekoek's work and had supported his position in the debate with Kautsky, and while before and during the war there had been little disagreement on theoretical issues between them, Schurer's contention does not recognize the influence Pannekoek, Luxemburg, Kautsky

and Hilferding had upon each other. Lenin had been influenced by the theorists of his time, who were associated with the revival of Marxism, rather than by any single writer.⁴²

Pannekoek defined imperialism as the modern form of capitalism which had developed internationally in the previous two decades. The politics of imperialism were characterized by force, conquest and colonial war:

Capital is not satisfied anymore to exploit labour at home and to sell its goods to far off parts of the world. The home country is not big enough anymore for profit-making capital investment. Therefore capital is exported and used in foreign countries ...to construct railways, harbours, canals, irrigation and waterworks, to exploit mines, to establish factories and to exploit the native peoples. 43

Pannekoek's imperialism--like that of Hilferding and Lenin--emphasized the role of finance capital in pursuit of super profits in foreign countries. Rosa Luxemburg, on the other hand, had stressed that capitalism could not survive without invading primitive economies and that the pursuit of super profits as a cause of imperialism was incidental to the question of the survival of the capitalist system.

World War One was an imperialist war, in Pannekoek's view, fought for world power, in which English capital endeavoured to maintain control over its colonial possessions and spheres of influence, while a rising German

capitalist class sought to undermine English hegemony.

Pannekoek described the nature of imperialist war as follows:

It does not break out on account of a particular object, but arises from the general antagonism of states. These antagonisms are rooted in the competition to win world power or to defend it; and this struggle for world power is nothing else but the struggle of every country to win for its capital, colonies, contracts, spheres of influence, and favourable opportunities for investment in Asia and Africa. 44

Nationalism in the Labour Movement

While it was generally assumed that imperialist policies and strategies, if successful, were in the interest of the capitalist class, Pannekoek felt that the entire middle class, as well as the organized workers, would view the expansionary policies as being to their benefit. He defined the workers' support for imperialism in terms foreshadowing Lenin's doctrine of the labour aristocracy, which offered a Marxist explanation for the sudden wave of patriotism within the European labour movement during the war:

All contractors, businessmen, merchants and educated or professional people...believe that better business, better positions await them...as their country's reputation grows in the world and as large industry prospers. Hence an imperialistic policy finds support in the entire propertied class...even the more enlightened organized workers easily fall under the influence of the rushing tide of imperialism. In the labour union whose struggle is always directed toward material advantages and neglects great ideals and intellectual development, there is a current

opinion that raw materials are needed for industry and hence that the forcible subjection of tropical countries is in the interest of the working class.⁴⁵

Internationally, imperialism tended to facilitate false loyalties to the nation, to break down the class solidarity of workers and destroy the labour movement.

Before 1914 Pannekoek had argued that, "only world revolution could put a stop to the horrors of a world war," but prospects for such a revolution were set back by a parliamentary fetishism among German socialists.⁴⁶ He wrote that the only alternative to passive radicalism was the action of the masses themselves. Mass action was to counteract the development of imperialism, while parliamentarism, under imperialist rule, had become a counter-revolutionary strategy; a means of strengthening the bourgeois order against socialism.⁴⁷

Notwithstanding the war prevention declaration at the 1912 International Socialist Congress in Basle, Social Democracy and the trade union hierarchy had been incrementally integrated into bourgeois democratic procedures in order to win their concessions and reforms. The opportunism of Social Democracy had prevented it from utilizing new mass action strategies to induce change:

The rapid growth of the party and the labour union organizations had produced an army of parliamentarians, functionaries and officials who, as types of specialists, became the representatives of traditional

methods of warfare, and obstructed the adaptation of new methods. 48

Extra-parliamentary measures--mass meetings, rallies, street demonstrations, wild cat, general and political strikes--were, for Pannekoek, the only means which could effectively oppose imperialism and its ultimate expression: world war. Mass action to counter imperialism, "begins with mere meetings and demonstrations, developing sometimes into huge street demonstrations...and, as the last and most powerful weapon the working class has at its disposal, the general strike."49

Contrary to stated intentions, Social Democratic parliamentarians gave their support to a war that bitterly divided the international working class, which had so recently declared its solidarity with the Second International. They "voted for the war credits almost unanimously...the party, by this act, sided with the war, assumed responsibility for the war, declared its solidarity with the government, placed itself in the service of German imperialism, and tore to pieces the International of the proletariat."50 Among the 397 members of the German Parliament--the Reichstag--there were 110 socialist representatives, among whom were more than a dozen revolutionary socialists. "Only Liebknecht had the courage to say 'No'."51

For Pannekoek, in the face of abdication by the representatives of the working class, it was critical to

present mass action as a strategy against imperialism. He was adamant that, under this new phase of capitalism, "mass action would prove to be the most important part of the class struggle against capital...."⁵² His opposition to Parliament during this period had not yet become absolute. He was not yet an anti-parliamentarian; but he had come to believe that parliamentary action had lost its revolutionary role and its historical necessity. Revolutionary parliamentarism had been possible in the past because revolutionary socialists believed that parliamentarism would increase the power of the workers.

Parliamentarism was both the historically necessary form of combat of the workers in the consolidated national states during the growth of capitalism, and the best way to organize a critique of and resistance to capitalism, as well as to bring political insight to the masses. But with the rise of imperialism the meaning of Parliament steadily declined.⁵³

The practice of parliamentarism by Social Democrats proved inadequate for a revolutionary task by stifling the proletariat and rendering it unable to wrest power from the bourgeoisie. The assertion of proletarian will demanded the incentive of extra-parliamentary activity.⁵⁴ Parliamentarism could not immobilize both the government and the military. Only a mass strike could uproot the entire state apparatus so that the state's functions could, in part, be transferred to the workers' organizations.⁵⁵

Parliamentarism was the right tactic for an era of preparation, when, only...with words, with propaganda, with concepts, the pressure from above could be fought...but every big class struggle has always been fought out by the masses, the class itself. The tactic of mass action is simply the return to this old truth. 56

In the mass strike, if the proletariat used its power over production to cripple the industry of the nation, no government could remain in authority for any length of time against the determined resistance of the masses. 57

Pannekoek felt that it was therefore essential that those who opposed imperialism should work towards a new International--a Third International--because one that, "obediently falls apart into opposing national armies when the bourgeoisie demands a war for the support of its interests, is no real International of labour." 58 Consequently, Pannekoek was one of the first prominent revolutionary socialists to make a decisive break with Social Democracy and became instrumental in reconstructing the revolutionary labour movement. He argued that, "between those who make Social Democracy a tool of imperialism and those who want to see it as a weapon of revolution, unity is no longer possible." 59

Lenin and the Zimmerwald Left

Lenin, who was not very well-known at the time, represented, with his Bolshevik adherents, the most radical and, as some believed, "the most insignificant 'left'

opposition tendency."⁶⁰ Within the mainstream of international socialism the Bolsheviks represented a much maligned group which had found little support in Europe. Under these circumstances, Pannekoek and Gorter, who had already acquired a reputation within the international socialist community before World War One, became the first European Marxists to rally to Lenin before his victory at Petrograd. Lenin had previously supported Pannekoek against Kautsky, in his State and Revolution, written on the eve of the Russian Revolution:

It is Pannekoek, not Kautsky, who represents Marxism; for it was Marx who taught that it is not enough for the proletariat to conquer state power in the sense of the old state apparatus passing into new hands, but that the proletariat must break up, smash this apparatus and replace it by a new one. 61

Prior to and during the war, Lenin had been aware of Pannekoek's work and had urged others to support him.⁶² He wrote to L.B. Kamenev, "It would be desirable that you get to know the left (particularly Pannekoek...)." ⁶³ In preparation for the Zimmerwald conference, Lenin had conducted a lively correspondence with David Wijnkoop, the secretary of the Dutch SDP,⁶⁴ and he approached the Tribunist group to participate in the conference.⁶⁵ The Tribune group initially supported Lenin unconditionally and several members, particularly Pannekoek and Gorter, became

his staunchest allies in Western Europe. They pledged, "to fight as revolutionaries against the war and capitalism with all the means," at their disposal;⁶⁶ and Lenin confirmed the unconditional solidarity existing between "...the Bolsheviks and the Dutch Marxists."⁶⁷ Wijnkoop wrote to Lenin that, "after you have looked through our resolution and Gorter's programme you should draw up a declaration."⁶⁸

The Zimmerwald conference, September 5-8, 1915, was to re-establish the International which had collapsed after the outbreak of the First World War. Lenin and Radek had opposed Trotsky, who, with the German representative, George Ledebour and the Dutch Marxist, Henriette Roland-Holst, was part of the moderate majority. As a unifying measure, Lenin co-signed the Zimmerwald Manifesto, but the radical minority around Lenin drafted an independent manifesto which was published in Vorbote.

The Tribunists did not participate in the Zimmerwald conference or in any of its preliminaries. "We are not able to come to Bern on August 7, and it is doubtful whether we shall be able to come to Switzerland at all in the next few months."⁶⁹ Henriette Roland-Holst wrote that, "the SDP felt nothing for the conference to which 'half opportunists', like...Trotsky were invited."⁷⁰

Wijnkoop and Van Ravesteijn disassociated themselves completely from the conference. They felt that their participation at Zimmerwald would only condone the views of people like Trotsky. And even with the Bolshevik signing of the Manifesto, without the participation of Wijnkoop and Van Ravesteijn, the Dutch Marxists expressed great disappointment in the outcome. Wijnkoop argued on behalf of the Dutch party that the Manifesto, "contained practically nothing that it should...a lot of old material... that meant nothing at all," and, "...committed the signatories to nothing whatsoever."⁷¹ Only Henriette Roland-Holst was present at the proceedings as the unofficial representative of the Revolutionair Socialistische Verbond (RSV).⁷²

Pannekoek alone felt that the Tribunists should have been present at the Zimmerwald conference because, "then the pressure of the left would have been stronger."⁷³ Even though the left--including Lenin, Zinoviev, Trotsky, Henriette Roland-Holst and Karl Radek--had signed the Manifesto, Pannekoek had many reservations about the official document. It failed to condemn certain directions within the labour movement; it failed to spell out methods of revolutionary struggle, and it failed to identify the revolutionary character of a new upcoming labour movement.⁷⁴ Pannekoek thought the Zimmerwald conference was forced to

make such broad concessions to the pacifist and non-revolutionary socialists that its programme was compromised. He urged that the left at Zimmerwald should express a more revolutionary position, independent of the more moderate groups at the conference. This small group of Zimmerwald leftists achieved historical importance with the success of the Russian Revolution.

At Lenin's urging, Pannekoek agreed to become the editor of a new international journal to consolidate the remaining revolutionary tendencies of the old Social Democratic movement.⁷⁵ Pannekoek urged the Dutch Marxists to, "participate in any further deliberations and to join the communists in order to exercise influence...and if possible keep them on the right track without compromising themselves."⁷⁶ Following this, Pannekoek persuaded Henriette Roland-Holst to finance the new publication, but Lenin considered Roland-Holst, "a Dutch Kautsky or a Dutch Trotsky," and had reservations about what he considered a point of view not commensurate with the Zimmerwald Left.⁷⁷ Roland-Holst, on the other hand, "considered Lenin more a modern Blanquist than a revolutionary Marxist...with...very few ideas."⁷⁸

A temporary alliance was formed nonetheless, in January 1916, and Roland-Holst agreed to subsidize the new journal Vorbote. Officially, Pannekoek was the editor,

but in fact it was edited by Karl Radek and distributed by Fritz Platten. Lenin and Zinoviev were members of the editorial committee and regular contributors, but Trotsky had declined to sit on the committee.⁷⁹ The Zimmerwald Left had brought together the revolutionary elements of the European socialist movement. It included the Bolsheviks, the Dutch Tribunists, and the International Socialists of Germany (ISD). The latter included many of Pannekoek's pre-war colleagues--the group associated with the journal Arbeiterpolitik, edited by Johan Knief and Paul Frölich; the group associated with the Berlin-based journal Lichtstrahlén, edited by Julian Borchard; and the Hamburg left radicals gathered around Heinrich Laufenberg and Fritz Wolfheim. These were among the first to support Lenin and the Bolsheviks.

Henriette Roland-Holst, however, did regret her investment in the new revolutionary journal. The money would have been better spent on the Dutch movement, she felt. The journal represented a strictly Bolshevik standpoint, she believed, sometimes at odds even with Pannekoek's views.⁸⁰ As an example of this, Lenin wrote to Zinoviev, "We declare ourselves in agreement with the questions raised in the excellent article of A. Pannekoek, but we feel that the last lines of the article are much too pessimistic."⁸¹

The centre of left radicalism in Western Europe during the war had moved from northwest Germany to a German-speaking canton of Switzerland, where Lenin was in exile.⁸² The Zimmerwald Left had become synonymous with Lenin, consisting mainly of his Russian associates, Zinoviev, Berzin, Radek, Trotsky, as well as Zeta Höglund, Ture Nerman, Julian Borchard and Fritz Platten. While in exile, Lenin became the progenitor of the left wing communist idea. The Bolsheviks had always belonged to the most extreme wing of the socialist International. Like Pannekoek, Lenin criticized the most notable theoreticians of Marxism, from Kautsky to the inveterate radical Rosa Luxemburg, particularly in her Junius pamphlet. During these years Lenin was positive in his support of Pannekoek and Gorter. With the collapse of the Second International, a renewed strength was given to the revolutionary left which laid the foundation, in Switzerland, of a new direction for the international labour movement. Pannekoek also aligned himself with the radical anti-imperialist tendency of the Zimmerwald Left.

Proletarian Consciousness and the Workers' Councils

In 1916, Pannekoek's parliamentary critique had become more astute, providing a theory of anti-parliamentarism within a Marxist framework. This development reflected

the radical tendency of the Zimmerwald Left. Pannekoek concluded that Parliament had become increasingly powerless against the growth of imperialism and was a means to "bewitch" and "pacify" the masses.⁸³

Imperialism cannot be fought with the old methods. One can criticize its manifestations in Parliament but not influence its politics. Since its development is determined not by Parliament but by a small group of persons...new weapons are required. The proletarian masses must arm themselves with active methods of struggle. 84

The Zimmerwald Left viewed parliamentarism as inconsequential in advancing the interest of the revolutionary proletariat. Pannekoek argued in Vorbote that, "...if the masses remain confused, unsure, docile, then all protests in Parliament will not help, and without a defence the masses must submit."⁸⁵ The strategy of mass action aimed at confronting the state power with a "mass strike."

The...growing proletarian organization...in mass action smashes the...power of the state. With it, political hegemony falls into the hands of the proletariat [which] sets to work to create the organs...for the new regulation of production. This is the historical meaning of mass action... the historical meaning of imperialism. It will force the working class to initiate...the struggle towards the road to freedom. 86

As one student of the socialist revolution has suggested:

Pannekoek drew a conclusion about the attitude of the revolutionary proletariat toward the state which was to be of great importance in the history of socialist thought for it presented a bridge between the reflections of Marx on the Paris Commune and the theses of Lenin in State and Revolution. 87

In the debate with Kautsky, Pannekoek had written:

The struggle of the working class is not simply a struggle against the bourgeoisie for state power... it is a struggle against state power. The main problem of the social revolution is to increase the power of the proletariat to such an extent that it exceeds the power of the state. The content of this revolution is the annihilation and dissolution of the instruments of state power by the instruments of proletarian power. 88

Lenin responded that, "revolution was the question Pannekoek raised," and, "revolution consists of the proletariat destroying the administrative apparatus and the whole of the state machinery, and replacing it with a new one consisting of the armed workers." Lenin implied that the new state government would not be ministries as under parliamentarism, but he asked if they should, "...not be replaced...by commissions of specialists working under sovereign all-powerful Soviets of workers' and soldiers' deputies?"⁸⁹

Like most European revolutionary socialists, Pannekoek acclaimed the Bolshevik seizure of power in the October Revolution, and declared his solidarity with Lenin and the Bolsheviks.⁹⁰ For Pannekoek the Bolshevik Revolution symbolized the defeat of the bourgeois order and the replacement of parliamentarism by a democracy of the workers and by the workers. The councils, or Soviets, were proof of the validity of mass action and the creation of proletarian units of self-government. In 1917 Pannekoek believed

that the type of organization he had championed had become a reality in the Russian Soviets, which had taken over the state power functions and production after the disintegration of the old state apparatus:

The revolutionary masses formed their own powerful organization. Following the example of 1905, the delegates of the factories and revolutionary regiments functioned as councils of the workers--as a sort of permanent peoples' representation--which represented the democracy of the masses versus the bourgeois government.... 91

At the same time Germany witnessed the demise of her imperial government. As the Prussian war machine faced imminent collapse, Pannekoek anticipated the outbreak of a German revolution which would be more significant than the revolution in Russia and which would spark subsequent revolutions throughout Europe. He considered the development of the German revolution crucial for the future of the Russian Revolution of February 1917. For Pannekoek, "the German revolution would proletarianize the Russian Revolution," and the further development of the Russian Revolution hinged on the success of additional revolutions in Western Europe. 92

After the Russian October Revolution, which established the Soviets as the effective state apparatus, Pannekoek looked towards Russia as his model for the German revolution. With the outbreak of the revolution in November 1918, Germany witnessed the establishment of the rule of the

"soldiers' and workers' councils," as exemplified in the Russian example, "in which the revolutionary developmental process can unfold."⁹³ Pannekoek's optimism was guarded; however, and he anticipated, "an enormous task for the real revolutionary communists in Germany." He noted in November 1918 that, "the German Social Democrats, the old party of the government socialists, the social patriots, were in control of the situation and that Ebert had become Chancellor." Pannekoek considered the Eberts and, "the Scheidemanns of all countries the most valuable servants of capital, and the most dangerous enemies of the revolutionary proletariat and socialism...;"⁹⁴ and he urged revolutionary socialists in Germany to concentrate on the task of building the workers' councils and rejecting parliamentarism:

In the workers' council the proletariat already has representative bodies which are much better suited to its conditions than the parliamentary marketplace for orators where bourgeois politicians hold their speeches.... In the building up of these workers' councils, complemented by peasant councils, ⁹⁵ lies the seed of the future proletarian government.

Proletarian consciousness had not, however, superseded the paradigm of bourgeois parliamentarism, and Pannekoek's revolutionary prognosis collapsed at the first national conference of the councils, which approved democratic elections and a return to parliamentarism in January 1919.

The policies of the socialist government, established by German Social Democratic patriots after the November revolution confirmed that state socialism was a superlative form of capitalist exploitation, because rather than emancipating workers it holds them down and exploits them more intensely than was possible under private capitalism:

When a government...announces nationalization, without making the organs of the proletariat all powerful, and without destroying the power of the bourgeoisie, then this leads to state socialism: the worst enslavement of the proletariat. 96

In contrast, Pannekoek supported the socialism of the Bolshevik Party and the workers' councils, with great enthusiasm, because he saw these councils as the real expression of the workers' democracy, which represented the life interest of the masses, whereas parliamentarism only represented an obstacle to democracy. Council democracy, to Pannekoek, was synonymous with Marx' concept of the dictatorship of the proletariat, and communism and Bolshevism.

Russian council democracy had inherited the conception of proletarian democracy from the Paris Commune of 1871.⁹⁷ Following the example of the Paris Commune, the Soviets in revolutionary Russia embodied the form of democracy Pannekoek had proposed prior to World War One. At the time of the revolution he described council democracy and contrasted

it with parliamentary democracy in the light of political developments in Western Europe and Russia:

The workers' councils in the city, and the peasants' councils in the country, are the elements from which the government is built from below. They make up the councils which are responsible for administration. The city administration is elected from the workers' councils of the city; and the workers' councils of the factories of a distinct branch elect the administrators of the whole branch throughout the country. A general council congress which meets regularly determines general policies; but for each particular branch of production, agriculture, transport, health and education, special congresses come together in which the local councils send their expert delegations to exchange experiences and decide on the problems they have in common. All these councils remain in close touch with the masses, because they are continually delegated anew and replaced by others. In this way the building of a new bureaucracy is prevented, and this is possible because at the same time through intensive learning and education the necessary 98 ability does not become the monopoly of a few.

The Russian Revolution saw the establishment of a council union, local control and direct democracy and the abolition of bourgeois parliamentarism. The Russian example provided a stark contrast with German parliamentarism:

A government of parliamentarians...every four years ...must obtain a mandate from the people; through beautiful speeches, promises and programmes they win votes, and they then are masters...but only in appearance are the people all powerful. The whole administration lies in the hands of the officials, the bureaucracy, which, as a supreme authority, governs over the people. This so-called separation of powers of the law-givers and the executive is the means to control the masses in the democratic republics, and yet at the same time presents them

with the appearance that they govern themselves. It is also the means to secure the hegemony of capital. Practice in France, America and Switzerland, proves that particularly there, in spite of democracy, the masses are controlled and exploited by capital. In spite of universal suffrage the masses are powerless and incapable of effecting changes. They are confronted with an ingenious machinery of oppression consisting of Parliament, parliamentary government and bureaucracy. Only at one point, at elections, can the masses exercise some influence. But even at this point they can assert their will only partially.... In as far as the elected parliamentarians are concerned, if they set out to satisfy the will of the people they will soon find themselves confronted with an arsenal of parliamentary dirty tricks--party discipline, behind the scenes deals, intrigues, empty talk--and the 'parliamentary government' of the party leaders is as good as independent of the will of the people. In turn this government is again, more or less, powerless against the solidly entrenched structure of the state bureaucracy; the authorities who confront the masses are an alien ruling power. 99

After the Russian Revolution Pannekoek's critique of parliamentarism assumed an anti-parliamentarian character. He no longer practiced the art of qualification and careful understatement, which was the hallmark of the left Social Democratic pre-war period. Pannekoek's and Gorter's solidarity with Lenin and the Russian Revolution had been based on the council principle; it had focused on the establishment of proletarian democracy and a strong identification with the emancipatory elements of Marxist theory. Such were the relations, at this moment in time, between Dutch and Russian revolutionaries.

*. Unless otherwise indicated, all English translations have been done by Marinus Boekelman.

¹ Erhard Lucas, Die Sozialdemokratie in Bremen während des Ersten Weltkrieges (Bremen, 1969); Hans Manfred Bock, Syndikalismus und Linkskommunismus (Meisenheim am Glan, 1969), pp. 66-72.

² Anton Pannekoek, "Herinneringen," p. 84.

³ Lucas, Die Sozialdemokratie in Bremen, p. 78. Lucas incorrectly suggests that Pannekoek returned to Germany from Holland to play an active role in the party politics of the Bremer Left.

⁴ Anton Pannekoek, "De ineenstorting van de internationale," De Nieuwe Tijd (1914), pp. 677-88; Anton Pannekoek, "The Downfall of the International," The New Review 2 (November 1914), pp. 621-30. The article was to commemorate the 25th anniversary of the Second International. An article that was written prior to the outbreak of the war only required a few minor changes (to suit the event of the actual collapse of the Second International).

Pannekoek wrote several articles dealing solely with the war. Anton Pannekoek, "Een stuk voorgeschiedenis van den wereld-oorlog," De Nieuwe Tijd (1915), pp. 343-52 & 423-35; Anton Pannekoek, "De Sociaal Democratie en de oorlog," De Nieuwe Tijd (1915), pp. 69-84 & 137-51; Anton Pannekoek, "The Great European War and Socialism," International Socialist Review 15 (1914-1915), pp. 198-204; Anton Pannekoek, "The War and its Effects," International Socialist Review 15 (1914-1915), pp. 455-59; Anton Pannekoek, "New Tactics Against War Basis of a New International," The New Review (February 1915), pp. 61-70.

⁵ De Nieuwe Rotterdamse Courant was a liberal business newspaper in the Netherlands. Pannekoek's assignment was to comment on the development of the war in Germany for an English newspaper, but they disliked his theoretical approach.

⁶ De Groene Amsterdammer (1914-1919) was a radical weekly publication. In it Pannekoek wrote a column on international politics under the pen-name Van Loo.

⁷ At this time Pannekoek started to use the pen-name: Horner so as to minimize the effect of his political activity while teaching high school.

⁸ Lichtstrahlen (1913-1921), edited by Julian Borchard, was the organ of the International Socialists of Germany (ISD) in Berlin. Arbeiterpolitik (Bremen, 1916-1919). Wochenschrift für wissenschaftlichen Sozialismus.

⁹ Anton Pannekoek, "De wereldstrijd der Duitsche arbeiders," De Tribune, 8 October 1913.

¹⁰ Anton Pannekoek, "Het strijdende Marxisme Oct., 1907-1917," De Tribune, 5 October 1912.

¹¹ Anton Pannekoek, "De Duitsche sociaaldemokratie en de oorlog," De Tribune, 26 August 1914.

¹² Anton Pannekoek, "The Third International," The International Socialist Review 17 (1916-1917), p. 461.

¹³ Rosa Luxemburg, The Accumulation of Capital (New York, 1968); Rudolf Hilferding, Das Finanzkapital (Berlin, 1947); V.I. Lenin, Imperialism: the Highest Stage of Capitalism (Moscow, 1968); Karl Radek, Der Zusammenbruch des Imperialismus und die Aufgaben der Internationalen Arbeiterklasse (Munich, 1918); Radek, "Der deutsche Imperialismus und die Arbeiterklasse," in European Socialism and the Problem of Internationalism before World War One (New York, 1972); Nikolai Ivanovich Bukharin, Imperialism and the Accumulation of Capital (New York, 1973); Bukharin, Imperialism and the World Economy (New York, 1968).

¹⁴ Hilferding, Das Finanzkapital, p. 457.

¹⁵ Ibid., p. 458.

¹⁶ Ibid., p. 464.

¹⁷ Luxemburg, The Accumulation of Capital, pp. 352-3.

¹⁸Ibid., p. 333.

¹⁹Ibid., pp. 368-70.

²⁰Anton Pannekoek, "Rosa Luxemburg: Die Akkumulation des Kapitals," Bremer Bürgerzeitung, 29 & 30 January 1913.
Anton Pannekoek, "De ekonomische noodzakelijkheid van het imperialisme," De Nieuwe Tijd (1916), p. 274.

²¹Pannekoek, "Rosa Luxemburg: Die Akkumulation des Kapitals."

²²Pannekoek, "De ekonomische noodzakelijkheid van het imperialisme," p. 282.

²³Ibid., p. 283.

²⁴Karl Kautsky, "Imperialismus," Die Neue Zeit II, 11 September 1914, pp. 919-20.

²⁵Ibid., p. 908.

²⁶Ibid., p. 909.

²⁷Ibid., p. 917.

²⁸Ibid., p. 918.

²⁹Ibid., p. 919.

³⁰Ibid., p. 920.

³¹Ibid., p. 921.

³²Karl Kautsky, "Imperialistische Tendenzen in der Sozialdemokratie," Die Neue Zeit, 22 October 1915, p. 98.

³³G. Gramlach, "Der imperialistische Socialismus," Die Neue Zeit I (1912-1913), p. 736.

³⁴Karl Kautsky, "Der imperialistische Krieg," Die Neue Zeit I, 16 February 1917, pp. 477-8.

³⁵Ibid., p. 482.

³⁶Pannekoek, "De economische noodzakelijkheid van het imperialisme," p. 282.

³⁷D.A. Smart, ed., Pannekoek and Gorter's Marxism (London, 1978), p. 93.

³⁸Pannekoek, "De economische noodzakelijkheid van het imperialisme," p. 268.

³⁹Anton Pannekoek, "Der neue Sozialismus," Lichtstrahlen 3, no. 5 (February 1916), p. 102.

⁴⁰Anton Pannekoek, "Der Marxismus als Tat," Lichtstrahlen (March 1915), pp. 88-199.

⁴¹Anton Pannekoek, "Deckungsfrage und Imperialismus," Die Neue Zeit I (1913), p. 114.

⁴²H. Schurer, "Anton Pannekoek and the Origins of Leninism," Slavonic and East European Review, no. 41 (June 1963), pp. 327-44.

⁴³Anton Pannekoek, "De Duitse verkiezingen," De Nieuwe Tijd 17 (1912), p. 90.

⁴⁴Pannekoek, "The Great European War and Socialism," p. 200.

⁴⁵Ibid., pp. 200-01.

⁴⁶Anton Pannekoek, "The Elections in Germany," International Socialist Review 12 (1911-1912), p. 561.

⁴⁷Anton Pannekoek, "Roosevelt," The New Review (June 1913), p. 567.

⁴⁸Pannekoek, "The Downfall of the International," p. 626.

⁴⁹Pannekoek, "The Elections in Germany," p. 561.

⁵⁰Anton Pannekoek, "German Socialism in the War," The International Socialist Review 15 (1914-1915), p. 456.

⁵¹Ibid., p. 458.

⁵²Pannekoek, "De Sociaal Democratie en de oorlog," p. 141.

⁵³Ibid., p. 138.

⁵⁴Ibid., p. 141.

⁵⁵Ibid., p. 142.

⁵⁶Ibid., p. 139.

⁵⁷Pannekoek, "The Downfall of the International," p. 629.

⁵⁸Pannekoek, "New Tactics Against War," p. 61.

⁵⁹Pannekoek, "The Third International," p. 461.

⁶⁰Julius Martow, Geschichte der russischen Sozialdemokratie (Erlangen, 1973), p. 278.

⁶¹V.I. Lenin, State and Revolution (New York, 1971), p. 95.

⁶²Schurer, "Anton Pannekoek and the Origins of Leninism," pp. 327-44.

⁶³V.I. Lenin to L.B. Kamenev, 6 September 1912, Lenin Briefe, 1910-1914 (Berlin, 1967), p. 91.

64. Lenin Through the Eyes of the World (Moscow, 1969), p. 7. See documents 12-17, pp. 33-46. In communicating with Pannekoek and Gorter, Lenin addresses himself formally to the SDP party secretary, David Wijnkoop.

65. V.I. Lenin to D. Wijnkoop, 15 July 1915, Lenin Briefe, 1914-1917 (Berlin, 1967), p. 94. "We must undertake something fast with the Tribunists and some of the German left...."

66. D. Wijnkoop to V.I. Lenin, 13 July 1915, Lenin Through the Eyes of the World, p. 36.

67. V.I. Lenin to D. Wijnkoop, 22 July 1915, Lenin Briefe, 1914-1917, p. 96.

68. D. Wijnkoop to V.I. Lenin, 6 August 1915, Lenin Through the Eyes of the World, p. 40.

69. Ibid.

70. Henriette Roland-Holst, "Persoonlijke herinneringen aan Leo Trotski," Henriette Roland-Holst Archives, 4 & 6, IISG, Amsterdam. See also: Henriette Roland-Holst, "Herinneringen aan Zimmerwald," Fundament, no. 7 (1935), pp. 10-29; Henriette Roland-Holst, "De Internationale Konferentie van Zimmerwald," De Nieuwe Tijd (1915), pp. 590-99.

71. D. Wijnkoop to V.I. Lenin, 28 September 1915, Lenin Through the Eyes of the World, p. 45.

72. The Revolutionary Socialist Verbond (RSV) combined the socialists who, with Henriette Roland-Holst, had left the SDAP to form their own group around the journal De Internationale. See Henriette Roland-Holst, Het Vuur Brandde Voort, Levens Herinneringen (Amsterdam: Van der Schalk, 1949), p. 271.

73. Anton Pannekoek to W. van Ravesteijn, 24 October 1915, Van Ravesteijn Archives, IISG, Amsterdam.

74. The objections of the left were published in an official document in the Berner Tagwacht, 18 September 1915.

75 V.I. Lenin to H. Gorter, 5 May 1915, Lenin Briefe, 1914-1917, p. 71.

76 Anton Pannekoek to W. van Ravesteijn, 24 October 1915, Van Ravesteijn Archives, 15, IISG, Amsterdam.

77 V.I. Lenin to D. Wijnkoop, 24 July 1915, Lenin Briefe, 1914-1917, p. 101.

78 Henriette Roland-Holst to Anton Pannekoek, n.d., Pannekoek Archives, Map 68/1, IISG, Amsterdam.

79 Anton Pannekoek to W. van Ravesteijn, 16 March 1916, Van Ravesteijn Archives, 15, IISG, Amsterdam.

80 For the disagreement over the editorial content and rights between Lenin and Henriette Roland-Holst, see V.I. Lenin to Henriette Roland-Holst, 8 March 1916, Henriette Roland-Holst Archives, 4 & 1, IISG, Amsterdam. Also in International Review of Social History (1964), p. 263, and Lenin Briefe, 1914-1917, p. 184.

81 V.I. Lenin to G.J. Sinowjew, 28 July 1915, Lenin Briefe, 1914-1918 (Berlin, 1967), p. 106.

82 Hans-Ulrich Jost, Links-radikalismus in der deutschen Schweiz, 1914-1918, (Bern, 1973), pp. 31-2.

83 Pannekoek, "Der neue Sozialismus," pp. 102-3.

84 Anton Pannekoek, "Der Imperialismus und die Aufgaben des Proletariats," Vorbote, no. 1 (January 1916), p. 90.

85 Ibid., p. 93.

86 Ibid., p. 97.

87 Massimo Salvadori, Karl Kautsky and the Socialist Revolution, 1880-1938 (London, 1979), p. 155.

88 Anton Pannekoek, "Massenaktion und Revolution," Die Neue Zeit II (1911-1912), pp. 543-4.

89 Lenin, State and Revolution, p. 96.

90 Anton Pannekoek, "De Russische revolutie," De Nieuwe Tijd (1917), pp. 438-52 & 548-60; also De Nieuwe Tijd (1918), pp. 31-46 & 119-42.

91 Pannekoek, "De Russische revolutie," p. 438.

92 Anton Pannekoek, "Rusland, Duitsland, Amerika," De Nieuwe Tijd 22 (1917), pp. 229 & 232.

93 Anton Pannekoek, "De Revolutie in Duitsland," De Tribune, 12 November 1918. See also: Die Deutsche Revolution von 1918-1923 (Hamburg: Arbeiterkampf, July 1974); Pierre Broué, Die deutsche revolution 1918-1923 (Berlin: Neuer Kurs, 1973); Richard Wiegand, "Wer hat uns verraten ...," Die Sozialdemokratie in der Novemberrevolution (1918/19) (Berlin, 1974).

94 Anton Pannekoek, "Der Anfang," Arbeiterpolitik, 23 November 1918, p. 289.

95 Anton Pannekoek, "Neue Aufgaben," Arbeiterpolitik, 23 November 1918, pp. 281-2.

96 Anton Pannekoek, "Der Sozialismus der Sozialistische Regierung," Arbeiterpolitik, 14 December 1918, pp. 299-300.

97 Anton Pannekoek, "Bolschewismus und Demokratie," Der Kommunist (Bremen: Flugzeitung der Internationalen Kommunisten Deutschlands, 11 December 1918).

98 Ibid., p. 130.

99 Ibid.

LENINISM AND THE DEFEAT OF LEFT WING COMMUNISM,

1918-1921

The Founding of the German Communist Party, 1918

Pannekoek's support of the Russian Revolution was contingent upon the practice of council democracy, which he continued to compare to developments in Germany after the 1918 revolution. Of Russian Soviet democracy he wrote in 1919:

The Russian Republic is the centre and stronghold of the proletarian revolution. The forms which determine the essence of communism should serve the workers of all countries as an example. 1

The workers' and soldiers' councils of the 1918 November revolution in Germany were widely viewed as concrete historical evidence of the methods of working class democracy, which provided an alternative to bourgeois democratic parliamentarism.² These councils, however, had elected a government of people's representatives ("Volksbeauftragten") consisting mainly of members of the old Social Democracy (SPD and USPD), who favoured, instead of the establishment of a council democracy, democratic elections and a return to parliamentarism,

In analysing the failure of the German revolution Pannekoek identified two causal factors: the strength of the Social Democratic Party, whose leaders were a part of

the parliamentary government; and the prevalence of the old governing classes' ideological hegemony. While the Social Democratic parliamentarians lulled the masses into inactivity, the old governing classes organized armed bands to crush the revolutionary movement and murder its leaders, Karl Liebknecht and Rosa Luxemburg.³ The defeat of the revolutionary communists in Berlin (Spartakusbund) and the death of their leaders were decisive in halting the development of socialism in the whole of Europe.

The failure of the Berlin communists also meant the re-establishment of the rule of capital under the guise of a veiled military dictatorship. Pannekoek characterized the pre-war teachings of Social Democracy as the most insidious obstacle to the proletarian revolution. Developments in Germany, and the perceived counter-revolutionary role of Social Democracy, confirmed his fears that the aims of the "Volksbeauftragten" were directed against the workers and for the re-establishment of the old order--the bourgeois style of power and authority. He described the people's representatives--the party members and trade unionists in the government--as follows:

For the proletariat they have beautiful words like socialism and liberty, etc.; but their actions--and the same is true for the majority of their followers, the party and trade union officials--characterized them as handmaidens of reaction, as devoted servants of capital. 4

For Pannekoek, a commitment to socialism precluded the support of parliamentary democracy; the actual rule of the people was the essence of a socialist society. Electoral reform and the universal franchise--the bourgeois freedoms for which pre-war Social Democracy had fought--had been automatically granted after the German defeat in 1919. To the social patriots, this meant that the "revolution" had accomplished its task. Pannekoek argued that the universal franchise to elect a national assembly did not establish a genuine rule by the people, but only a formal semblance of democracy which secured the hegemony of capital:

German Social Democracy had always beaten into the masses the idea that the general franchise is the means to secure political hegemony, but in practice the general franchise has proved to be the best method to solidify the hegemony of capital. This may seem contradictory but experience confirms... that nowhere has it led to the collapse of capitalism.⁵

In response to developments in Germany the Group of International Communists of Germany formed the Communist Party of Germany (Kommunistische Partei Deutschlands Spartakusbund) (KPD(S)), in December 1918. The anti-parliamentary tendency of the left had been emerging since the start of the First World War. It had been most actively pursued by Lenin and the Bolsheviks, who had founded the Russian Republic on the basis of council organizations-- the Soviets. The German Communist Party supported the

workers' councils and the principle of non-participation in Parliament as well.

On his return from Russia in 1919, Karl Radek, in his writings based upon his Russian experiences, claimed that the dictatorship of the proletariat is realized in the dictatorship of the Communist Party, and that the party should act as the conscious vanguard of the masses.⁶

In Development of World Revolution and the Task of the Communist Party (1919), Radek argued that under German conditions, the road to dictatorship of the proletarian vanguard must involve what Pannekoek considered opportunism -- a return to the twin pillar theory of communist participation in parliamentary politics and in the trade union movement.

Pannekoek opposed this development within the Communist Parties in the West.⁷ He argued that, as opposed to parliamentary parties, workers' councils unite all productive workers in one cohesive body of labour. Workers' councils are not party segments but independent bodies, incompatible with parties and parliamentarism.⁸

The political objective of the proletariat is a transition period, during which the proletariat, after the conquest of power, is forced to withhold all political rights from the bourgeoisie, to prevent the utilization of its remaining power to obstruct...the new organization of society. Further, that as an organ of this dictatorship, only the council system, based upon the organization of labour, is useful. 9

At the founding congress of the German Communist Party (KPD(S)), December 30, 1918, sixty-two of the ninety-two delegates voted against participation in elections.¹⁰ The party programme had been outlined in terms of workers' council democracy. Specifically, it referred to:

- 1) Replacement of all political organs and representatives of the 'ancien regime' by representatives of the workers' and soldiers' councils.
- 2) Removal of all Parliaments and parliamentary assemblies and replacement of their functions by workers' and soldiers' councils.
- 3) Election of workers' councils throughout Germany.
- 4) Elections of delegates of workers' and soldiers' councils to represent the German people at the executive council. 11

The party was divided into the Berlin-based Spartakists, on the one hand, and the Bremen-Hamburg based International Socialists of Germany, on the other, who identified with Pannekoek's and Gorter's position. The predominantly Spartakist-oriented executive of the KPD(S) denounced the anti-parliamentary position as a syndicalist tendency and charged, according to Pannekoek, that those who moved in this direction were isolating themselves from the party.¹²

At the October 1919 Heidelberg party congress of the KPD(S), the left wing anti-parliamentary faction was expelled. The Bolshevik organizational theories of Radek were in sharp opposition to the council theories of Pannekoek. Radek had first equated the concept of the dictatorship of the proletariat with the dictatorship of

the party. Pannekoek responded to Radek's position as follows:

Arnold Struthahn «Karl Radek» talks about the dictatorship of the Communist Party as meaning the same thing as the dictatorship of the proletariat, and since he at the same time regards the executive as the standard bearer of Communism, he sees the dictatorship of the proletariat realized in the party executive, and he declares the struggle against this executive as a rebellion against the idea of the proletarian dictatorship! 13

Pannekoek perceived the function of the party as subordinate to the councils. The party's task, in his view, consisted of providing education, direction through study, discussion, literature and propaganda. The party must take a position on all important questions, in order to raise class consciousness, and to create a cohesive ideology among the workers. Only then would the communists become the mentors of the proletarian class.¹⁴

Marx has...identified as the task of the proletariat to destroy the state machine and to build up for themselves their own political organizations; the seeds of this new form of organization were sown in the Paris Commune, and at present they are witnessed ...in the Russian council system.... The head of a government...cannot destroy the state machine; that can only be done by the masses through the council hegemony by which they take on the functions of civil society and through which they realize the dictatorship of the proletariat. 15

In comparing Social Democrats with communists, Pannekoek explained that the former wanted to make the party the ruling power whereas the latter wanted to make

the working class the ruling power. Communists in Western Europe and Russia believed that the masses themselves must build a proletarian class hegemony from the bottom up and build the foundations for social reconstruction.¹⁶ In the deliberation over communist principles and tactics, in 1919, Pannekoek had believed Lenin to be a steadfast ally who would overrule Radek's position on parliamentarism and trade unionism. Radek viewed Pannekoek's left supporters as revolutionary romantics whose overly active politics were said to hurt the cause of communism. Radek had initiated and led the critique directed against the revolutionary left in Germany, and had become the chief spokesman for the new communist strategy of the KPD(S).¹⁷ But Pannekoek characterized Radek's theme--that a revolutionary minority could acquire and maintain political power and then identify this coup with actualized proletarian hegemony--as a new Blanquist tendency.¹⁸

Radek talks about the dictatorship of the working class. What does this mean? In the first place, it puts the interest of the working class first. Secondly, it can only be carried out through workers' organizations. In other words, dictatorship of the working class does not mean the dictatorship of labour, but something else. It is not the dictatorship of the class but the dictatorship of particular groups and it calls itself a proletarian dictatorship because it is practised by a workers' organization and puts the interest of the workers first. What is represented here is the dictatorship of the Communist Party, the dictatorship of the determined revolutionary minority...and, following the logic of this

doctrine, it is not the whole Communist Party but its executive which practises this dictatorship, at first within the party itself, where, on the basis of their own authority, they exclude...and rid themselves of opposition. 19

Ideological Rifts Within the Communist Party of Germany

A faction within the Berlin-based Independent Social Democratic Party (USPD), which had included Rosa Luxemburg, Karl Liebknecht and F. Mehring, also supported the left. Their politics were based on an inexorable opposition to the war. In Bremen, the Group of International Communists of Germany was associated with the journal Arbeiterpolitik, emphasizing the educational aspects of socialism, class consciousness and the emancipation of workers. In Hamburg, Heinrich Laufenberg and Fritz Wolfheim formed a group predominantly concerned with the problems arising from imperialism. The Berlin, Bremen and Hamburg organizations formed the combined opposition to parliamentarism. They rejected the Independent Social Democrats and advocated smashing the bureaucratic organization of the trade union movement, which they considered to be under the influence of Social Democratic patriots. The anti-parliamentarians favoured building a new industrial, rather than the traditional craft-based, trade union movement.²⁰

With the deaths of Luxemburg and Liebknecht, the Communist Party executive, 'Zentrale', had come under the

influence of Radek and Levi, who sought after future electoral participation, union with the USPD, and the formation of 'cells' within the existing Social Democratic trade union organizations. The left opposition believed that the function of the Communist Party was found in discerning aims, in directing the masses, and in educating them along class lines, but not in governing.²¹ The executive criticized this attitude as demeaning the Communist Party to the level of a harmless educational union. It considered the task of the party to operate as a government in exile, to call upon the masses to act when the time had come. For Pannekoek this meant that the dictatorship of the proletariat would come to mean the dictatorship of the Communist Party:

A revolutionary minority cannot carry through the dictatorship of the proletariat. Its victory would mean no more than the dictatorship of a few leaders.²²

At a "secret conference" in October 1919, the 'Zentrale' proposed a party programme which was to formulate future communist tactics in Western Europe. To vote against this programme was to cease to be a member of the party; otherwise, the opposition, by constituting the party majority, would have been in a position to dismiss the executive.²³

Some of the expelled communists reorganized themselves at the founding conference of the 'One Big Union' of Germany (AAUD); they advocated a united front organization and

favoured direct action against employers, and non-participation in parliamentary activity. At the same time, the remainder of the expelled members of the KPD(S) founded the Communist Workers' Party (KAPD).²⁴

The anti-parliamentarians considered themselves to be the legitimate heirs of the Russian Soviet system and in opposition to syndicalism:

The principle of the conquest of political power by the proletariat, as well as the recognition of the need for centralization of the proletarian state, divides us from syndicalism whilst our conception of the functions of industrial organizations exactly coincides with that of the Russian Soviet system. ²⁵

Ideological differences among the German communists, with Pannekoek as the outstanding spokesman for the opposition, and Radek and Levi/representing the executive 'Zentrale', prompted a response by the executive committee of the Communist International, prior to the appearance of Lenin's brochure, "Left-Wing" Communism: An Infantile Disorder". This response, Theses Presented to the Second World Congress of the Communist International, Petrograd, 1920, expressed the executive's disagreement with views held by left communists in Europe, particularly the confusion over the council/party dichotomy:

The formation of the Soviets as the chief historically created form of proletarian dictatorship, does not diminish in the least the leading role of the Communist Party in the proletarian revolution.

When the German 'Left' communists...declared that 'the Communist Party must also adapt itself more and more to the idea of Soviets and acquire a proletarian aspect'...this is only an obscure expression of the idea that the Communist Party must become dissolved in the Soviets and that the latter may be the substitute for the party. 26

Lenin voiced his criticism of the left, particularly with regard to the question of parliamentarism and trade unions, at the congress in, "Theses on the Fundamental Task of the Second Congress of the Communist International." In it he singled out the Communist Labour Party of Germany, the Communist Party of Switzerland, the communist group around the paper *Kommunismus*, edited by George Lukacs, the West European Secretariat of the Communist International in Amsterdam, "and several of our Dutch comrades" (that is, first of all, Pannekoek and Gorter);²⁷ as well as certain Communist organizations in England--i.e., the Socialist Workers' Federation and the Shop Steward Committees--and in North America, the Industrial Workers of the World (IWW).

Delegates to the Second Congress of the Third International, however, still considered the immediate affiliation of these organizations "possible and desirable," while at the same time insisting that, "views regarding the relations of the party to the class and to the masses, and the non-participation of the Communist Parties in the bourgeois Parliaments and...labour unions...were not correct."²⁸

Prior to the appearance of Lenin's brochure, "Left-Wing" Communism: An Infantile Disorder, Pannekoek's position was based upon what he understood to be Lenin's position, as well as the essence of the Russian Revolution-- the workers' councils. In the matter of the historical ascendancy of councils' as conduits of proletarian democracy, Lenin's support had been assumed. In his memoirs Pannekoek wrote:

I still remember how perplexed we were and with what difficulty we began to understand the cumbersome position Russia was in...but immediately we began to think of ourselves as the defenders of a concept of communism...which was commensurate with a highly developed capitalism. 29

The resumption of parliamentary activity by the German Communist Party was a departure from the tactics of the radical left, which had pursued an anti-parliamentary policy since the Zimmerwald conference, with Lenin providing the most vocal opposition to "parliamentary cretinism."

After the revolutionary setbacks of 1919, Europe's communist militants veered sharply to the left, with the exception of the Moscow-oriented KPD(S), which provided the basis for future patterns of European communism.

Left wing communism, led by Amadeo Bordega, became a considerable political force in Italy. In Britain, the small Socialist Workers' Federation (SWF), under Sylvia Pankhurst, opposed parliamentarism and Labour Party affiliation

so effectively that it prevented communist unity. The Shop Stewards' and Workers' Committees as well as the Scottish Workers' Committees also opposed parliamentarism. In France, the left had been vociferous enough to persuade the Committee for Adhesion to the Third International to repudiate parliamentarism.³⁰ The Swiss Communist Party adopted a resolution that began with the declaration that, "the Swiss Communist Party rejects any participation in bourgeois Parliaments.... In Austria, the Communist Party was dominated by anti-parliamentarians."³¹ Bela Kun and George Lukacs, the Hungarian emigrés, criticized parliamentary representation, and the Austrian Communist Party decided unequivocally in favour of boycotting Parliament.³² European left wing communism seemed, as students of the Comintern have argued, if not stronger, at least more vocal and vital than the Eastern communism based on party discipline.

After it had expelled the left, the KPD(S), as the Berlin-based West European Secretariat, could claim the distinction of being the only bureau (of the three bureaux of the International outside the USSR) to adhere to Leninism. The nature of Leninism, and its significance for the development of European communism in the West, had not been firmly established before the publication of "Left-Wing" Communism: An Infantile Disorder. Up until its publication,

among the left, the name Lenin had been associated with world revolution, uncompromising class struggle and anti-parliamentarism. This position reflected Lenin's politics as it developed during the war, as illustrated in his State and Revolution, and found support among the Zimmerwald Left. It was generally assumed that the Marxism of the KPD(S), with its stress on party discipline, parliamentarism and trade unionism, did not mirror the views of Lenin.

The European anti-parliamentary communists together had constituted a significant percentage of those most dedicated to the Third International. Organizationally, the West European communists began to forge international ties, and they functioned as a coherent political unit, embracing all of Europe and reaching out towards North America. The scope and importance of the ties developed by the Amsterdam and Vienna bureaux were equal to, if not greater than, those fashioned by the West European Secretariat in Berlin, the only communist bureau, outside Russia, which functioned strictly within the Bolshevik orb.³³

Pannekoek and Left Wing Communism

During this period Pannekoek wrote his most pervasive critique on the nature of communist organization and tactics as it developed in the German Communist Party. The Amsterdam

Bureau's "Theses Concerning Parliamentarism," authored by Pannekoek, outlined the incompatibility of Parliament and councils:

Under the capitalist regime Parliament was a means by which the bourgeoisie ruled the state and controlled the exercise of the state's power. But it can never, even under a democratic constitution, be the means by which the proletariat puts an end to the mastery of the state over the people; it can only be the means by which the bourgeoisie camouflages this mastery. It is the task of the proletariat to break the mastery of the state by taking political power into its own hands. This can be done only by developing the Soviet system as an organ of the dictatorship of the proletariat. 34

World Revolution and Communist Tactics, first published in De Nieuwe Tijd and later in the Vienna journal Kommunismus, represented a critique of the Third International and the transformation of council communism into Bolshevik state capitalism. Kommunismus stood at the centre of the debate among European democratic socialists who understood socialism as council democracy rather than parliamentarism or a single party government. George Lukacs wrote:

The inner core and the permanent membership of Kommunismus was provided by Austrian communists, Hungarian and Polish emigrants. There were also sympathizers from the Italian ultra-left, like Bordiga and Terracini, and Dutch communists like Pannekoek and Roland-Holst. 35

Pannekoek anticipated the "state capitalist" development of the Russian Revolution, the demise of council democracy, and the dictatorship of the Bolshevik Party as

the dominant institution of the new order in Russia. In his view, opportunism in the Third International relied upon the forms of political action which were characteristic of the Second International. Pannekoek charged that the trend towards parliamentarism and trade unionism, and away from council communism as the form of the dictatorship of the proletariat, represented a programme of opportunism. This development, Pannekoek contended, meant that the Third International proposed to reach their socialist objective with the help of the great mass of non-socialist workers, leading to a weakening of their strategy and, finally, to the collapse of the movement.³⁶ Parliamentarism and trade unionism represented the epitome of political struggle in which only the leaders are actively involved, and in which the workers themselves play subordinate roles. Parliamentarism inevitably tended to inhibit, Pannekoek believed, the autonomous activity of the masses that was so necessary for revolution:

Parliamentarism is the typical form of struggle through means of leaders, in which the masses play a subordinate role.... Through its practice ...it creates the illusion that others can wage the struggle for the masses. 37

Parliamentarism perpetuated the alienation and dependence of the workers in that it supported a large class of intellectuals--"the clergy, educators...journalists,

the literati and the politicians"--who functioned as, "the spiritual leaders of the working masses," in all parliamentary debates and in the class struggle. Through the mediation of these intellectuals, capitalism symbolized the "power of the leaders over the masses."³⁸

The rejection of parliamentarism and trade unionism was necessary to free the proletariat from its psychological dependence upon so-called working class representatives in order to emancipate itself through the council system. Not only had the council system of direct democracy proved itself capable of replacing the state bureaucracy, but the trade union bureaucracy as well. Trade unionism as well as parliamentarism harboured a counter-revolutionary potential. Revolution implied the destruction of the trade unions, because the ultimate revolutionary ideal consisted of the masses themselves becoming active in production and in the management of society. Pannekoek sought, the disintegration and dissolution of the state, as well as the party and the trade union bureaucracies, and the formation of councils as the power base for the workers themselves.

Pannekoek outlined his anti-parliamentary position in terms of the Soviet principle, the councils, and the nature of parliamentarism and trade unionism in liberal democracies:

This new anti-parliamentarism which is prevalent among communists in many countries, has nothing in common, as has been alleged, with syndicalism or anarchism, but is immediately connected with the Soviet principle. In the same manner as parliamentarism represents the spiritual, so does the trade union represent the material power of the leaders over the masses. The large trade unions have become bodies which to some extent exhibit the characteristics of state organisms. From servants the administrators have become masters, who form a caste which identifies with the organization and which commands all means of power of the whole, whereas each expression of rebellion of the members is obstructed by the apparatus of rules and bureaucratic hierarchy, before the members have a chance to assert themselves vis-à-vis the leaders. 39

By insisting that, during the transition from capitalism to socialism, political and social power must develop in the councils and remain firmly in the hands of the proletariat as opposed to the revolutionary party, Pannekoek provided a clear alternative to the policies and tactics of the German Communist Party and its leaders. Until the publication of Lenin's "Left-Wing" Communism: An Infantile Disorder, he did not know that in taking up the theoretical struggle of the left communists in Europe and the struggle for workers' democracy and self-management, he offered an alternative to Leninism. He had expected opposition from Lenin's associates in the Comintern, but he had anticipated the support of Lenin himself as the defender of the Soviet principle and of the world revolution.

Until the spring of 1920, left wing communism had not been proscribed by the Comintern. At that time, Lenin intervened by producing a brochure which outlined what later came to be thought of as the "classic" statement of Leninism. Although the anti-parliamentarians in the West European communist movement never developed enough momentum to become a threat to the capitalist system in Western Europe, the Bolsheviks and Lenin, in particular, viewed the anti-parliamentarian communists as a threat to the communist movement itself. Lenin in "Left-Wing" Communism: An Infantile Disorder, expressed an apprehension about a left wing critique which challenged the authority of Bolshevism, as it had developed in the German Communist Party, and he sought to promote its organizational principles among the West European Communist Parties. This prompted Lenin to respond, first, by the measures that could be taken through the Comintern; second, by writing "Left-Wing Communism: An Infantile Disorder; and third, by summoning the leaders of the European Communist Parties to the Comintern's Second Congress, which convened in Moscow in July 1920.

"Left-Wing" Communism: An Infantile Disorder was written in response to the tactics of the revolutionary left in Britain, France, Germany, Italy, Austria, Hungary, the Netherlands and Switzerland. It was published in

Russian in June 1920, and shortly thereafter in German, English and French. Nor was it coincidental that the brochure first appeared on April 27, the day the Comintern resolved to abolish the Amsterdam Bureau. The tenth issue of the Comintern journal Communist International, published in May 1920, had opened with an article by Herman Gorter, which appeared ahead of articles by Lenin and Trotsky; and, on the title page of the sixth issue of the Russian edition, the list of contributors included six prominent Dutch communists--Roland-Holst, Gorter, Wijnkoop, Rutgers, Van Ravesteijn and Pannekoek, all members of the Amsterdam Bureau.⁴⁰ With the abolition of the Amsterdam Bureau, the names of Pannekoek and Gorter ceased to appear in the journal.

The Amsterdam Bureau had only a brief existence. In January 1920, Sebald Rutgers had arrived from Russia to establish with the Dutch Marxists a West European Bureau to unite and organize all communist groups. The Manifesto developed at the conference of the Amsterdam Bureau, in February 1920, had included an explicit critique of parliamentarism and trade unionism and had emphasized the significance of the workers' councils as the new principles of organization.⁴¹ It also stressed the need for the Communist Party to provide leadership to pursue the objec-

tives of council democracy. At the same time the document confirmed the Bureau's solidarity with the international labour movement of all countries, supporting the Russian Soviet Republic against the intervention of imperialist powers. The activities of the Amsterdam Bureau had been financed by Russia, via the Berlin-based Communist Party.

In 1921, however, Levi and Radek founded the West European Secretariat in Berlin (WES). This meant that the activities of the Amsterdam Bureau had come to a halt. Pannekoek saw this turn of events as a return to a policy of opportunism, as he made known to the Second Congress of the Third International in Moscow.⁴² Not at any time did he suspect that the position of Radek and Levi regarding parliamentarism and trade unionism was now supported by Lenin.

Western Marxism Versus the Bolshevik State

Pannekoek shortly thereafter wrote Weltrevolution und Kommunistische Taktik; where he still expressed a cautious optimism that the communist movement would alter its policies, and that as part of the great Asiatic revolution against West European-American capital, Russia would become the centre of a new civilization.⁴³ Gorter and Schröder went to Moscow to effect a reconciliation with

the Russian party, having personal interviews with Lenin, Radek and Bukharin on all matters dealing with the world revolution.⁴⁴

These three lacked any apparent concern for the international proletariat, unless it had a direct bearing on the survival of the Russian Bolshevik state. For Gorter, Pannekoek wrote in his memoirs, it became obvious that Lenin might be the father of the modern Russian state, but he was not the leader of the world revolution.⁴⁵

In both foreign and domestic politics, the Bolshevik contribution to the world revolution was not in promoting it, but rather in impeding it. Pannekoek was one of the first Western observers who argued, as did the workers' opposition movement in Russia, that the Bolshevik leaders were a classic example of a caste of self-seeking intellectuals who had betrayed the interest of the masses. Lenin, having the authority of the Soviet state, was able to convince the Third International that anti-parliamentarism, instead of stimulating the revolutionary impulse of the Western proletariat, would make the West European communist movement a political coterie, cut off from the masses and enjoying little influence. He interpreted the refusal to participate in Parliament and the trade unions, which were

dominated by reformist, and petty bourgeois elements, as an abdication of communist responsibility--leadership for the masses--leaving them totally under the influence of those non-revolutionary reformist elements. Lenin urged communists to "...work wherever the masses are to be found."⁴⁶

As long as you are unable to disperse the bourgeois Parliament and every other type of reactionary institution, you must work inside them precisely because there you will still find workers who are duped by the priests and by the dreariness of rural life; otherwise, you risk becoming mere babblers. 47

Lenin considered the views of Pannekoek particularly "stupid" and he described the tactics Pannekoek defended as "empty phrase mongering."⁴⁸ Pannekoek's analysis of the world revolution and communist tactics, Lenin wrote: "very clearly reveals their whole process of thought and their whole circle of ideas, or rather, the full depth of their stupidity, pedantry, baseness and betrayal of working class interests...."⁴⁹ He concluded that the struggle for the overthrow of the international bourgeoisie, as advocated by the revolutionary left, and the rejection of party and trade union compromise, was "infantile":

And yet we find that people so immature and inexperienced (if youth were the explanation, it would not be so bad; young people are ordained by God Himself to talk such nonsense for a period) meet with the support--whether direct or indirect, open or covert, whole or partial, does not matter--⁵⁰ of some members of the Communist Party of Holland.

Lenin, in opposing the views of Pannekoek and Gorter, as well as of other leftists, argued that the task of the West European communist parties was to infiltrate the workers' organizations. Lenin premised that the trade unions and the parliamentary parties must become the object of cell tactics, influenced by Communist Party members so as to undermine bourgeois legitimacy:

You must be capable of every sacrifice, of overcoming the greatest obstacles in order to carry on agitation and propaganda systematically...., precisely in those institutions, societies and associations--even the most ultra-reactionary--in which proletarian or semi-proletarian masses are to be found. 51

In 1920, many other European socialists had overcome their hesitations and initiated some support for the Comintern. But to Pannekoek and Gorter it now became clear that the democracy of the workers' councils was no longer a buttress for the Russian Revolution. The dictatorship of the party--democratic centralism--was now its policy framework. Thus, Pannekoek became a theoretician of the revolutionary left in Western Europe and a principal originator of the radical anti-Bolshevik tendency.

Pannekoek was opposed to the dominant role of the party in the revolution, to the failure to institute workers' control of the means of production, and to the anti-civil-libertarian tendencies of Bolshevism. He continued to

advocate workers' councils as the instrument of proletarian democracy, and he rejected parliamentarism and trade unionism as alien bourgeois institutions. From 1919 to 1922, Pannekoek had produced a persuasive early critique of Bolshevik theory and practice outside of Russia.⁵¹

Thus, while he had been among the first to support Lenin before his victory in Petrograd, Pannekoek was also among the first to articulate the essential contradictions in the policy Lenin later imposed on the Third International and the affiliated Communist Parties. During the early twenties Pannekoek represented the most direct ideological challenge to the hegemony of Lenin and his followers within the international revolutionary Marxist movement. Within Russia, criticism of Bolshevik theory and practice had been advanced by others also, including Alexandra Kollontai in The Workers' Opposition.⁵² Paul Avrich remarked that from the control of the council organization of workers', Lenin "stepped backwards" into state capitalism, discarding the authority of the factory committees in favour of the trade unions.⁵³

Until Gorter's return from Moscow, Pannekoek had been convinced that the conflict between left wing communists and the executive of the Third International could be resolved. They both had suggested that the substance of

the Russian Revolution had to be found in the class alliance of the peasants and the workers. This had made the revolution a reality in Russia, but in Western Europe, in contrast, the peasants sought after a petty bourgeois capitalist entrepreneurship which was bitterly opposed to socialism and communism. The peasant or farmer in Western Europe, as opposed to his counterpart in the East, Pannekoek argued, is an individualist at odds with proletarian solidarity, one who sees the worker as his class enemy.⁵⁴ Lenin, on the other hand, insisted that the West European peasants were eager to escape the "dreariness of rural life."

Gorter, in his response to Lenin's "Left-Wing Communism: An Infantile Disorder", remarked that the difference between the two points of view was found in the dissimilarity of the class basis of the agricultural sectors of the economies of Western Europe and Russia. He questioned the proletarian class basis of the revolution and rejected the suggestion, "that a revolt of poor peasants is approaching in the West." A Russian model of revolution, Gorter thought, had been superimposed upon European left politics:

The reason for the difference between your viewpoint about tactics on the trade union and parliamentary questions and that of the so-called left in West Europe lies precisely in the difference between West Europe and Russia.... Your judgment about West European tactics is wrong.... There is a great difference between Russia and West Europe. In general, the significance of the poor peasantry as a revolutionary factor lessens from east to west.... The more one goes westward, the more hostile it is toward the revolution. 55

Lenin's prescription for revolutionary Marxists--the support of parliamentarism and trade unionism--undermined the European council movement and the revolution. For Gorter the revolution in Western Europe could be brought about neither in Parliament nor in the trade unions, but rather in the workshop organizations. Only the workers' councils could guarantee the rights won in the revolution.

Russian Communism: Its Effect on the Third International
and Pannekoek's Opposition

When other leftist groups were joining the "revolutionary" Third International, Pannekoek had already concluded that the European revolution had failed:

Just as the hope of the Social Democrats, that the proletariat in a society of abundance would take power into its own hands, has proved to be a utopian idea, so also shall our hope that the collapse of the capitalist system shall find a communist-educated proletariat, conscious of its task, not be realized. This means that political development in Western Europe and America will not be as simple and easy as it was, for example, in Russia. Enormous difficulties must be overcome here, where a deeply rooted bourgeois culture controls the masses. 56

While the Bolsheviks were still anticipating a European revolution by the proletariat, Pannekoek had come to appreciate the actual relevance of the Russian Revolution then, as a national freedom movement: an uprising against the hegemony of Western capitalism, culture and technological preponderance. He saw the Russian Revolution not as

a Marxist proletarian revolution, as outlined in the Communist Manifesto, but rather as the beginning of "a massive uprising of the people of Asia against Western European capital...."57

The Russian Revolution had little import for the proletarian revolution Marx had hypothesized in highly developed industrial countries. Instead, it symbolized a crumbling of the traditional imbalance between metropolis (Western Europe) and hinterland (Asia). Pannekoek saw the revolutionary developments in what we now call "under-developed" or "Third World" countries, as the ascendency of a new metropolis, with Moscow becoming a nucleus of world power, which would come to challenge Western supremacy in technology, culture, military superiority and economic development:

This will not have been the first time in history, that with the transition from one system of production--or form or phase thereof--to another, the centre of the world has moved to new lands or regions. In antiquity it moved from Asia Minor to southern Europe; in the Middle Ages from southern Europe to the north; with the rise of colonial and merchant capital it moved first to Spain then to the northern Netherlands; and with the rise of industry, England became the leading nation. 58

New civilizations based on a new means of production were not poisoned by the influence of an individualist bourgeois world view. There the dawn of industrial development combined with a spiritual sense of community;

where the presence of raw materials and where the impact of the West formed the technological basis of renewal; where there was ideological pressure to compel the masses into conflict, and where there was an absence of an all-powerful entrenched bourgeoisie.

Countries that could combine a communal spirit with materialism were to become the foundation of a new communist world. Pannekoek singled out the peoples of the East: in Russia, Siberia, China and India, as the heart of the new civilization.⁵⁹ These peoples, according to Pannekoek, would rebel against Western supremacy and, on the material basis of a class struggle--the workers and the peasants against oppressive world capitalism--would adopt a communist theme and programme.⁶⁰

Gorter went to Russia, hoping to convince Lenin, first, that Western Europe had little in common with these countries and lacked the large peasant class found in the East, and secondly, that Western Europe must make its revolution on its own terms, commensurate with its own traditions and ideals, and independent of Russian developments. He addressed the executive in 1920, and in Lenin's absence, Trotsky was the last Bolshevik representative to reply to the criticism of the Western Marxists; and he replied disparagingly:

Comrade Gorter didn't simply express the views of his own particular tendency--he lectured us, poor orphans of Eastern Europe.... Unfortunately, I haven't seen Comrade Gorter's mandate and so I can't tell whether he was really delegated by Western Europe to give us his edifying lecture.... Gorter's speech is nothing but a repetition of those criticisms and denunciations and formulations which have been offered us more than once in counterpoise to the programmatic and tactical principles of the Third International.... We can't possibly forget that Comrade Gorter is the spokesman of a very small and scarcely influential group in the labour movement of Western Europe.... Gorter reasons not so much after the Western European manner as after the manner of--the Dutch. He speaks not in the name of France or Germany or England with their rich experience in proletarian struggles, but primarily in the name of a section of a small, Dutch party.... Holland is a wonderful country, but it is not yet the arena of those mighty revolutionary battles for which and through which the ideas of the Communist International are taking shape.... Gorter has accused us of being much too Russian.... We still think that his approach to the question is much too geographic; and that this tends to bring him politically into much too close a proximity with opportunists.... 61

Pannekoek, against whom Lenin's polemics in "Left-Wing" Communism: An Infantile Disorder were directed, went further than Gorter in exposing the contradictions between the Russian Bolshevik government and the Third International. He stressed the increasing contradiction between the two organizations which were dominated by the same people. Pannekoek was convinced that, while the radical West European labour movement policy anticipated the coming revolution, the Bolsheviks regarded this movement

'as part of their own scheme, serving not the world revolution but the Soviet Republic:

The Third International, the organization of the Communist Parties which prepares for the revolution in the capitalist countries, has a completely different task from the Soviet government, and must be completely separated from it; ...the Executive Committee in Moscow is at arms length from the government of the Russian Republic. It is an instrument through which the Soviet government influences West European politics. It is thus understandable that the tactic of the Third International in these countries...is determined not only on the basis of internal Communist propaganda, but also, and above all, by the political requirement of Soviet Russia. 62

Pannekoek's analysis was grounded in the hypothesis that the new Soviet Republic needed a European labour movement which would respond subserviently to Russian foreign policy. The existence of radical Communist Parties preparing for revolution undermined the immediate external requirements of the Russian state.⁶³ Pannekoek analysed the nascent contradiction between co-existence with the capitalist world, and the Third International, which had been created, supposedly, to advance the world revolution and destroy world capitalism. The solidarity of the European communist movement with the Russian Republic served only to bolster the national security of the new state.

Pannekoek argued that the fusion of the communist workers' movement with Moscow prominently displayed the fact that, for world capital, the war of annihilation

against Russia was no longer politically viable and that peace, the resumption of trade, and diplomatic relations were inevitable. In light of this, Moscow proclaimed, for the Third International, a policy partial to traditional bourgeois concepts of parliamentarism and trade unionism. Meanwhile, those Western Marxists who opposed the foreign policy of Soviet Russia were categorized as enemies of communism, of the world revolution, and of the Soviet state.⁶⁴

Pannekoek showed that the Western Marxist position was equated with the Soviet principle. The West European radicals followed precisely the same strategy as the Bolsheviks had pursued before the establishment of the Soviet state; and, contrary to Bolshevik allegations, Western Marxism was not characterized by a "degeneration towards anarcho-syndicalism."⁶⁵

Instead of liberating the proletariat from the tutelage of the parliamentary leaders, the Third International, through its parliamentary tactic ---to win the backward masses, strengthened the power of these leaders and, by replacing better organizational forms, the International has strengthened the trade unions and stopped the building up of the factory organizations through its cell tactic, to infiltrate the machinery of these mass organizations. 66

Pannekoek maintained that parliamentary participation would prolong the life of the capitalist order. Non-participation, on the other hand, would undermine the

legitimacy of the state, creating the conditions for the European revolution. He conceded that the Bolsheviki had built a new Russia, but he refused to accept that this new Russia was communistic.⁶⁷ Instead he pointed to its authoritarian features, which incorporated elements of traditional feudal Russia and symptoms of "statism"--an emerging state capitalism. Communism in Russia meant:

The workers work in factories for a meagre wage under the supervision of state officials and directors. They are led from above and commanded by the state. The farmers still till their private property and sell the proceeds to enrich themselves. The state is a new bureaucracy governed according to the political requirements of the peasant majority. 68

Reflecting on these conditions, Rosa Luxemburg, in "The Russian Revolution," had also noted earlier that, "the remedy which Trotsky and Lenin have found, the elimination of democracy...is worse than the disease it is supposed to cure." For Luxemburg also, "Freedom only for the supporters of the government, only for the members of one party...is no freedom at all."⁶⁹

What was called communism in Russia in the twenties was not, to Pannekoek, a concrete, economic reality but an ideology.⁷⁰ Bolshevism had not inaugurated a communist society, but it had provided an alternative to feudal-capitalist Russia, with the help of the proletarian class as the active revolutionary soldiers.

Pannekoek saw the Bolsheviki as a revolutionary middle class intelligentsia, suggesting that the functioning of the Russian Communist Party had very little to do with socialism and even less to do with communism. Instead, the post-revolutionary Russian state exhibited characteristics of a developing centralized state capitalism, with the continued alienation of labour from the goods they produced. As such the dependence of the workers upon the employers remained unchanged and labour exploitation was intensified under Bolshevism to accelerate the industrial revolution in Russia.

The questions raised by Pannekoek and Gorter about the nature of the Third International and of Russian communism marked the first time that, in opposition to the Russian leaders, the revolutionary concept of anti-parliamentarism and council self-government was articulated from within the new International.⁷¹

Pannekoek's opposition to Leninism and the ideological direction of Bolshevism had been motivated by the same intellectual heritage as his opposition to bourgeois government and parliamentarism. Russian communism became, in his opinion, an accelerated form of bourgeois rule, based on the un-Marxist exploitation and bureaucratic manipulation of the masses. Politics in Russia, for Pannekoek, was not

the expression of a proletarian dictatorship, but the summit of a super-bureaucracy which, albeit with predominantly Marxist slogans, exercised the functions of a bourgeois government. 72

Pannekoek's opposition to parliamentarism was now central to his political thought. He came to see the future of Western democracy in the development of workers' self-governing council organizations:

Parliament serves as a safety valve.... The bourgeoisie...needs Parliament to distract the masses; it needs the party leaders. Above all it needs an irreconcilable, principled opposition, which attacks the government ferociously with words, because without this, the proletariat would too quickly see through this deceptive spectacle. 73

Pannekoek analysed the essential contradictions between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie in their relations with the state as follows:

The proletariat represents the oppressed, exploited class held in bondage by the state bureaucracy; the splendidly closed organization of the entire bourgeoisie and the military. Its leading civil servants belong to the exploiting classes themselves. Therefore it represents an inner contradiction that the oppressive machinery of the state can suddenly be changed into an instrument of liberation of the proletariat, merely because socialist ministers stand at its helm. 74

Pannekoek maintained that in an era of class polarization the parliamentary struggle serves as a democratic front to allow capitalist interests to take reactionary measures against the working class. Parliamentarism

represented a form of pseudo-democracy outside of the decision-making process. The practice of parliamentary democracy led the common man to believe that he had a valid part in the decision-making process through his elected parliamentary representative. Pannekoek alleged that the interest of capital exercised control over the press and public opinion, that capital had supported the organization of society, and that it had obscured the emergence of class opposition:

The conscious task of Parliament is to serve as an advanced structure to impede unqualified intruders, a propaganda institute that serves to formulate and dispense public falsehoods which obscure capitalist exploitation and in which all interests of capital agree to keep themselves removed as far from reality as is necessary to falsify or deny the public record of capital. 75

Outcome of the Controversy

In 1920, Pannekoek commented on the new avenue of Soviet foreign policy, which aimed at reconstruction of the means of production by pursuing an economic strategy of state capitalism. He referred to Soviet development as state-capitalist economic reconstruction with the assistance of Western capitalist countries.⁷⁶ This meant that the political and economic autonomy of the workers' councils would be severely restricted and their role reduced to that of mere trade union subdivisions. In Europe the state capitalist development policy, ratified by the

Second Congress of the Third International, ended in failure with the defeat of the 1921 March uprisings in Germany. Pannekoek urged others on the left to work towards an end to the uncontested dominion of Russia over the future of the West European revolution.⁷⁷

In his last article in the Dutch revolutionary Marxist journal De Nieuwe Tijd, Pannekoek compared the Third International to the Second. The former, he held, continued the policies and basic ideologies of the left wing and radical Social Democracy of the latter, except that in the Third International, communist slogans underlined the traditional policy of revolutionary socialism. As in the Second International, the Third International continued to espouse Marxist propaganda in order to win the trade union movement for the socialist cause.⁷⁸

When the KAPD had been expelled by the Third International, Pannekoek had been approached by Erich Mühsam, who represented the anarchist revolutionary groups in Germany, with the proposal that all the revolutionary groups expelled from the Third International should form a league of independent revolutionary organizations. As a Marxist theoretician, Pannekoek rejected affiliation with predominantly anarchist organizations and remained convinced that only the Marxist theory of class struggle could lead the proletariat to victory.⁷⁹

With the defeat of left wing communism, small groups had formed in several European countries, advocating an international and anti-parliamentary ideology which emphasized the importance of the spiritual dimension of Marxist emancipation, that is, a "revolutionary consciousness."⁸⁰ Since 1921, however, the Dutch Marxists--Pannekoek, Gorter and Henriette Roland-Holst--were, according to Van Ravesteijn, scarcely active any longer in the Dutch Communist Party. After two decades of intense political activity in the Netherlands, in Germany, and in the politics of the Second and Third International, Van Ravesteijn duly noted that these three no longer occupied any responsible positions in the Netherlands, nor in any public assemblies, executive bodies or editorial boards.⁸¹

The effect of Comintern policy on the Dutch Communist Party had been far-reaching. Members of the party who sympathized with the anti-parliamentary policies of the German KAPD were confronted with the prospect of party discipline, stifling all debate and opposition, or with leaving the party. Many, including Pannekoek, opted for the latter. Henriette Roland-Holst, however, felt called upon to defend the position of the Comintern executive, and portrayed Pannekoek and Gorter as enemies of Soviet Russia.⁸²

A resolution passed at the Third Congress of the Comintern in 1921 had reinforced the concept of "iron discipline"--that all political and intellectual expressions of its members and co-workers must have the express support of the Communist Party. This had an immediate effect upon De Nieuwe Tijd, which had been the only organ of its kind in Europe to have survived for twenty-five years as an independent forum of socialist expression.⁸³ Ironically, on the journal's twenty-fifth anniversary, Roland-Holst had declared that its survival had been due in large part to its editorial independence from the party and its executive.⁸⁴

The latter attempted to introduce Communist Party editors to De Nieuwe Tijd.⁸⁵ Pannekoek, however, was convinced that the journal should continue as a free organ of communist and Marxist ideology and as a forum for diverse and competing ideas without the interference of any one political party.⁸⁶

Roland-Holst agreed with the executive that under the circumstances, De Nieuwe Tijd could not remain in existence, because of the ideological divisiveness of the Dutch party and, even if continued publication proved to be viable, she argued that, "Moscow would find it unacceptable," to co-edit a theoretical journal with Pannekoek,

Gorter and their followers.⁸⁷ It seemed clear to Henriette Roland-Holst that, "to maintain a mixed editorial board ~~was~~ no longer possible.... It is undisciplinatory in the highest degree; against the letter and the spirit of Moscow."⁸⁸ Pannekoek also noted:

If Moscow forbids further co-operation in a formal literary context...good, then we'll decide to dissolve our partnership on December 31st. If Moscow does not agree and orders an immediate dissolution, then we'll refund the subscribers and put up a sign, 'Closed by order of Moscow'.⁸⁹

The last issue of De Nieuwe Tijd appeared on December 20th, and the Dutch Communist Party subsequently founded its own party journal De Nieuwe Gids. It marked the final dissolution of all ties that Pannekoek had had with the Communist Party in the Netherlands and with the Third International.

NOTES

* Unless otherwise indicated, all translations have been done by Marinus Boekelman.

¹K. Horner [Anton Pannekoek], "Der Internationale Kommunismus," Arbeiterpolitik, 1 February 1919, pp. 344-5.

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³Anton Pannekoek, "Why Past Revolutionary Movements Failed," New Essays 5, no. 2 (Fall 1940), p. 23.

⁴K. Horner [Anton Pannekoek], "Der Ausgang des Kampfes," Arbeiterpolitik, 1 February 1919, pp. 342-3.

⁵Anton Pannekoek, "Kommunismus und Sozialdemokratie," Arbeiterpolitik, 15 February 1919, pp. 355-6.

⁶Arnold Struthahn [Karl Radek], Die russische und die deutsche Revolution und die Weltlage: Begrüßungsrede an den Gründungsparteitag der KPD-Berlin (n.p., n.d.); Arnold Struthahn [Karl Radek], Die Diktatur des Proletariats und die kommunistische Partei (KPD, 1919); Arnold Struthahn [Karl Radek], Die Entwicklung der deutschen Revolution und die Aufgabe der kommunistische Partei (Berlin, 1919). In these brochures Radek postulated that the dictatorship of the proletariat is realized in the dictatorship of the Communist Party, and he claimed for the party the role of

conscious vanguard of the masses. Also see Arnold Struthahn [Karl Radek], Protokoll des Gründungsparteitages der Kommunistischen Partei Deutschlands (Berlin, 1972); and Arnold Struthahn [Karl Radek], Bericht über den Gründungsparteitag der Kommunistischen Partei Deutschlands (Berlin, 1919).

⁷ K. Horner [Anton Pannekoek], "De derde Internationale en de Wereld revolutie," De Nieuwe Tijd (1920), pp. 161-9, 193-207 & 257-71; K. Horner [Anton Pannekoek], "Der Neue Blanquismus," Der Kommunist, 3 February 1920; K. Horner [Anton Pannekoek], "Der Weg nach rechts," Kommunistische Arbeiterzeitung, 23 January 1920; Karl Horner [Anton Pannekoek], "Die Gewerkschaften," Kommunistische Arbeiterzeitung, 27 January 1920.

⁸ Anton Pannekoek, "Het Duitsche kommunisme," De Nieuwe Tijd 24 (1919), p. 781.

⁹ Anton Pannekoek, "De strijd over de kommunistische taktiek in Duitschland," De Nieuwe Tijd 24 (1919), p. 693.

¹⁰ Hans Manfred Bock, Syndikalismus und Linkskommunismus von 1918-1923 (Meisenheim am Glan, 1969), p. 39.

¹¹ Arnold Struthahn [Karl Radek], Bericht über den Gründungsparteitag der Kommunistischen Partei Deutschlands (Spartakusbund) (1918-1919), pp. 49-56.

¹² Pannekoek, "De strijd over de kommunistische taktiek in Duitschland," p. 695.

¹³ K. Horner [Anton Pannekoek], "Taktische und organisatorische Streitfragen," Der Kommunist: Organ der Kommunistischen Partei Deutschlands (Spartakusbund), Besirk Nordwest, 3 parts, 13, 14, 17 December 1919. In fn., 13 December 1919.

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¹⁶ Ibid.

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20 K. [Anton Pannekoek], "The Differences in the Communist Party of Germany," Bulletin of the Provisional Bureau in Amsterdam of the Communist International, no. 1, (February 1920), p. 8.

21 Ibid.

22 Ibid.

23 Ibid.

24 "Bericht über den Gründungs-Parteitag der Kommunistischen Arbeiter-Partei Deutschlands am 4 und 5 April in Berlin," Jahrbuch 5: Kritik des Leninismus Arbeiterbewegung; Hans Manfred Bock, "Theorie und Geschichte," Jahrbuch 5: Kritik des Leninismus Arbeiterbewegung, introduction (Frankfurt, 1977), pp. 185-242.

25 K.H. [Anton Pannekoek], "The Differences in the Communist Party of Germany."

26 Theses Presented to the Second World Congress of the Communist International (Petrograd, 1920), pp. 18-9.

27 Ibid., p. 118.

28 Ibid.

29 Anton Pannekoek, "Herinneringen," p. 103.

30 Branko Lazitch and Milorad M. Drachkovitch, Lenin and the Comintern 1 (Stanford, 1972), p. 255. I am indebted to Branko Lazitch and Milorad Drachkovitch's analysis of "Lenin and the Left Communists," chapter six in their book.

31 Ibid.

³² Cited in Lazitch and Drachkovitch, Lenin and the Comintern 1, p. 255; also see James W. Hulse, The Forming of the Communist International (Stanford, 1964).

³³ "Conference of the Third International held at Amsterdam, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 and 8 February 1920," Bulletin of the Sub-Bureau in Amsterdam of the Communist International, no. 2 (March 1920; reprint ed., Milan: Feltrini, 1967), pp. 3-9.

³⁴ "Theses Concerning Parliamentarism," Bulletin of the Provisional Bureau in Amsterdam of the Communist International, no. 1 (February 1920), p. 3.

³⁵ George Lukacs, History and Class Consciousness (Cambridge, 1971), p. xiii.

³⁶ Horner [Anton Pannekoek], "De derde Internationale en de Wereld revolutie," p. 167.

³⁷ Ibid., p. 194.

³⁸ Ibid., p. 195.

³⁹ Ibid., pp. 197-8.

⁴⁰ See Lazitch and Drachkovitch, Lenin and the Comintern 1.

⁴¹ G.C. Trincher Rutgers and K. Trincher, Rutgers, Zijn leven en streven in Holland, Indonesia, Amerika en Rusland (Moscow, 1974), pp. 85-9; Hulse, The Forming of the Communist International, pp. 152-60; Lazitch and Drachkovitch, Lenin and the Comintern 1; Bulletin of the Provisional Bureau in Amsterdam of the Communist International, no. 1 (February 1920).

⁴² Pannekoek, "Herinneringen," p. 101. Here Pannekoek stated that Radek accused the Amsterdam Bureau of financial irresponsibility.

⁴³ Anton Pannekoek, Weltrevolution und Kommunistische Taktik (Vienna, 1920). In English translation, D.A. Smart, ed., Pannekoek and Gorter's Marxism (London, 1978), p. 138.

⁴⁴Pannekoek, "Herinneringen," p. 105. There is also an account of the journey by Gorter and Schröder to Russia in Proletarier, no. 3 (1920), pp. 5-12. See also Jenne Clinge Doorenbos, Wisselend Getij (Amsterdam, 1964), pp. 44-52.

⁴⁵Pannekoek, "Herinneringen," p. 105.

⁴⁶V.I. Lenin, "Left-Wing Communism: An Infantile Disorder" (Peking: Foreign Language Press, 1970), pp. 44-5.

⁴⁷Ibid., pp. 52-3.

⁴⁸Ibid., p. 36.

⁴⁹Ibid., p. 2-3.

⁵⁰Ibid., p. 67.

⁵¹Ibid., pp. 44-5.

⁵²Robert Daniels, The Conscience of the Revolution (Cambridge, 1965); Die Linke Opposition in der Sowjetunion: Texte 1923-1928, 4 vols. (Berlin: Ulf Wolter, 1976); Documents of the 1923 Opposition (London, 1975); A. Kollontai, The Workers' Opposition, Solidarity Pamphlet, no. 7.

⁵³P. Avrich, "The Bolshevik Revolution and Workers' Control in Russian Industry," Slavic Review 22, no. 1 (1963), p. 62.

⁵⁴K. Horner (Anton Pannekoek), "Die Agrarfrage," Der Kommunist, 3 March 1920.

⁵⁵Herman Gorter, "Open Letter to Comrade Lenin: An Answer to Lenin's Pamphlet "Left-Wing Communism: An Infantile Disorder," in International Communism in the Era of Lenin: A Documentary History, edited by Helmut Gruber (New York, 1972), pp. 216-7. Also Herman Gorter, Offener Brief an den Genossen Lenin (Hamburg, 1974), p. 23.

⁵⁶Anton Pannekoek, "Wereld Krisis," De Nieuwe Tijd 25 (1920), p. 7.

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59 Ibid., p. 268.

60 Pannekoek, Weltrevolution und Kommunistische Taktik, p. 47.

61 Leon Trotsky, "On the Policy of the KAPD," (Speech delivered at a session of the ECCI, November 24, 1920), The First Five Years of the Communist International 1 (New York, 1972), pp. 137-8.

62 Karl Horner (Anton Pannekoek), "Voor het Kongres in Moscow," De Nieuwe Tijd 25 (1920), p. 481.

63 Ibid., p. 485.

64 Ibid.

65 Ibid., p. 486.

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67 Anton Pannekoek, "Rusland en het kommunisme," De Nieuwe Tijd 26 (1921), p. 645.

68 Ibid.

69 Rosa Luxemburg, "The Russian Revolution," Rosa Luxemburg Speaks, ed. by Mary-Alice Waters (New York, 1970), pp. 3

70 Pannekoek, "Rusland en het Kommunisme," p. 646.

71 Anton Pannekoek, "De KAPD en Moscow," De Nieuwe Tijd 26 (1921), p. 78.

⁷²Pannekoek, "Rusland en het kommunisme," p. 645.

⁷³Anton Pannekoek, "De Opmarsch der reaktie," De Nieuwe Tijd 26 (1921), p. 169.

⁷⁴Anton Pannekoek, "Het Duitsche Kommunisme," De Nieuwe Tijd (1919), p. 781.

⁷⁵Pannekoek, "De Opmarsch der reaktie," p. 164.

⁷⁶Anton Pannekoek, "Hulpactie en klassestrijd," De Nieuwe Tijd 26 (1921), p. 519.

⁷⁷Pannekoek, "Soviet Rusland en het West Europese Kommunisme," p. 436.

⁷⁸Anton Pannekoek, "Overgang," De Nieuwe Tijd 26 (1921), p. 714.

⁷⁹Anton Pannekoek to Erich Mühsam, Die Aktion, 19 March 1921, pp. 162-3.

⁸⁰Pannekoek, "Overgang," p. 714.

⁸¹CPH Partijgeschillen 1920 Aantekeningen; strijd van Ravesteijn Wijnkoop tegen HRH/AP/HG, Van Ravesteijn Archive 78, IISG, Amsterdam.

⁸²Henriette Roland-Holst, "De Nieuwste Aanval of Sovjet Rusland," De Nieuwe Tijd (1921), pp. 524-44; and, Henriette Roland-Holst, "Soviet Rusland en de proletarische revolutie," De Nieuwe Tijd (1921), pp. 661-76.

⁸³Anton Pannekoek to Rogge, 6 June 1921, Rogge Archive, IISG, Amsterdam.

⁸⁴Henriette Roland-Holst, "Bij de vijf en twintigste jaargang," De Nieuwe Tijd (1920), p. 1.

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COUNCIL COMMUNISM, 1921-1960

Sectarian Politics

In 1921, when Pannekoek had ceased his association with the Dutch Communist Party (Communistische Partij Holland) (CPH), his career of political activism ended, and he headed for a vocation in astronomy. Previously, in 1919, he had been proposed by the Board of Governors of the University of Leiden as the new co-director of the prestigious Leiden Observatory; however, the appointment had been arrested by the conservative government of Ruijs de Beerenbroeck.¹ Shortly thereafter Pannekoek accepted a position as lecturer in astronomy and mathematics at the University of Amsterdam. He was now forty-six. Astronomy soon came to absorb most of his time and energy, pushing his interest in Marxist theory and politics to a subordinate position. It appears that politics rarely intervened in his teaching career.

In 1921 he was approached by the small Dutch sister party of the KAPD, the Communist Workers' Party of the Netherlands (Kommunistische Arbeiders Partij Nederland) (KAPN), but he felt that formal membership in a political party would only obstruct his need to re-orient himself and to clarify his thought.² In fact, Pannekoek refrained

from every kind of political activity during the following six years while he established himself at the University of Amsterdam, where he founded the Astronomical Institute.

In Germany the council movement had been emasculated after the enactment of the Workers' Councils Law of February 4, 1920, based on Article 165 of the Weimar Constitution. The revolutionary workers' and soldiers' councils formed in the German uprisings had become the subject of a major controversy between various factions of the German labour movement. The legislation was thought of as a compromise between revolutionary movements and Social Democratic parliamentary rule in the Weimar Republic, as one student of workers' councils has suggested. It was a compromise that gave to the left the "...symbols of victory without its substance."³

While the legislation had been initiated by left wing pressure upon the government, the USPD majority socialists had succeeded in eliminating the insurgent aspects of the council movement.⁴ The act gave legal status to the workers' councils provided they only functioned as bargaining units and participated in management. In practice this meant that the councils initiated wage contracts within the framework of the collective agreement concluded by the trade unions, defined work schedules and regulations, and made representations to management on behalf of the workers.

As it turned out, the German workers' councils legislation greatly facilitated labour-management harmony; indeed, to a degree that had never been thought possible under the adversary labour-management relations system of the past.

For Pannekoek, Gorter, and the remnants of the revolutionary labour movement, and for parties like the KAPD, the councils had been intended to supersede the trade union bureaucracies and imbue the labour movement with a new revolutionary consciousness, so as to provide an antidote to the Social Democratic reformism of the Weimar Republic. Instead, the councils became subsidiary and subordinate organs of the trade unions with limited, specialized tasks. Thus, the struggle between the council movement and Social Democratic reformism had ended in all but total defeat for the left. The National Congress of Workers' Councils, held in October 1920, confirmed the demise of the revolutionary councils, and adopted the following resolution with an overwhelming majority:

It is incumbent on labour to develop the power, which lies in it as a class, to the maximum extent; to make use of this power in action; and to avail itself of all means which can serve this purpose. Important tasks are imposed on the Works Councils through their position in the productive process, and they have a great responsibility to shoulder. The Works Councils find their support in the trade unions, which remain as before the chief protagonists in the economic sphere, in the struggle between

capital and labour. The Works Councils must base themselves on the trade unions because they can only accomplish their tasks if they are certain of the support of the trade unions. The development of the trade unions into powerful industrial unions is exclusively a matter for the trade unions themselves. The Works Councils are to be organized within the trade unions. A separate organization of the Works Councils, whether local or central, is undesirable; apart from its effect in hindering the activity of the trade unions it would nullify the effective representation of the interests of the workers by the Works Councils. On the other hand, a local grouping of the Works Councils in conjunction with the local committees of the ADGB and the AFA, as well as, the establishment of a Central Bureau jointly with the Central Bureau of Trade Unions, is necessary. 5

This resolution rendered the councils instruments of the trade unions in the bargaining process. With the demise of revolutionary fervour in the twenties, the council movement on the whole adjusted its aims accordingly, and emphasized participation in the decision-making processes at the managerial level within each firm. Its earlier political objective--to build solidarity between council leadership and a militant rank and file in the factories--was lost.

Dissatisfied with the policy of trade union labour peace during World War One, the first post-revolutionary councils had embodied the spirit of rebellion against the trade union leadership, rather than a spontaneous political movement for working class power. While the revolutionary

roots of the workers' councils of the first two decades of the century had been articulated in the political writings of Luxemburg and Pannekoek, in the post-revolutionary period of the twenties and thirties, there were no instances of social reform which allocated to the councils the full and sole authority to manage the corporations. The class struggle had been subdued, and an era of class collaboration ensued.

Several managements had solicited workers' participation, created financial incentive schemes, profit sharing, programmes, welfare packages, social, cultural and sports programmes, educational assistance and paid leaves of absence for personal enrichment. One by-product was an improvement in the quality of life at work; but cumulatively, the effect has been to obscure the class struggle, to harmonize labour-management relations, to procure corporate identification and reduce labour alienation. Only the most politically educated and class conscious workers could resist the subliminal influence of harmonized labour relations. As a result Western European nations have increased their productivity, rationalized their economies, and substantially increased the profits for their shareholders.

Primitive capitalist exploitation and accumulation of the nineteenth and early twentieth century had been perfected to a science of capitalist manipulation, which had reduced the socialist ideals of 'the workers for themselves' and 'labour's independence' to mere hollow slogans. Pannekoek's political theory of council communism preserved elements of workers' defiance, spiritual rebellion, utopian optimism, emancipatory aspirations and proletarian class consciousness. But nowhere did his theory find a movement or political expression of any import. It awaited a proselytizing agent.

In 1927, after Lenin's death and the succession of Stalin as leader of the Soviet Communist Party, Henriette Roland-Holst and other intellectuals in the Dutch party gradually left the communist movement. Still others emigrated to America. Pannekoek had become politically isolated from the "mainstream" of the fragmented labour movement, and only with Herman Gorter (till his death in 1927) and KAPD members in Germany did there continue to be a common goal in thought and action. In these years, according to Pannekoek's memoirs: "...before and after 1927 I had actually had no part in what may be called the labour movement...but still deep in my heart there remained the question and the problem of the proletarian revolution

which fulfilled me...during these years I could not do anything which seemed fruitful."⁶

Through Henk Canne Meijer, who was to become his closest collaborator, Pannekoek, in 1927, resumed his political-theoretical work where he had abandoned it in 1921, elaborating and expounding on ideas and theories which he had formulated in terms of the political context and activities prior to World War One. His work was now strictly limited to contributions to the council communist press and American socialist journals.⁷ The Group of International Communists Holland (Groep Internationale Communisten) (GIC) represented one of many sectarian offshoots of the Third International. Pannekoek re-established, through the Dutch council communists (GIC), his interest in an ideology similar to his own, and which to him promised more than the other factions which had evolved from the socialist and communist movements.⁸ The theoretical work of the Group of International Communists Holland emphasized the concept that the workers must accept responsibility for their own actions and that political action must originate from the workers themselves and not from their leaders: "The working masses must decide themselves about their struggle; lead and act themselves."⁹ Council communists, although followers of Marx, had found support among syndicalists and anarchists. The members of the

Group of International Communists Holland were primarily adherents to the now defunct KAPD and KAPN. The social character of the group has been referred to as, "Klosterbrüder des Marxismus" (Cloister friars of Marxism). One student found their work to be analogous to that of the medieval monks who preserved the heritage of Aristotle through the Dark Ages.¹⁰

Similar groups had emerged in other Western countries. They were founded by German KAPD expatriots and emigrés, and were known as council communists in North America and England, Räte-Kommunisten in Germany, Communistes du Conseils in France, and Raden Communisten in the Netherlands.¹¹ All these parties perpetuated a left theoretical intellectual tradition which had survived the recent decline of revolutionary thought and action. The 1931 declaration of principles of the Dutch council communists (GIC) amplified this tradition:

The development of capitalism leads to increasingly severe crises which result in increased unemployment and dislocation of the production apparatus, causing millions of redundant workers to hover on the brink of starvation. Rationalization of business accelerates the pace of this development. Impoverishment and growing uncertainty as to its ability to make a living forces the working class to take up the struggle for communist production. The Groups of International Communists in this struggle call upon the workers to take into their own hands control and management of production and distribution, in accordance with general social principles, to realize the association of free and equal producers. The Groups of International Communists see the real emancipation of the labour movement in the development of the self-consciousness of the workers.

Therefore, they oppose the 'leaders-politics' of the parliamentary parties and the trade union movement with the slogan: All power to the workers' councils! Production in the hands of the factory organizations! 12

The council communist movement in the Netherlands embraced several groups. In November 1932, council communists had participated in a conference which represented three different tendencies: 1) The Left Workers' Opposition (Linksche Arbeiders Oppositie) (LAO) was an offshoot of the Netherlands Workers' Secretariat (Nederlandse Arbeiders Sekretariat) (NAS), the anarcho-syndicalist trade union movement. It published the journal Spartakus (Rotterdam), and aimed at promoting the growth of the movement through direct provocative industrial action. 2) The Netherlands Communist Workers' Party (Kommunistische Arbeiders Partij Nederland) (KAPN) rejected the daily trade union activities but advocated factory occupation. 3) The Group of International Communists Holland (GIC) expressed indifference towards trade unionism, but emphasized education; conducive to the growth of the movement, as its first priority.

The Netherlands Communist Workers' Party, since 1923, had shared the viewpoint of the Essen group within the KAPD, in which Herman Gorter had been active until his death in 1927. The various council communist organizations

with roots in the KAPN founded the journal De Raden Communist (The Council Communist) in 1933. The Group of International Communists Holland (GIC) maintained relations with the German council communist movement which had evolved from the Berlin chapter of the KAPD. Its most permanent contact proved to be with the Rote Kämpfer Gruppe (RKG).¹³ The latter accepted the socio-political system of council democracy based on the factory organization and local control. Its position on Bolshevism coincided with that of the GIC. In its publication Persmateriaal, July 1932, the GIC confirmed its affinity with the Rote Kämpfer Gruppe (RKG), but questioned the wisdom of working within the Social Democratic framework:

The Rote Kämpfer Gruppe accepts the council standpoint; in several other respects, however, their ideas are divergent from ours, which comes to the fore most patently in their belief that it is possible to work within other organizations such as the SPD and the SAPD. 14

The relationship between German and Dutch council communists was one of political and theoretical kinship and had been defined as follows:

The GIC, active since 1926, has always maintained close relations with the German council movement, the AAUD, the KAPD and later the KAUD. The representatives of the GIC have participated in many congresses in Germany, the GIC has written in the German press (Kommunistische Arbeiterzeitung and Der Kampftruf); and it has maintained a lively correspondence and exchange of materials. In praxis the GIC was part of the German 'Union' movement, even though we were not formally bound by their 'programmes'. The affinity with the German movement must be sought in the realm of practical activity. 15

At the founding congress of the Communist Workers' Union of Germany (Kommunistische Arbeiter Union Deutschlands) (KAUD) in 1931, Henk Canne Meijer summarized the activities of the GIC primarily in terms of political education, circulating its literature and political ideas among the council organizations. The GIC acted as a clearing house for council communist literature which had set itself the task of defining the basic theoretical principles underlying the class struggle and the conditions necessary to activate the masses in this struggle. In terms of practical politics, the Group of International Communists had little significance, but it tried to exercise some authority in 1926 as a result of the so-called 'Granate Affair', involving alleged cooperation of the Russian and German military, exposed by Ernst Schwartz in the Reichstag. The GIC publicized the attack that Schwartz had made on Russian and German communists for their cooperation with the German military.¹⁶

In 1927, Pannekoek, in his fifties now, re-entered the political debate in which he had taken part from 1901 to 1921, with an article entitled Principles and Tactics.¹⁷ In this article, Pannekoek supported the KAPD anti-parliamentary policy dating from 1920, which stood in sharp contrast to the German Social Democrats who participated in Parliament and saw it to be a convenient vehicle for their narrow pragmatism.

What was disturbing to Pannekoek was a tendency of left communists to participate in Parliament despite the KAPD resolutions to boycott parliamentary politics. Although Pannekoek approved of Schwartz's revelations of the links between the Russian and German military, he was critical of Schwartz, a KAPD member, using Parliament as a forum for publicizing this matter.¹⁸

In addition to Pannekoek's critique of left parliamentarism, he believed that the KAPD based their tactics on an incorrect interpretation of the destiny of capitalism, namely, that the KAPD believed that capitalism was fated to disappear in an inevitable terminal crisis (Todeskrise). Pannekoek thought that a belief in the inevitable decline of capitalism led to a Kautskyian passive expectation of revolution rather than an active organization for revolution on the grass roots level, a repudiation of all action except for the "indirect" and legal activities of parliamentary representatives.

In the 1920s the German left was split into a large number of sectarian movements generated by a tension between the doctrinaire attitudes expressed in the theory of the terminal crisis of capitalism and the practical need to maintain a constituency amongst workers by providing organizations to meet the aspirations for day to day improvements

in living standards that business unionism furnished.¹⁹ In the German "One Big 'Union'" movement (Kommunistische Arbeiter Union Deutschlands) (KAUD), participation in a practical wage struggle was regarded as a return to reformism. But after 1922, this tendency to business unionism had affected the Essen group of the KAPD (in which Gorter was active) and the Allgemeine Arbeiter Union Deutschland (AAUD). The Berlin section of the KAPD, which generally had the support of Pannekoek and later of the GIC, did not succeed either in devising a coherent crisis theory or in formulating tactics for non-reformist trade unionism.

The theory of capitalist crisis resulted in a doctrinaire approach to politics. At the eighth national conference of the Berlin-based AAUD, in 1927, a more flexible approach toward policy making had been favoured by the members and confirmed at the ninth conference of the KAPD in 1929. Yet the notion that economic crisis would be a permanent feature of modern capitalism remained entrenched in the anti-parliamentary left. The combined conference of the AAUD and the Allgemeine Arbeiter Union Einheitsfront (AAUE), in December 1931, confirmed this assumption.

It was in the context of this theoretical and tactical confusion that Pannekoek contributed his Principles

and Tactics, which argued for a less doctrinaire approach to revolution, and which questioned the assumption of an inevitable fatal crash of capitalism. Moreover, Pannekoek supported the GIC position that the German council communists were too introspective in their exclusive concentration on the internal politics of the anti-parliamentary left in Germany and advocated a more global view of capitalist development and working class opposition.²⁰ Thus, Pannekoek believed that the German left would continue to be bogged down in sectarian politics until a fresh theoretical approach to capitalist collapse and revolutionary activity were undertaken. In short, Pannekoek justified the scholarly activities of the Dutch GIC which he felt were essential to unblocking the obstacles to the development of self-consciousness amongst the working class.

Pannekoek insisted that the essence of revolution lay in the development of self-awareness of the working class, and that parliamentarism must, therefore, be exposed as a deception parading under the banner of democracy which in reality served only the interests of the bourgeoisie. He considered dishonest those members of the KAPD who endeavoured to reconcile this theory of parliamentary sham with occasional use of Parliament. However, the GIC (for whom Pannekoek was a spokesman) regarded the KAPD as the only remaining revolutionary Marxist party in the world. It

'had earned this reputation amongst its members, above all, by completely disassociating itself from the Russian system after 1921, and by advocating a new party concept, which made proletarian class politics and the development of the self-consciousness of the working class the leitmotif of its theories.

The GIC hoped that the fiasco of KPD politics would boost the KAPD to national prominence. It seemed reasonable to expect that the latter would welcome the opportunity to work together with the real revolutionary elements of the former. Yet the KAPD union with the Entschiedene Linke (EL), the expelled left wing of the KPD, became a turning-point in the history of the KAPD. The party executive renounced its anti-parliamentary policies and class-based politics in favour of a 'new mode' of party politics similar to other left parliamentary splinter groups.

These events resulted in the return to a strategy of parliamentary politics, of leaders' representation of the cause of working class emancipation. The GIC anticipated that the party rank and file would concur with their leaders and that the transition towards bourgeois politics, i.e., parliamentarism, would become a fait accompli.

historically, the theory of anti-parliamentarism had set the KAPD apart from other Marxist parties. In defiance

of a universal trend towards the support of parliamentarism and trade unionism, the GIC and Pannekoek continued a programme of political education and publication which emphasized the reconstruction of factory assemblies and workers' councils as a means to stimulate the self-government of the working class.

While the GIC in the Netherlands managed to survive until the sixties (changing its name after the Second World War to Spartakusbund) and supported an active publication programme, primarily of Pannekoek's writings and those of other council communists, the anti-parliamentary communist movement, which, since 1921, had found its most vociferous expression in the KAPD, gradually disintegrated. In a brochure published by the GIC in 1931,²¹ it was noted that, after the defeat of the 1918 revolution, the 'Union' movement had broken into five different tendencies. The Essen faction of the KAPD, after the death of Herman Gorter, had ceased to operate altogether. Several ex-members of the defunct organization had continued their activities in the Rote Kämpfer Gruppe. The Berlin-based KAPD barely managed to survive, and the remains of the AAUD and the AAUE, in so far as they had not been absorbed into the Spartakusbund, no. 2, had joined the Kommunistische Arbeiter Union Deutschlands which, according to their own information

at its founding conference, represented 343 members, of which fifty-seven had come from the AAUE.²²

The council movement never gained the momentum its adherents had envisaged. Where workers' councils developed at all, as in the case of the Weimar Republic, they were organized through state initiative and integrated in the trade union movement. Council movements had exhibited spontaneous manifestations of working class power and initiative and usurped state functions, but they proved incapable of maintaining continuity and legitimacy. As the council movements declined, the theories developed during the revolutionary era lost their immediacy. They no longer reflected the dynamics of a society undergoing revolutionary change. Gradually the council communists lost their following and became more sectarian, only active in the field of education and publishing.

In this context, Pannekoek continued to raise the theoretical questions that had been posed by the anti-parliamentary left communists until his death.

The Theory of Council Communism

Pannekoek's observations, at the end of World War One, on experiments with workers' councils as vehicles both of production and of class struggle, led him to promote the

theory of the self-organization of the working class, or organization by and not simply of the working class.

Since the First World War Pannekoek had portrayed the revolutionary process as the disintegration (Auflösung) of the state power. However, Weimar Germany saw the integration of Social Democrats into state power which consolidated rather than disintegrated bourgeois hegemony.

The widespread assumption among the working class that state power could be reformed by socialist participation in Parliament transformed the idea of a socialist revolution into Bernstein's idea of capitalist reform. In order to maintain revolutionary aspirations from counter-revolutionary tendencies, workers must create their own power base in the factories and prepare for civil war. Through the councils, workers would assume full responsibility for the complete direction of society.²³ Such organs of workers' democracy would arise spontaneously during prolonged periods of mass action and revolution, and were intended to become the legitimate civil authority in the revolution.

The prototype for revolutionary organization was evident in the wild cat strike committees. Trade union leadership obstructed the effectiveness of strike committees by assuming control, diffusing discontent and promoting conciliation.²⁴ Both party and trade union

leaders assumed the role of mediator in the class struggle. They negotiated with capital, advocated limited reforms in the interest of labour, and promoted concessions as major achievements deserving unconditional support from the rank and file. Instead of calling upon their members to fight for their interests, they obscured the class struggle and became instruments of the status quo. Historically, trade union leaders opposed workers who rejected wage settlements and working conditions.²⁵

Wild cat strikes indicated that the struggle between capital and labour transcended parliamentarism and trade unionism, and that workers could develop alternate forms of action and organization. The revolt against capital is simultaneously a revolt against standard organizational forms of mediation; trade unions and parliamentary labour parties. Resistance to capitalist domination implied resistance to the alliance of capital and labour. Only when the working class itself is master of its own means of production will capitalist domination and exploitation cease. Representatives of the councils were chosen among co-workers and excluded outsiders.

Pannekoek endeavoured to demonstrate that freedom from the constraints of capitalism cannot be attained through parliamentary action. A political system of

delegated class struggle precluded the rise of the workers' movement for themselves. Pannekoek, following Marx, emphasized the concept of the class for itself. "The liberation of the working class can only be the work of the class itself."²⁶ Factory occupation, mass action and workers' council organization precipitated the collapse of capitalist society while parliamentary and trade union action prolonged domination and exploitation.

Pannekoek's rejection of representative leadership of the workers' movement in political parties and trade unions had been based upon the assumption that leaders develop interests different from the revolutionary interests of workers:

The proletarian revolution is not simply the vanishing of capitalist power. It is the rise of the whole working class from dependence and ignorance towards independence and consciousness....²⁷

In the initial stages of the revolution, Pannekoek regarded the councils as, "a kind of primitive government," which could not be organized by revolutionary parties. In the struggle for freedom, councils would emerge, expanding their role simultaneously with the development of the revolution.²⁸ As did Marx and Engels, Pannekoek saw the necessity for a dictatorship of the proletariat as the political form by which to bring about social change. The councils were to embody proletarian dictatorship and

workers' democracy, and to provide for local control, initiative and participation in decision-making.²⁹

Council delegates would be bound by a mandate received from their co-workers and could be recalled and replaced at any time. Direct council democracy would ensure that power remains with the workers, and delegates express the common will of a homogeneous group based upon communal class interests and the division of labour in production. Council democracy was founded not on private but on collective production, which combined politics and economics into one consolidated realm. Council communism advocated a political economy in which producers managed their own affairs, but as a system of production, councils were transitory:

Workers' councils are the form of organization during the transition period in which the working class is fighting for dominance, is destroying capitalism and is organizing social production.³⁰

Marx pointed out that between the hegemony of capital and the communist society of a liberated mankind there will be a transition stage in which the vestiges of the old regime will seek to impose their bourgeois norms. Council organization, for Pannekoek, represented the Marxist idea of dictatorship of the proletariat:

Marx's conception of the dictatorship of the proletariat now appears to be identical with the labour democracy of council organization.³¹

Council communism symbolized the genuine communist element in Germany. Underlying the theory of council communism is the concept of the class for itself (fürsichselbst).³² In the classical works of Marx, the proletariat becomes the conscious subject which terminates the epoch of the pre-history of man through the realization of its own emancipation.³³ Marx called upon the proletariat to carry out its historic mission to replace centralized state power and its operatives--the army, police and bureaucracy--with the self-government of the producers (Selbstregierung der Produzenten).³⁴ As early as 1844 Marx had proclaimed the necessity for the proletariat to liberate itself. Council communism has been interpreted as a theory of completed Marxism (vollendeter Marxismus),³⁵ but Pannekoek considered council organization an intermediary stage between the bourgeois epoch and communist society.

For Pannekoek, workers' councils can best be described as the embodiment of "a principle" of the direct authority of the workers themselves over the corporation and production. As organized self-management it is contrary to the principle of hierarchical organization and compulsion under state socialism and state capitalism. Above all the workers' councils represent the unrelenting class struggle against the capitalist power structure.

Workers' councils manifest themselves not merely as a programme of political action but as a principle for the liberation of the mind from the fetters of subordination and domination. The world of the workers' councils transformed the mind from a concern with self to a concern with community and society at large. Pannekoek saw in the workers' councils, the fulfilment of democratic aspirations based upon the equal rights of producers—a Marxist prognosis which has thus far eluded the working class.³⁶

Ideological Hegemony and Class Consciousness

During the first two decades of the twentieth century Pannekoek shared the revolutionary optimism of the left in the international labour movement, but in the post-revolutionary era this optimism had been tempered by the recognition of the failure of the working class. The subjective elements in the revolution--ideological hegemony and class consciousness--had not effected man's psychological transformation. The absence, among workers, of an alternate concept of society, Pannekoek saw as the greatest obstacle to social change. Adverse social, economic and political conditions alone were not sufficient provocation for a political response to the exploitation and deprivation of the working class.

The problem of class consciousness, the subjective factors underlying social change, remained constant in Pannekoek's thought, based on Marx, Engels and Dietzgen. Although Pannekoek's thought is based upon historical materialism, and the view that human consciousness is conditioned by the place individuals occupy in the production process, Pannekoek thought that the founders of historical materialism paid insufficient attention to the role of consciousness in social transformation (or conversely, in the stagnation and continued dependence of the proletariat in mature capitalist societies)...

Economic determinism for Pannekoek meant that, "society is not simply an aggregate of men; men are connected by definite relations not chosen by them at will, but imposed upon them by the economic system under which they live and in which each has his place."³⁷ Economic necessity unites all men and directs their cognizant behaviour. Action is the product of a subconscious spontaneous mental process, rooted in the economic interest of a social class. The ideology of specific classes arises from universalizing in consciousness what is particular to their economic needs:

For the members of a social class, life's daily experiences condition, and the needs of the class mold the mind into a definite line of feeling and thinking, to produce definite ideas about

what is useful and what is good or bad. The conditions of a class are life necessities to its members, and they consider what is good or bad for them to be good or bad in general. 38

The ideological struggle runs parallel to and interacts with the class struggle. Traditional social, political and scientific thought has been preserved both materially as historical events and spiritually as culture--literature, science, religion and philosophy. Pannekoek referred to man's spiritual inheritance as the cumulative memory of the community--collective consciousness.³⁹ Mind in society constitutes tradition; patterns of thought and action become fixed as the ideology of an epoch and are transferred to the next generation as a regimented code of values and beliefs. Ideology perpetuated the essence of man's entire historical experience. Social change alters the human consciousness, but at the same time, custom hampers modern social development and the dissemination of new ideas. This contradiction between changing experience and customary ideas is resolved when lagging consciousness is swept along and in turn revolutionized.⁴⁰ The hegemony of middle class culture in civil society acts as a deterrent to the emancipation of the proletariat.⁴¹

Pannekoek detected the failure of the revolution in the underdevelopment of the working class itself. The lack of education and class consciousness proved the primary

obstruction in the revolutionary transformation of society. Middle class leadership and its ideological influence on the labour movement precluded the development of a proletarian class consciousness and the self-management of free and equal producers:

What hampers [the workers] is chiefly the power of the middle class world, enveloping their minds into a thick cloud of beliefs and ideologies, dividing them, and making them uncertain and confused. The process of enlightenment, of clearing up and vanquishing this world of old ideas and ideologies is the essential process of building the working class power, is the progress of revolution. 42

Marxism, in Pannekoek's view, is to engage continually in a critique of religion, nationalism, democracy, trade unionism, party and Parliament--bourgeois concepts which undermine the development of proletarian class consciousness. Capitalist power lay in its spiritual command over the minds of the workers. Ideas, attitudes and convictions were determined on the basis of class, social and occupational function. Cultural hegemony prevented the rise of proletarian class consciousness and legitimized submission to domination and exploitation as the norm. The docile mind which accepts capitalism as the natural social order, as a phenomenon of human nature, only hindered the transformation of society. "Capitalism must be beaten theoretically before it can be beaten materially."43

The capitalist state recognized the contribution of artists, writers and intellectuals, who laud its supremacy and defend it against censure. For Pannekoek, spiritual power or enlightenment had hitherto been the prerogative of a social stratum associated with the rising bourgeoisie. Here the emphasis was on private ownership and individualism. With the development of capitalism, bourgeois values become the universal attributes of modern society. Moreover, many of the ideas of the working class had their origin, Pannekoek felt, in the impoverished elements of the middle class; even if critical of bourgeois society, these ideas still bore the stamp of their bourgeois origin.⁴⁴

As a result, working class power was a dormant social force which could only be evaluated in terms of its potential, and only be realized through class consciousness, when the worker is seized by, "a vision of freedom for his class." As long as the working class is captivated by bourgeois values, capitalist hegemony will be prominent in civil society. The history of the working class, Pannekoek observed, "reflects the history of its subjugation--freedom cannot be given by others; it must be won for oneself."⁴⁵

The incongruity between customary ideology and the political requirements of the class struggle is expressed in the tendency of workers to assign complete validity to

traditional ideas. Pannekoek considered it essential that workers comprehend the fact that mores were not independent truths, but mere generalizations of past experience. Only an understanding of the limitations and the conditions of the validity of conventions and customs would emancipate workers from their psychologically dependent attitude towards nature and society.⁴⁶

The liberation of man's consciousness from the fetters of traditional middle class paradigms, Pannekoek hoped, would be a major, enduring consequence of Marxism. The theory of the relationship of mind to society, as conceived by Marx, Engels and Dietzgen, appeared to him the most all-consuming idea in the class struggle.⁴⁷ In the revolution, social cohesion--the spiritual and psychological superstructure--determined the outcome. Ideological warfare rather than physical conflict circumscribed the transformation of society. A proletarian ethic must embrace a complete vision of society and express a coherent world view and philosophy imbued with moral authority: "the essence of working class victory is to make the class invincible."⁴⁸

Proletarian action was actually a middle class movement in which workers played a dependent and subordinate role and deferred to an intellectual elite which competed for power with the established regimes. Middle class

intellectuals in the labour movement shared the assumption that worker emancipation is the result of professional, technical and revolutionary leadership from within their own class, and that the workers are incapable of self-management and social conversion. As Lenin had noted in What Is to Be Done?, in 1902, Kautsky expressed the middle class character of socialism as follows:

...socialist consciousness appears to be a necessary and direct result of the proletarian class struggle...this is absolutely untrue.... Modern socialist consciousness can arise only on the basis of profound scientific knowledge.... The vehicle of science is not the proletariat, but the bourgeois intelligentsia. 49

Lenin as well, similarly identified a significant role for the middle class intellectuals in the leadership of the workers' movement:

...there could not yet be Social Democratic consciousness among the workers. This consciousness could not be brought to them from without. The history of all countries shows that the working class, exclusively by its own efforts, is able to develop only trade union consciousness.... The theory of socialism, however, grew out of the... theories that were elaborated by the...intellectuals. 50

The dilemma of class consciousness, the leitmotif of Pannekoek's thesis, remained for him an "unsolvable problem." How a workers' revolution could triumph when, on the one hand, the ideological supremacy of the rulers, and on the other hand, the indifference of the ruled impeded the necessary spiritual conditions, remained a

quandary.⁵¹ Knowledge, education and understanding were essential to the advent of the workers' movement. The conventional institutions of learning Pannekoek considered an impediment to class consciousness which kept the workers in "spiritual bondage." They provided, in addition to skills, ideological integration into the middle class value system. Education for the proletariat did not result in development of class consciousness but in embourgeoisement. For Pannekoek:

It [class consciousness] can only be acquired by self-education, by a desire to understand the world from within. The truth that the working class seeks does not exist anywhere in the world outside of them. They must build it up within themselves... Self-liberation of the working masses implies self-thinking, self-knowing, recognition of truth and error based upon independent thinking.⁵²

Spiritual and intellectual superiority can only be earned through revolution. The self-education of the masses is inherent in the revolution. On the one hand, the ideological hegemony of the bourgeoisie prevents the revolution and the growth of class consciousness; on the other hand, class consciousness can only emerge through class struggle and the revolution itself, requiring a convergence of both subjective and objective circumstances. Pannekoek, however, in observing the failure of the working class, came to regard this unique moment in history as an impossible situation.

The dependence of thinking on being had been firmly established by Marx and Engels. In opposition to idealism, represented by Kant and Hegel, Marx referred to this relationship as historical materialism. Marx and Engels' practical politics were rooted in historical materialism, understood as a theory of man and his productive relations with nature and his fellow men. Similarly, Pannekoek's political commitment to Social Democracy, communism and council communism was inherent in his theoretical assumptions concerning the relationship between mind and matter, based upon the work of Marx, Engels and Dietzgen, which remained constant from the turn of the century to the post-1945 period. Thus, Pannekoek may have idealized the coming into being of the new proletarian humanity; however utopian his expectations for extra-parliamentary mass action and for the self-activity of the workers (unmediated by parliamentary or trade union representatives) in wild cat and political strikes, his theory of ideological dependency and the growth of class consciousness in revolutionary confrontation (upon which his tactics were based) deserves our attention.⁵³

As contemporary scholarship, Pannekoek's political writings in the socialist and council communist press appear utopian, an incantation of proletarian virtues to undermine and destroy bourgeois society. He

held steadfast to the Marxian edict that the bourgeois revolutions would be followed by proletarian revolutions and bring about the real liberation of humanity. In spite of increasing evidence that after the first two decades of the twentieth century, industrialized nations of the West had been characterized by counter-revolutionary tendencies and embourgeoisement of the industrial proletariat,⁵⁴ Pannekoek remained committed to the power struggle of a new class for a new world view.

The role of the proletarian class struggle leading to a communist society exemplified Pannekoek's Marxism. In his commitment to Marxism, he embraced the theory that all political and ideological phenomena are conditioned by the stage of economic development; the theory of capitalism as a historical phenomenon, and its analysis in terms of surplus value and its evolution through the proletarian revolution, towards communism.⁵⁵

Critique of Social Democracy

Social Democrats considered parliamentary democracy an instrument of liberation for the working class, but failed to recognize its limitations. In Western European nations--England and France--the bourgeois revolutions defeated the absolute power of the sovereign and vested

the power to govern in an elected Parliament. The government, that is the cabinet, is chosen by the leader of the victorious party who delegates authority through deputy ministers. What is called democracy in the West does not refer to a political theory, but to the system of government in which political parties compete to induce an electorate to vote them into power.

In industrial societies, wage earners comprise the majority of the population. In order to defend their interest, Labour and/or Social Democratic Parties have been established. A Social Democratic electoral victory, supporters expect, will issue forth legislation and policies in accordance with the interest and values of the working class.

Pannekoek's critique of Social Democracy challenged parliamentarism, labour parties and trade unions. He recognized that a Labour Party triumph in Parliament was not a victory over the capitalist class. Workers were alienated from the political process. Politics had eroded into the mere exercise of democratic rights through the ballot box, every four years, on behalf of a candidate who has been imposed on them by others. Working class politics was characterized by the delegation of their class interest to others who would take up their fight. It did not represent the power of workers, but their dependency upon middle

class leadership:

Parliamentarism is a struggle through the means of others--the leaders. Everything depends on these others--the representatives. Everything depends on their fighting skills in the House of Commons; therefore, they are the leaders who do the actual work, who consequently know best and, therefore, are also the most vocal. We talk about democracy because universal suffrage exists. But this so-called parliamentary democracy is not government by the people themselves, but a government of parliamentarians.... Moreover, the electors do not choose for themselves their trusted representatives; the various political parties determine the candidates from among whom the voters may choose. Only with great difficulty do the voters sometimes succeed in presenting and electing an independent candidate; and in the House of Commons such a candidate is isolated and has no influence whatsoever. 56

Parliamentary democracy is an illusion, exemplifying false consciousness among the working class. Democratic institutions under capitalism are not the instrument of workers' liberation, but the instrument of their voluntary enslavement. Social Democrats have interpreted the struggle of the workers primarily as a struggle of middle class leaders. Social Democracy conceives of a society based upon the leadership of professional politicians and administrators--a meritocracy. Socialization of the means of production depends on the professional competence of the bureaucratic superstructure responsible for production and distribution. The role of the workers in the Social Democratic parliamentary transformation becomes one of support, discipline and obedience. "Thus, both in the

'revolution' and in the building of socialism, workers barely play any role at all."⁵⁷

Pannekoek's criticism of such parliamentary transformation of society is based upon the spurious assumption that the bourgeoisie will let itself be expropriated when workers elect a socialist majority to Parliament. Parliamentary conquest of political power renders the workers even more superfluous to the political process:

Even if he knows nothing more, every worker knows and understands that the conquest of power in society can only be the fruit of a prolonged struggle, of the most strenuous efforts and of heartbreaking sacrifices; that this liberation is possible through his struggle, his effort and his sacrifice alone. ⁵⁸

A parliamentary majority can compel ministers and cabinets to resign, but it has no jurisdiction over new appointments. The ministries are chosen not by popular representatives but by the party leader who selects his cabinet in conformity with the aspirations of the non-elected civil service and military, as well as powerful cliques of the capitalist class.

The execution and interpretation of progressive legislation by the bureaucracy--perpetual in democratic government--tend to subvert its intention and benefit the middle and upper rather than the working class. Even at the lowest echelon, civil servants maintain an esprit de corps for public authority. Pannekoek questioned the

validity of a Social Democratic parliamentary victory in effecting change within the corpus of state officials and rendering the bureaucracy an instrument of socialism.⁵⁹

A parliamentary majority of socialist labour representatives lacks the means to overcome the passive resistance of the capitalist state bureaucracy. Parliamentary elections are inconsequential against the general will and ideological and economic power of a national bourgeoisie. For the real social power struggle, workers must become politically active themselves. Social Democracy, for Pannekoek, constitutes a major supporting pillar of the capitalist state; where both capital and labour are indispensable social forces in production and distribution.

A stable capitalist society requires workers to be nominally free agents, endowed with the same civil rights as the bourgeoisie--the right to organize, to strike, to vote, to freedom of opinion, speech, and assembly. Any restrictions on these rights impede sound, efficient government and lead to social breakdown. In this context, Social Democratic labour parties and trade unions are essential to the capitalist society. They are the organizations through which the interests of workers can be legitimately expressed within the framework of capitalism.⁶⁰

Thus, for Pannekoek, Social Democracy could not be concurrently the voice of capitalism and of revolution. He considered it doubtful whether Social Democracy had the potential for even a moderate socialism. Capitalist state power--relying on the bureaucracy, the military, the police and the judiciary, including public and private institutions--would conspire to abort any moderate political expression of socialism, dismember Social Democratic organizations, seize their revenues, neutralize their leaders, and bring the politiking of Social Democracy to an abrupt halt.

Rather than perceiving the capitalist class, the military and the bureaucracy as the principal enemy of socialism, Social Democrats tend to think that radical movements originating outside the framework of Social Democracy weaken its legitimacy and are potentially more harmful than bourgeois opposition. Historically, Social Democracy has sought to subdue revolutionary radicalism, usurped the leadership of rebellious groups and curtailed their activities by limiting them to parliamentarism. To obtain the Social Democratic objective--to form the next government--workers are only essential as loyal voters and canvassers at election time. Social Democrats ultimately could claim to be the most "socially aware bourgeois politicians."

In Western democracies, Parliament as a bourgeois forum for decision-making had, since the English Revolution, become increasingly ineffective. The concentration of monopoly capital dominated economic life in the West. Monopoly capital defends its interests not in Parliament, but in committee and board rooms, through voluntary organizations and chambers of commerce which it sponsors. Its influence is brought to bear upon rulers and ministers, and bypasses the open parliamentary forum. Only sporadically are documents and reports leaked and debated inadvertently in Parliament. Parliament is but a minor constraint upon decision-making under monopoly capitalism, and its main functions to formalize decisions which have been presented as a fait accompli.

The interest of monopoly capital in Parliament masquerades as the national interest. Elections serve to uphold its legitimacy; and participation reinforces the hegemony of the bourgeoisie. "As long as the workers participate in elections and have expectations which they believe will be satisfied, they do not think about other actions which will be a threat to capitalism."⁶¹ Workers' participation in elections demonstrates that propaganda is a powerful tool in captivating the masses and in restraining any opposition to capitalist society.

In analysing the role of the Communist Party, Pannekoek's critique of Social Democracy was equally relevant. The primary difference was superficial and related to the use of revolutionary jargon, slogans and superlatives in propaganda by the Communist Party. Otherwise, "in terms of objective praxis," Pannekoek saw, "very little difference between Social Democracy and Communism."⁶² In soliciting the labour vote Communist Parties demonstrated equal electoral fervour. When workers vote communist they abdicate their responsibility to a communist leader in the same manner as when they vote Social Democrat and abdicate their responsibility to a Social Democratic leader.

Communist Parties, in addition, were modelled after the Russian post-1917 example. Communism meant a society based upon state and party bureaucracy administering and leading the entire economy. Similarly, in Western Europe the objective of Communist Parties was to establish their leadership in the labour movement and to manage a state-owned economy. The legacy of German socialism had been to strengthen capitalism; and in Russia, socialism found expression in an economic system of "state capitalism" which imposed on the workers a more thorough repression under a new ruling class.

Pannekoek considered some of the most notable representatives of Marxism--Kautsky and Lenin--as parties to

this development. The bankruptcy of socialist theory had been vividly expressed in the counter-revolutionary praxis of both socialist and communist movements. Socialism had become synonymous with public ownership, a state-run economy where workers were subject to alienation as wage earners and exchanged the domination of corporate capital for the domination of state capital.⁶³

The achievements of Social Democracy did not relate to building a socialist state. It had, however, secured an acknowledged place for the working class in capitalist society, and established certain minimum standards of working and living conditions. Social Democratic Parties had displayed elaborate programmes of immediate demands which, over time, had either been legislated in moderated versions by oppositional parties or by Social Democrats in power.

The reformation of capitalist society through compounded legislative reforms and trade union activity had ostensibly been directed towards the ultimate objective of a socialist society, but the development of monopoly capitalism in the twentieth century inexorably concentrated power in fewer hands. It strengthened in this class the tendency towards domination, suppression and the support of authoritarian movements and institutions. Bourgeois power was based on the hegemony of government, business

and labour over the workers. Trade unions played the role of mediator; and as unwitting agents of capital, they imposed working conditions on the labourer, dictated by the corporations.

In the twentieth century, Pannekoek noted that the class struggle had been institutionalized, emasculated and circumscribed by restrictive legislation. Under monopoly capitalism, the state bureaucracy acquired an important function in organizing, regulating and subsidizing the corporate sector. State officials became the directors of a planned economy, systemizing production and consumption. They suppressed working class discontent through subliminal ideological propaganda. Monopoly capitalism had come to be viewed as a united front of state power, the capitalist class and trade union and labour party officials. Pannekoek identified this tri-partism as the new instrument of domination.⁶⁴

Trade Unions

Pannekoek shared similar views with Robert Michels' 'Iron Law of Oligarchy', but the only explicit reference to Michels is in a review of a critique of German socialism in Le Mouvement Socialiste.⁶⁵ Trade union officials mediated the class struggle and negotiated and promoted minor reforms for the workers which they presented to them as significant victories. Trade unions have come to support the status quo. Instead

of calling upon labour to fight for its interests, trade unions have obscured the class struggle. "Leaders of the workers' organizations become mediators between the opposing classes, and when workers reject working conditions and strike, trade union leaders oppose the workers."⁶⁶

The revolt against capital is simultaneously a revolt against antiquated forms of organization--trade unions, and parliamentary labour parties. The essence of capitalist supremacy is the alliance of capital with labour.

Trade unionism is the main institution of the labour movement in Western democracies. In developed capitalist societies, trade unions and employer unions (association, trusts, corporations, chambers of commerce) represent mutually antagonistic social forces. Trade unionism originated in England where industrial capitalism first developed. The growth of the trade union movement is an integral part of capitalism. In a growing capitalist economy, a free enterprise ideology prevails among the working class. It is informed by the belief that capitalism provides opportunities which enable workers to become free artisans, small businessmen and even powerful industrialists. The idea of upward social mobility provides a stimulus to acceptance of the inequalities of the capitalist mode of production as temporary inconveniences.

Trade unionism appeared as an opposing social force in the dynamics of capitalist society, but was also in harmony with it as organized labour represented the self-interest of workers as long as it did not project beyond the confines of that society. Its aim was not to replace capitalism with another mode of production or organization, but rather to secure better working conditions and a better standard of living within a capitalist framework. Trade unionism was not a revolutionary but a profoundly conservative movement. 67 /

In the class struggle, trade unionism was a reserved antagonistic social force, but it represented the first expression of organized proletarian power and solidarity. In the early English and American trade unions, conservatism often degenerated into a narrow craft corporation ideology. Only where workers fought for subsistence conditions and wages was the class struggle enlightened with revolutionary class consciousness. Within the working class as a whole, trade unionism was a contradiction. It represented only the class struggle of the skilled, educated, privileged and organized members of the proletariat.

The growth of capitalism encouraged business trade unionism. In structure, the trade unions resembled corporations with thousands of members, branches, sections

and executives to manage union affairs. In terms of social status, income, lifestyle and education, the union executives came to have more in common with the corporate representatives than with the rank and file trade unionists. The social nature of union work, modes of reasoning and action are completely detached from the workers they represent. What separates trade union executives from corporate executives is the common working class background of the former. But the social realities of trade union management tend to weaken the influence of this common origin.

Trade union executives lack the elementary understanding of working class conditions and develop hostile relations with the rank and file, resulting in wild cat strikes from which they disassociate themselves.⁶⁸ Pannekoek considered the primary function of trade unions as modification of the class struggle; to regulate labour relations and to secure industrial peace. Harmony of capital and labour was one of their principal but unstated aims. Spontaneous strikes were evidence of the failure of union executives and loss of control.

For Pannekoek, the wild cat strike portrayed genuine opposition to capital, where even defeat rouses the spirit of revolt. The struggle against capitalist oppression outside the legalistic framework of trade unions proclaimed

a new power issue with which the working class as a whole could identify. Spontaneous strikes were a prelude to revolutionary conflict. Wild cate strikes, concurrently, symbolized rebellion) against the trade unions and their executives, and demonstrated that, "trade unionism...has turned into a power over and above workers. Just as government is a power over and above the people."⁶⁹

NOTES

* Unless otherwise indicated, all translations have been done by Marinus Boekelman.

¹Anton Pannekoek, "Herinneringen," p. 97.

²Ibid., p. 109.

³Adolf Sturmthal, Workers' Councils (Harvard, 1964), p. 54. I am indebted to Sturmthal's analysis of councils in the post-world war period of the Weimar Republic.

⁴Kurt Baigl-Matthias, Das Betriebsräteproblem (Berlin, 1926), pp. 2-3. Cited in Sturmthal, Workers' Councils, p. 199.

⁵Cited in Sturmthal, Workers' Councils, pp. 14-5.

⁶Pannekoek, "Herinneringen," p. 111.

⁷The principle journals are: Science and Society, Funken, New Essays, De Vlam, Industrial Worker, Western Socialist, Southern Advocate for Workers' Control, Politics, International Council Correspondence, Retort, Proletarier, Rätekorrespondenz, Left, La Revolution Proletarienne, Spartakus, Socialism ou Barbarie, Modern Socialism, Persdienst van de groep van Internationale Communisten, and Living Marxism.

⁸The proliferation of the socialist movement was rapid. In Germany on September 27, 1931, Vorwärts calculated seventeen sectarian movements which, "in the lower dungeons of the labour movement practice their non-existence." Franz Osterroth and Dieter Schuster, Chronik der deutschen Sozialdemokratie (Hannover, 1963), p. 353.

⁹Pannekoek, "Herinneringen," p. 114.

¹⁰Fritz Kool, Die Linke gegen die Parteiherrschaft (Ölten, 1970), p. 22.

¹¹For the ideological and intellectual roots of council communism see: Olaf Ihlau, Die Roten Kämpfer (Meisenheim am Glan, 1969); Hans-Harald Müller, Intellektueller Linksradikalismus in der Weimar Republik (Kronberg, 1977).

¹²Anton Pannekoek, Partij, Raden, Revolutie, edited by Jaap Kloosterman (Amsterdam, 1972), p. 209. I am indebted to Jaap Kloosterman for his analysis of council communism in the Netherlands and in Germany.

¹³Ihlau, Die Roten Kämpfer; Müller, Intellektueller Linksradikalismus in der Weimar Republik.

¹⁴Pannekoek, Partij, Raden, Revolutie, p. 192.

¹⁵Rätekorrespondenz, no. 16/17 (May 1936), pp. 3-4.

¹⁶Ernst Schwartz had criticized the KPD in Parliament over its alleged role in the so-called 'Granate Affair'--the close co-operation between the Soviet and German military. As a result of this controversy, the Berlin section of the KAPD and the Entschiedene Linke concluded that the proletarian revolution in Russia was still on the agenda. Pannekoek, Partij, Raden, Revolutie, pp. 185-6.

¹⁷K. Horner [Anton Pannekoek], "Prinzip und Taktik," Proletarier, no. 7 (July 1927), pp. 141-7; and no. 8 (August 1927), pp. 178-86. A Dutch translation is included in a selection of his writings in Pannekoek, Partij, Raden, Revolutie, pp. 22-55. Excerpts have been translated into French by Serge Bricianer, Pannekoek et les ouvriers (Paris, 1969), pp. 224-36. An English translation was published: Serge Bricianer, ed., Pannekoek and the Workers' Councils (St. Louis, 1978).

The editors of Proletarier introduced Pannekoek's entry into KAPD politics as follows:

The author of this essay of which we will publish the concluding chapter in the next issue of Proletarier has been associated with the pre-war Marxist-wing of Social Democracy. Together with

Rosa Luxemburg he has fought against Social Democratic revisionism. We would like to come back to certain points Pannekoek has raised for further elaboration.

An editorial in Kommunistische Arbeiterzeitung, Organ der Kommunistische Arbeiter Partei Deutschlands, no. 2 (Berlin, July 1927), notes that, "this essay has led to a discussion among the members." For further discussion relating to Pannekoek's essay see: Paul Klein, "Marx-Epigonen gegen Rosa Luxemburg: Randglossen über die Akkumulation des Kapitals," Proletarier, no. 9 (September 1929), pp. 202-9; Alfred Heinemann, "Unsere Taktik und die IWW," Proletarier, no. 9 (September 1929), pp. 209-11. A series of articles by Karl Schlicht started in Proletarier, no. 10, was continued in the KAZ. Karl Schlicht, "Eine Antwort an Genossen K. Horner," KAZ, no. 15 & 16 (February 1928).

¹⁸Henk Canne Meijer, "Vermeintliche oder tatsächlicher Opportunismus?," Kommunistische Arbeiterzeitung (Berlin), no. 17, 1 March 1928; and no. 18, 4 March 1928.

¹⁹Rosa Luxemburg, The Accumulation of Capital (New York, 1968). Pannekoek had written an earlier critique of the Luxemburg thesis. Anton Pannekoek, "Rosa Luxemburg: Die Akkumulation des Kapitals," Bremer Bürgerzeitung, 29-30 January 1913; Anton Pannekoek, "Theoretisches zur Ursache der Krisen," Die Neue Zeit I (February 1913), pp. 780-92; Anton Pannekoek, "De economische noodzakelykheid van het imperialisme," De Nieuwe Tijd (1916), pp. 268-85. See also Anton Pannekoek, "Der Zusammenbruchstheorie des Kapitalismus," Rätekorrespondenz, no. 1 (June 1934), pp. 1-20; Gottfried Mergner, ed., Gruppe Internationale Kommunisten-Hollands, pp. 114-33; Karl Korsch, Paul Mattick, and Anton Pannekoek, Zusammenbruchstheorie des Kapitalismus oder Revolutionäres Subject (Berlin, 1973); and Henrijk Grosmann, Das Akkumulations und Zusammenbruchstheorie des Kapitalismus (Leipzig, 1929).

²⁰Hans Manfred Bock, Syndikalismus und Linkskommunismus (Meisenheim am Glan, 1969) related the development of council communism in Germany. Kool, Die Linke gegen die Parteiherrschaft deals more specifically with the more international oriented Dutch council communist movement.

21 De Group van Internationale Communisten en de Duitse Radenbeweging (n.p., n.d.).

22 With the fifth congress of the Comintern (June-July 1924) the period of 'Bolshevization' of the international communist movement began. Following the Russian factional struggles, this led to a series of purges against both the left and the right wing and finally to the formation of monolithic Stalinist parties. In the KPD the left wing was relatively strong. After the collapse of the coalition government with the SPD in Saxony and Thuringen, and the defeat of the Hamburg uprising in 1924, the left under Arkady Maslow and Ruth Fischer advanced to positions in the party leadership. The Comintern, however, brought pressure to bear upon the new 'Zentrale'. The latter was forced in this way to look forward to renewed co-operation with the SPD. This alliance led to the formation of an ultra-left opposition which opposed a united front strategy and centralization of party leadership, to the increasing influence of the Comintern and the thesis it defended--the relative stability of capitalism.

In 1925 after the right wing, under Ernst Thälmann, had consolidated its power with the support of the Comintern, rapid liquidation of these groups followed within the KPD. January 1926 saw the expulsion of the opposition elements gathered around Ivan Katz; they consequently founded the Spartakusbund no. 2, together with a section of the AAUE, in June 1926. In May 1926 the so-called Entschiedene Linke was forced to leave the KPD. They were grouped around the parliamentarians Ernst Schwartz and Karl Korsch. In September 1926 the group around Korsch advocated tactical union with the left wing of the KPD and published the journal Kommunistische Politik. Schwartz and his followers formed a work group with the KAPD, and in July 1926, published the journal Entschiedene Linke. Cited in Pannekoek, Partij, Raden, Revolutie, p. 185.

23 Anton Pannekoek, "The Party and Class," Modern Socialism 1, no. 2 (Winter 1941/42), p. 9.

24 Anton Pannekoek, "The Workers' Councils," New Essays 2, no. 5 (April 1936), p. 21.

- ²⁵ J. Harper & Anton Pannekoek, "General Remarks on the Question of Organization," New Essays 5 (November 1938), pp. 146-7.
- ²⁶ Pannekoek, "The Workers' Councils," p. 23.
- ²⁷ Ibid., p. 21.
- ²⁸ Ibid., p. 23.
- ²⁹ Ibid., p. 26.
- ³⁰ Anton Pannekoek, "Workers' Councils," The Rise of the Workers' Movements, edited by Root and Branch (Cambridge, 1975), p. 433.
- ³¹ Ibid., p. 438.
- ³² Kool, Die Linke gegen die Parteiherrschaft, p. 15.
- ³³ Karl Marx, "Das Elend der Philosophie," MEW 4 (Berlin, 1971), p. 181. Cited in Kool, Die Linke gegen die Parteiherrschaft, p. 14.
- ³⁴ Karl Marx, "Die Pariser Kommune," MEW 17, pp. 336 & 339. Cited in Kool, Die Linke gegen die Parteiherrschaft, p. 14.
- ³⁵ Kool, Die Linke gegen die Parteiherrschaft, p. 15.
- ³⁶ Anton Pannekoek, "Über Arbeiterräte," Funken, no. 1 (June 1952), pp. 14-5.
- ³⁷ Anton Pannekoek, "Society and Mind in Marxian Philosophy," Science and Society 1, no. 4 (1937), pp. 445-6.
- ³⁸ Ibid., pp. 448-9.
- ³⁹ Ibid., p. 452.
- ⁴⁰ Ibid., p. 453.

⁴¹Anton Pannekoek, Lenin As Philosopher (London, 1975), p. 102.

⁴²Ibid., p. 105.

⁴³Pannekoek, "Workers' Councils," The Rise of the Workers' Movements, p. 414.

⁴⁴Ibid., pp. 493-4.

⁴⁵Ibid., pp. 495-6.

⁴⁶Pannekoek, Lenin As Philosopher, p. 106.

⁴⁷Ibid.

⁴⁸Anton Pannekoek, "Workers, Parliament and Communism" (unpublished manuscript).

⁴⁹Cited in "What Is to Be Done?," in V.I. Lenin, Selected Works 1 (New York: International Publishers, 1967), p. 129.

⁵⁰Ibid.

⁵¹Pannekoek, "Workers' Councils," The Rise of the Workers' Movements, p. 489.

⁵²Ibid.

⁵³Anton Pannekoek, "Materialism and Historical Materialism," New Essays 6, no. 2 (Fall 1942), p. 14.

⁵⁴Ibid., p. 15.

⁵⁵Ibid., p. 16.

⁵⁶Pannekoek, "Workers, Parliament and Communism," p. 9.

⁵⁷Ibid.

⁵⁸Ibid.

⁵⁹Ibid., p. 11.

⁶⁰Ibid., p. 14.

⁶¹Ibid., p. 16.

⁶²Ibid., p. 17.

⁶³Anton Pannekoek, "The Crisis in Socialist Theory," Left, no. 132 (October 1942), pp. 225-6.

⁶⁴Anton Pannekoek, "Strikes," The Western Socialist, no. 15 (January 1948), pp. 16-7.

⁶⁵Anton Pannekoek, review of "Le patriotisme des socialistes allemands et le congres d'Essen," Le Mouvement Socialiste (January 1908), in Die Neue Zeit 1 (1907-1908), pp. 714-6.

⁶⁶Harper [Anton Pannekoek], "General Remarks on the Question of Organization," pp. 146-7.

⁶⁷Anton Pannekoek, "Trade Unionism" International Council Correspondence 2, no. 2 (June 1936), p. II.

⁶⁸Ibid., pp. 12-3.

⁶⁹Ibid., p. 17.

CONCLUSION

Pannekoek must be viewed as a political activist whose thought is both a product of and a reaction to the maturation of the labour movement from 1900-1920--the Second and Third International. Throughout Pannekoek's life, left-radical democratic socialism, in opposition to reformism, informed his thought. Even as a council communist he continued to advocate a political value system rooted in the Marxist democratic socialism of the turn of the century.

Rosa Luxemburg's thought was also characteristic of the left-radicalism of that time. In addition to the work of Pannekoek's closest associates in the Netherlands--Herman Gorter and Henriette Roland-Holst--her work helped to determine the boundaries of his political system. Of all the major and minor figures in the labour movement of this period, only Pannekoek lived on to continue the radical intellectual tradition of democratic socialism of this era. This partially explains the intellectual isolationist tone of his writings after 1920. His essays and two volumes, Lenin As Philosopher and Workers' Councils, published after 1920, had a negligible impact at the time. The publication of Workers' Councils, written during 1941-1942, had to be financed and distributed by the author himself.¹

During these years of political obscurity and study, independent of any major party or social movement, Pannekoek saw his task as preserving the heritage of a democratic socialist tradition for future generations: "There is still good work to be done, even though it seems now that everything we thought important then, has no lasting value, thus we would hardly be able to speak about making propaganda; only about ordering material for those who come after us."²

Having provided a radical-left analysis of political events, ideas and social movements of the first quarter of the century, Pannekoek originated an erudite thesis based upon his involvement in the Second and Third International, which dealt with the nature of ideological hegemony and class consciousness. His writings were independent of the contemporaneous work of the Italian Marxist, Antonio Gramsci, and were separate from the politics of the workers' councils, and of Social Democracy and communism. Pannekoek's isolation from the workers' movement lent an abstract quality to his thought, which reflected the effective decline of the revolutionary workers' movement and of the intellectual traditions of democratic socialism, after 1921.

From 1927 until his death in 1960, Pannekoek's work found only marginal acceptance among workers, and less among the succeeding generations of students. In the late

sixties, however, his work did strike a responsive chord among radical students in North America and Europe, who discovered a tradition of democratic socialism in his writings that had endured past fascism, Stalinism and the Cold War; a world view with which they could sympathize. Pannekoek's work, nevertheless, has not stimulated the kind of democratic socialist society which he consistently advocated for the West, namely, one in which the production process and the distribution of produce would be democratized. He has been criticized for utopianism, or remaining aloof from the labour movement, while "writing on how the revolution should go."³ Whether or not this should be considered a criticism of Pannekoek is a subject for debate, but it is certainly the case that he lacked the Realpolitik of the pragmatic politician and was concerned primarily with the ultimate objectives of political life, the 'ought' rather than the 'is'.

Labour politics was, in one sense, a contradiction in terms. Politics represented class domination; whereas the task of workers under democratic socialism was to destroy this domination.⁴ The practice of democratic socialism as the workers' ideal meant that the workers sought to secure their place within capitalism. Thus, for Pannekoek, the elections, demonstrations, social reform agitation and trade unionism may be called labour politics, but, notwith-

standing, the results still lead to the strengthening of capitalism. Political practicality is the main concern of all socialist parties.⁵

The only political office ever held by Pannekoek was as chairman of a local chapter of the SDAP in Leiden in 1901. In practical politics Pannekoek remained consistently well removed from the mainstream of the socialist movement, acquiring a reputation as a perpetual critic concerned only with the intellectual ideals of democratic socialism, rather than with the immediate political needs of the worker. In this, Pannekoek found himself in opposition to Troelstra in the Dutch Social Democratic Party, then to Kautsky in the German Social Democratic Party, to Radek in the German Communist Party, to Lenin in the Russian Communist Party and the Comintern, and to Roland-Holst, Van Ravesteijn and Wijnkoop in the Dutch Communist Party. In his correspondence he writes:

My lot in the labour movement has always been to be in opposition to the leading personalities and their methods and to side with the break away or expelled groups. 6

Among socialists in the post-revolutionary era, only Gorter fully shared Pannekoek's most fundamental vision of democratic socialism as "the producers themselves being master over the means of production."⁷ Democratic socialism

as the struggle for the liberation of the worker had been an exemplary model of a political theory that expressed the aspirations of subordinate people, but it succeeded only in widespread political reform instituted by Social Democratic Parties throughout the Western parliamentary democracies and stopped short of initiating class struggle aimed at establishing workers' control of the means of production. Pannekoek thought that revolutionary struggle had still to take place.⁸ He saw the task of future generations as being, "similar to the first struggles...for socialism one hundred years ago."⁹ Now it also had to free the workers from the legacy of socialist and communist traditions and show that these political systems have only led to a new form of class domination.¹⁰ He thought it essential for the prospect of democratic socialism to refute the belief that state socialism, parliamentarism and trade unionism are prescribed policies of Marxism.¹¹ "Socialists, calling themselves followers of Marx, in unilateral distortion of his views act as agents of state capitalism...."¹² Ossified socialist doctrine cannot assist the workers in their self-emancipation.

Western democratic socialists, 1900-1920, proclaimed a commitment to the ideals of independence, development of initiative, and self-reliance. They rejected dependency and saw the limitations of charismatic leadership; but

the character of Russian state socialism indicated that obedience and loyalty to the party leadership was regarded as indispensable to the true communist.¹³ In both the East and the West, Pannekoek saw the final convergence of political systems characterized by totalitarian aims:

Everywhere governments assume a totalitarian character, seek to lead production, make alliances with the party and trade union leaders to form a united power over the working class. State socialism in several intensities has emerged...in a more democratic disguise than in Russia; but the tendency is universal. Against this totality of power the workers must take up the struggle--we will see wild cat strikes and factory occupations--and the purpose cannot be other than to become masters of the factory, masters of production and society with their strike committees and councils as organizational forms. 14

In the face of what he perceived as a system of total control of workers parading under the banner of democracy, freedom and human rights, Pannekoek still felt that only the working class was capable of containing capital and liberating mankind from the degradation of wage labour, exploitation and domination.

Any influence Pannekoek may have had upon the policies of the labour movement of the Second and Third International had been completely dissipated after 1920. Democratic socialism had virtually become an extinct species of political theory, but isolation had not daunted his belief in the coming of the proletarian revolution even though the

post-revolutionary period had been fraught with disillusionment and disappointment. He wrote to Henk Canne Meijer:

We are all together like the old guard which tries to look ahead a little and to prepare, but only after us will come the new struggle. For us personally, it is disappointing when one is trying to say something and regarded as an isolated voice crying out in the desert; but just the same it will come! 15

Looking back upon his life as a democratic socialist which, in the sphere of Realpolitik, must be considered as political failure, Pannekoek saw the history of the labour movement as the progress of antagonism and strife in the emancipation of the working class. The history of labour in the first half of the twentieth century was preliminary in nature and uninformed by the spiritual power of class consciousness. The real contest for democratic socialism and self-determination was still to come in the struggle against state socialism. 16

Ultimately the intellectual challenge set by Pannekoek and others on the democratic socialist left was to overcome the traditional division of humanity into two groups--a small elite and the subordinate and exploited masses. This commitment to the common man and his emancipation through self-education and the development of class consciousness had been the leitmotif in Pannekoek's life and work.

* Unless otherwise indicated, all translations have been done by Marinus Boekelman.

¹ Pannekoek to Jim Dawson, 15 February 1949, Pannekoek Archive Map 108/5, IISG, Amsterdam. "I will try and hope to be able to send you once more \$200 out of my savings...."

² Anton Pannekoek to Henk Canne Meijer, 18 January 1951, Canne Meijer Archive, IISG, Amsterdam.

³ D.J. Struik, "Years of Revolution" (unpublished manuscript), p. 13.

⁴ Anton Pannekoek to Maximilien Rubel, 5 December 1952, Pannekoek Archive Map 108/61, IISG, Amsterdam.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Anton Pannekoek to Maximilien Rubel, 18 August 1951, Pannekoek Archive Map 108/70, IISG, Amsterdam.

⁷ Anton Pannekoek to Maximilien Rubel, 22 June 1952, Pannekoek Archive Map 108/70, IISG, Amsterdam.

⁸ Anton Pannekoek to Paul Mattick, 28 September 1945, Pannekoek Archive Map 108, IISG, Amsterdam.

⁹ Anton Pannekoek to Maximilien Rubel, 30 April 1952, Pannekoek Archive Map 108/76, IISG, Amsterdam.

¹⁰ Anton Pannekoek to Liliga, 25 December 1946, Pannekoek Archive Map 108/4, IISG, Amsterdam.

¹¹ Anton Pannekoek to Ridley, 27 February 1947, Pannekoek Archive Map 108/31, IISG, Amsterdam.

¹² Anton Pannekoek to P. Kenefick, 26 May 1949, Pannekoek Archive Map 108/8, IISG, Amsterdam.

¹³ Anton Pannekoek, "Why Past Revolutionary Movements Failed?," New Essays 5, no. 2 (Fall 1948), p. 24.

14 Anton Pannekoek to Liliga, 25 December 1946,
Pannekoek Archive Map 108/4, IISG, Amsterdam.

15 Anton Pannekoek to Canne Meijer, 1 January 1948,
Canne Meijer Archive, IISG, Amsterdam.

16 Anton Pannekoek to Paul Mattick, 11 June 1946,
Pannekoek Archive Map 108, IISG, Amsterdam.

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ABBREVIATIONS

AAUD	Allgemeine Arbeiter Union Deutschlands
AAUE	Allgemeine Arbeiter Union-Einheitsorganization
CPH	Communistische Partij Holland
EI	Entschiedene Linke
GIC	Groep van Internationalé Communisten
ILP	Independent Labour Party
IWW	Industrial Workers of the World
KAPD	Kommunistische Arbeiter Partei Deutschlands
KAPN	Kommunistische Arbeiders Partij Nederland
KAUD	Kommunistische Arbeiter Union Deutschlands
KPD	Kommunistische Partei Deutschlands
LAO	Linksche Arbeiders Oppositie
NAS	National Arbeids--Secretariaat
OSV	Onafhankelijk Socialistisch Verbond
RKG	Rote Kämpfer Gruppe
RSV	Revolutionair-Socialistisch Verbond
SDAP	Sociaal-Democratische Arbeiders Partij
SDP	Sociaal Democratische Partij
SPD	Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschlands
USPD	Unabhängige Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschlands