

From the 2nd to the 3rd Internationale

Three articles by Anton Pannekoek

The New Review 1914-1916

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Introduction

John Gerber "Anton Pannekoek and socialism of workers' self-emancipation (1873-1960)" - fragment

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

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

'The Second International is dead. But this ignoble death is no accident; like the downfall of the first International, the collapse of the second is an indication of the fact that its usefulness is at an end. It represents, in fact, the downfall of the old fighting methods of the epoch. (...) And out of these new conditions a new International of Labor will grow, more firmly founded, more strongly organized, more powerful and more Socialistic than the one that perished.

Looking beyond this terrible world-fire, we revolutionary Socialists boldly erect upon the ruins the standard of the new, the coming of Internationalism."

Of this assessment, Lenin noted several weeks later: 'The only one who had told the workers the truth – although not loudly enough, and sometimes not quite skillfully – is Pannekoek [...]. His words [...] are the only socialist words. They are the truth. Bitter, but the truth.' ¹ (...)

Pannekoek's political activity in the aftermath of August, 1914 was directly linked to a broader process of left regroupment within the international socialist movement. This process of regroupment derived its chief impetus from Lenin and the Bolsheviks and had its organizational base in what later became known as the Zimmerwald movement. ² Lenin's first foray at left regroupment came at a conference of Italian and Swiss socialists at Lugano, Switzerland, on September 27, 1914, at which he presented his September theses on turning an imperialist war between nations into a civil war between classes. At this gathering a major division of opinion emerged between the revolutionaries, who felt the main task was to use the war as a catalyst for socialist revolution, and the pacifists, who felt the primary duty was to end the war. When the Italian and Swiss socialists called for an international conference of all socialists opposed to the war, Lenin began to focus his energies on building a strong revolutionary presence at the conference.

A key element of Lenin's strategy of revolutionary regroupment was his desire for an alliance between the Bolsheviks and the Dutch SDP, which he regarded as among the best of the revolutionary groupings. To facilitate this alliance, Lenin wrote Wijnkoop proposing that the two parties formulate a joint declaration and requesting that the SDP send representatives to the upcoming conference. ³ Wijnkoop and others in the SDP-leadership, however, rejected Lenin's proposal on the grounds that the conference was opportunistic in character and would not be a gathering of revolutionaries. ⁴ Lenin, however, persisted and again wrote to Wijnkoop, warning of the 'great danger' for the movement if his plan for an interna-

1 Lenin to Alexander Shlyapnikov, October 27, 1914, in: V.I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, vol. 15, Moscow, 1966, p. 168.

2 For a broad overview of these events and developments see: Merle Fainsod, *International Socialism and the World War*, Cambridge/Mass., 1935, reprint New York, 1966; Olga Gankin, Harold H. Fisher, *The Bolsheviks and the World War. The Origin of the Third International*, Stanford, London, 1940; Horst Lademacher (ed.), *Die Zimmerwald Bewegung. Protokolle und Korrespondenz*, The Hague, Paris, 1967.

3 Lenin to Wijnkoop, n.d. [some time between June 19 and July 13, 1915], in: Lenin, *Collected Works*, vol. 35, op. cit., pp. 191-192.

4 D.J. Wijnkoop, 'De geest van Zimmerwald', *De Nieuwe Tijd*, 1916, pp. 54-62.

tional declaration by the Marxist left failed to materialize.⁵ When this attempt proved equally useless, he wrote to Radek requesting that he arrange for Pannekoek - who was a strong supporter of the proposed conference - to play a mediating role.⁶ When Pannekoek failed to make headway, Radek sent Pannekoek a telegram on the eve of the conference requesting that he come on his own and offering to pay his way. Pannekoek, however, declined on the grounds that only Wijnkoop could represent the SDP.⁷

The international conference which met in the Swiss mountain village of Zimmerwald from September 5 to 8, 1915, marked both the complete and clear segregation of minority and majority socialists into separate camps and the general consolidation of a distinct left current within the anti-war minority. Of the Dutch, only Henriette Roland Holst was present.⁸ During the proceedings, Lenin once again offered a resolution calling for a direct revolutionary struggle against capitalism and the formation of a new International. Although Lenin's resolution managed to gain the votes of only about one third of the delegates, this was regarded as a minor victory by the left.⁹ More encouraging for the left was the creation of an International Socialist Commission in Berne to coordinate future activities, which Lenin saw as the potential nucleus of a new International.

In order to influence this body and to disseminate their own views, the left established a coordinating bureau of their own. In the fall of 1915, this bureau, at the initiative of Karl Radek, began to lay the groundwork for the creation of a separate international publication of the left. Pannekoek had first broached the idea of such a publication in the spring of 1915, arguing that it might serve as a spiritual counterweight to Kautsky's *Neue Zeit* and an instrument of theoretical clarification.¹⁰ Following consultation with Lenin, Radek suggested in October to Pannekoek and Roland Holst that a German-language review be started in Holland. Radek proposed as well that Pannekoek and Roland Holst serve as co-editors, although it was under-

5 Lenin to Wijnkoop, n.d. (some time after July 24, 1915], in: Lenin, Collected Works, vol. 35, op. cit., pp. 195-197.

6 Lenin to Radek, n.d. (August 19, 1915], *ibid.*, pp. 202-203.

7 Noted in a letter from Wijnkoop to Van Ravesteyn, September 4, 1915, in: Gankin, Fisher, *The Bolsheviks and the World War*, op. cit., p. 103.

8 Lenin's attitude toward Roland Holst is revealed in a letter to Wijnkoop: 'I see that we cannot in any circumstances accept solidarity with Mme. Roland-Holst. Mme. Roland-Holst, in my opinion, is a Dutch Kautsky or a Dutch Trotsky.' Lenin to Wijnkoop, n.d. [some time after July 24, 1915], op. cit.

9 Fainsod, *International Socialism and the World War*, op. cit., p. 69.

10 L.J. van Rossum, 'Ein unveröffentlichter Brief Trockij's von Anfang 1916', *International Review of Social History*, nr. 2, 1969, pp. 251-266.

stood that he was to be the real source of power. The initial editorial board envisioned by Radek was to consist of himself, Pannekoek, Roland Holst, Lenin, Trotsky, Mehring, Borchardt, and perhaps Grimm, Zetkin and Frania. For Lenin, Pannekoek's cooperation was extremely crucial; one of his conditions for supporting the publication was that Pannekoek, 'whom we see as our representative' [of the Zimmerwald left], be placed on the editorial board. ¹¹

Pannekoek's willingness to edit the new publication was based in part on his desire to articulate his own conception of revolutionary regroupment. Although closely allied with Lenin on the Zimmerwald left, Pannekoek's strategic analysis diverged from Lenin's at several key points. At the most basic level, Pannekoek made it clear that his fundamental concern was with advancing a strategy based on political consciousness and mass action, rather than, as he felt Lenin advocated, one based on splitting the existing socialist movement and a continuation of the traditional tactics. ¹² A regrouping of the socialist left, Pannekoek argued, was possible only on the basis of an 'internationalism of deed' founded upon incessant opposition to the ruling classes in every country. ¹³ To attempt to build a new international movement on the basis of conferences and delegates alone would lead to 'nothing more than an International of Leaders'. ¹⁴

The projected international review became reality in January, 1916, under the name *Vorbote*. In the introduction, Pannekoek defined the main aim of the publication as one of providing theoretical support for the struggle against imperialism. Pannekoek made it clear that this task involved, in the first instance, a 'merciless analysis of the inadequacies of the old revisionist and radical socialism' as a prelude to a full-scale organizational break with social democracy. What was needed was a completely new spiritual orientation which could only arise out of a long hard process of theoretical clarification and struggle:

11 This information is contained in a letter of Radek to Roland Holst, October 12, 1915, in: Lademacher (ed.), *Die Zimmerwalder Bewegung*, op. cit., vol. II, pp. 165-166.

12 Pannekoek to Van Ravesteyn, October 22, 1915, Van Ravesteyn Archives, nr. 15.

13 A(nton) P[annekoek], 'Nog eens Zimmerwald', *De Tribune*, January 5, 1916.

14 Anton Pannekoek, 'New Tactics Against War Basis of a New International', *New Review*, nr. 2, February, 1915. Similar reservations about Lenin were also shared by most of the Dutch Marxists. Roland Holst, while considering Lenin sympathetic as a person, felt he was 'much more a modernized Blanquist than a revolutionary Marxist' and 'somewhat narrow, pedantic, and with few ideas'. Roland Holst to Pannekoek, n.d. [1916], Pannekoek Archives, nr. 63. Wijnkoop, for his part, noted that he was 'never very much attracted to Lenin's "theory", though he admitted to knowing 'very little about it'. Wijnkoop to Van Ravesteyn, September 21, 1915, in: Lademacher(ed.), *Die Zimmerwalder Bewegung*, op. cit., vol. II, pp. 114-116.

'Now is the time to gather together everything in the way of new ideas, new slogans, new propositions, to inspect them, to test them, to clarify them by means of discussion and thus to make them of service to the new struggle. [...] But this struggle is only made possible by an uncompromising struggle against all the elements of the former social democracy, which would bind the proletariat to the chariot of imperialism; against open imperialists who became ordinary agents of the bourgeoisie as well as social patriots of all tinges who seek to reconcile incompatible antagonisms and to keep the proletariat from struggling against imperialism by the most acute methods. The formation of the Third International will be possible only after a resolute break with social patriotism.'¹⁵

Despite the high hopes of Pannekoek and others, *Vorbote* was plagued by a series of factional controversies almost from the moment of its inception. Following the appearance of Pannekoek's introduction, Lenin charged that Pannekoek had transformed the review into a personal organ and was evading his responsibilities as a representative of the Zimmerwald left.¹⁶ These differences were compounded by an even deeper conflict between Lenin and Radek over the question of national self-determination. Lenin also felt that Radek was guilty of 'intrigues' against him and was attempting to remove his supporters from the editorial board. Lenin added to this the accusation that both Pannekoek and Radek were 'incorrect' in their approach to the struggle against Kautskyism.¹⁷ Criticism from another quarter came from Trotsky, who felt that 'the Russian and Dutch extremists' were attempting to build their own International. Trotsky also felt that the idea of using the publication to organize the workers and build a broad movement of the left was a 'pure Leninist utopia'.¹⁸ Due in part to the inability of the left to resolve these differences, *Vorbote* ceased publication with the second issue.

While Pannekoek's influence diminished after the failure of *Vorbote*, this failure had little impact on the development of the Zimmerwald left itself. By the time of the second conference of the Zimmerwald movement at Kienthal, Switzerland, in April, 1916,

15 [Anton Pannekoek], 'Zur Einführung', *Vorbote*, Nr. 1, January, 1916, pp. 1-4. An English version of this article appeared under the title: 'The Third International', *International Socialist Review*, February, 1917, pp. 460-462.

16 Lenin to Roland Holst, n.d. (early 1916), in: Gankin and Fisher, *The Bolsheviks and the World War*, op. cit., pp. 484-485.

17 Lenin to Inessa Armand, n.d. [November 30, 1916], in: Lenin, *Collected Works*, vol. 35, op. cit., pp. 250-255.

18 Trotsky to Roland Holst, n.d. [February, 1916], in: Van Rossum, 'Ein unveröffentlichter Brief Trockij von Anfang 1916', op. cit.

it was clear that the left had established a momentum which could not be broken. Although the left was still a minority, it, nonetheless, had a significant impact on the resolutions which were approved by the conference. For the left, Kienthal brought to the surface a new spirit of self-confidence and gave eloquent testimony to what was becoming a deepening fissure within European social democracy.¹⁹

Source: *John Gerber* "[Anton Pannekoek and socialism of workers' self-emancipation \(1873-1960\)](#)" p. 108/112.

19 Information on the relationship between the Zimmerwald left and the later foundation of the Communist International can be found in: Edward Hallett Carr, *The Bolshevik Revolution. 1917-1923*, vol. III, London, 1953, pp. 567-670.

THE DOWNFALL OF THE INTERNATIONAL BY ANTON PANNEKOEK (Bremen)

In: The New Review, Vol. II (1914), Nr 11, November 1914, p. 621-630

I

Exactly half a century has passed since the International Workingmen's Association was founded in London under the leadership of Karl Marx. It went to pieces after the Franco-Prussian War of 1870 and the Paris Commune. Exactly a quarter of a century ago, at the Congress of 1889 in Paris, the new International was founded. This year the Congress at Vienna was to celebrate the double anniversary. But just a month before it was to take place the firebrand of international war was tossed into Europe from Vienna. With the outbreak of the European War, the new International, too, is disrupted.

When the old International was founded (1864), capitalism in Europe, with the exception of England, was still in its first stages. Its political form, the bourgeois State, was as yet only partly developed. In England alone the bourgeoisie was already in absolute control of the government. Their modern industrial methods and large scale production had produced a proletariat which had, to be sure, lost all revolutionary spirit in the remarkably prosperous period following 1850, but which had nevertheless built up strong organizations by means of which it had fought bitter struggles in the sixties in order to realize some of its immediate demands.

In France, on the other hand, the old system of small scale production was still in vogue, though here, too, it was already being hard pressed by the hot-house like growth of capitalist industry. In Germany the factory system began to grow strongly only in the sixties. It did away with the old system of handicraft, impoverished the craftsmen and drove them into the factories.

In these countries the working class was still wholly under the influence of the ideals and thoughts of the age of individual enterprise. Their feeling of enmity toward capital was not the hatred of the exploited worker against his exploiting master. It was rather the resentment that the unfortunate, miserable master must feel for his stronger competitor, as is proven by the fact that the productive co-operative associations, rather than the labor unions, occupied the center of popular interest.

By means of these societies their supporters hoped to place machine production into the hands of the worker and so render him able to compete with the manufacturer. Lassalle's proposal of productive associations supported by State loans and the prevalence of Proudhon's ideas in France bear witness to the popularity of this idea.

The bourgeoisie, not having as yet acquired political mastery in these countries, formed a strong radical opposition party, which strove, above all, to unite the various provinces into a national whole. Its middle class wing, true to the ideals of 1848, aspired to political democracy, meddled with the labor movement and confused the minds of many workers with its empty phrases.

The workers of Western Europe were unanimous in their determination to defend their democratic institutions against European reaction under the leadership of Russian Czarism. The Polish Revolution in 1863, therefore, gave the impetus that led to the organization of the International.

The history of the old International is a constant struggle between the middle class ideals of the handicraftsmen and the spirit of the modern working class movement that the development of capital had produced. Coming from England, defended at the congresses by English delegates, provided with a general theory by Karl Marx, the new spirit gradually pushed the petty bourgeois ideals of the past into the background. Thus the International became a school for the propaganda of the fundamental Marxian theories. The more progressive groups of the working class became class-conscious, and gained the insight into social problems that was to determine their tactics in the period that followed. Recognition of the necessity of industrial organization in the struggle against capitalist masters and of independent political warfare to secure control of the government, with communism as the ultimate goal—that was the abiding result of the internal struggles of the old International. But the organization itself was doomed to destruction. The European wars coming to a close in 1870, had fulfilled the national ideals of the bourgeoisie. In Central Europe larger nations, Germany and Italy, such as were necessary for the further development of capitalist industry, had come into existence. These nations, together with the older France and England, were the battleground upon which the coming struggles of the proletariat were to be fought. The internationalism of a general organization governed by an executive in London had become impossible. The workers of each nation had to shape their struggles according to the local political conditions. The downfall of the International, therefore, was inevitable after the Paris Commune had proven "that the working class could not simply lay hold of the State machinery and wield it for its own purposes" (Marx), in other words, the proletariat was still in its first infancy from the point of view both of intellectual development and organizing power.

Twenty-five years after the foundation of the old International, representatives from the working class organizations of twenty nations met in Paris. The fact that the congress was recruited from representatives of Socialist Parties as well as Labor Organizations, linked the New International to the Old, and proclaimed the theoretical postulates of the latter as a great practical force. The seed had sprouted. Everywhere the workers had embraced the Socialist idea, and were carrying on the political struggle with steadily increasing success. With new industrial conditions there had awakened a new generation with new ideals. Capitalism had gained full control of industrial life; it had spread to the ends of Europe in the East, to America in the West. Everywhere it had done away with small scale production and handicraft and had cast the great mass of the people into the class of wage-proletarians. But even in the hour of its full development it produced the germs of its own destruction. The long years of business depression after 1875 had aroused doubts as to the stability of the capitalist order even in bourgeois circles, while in America the newly arisen monsters, the Trusts, had proclaimed the end of the era of free competition. Middle class opposition disappeared; the proletariat was arrayed face to face against the ruling class. The old middle class illusion, that matters might be mended with the simple expedient of co-operative organizations, had died out. Clearly and distinctly the new problem stood out: the proletariat must obtain control of society so that it may master the whole mechanism of production. Conquest of political power was recognized as the immediate aim; parliamentarism as the means, prepared and supplemented by the conquest of universal suffrage, which latter was at that time the most important factor in the political struggles of a number of nations. Hand in hand with the political struggle went the efforts to found and build up labor unions to secure better conditions. The congresses of the new International were deliberative conferences of independent autonomous parties of various countries. After the last remnants of the earlier Anarchism were thrown out, these congresses were chiefly occupied with the discussion of parliamentary tactics.

Another twenty-five years passed. Capitalism grew and spread even more rapidly than in the preceding period. Favored by the period of unparalleled prosperity that began in 1894 in Germany and spread out over the other nations, interrupted only by short crises, capitalism had taken possession of the earth. It revolutionized every continent, it broke down the rigid immobility of immense empires that had resisted change for thousands of years, it seized the treasures of the world, it exploited men of every race and color. And everywhere the Socialist spirit, hatred against capital, took root in the minds of the exploited workers, often combined with the aspiration for national freedom.

Socialist organizations arose in China and in New Zealand, in Johannesburg and Honolulu, in Alaska and Arabia. Capitalism and Socialism were flooding the whole earth.

More important still were the internal upheavals. Capital had won complete mastery over the industrial and political life of the nations. All classes, even those which were apparently independent—farmers and the small business men—became its servants; but in the same measure ever greater masses of men became its foes. Gigantic factories filled with the latest machinery put millions of workers into the power of a few magnates. Organization growing steadily more perfect took the place of anarchistic competition. The first Trusts twenty-five years ago were but the weak beginnings of that concentration of capitalistic power which now placed the whole industrial life and the treasures of the earth into the hands of a few hundred kings of production. In Germany and America this development went on with the utmost vigor and rapidity. But while in America the great expanse of territory made possible the broadest development, in Germany, where all activity is crowded into a small space, the antagonism between classes and conditions became exceedingly acute.

These conditions have changed the attitude of the working class. They no longer believe that social supremacy can be won offhand by parliamentary legislation. Parliament has become a mere machine for granting appropriations to defray the cost of the new governmental functions, and at best a stage upon which the protests of labor may find utterance.

The proletariat is pitted against the colossal power of the State, which must be attacked and vanquished. But the strength of the proletariat, too has grown. The Socialist idea has taken possession of large minorities of the people in all capitalist nations. Greater still is the growth of labor unions; insignificant in 1889, they have taken rapid strides forward in the years of prosperity. Everywhere in the labor unions there are great armies firmly organized, bound to each other by strong ties of solidarity, confronting the mighty power of the magnates of capital.

But within this struggling mass of workers, progressive and conservative elements are fighting for supremacy.

III

The policies and theories that comprise the spirit and nature of modern capitalism may be summed up under the name of Imperialism. Capital is eager to spread out over distant continents, to start railroads, factories, plantations and mines, in order to realize high profits. To this end it is necessary that these foreign regions be con-

trolled politically by the home country. Each government strives to conquer or control the largest possible part of the earth for its bourgeoisie, that it may be in a position to protect the interests of its capital there. Each government, therefore, strives to secure the greatest possible amount of world-power and arms itself against the others in order to impart the greatest possible weight to its demands and to force the others to recognize its claims. So we see each European nation striving to become the center of a world-empire consisting of colonies and spheres of influence. This policy of "imperialism" controls nowadays to a greater or lesser extent, the political life of all nations and the mental attitude of the bourgeoisie. It has given to the possessing classes, who hitherto had nothing to oppose to the Socialist ideals of the working class, a new ideal: to make the fatherland great and mighty among the peoples of the earth. The intellectuals, who had formerly flirted with Socialism, now became the enthusiastic supporters of the bourgeoisie; the old ideals of world-peace, progress and democracy were supplanted by the ideals of world power, patriotism, race prejudice, the admiration of force and brutality. All doubt as to the ability of capitalism to persist indefinitely, and in full vigor, has disappeared, while Socialism is now regarded by them as feeble humanitarian sentimentalism, which unfortunately puts the working class in opposition to national aims. An insane competition in the increase of naval and military armaments eats up billions of dollars, piles heavy taxes upon the masses of the people, and makes drastic social reforms impossible. In all lands it became apparent that a small but powerful clique of capitalists and bureaucrats controlled the political life, not only in the semi-absolute monarchies of Germany and Austria, but also in democratic France and in parliamentary England. The centralized power of the State was tremendously increased, in order to enable it to cope with the problems of the great world struggle.

On the other hand, the forces of resistance in the proletariat were also growing. The ever increasing taxes and military burdens aroused the bitterest opposition in ever widening circles, as was plainly evidenced by the electoral victories of the Social Democracy. Spontaneous outbreaks from among the masses revealed possibilities of new methods of working class warfare, other than parliamentarism and labor unionism. They showed the weapons at the disposal of the proletariat in the struggle against imperialism: mass-actions, in which the working masses demonstrate their opposition on the streets or seek to impose their will upon governments by means of political general strikes. Thus the political and industrial struggles of the workers flow together into one united struggle against the government and organized capital. To be sure, such actions demand a strength of the proletariat, a firmness of organization, a willingness to make sacrifices, a solidarity, a clear Socialist understanding, a revolutionary energy, such as are now to be found only inadequately and can grow

only in course of the struggles themselves. But these first struggles already open before us a vista of the coming period of revolutionary assaults upon the State by the proletariat, a period that is destined to supersede the preparatory period of peaceful parliamentarism and labor unionism.

But at the same time the elements of weakness also become more apparent. The rapid growth of the party and labor union organizations has produced an army of parliamentarians, functionaries and officials, who, as a sort of specialists, became the representatives of the traditional methods of warfare and obstructed the adoption of new methods. As the 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 place of the 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—in France, Belgium, Holland, Denmark, while in England the Labor Party showed the same tendency without using Socialist phrases. In Germany, as a direct result of reactionary pressure from above, the tactics of the class struggle maintained their ascendancy; but here, too, similar reformistic tendencies made their appearance with the growth of the organization. It is true that organization is a condition, a necessary instrument for the victory of the proletariat; but as it becomes stronger there is the dangerous tendency to regard it as the end, instead of as the means to an end, its maintenance becomes the highest aim, and in order to safeguard the organization serious struggles are carefully avoided. This tendency is furthered by the numberless officials and executive heads of the party and the labor unions. In recent years the struggle between these two opposing tendencies in the German Social Democracy came to a head upon several occasions. But each time those who called for revolutionary tactics against the increasing strength of imperialism and pointed to the necessity of mass-actions, were in the minority. This was due in the main to the fact that among the workers themselves there was little revolutionary energy. This again is a direct result of the prosperity which furthered capitalist expansion as well as the growth of labor organizations. For in good times there is little unemployment, wages increase, the laboring masses are comparatively satisfied, are not driven to rebellion by hunger and unbearable misery. This is the underlying cause for the growth of reformism in Europe, for the indifference of the masses, for their unwillingness to adopt revolutionary measures, for the stagnation of the whole labor movement.

In such circumstances the International itself was bound to degenerate. The congresses, which were at one time the scene of passionate discussion on tactical questions, degenerated into bureaucratically organized theatrical performances staged by

reformistic politicians and bureaucrats. There was but one force that could make of this international union of Social Democratic Parties a living, necessary thing. That was the international policy of imperialism with its ever growing menace of world-war.

In opposition to the Old International, whose center of gravity lay in the international policy of the proletariat, the New International lacked a clearly defined international policy. It was concerned with questions of internal politics, questions and struggles that were caused by the development of capitalism in each individual country. This had to change when imperialism, with its militaristic armaments, its endless conflicts among the various States, its ever-present menace of war, raised its head. The new international policy must needs be entirely different from that of Marx and Engels. At that time the defense of European democracy against Czarism was the aim of the International. To-day, after the Russian Revolution, it could only be to defend the proletariat against world-war, to preserve world-peace. The International should, therefore, have become a firm union of the working class parties of all countries against war. The party has always striven toward this end, has always emphasized this phase of its activity. The highest expression of this effort was reached in the International Congress at Basel, where Social Democratic representatives from all countries protested against war and declared that they would do everything in their power to prevent it. But behind this declaration there lay much more fear of war than firm determination to take up the fight against it. Its outward form, the session in the church, the ringing of bells, the avoidance of all discussion as to how and with what means war was to be prevented—all these things betrayed the effort to mesmerize the governments with words and outward appearances, instead of trying to organize the real strength of the proletariat and preparing it for a struggle so difficult and requiring so many sacrifices. And when finally the governments really wanted war, there was neither the strength nor the courage to take up the fight. Internationalism went up in smoke and the International lay in ruins.

IV

The Austrian Social Democracy has always ranted vigorously over the stupidity of the ruling politicians in Vienna, because they could not win the confidence of the Balkan peoples by adopting a sensible policy towards the various nationalities; but in theory and in practice it itself supported nationalism and instead of fighting nationalistic passions in reality supported them. Thus, when the conflict between Austria and Servia broke out, the Vienna Arbeiterzeitung, instead of vigorously attacking its own government, took up the cudgels against the Servian government and thus played into the

hands of the warlike Viennese government. Naturally antiwar demonstrations in Vienna were entirely out of the question. The despised Servians, on the other hand, were the only ones who loyally did their duty as Social Democrats, although, if anywhere, a nationalistic attitude on the part of the Balkan workers in their desire to uphold the independence of their awakening nations would be perfectly intelligible. Comrade Lapschewitz declared that, while the attack of Austria was an outrage, yet he was of the opinion that the Servian government was in part to blame because of its policy. The Social Democracy, therefore, as an unalterable opponent of this policy, must protest against it by voting against all war credits. This is an example of courage that may well be compared with the memorable stand taken by Bebel and Liebknecht in 1870.

The German working class has been, through its organization and Socialist education, the strongest cohort of the International; if anywhere, it should have been possible here to arouse an energetic opposition to the war plans of the government. Beyond a doubt the government as well as the bourgeoisie was at first somewhat uneasy as to the attitude of the German workers. But this uneasiness was soon dispelled. The party was not willing to fight the government, and immediately used the argument employed by the government itself to create a war sentiment among the people: "We have been unwillingly forced into a war of defense against Russia, which has insolently attacked us and threatens our culture." And the Social Democratic press showed that the war against Russia was a sacred bequest from Marx. In its ignorance of the imperialistic character of modern war, together with the fear of taking up the fight against the terrible power of the militaristic State, the German proletariat has allowed itself to be harnessed to the car of German imperialism. The Social Democratic parliamentarians voted war credits to the government; long years of Socialist opposition against militarism were thus wiped out.

This determined the course of the Socialists all over Europe. True, the Russian Socialists refused to vote war credits, and in England the Labor Party—according to ancient pacifist-Liberal tradition—attacked the government bitterly for its interference. But in Belgium, Emil Vandervelde, former Chairman of the International Bureau, was made a member of the Cabinet, and in France that old uncompromising fighter of the class struggle, Jules Guesde, who always championed the German radical tendency, accepted a place in the Cabinet. In a manifesto published by the French Party, the workers are called upon to defend the democracy and Socialism of France against "German imperialism"—as if the French armies were not fighting for French and English imperialism! Not a whit better are the Syndicalists and Anarchists, whose hatred of the German Social Democracy has now become a fruitful ground for jingoism; thus at the burial of Jean Jaures, Jouhaux expressed himself in a purely nationalistic sense. Ger-

man Social Democrats are now going to the neutral countries as commissioners, so to say, of the German government, to soften the hostility of the Socialists against the German government; thus Sudekum in Sweden, Scheidemann in Holland, a whole deputation in Italy. And everywhere they are repulsed, not because they have violated their Socialist duty to the International, but because they speak in the interests of that Germany which is held in fear by the middle class of all other nations. In Sweden Branting spoke, as if he were the representative of the Swedish middle class: "We can never forgive you the violation of the neutrality of Belgium." While the proletarian masses, obedient to the rulers, dissolved into national armies, are slaughtering one another in the service of Capital, the International Social Democracy has broken up into groups of jingo politicians who bitterly attack one another.

The second International is dead. But this ignoble death is no accident; like the downfall of the first International, the collapse of the second is an indication of the fact that its usefulness is at an end. It represents, in fact, the downfall of the old fighting methods of the epoch. Not in the sense that they will disappear or become useless, but in the sense that the whole world now understands that these methods cannot bring the Revolution. They retain their value as preparation, as auxiliary means. But the conquest of power demands new revolutionary forms of struggle.

To have pointed these out, to have put before us the new problems which it itself was incapable of solving—this is the bequest to us of the second International. These will be fully developed by the new capitalist world that will grow out of this world-war—a world of mightier capitalist development, increased oppression of the proletariat, more pronounced antagonism of the three great world powers, Germany, England and America. And out of these new conditions a new International of Labor will grow, more firmly founded, more strongly organized, more powerful and more Socialist than the one that now perished. Looking beyond the terrible world-fire, we revolutionary Socialists boldly erect upon the ruins the standard of the new, the coming Internationalism:

*C'est la lutte finale, groupons nous, et demain
L'Internationale sera le genre humain.*

Source: aaap.be

NEW TACTICS AGAINST WAR, BASIS OF A NEW INTERNATIONAL BY ANTON PANNEKOEK

In: The New Review, Vol. III (1915), Nr 2, February 1915, p. 61-70

More than a conference of delegates from the Socialist parties of the neutral nations is needed to reorganize the International. Such a conference cannot even be an instrument for peace, for now that all the high-sounding resolutions of the Social-Democracy have become mere empty talk, no one feels any respect for its power.

Even if the leaders of all Socialist parties should meet when the war is over, fall about each others' necks and forgive each other their nationalist sins, their "International" would be nothing more than an International of Leaders for the protection of common interests. An International that obediently falls apart into opposing national armies when the Bourgeoisie demands war for the support of its interests is no real International of Labor. The International of the Proletariat is possible only when founded upon incessant opposition and increasing struggle against the ruling classes. The first condition for a real international policy of the Proletariat is *the tactic of the class-struggle*, the emphatic denial of all opportunism in inner politics.

But more than this we must take up the fight against war, not with resolutions but by doing everything in our power to prevent war. To prevent war the working-class needs mental power and material power. The creation of this power alone can make possible a re-organization of the International.

Mental power is necessary. As long as a ruling class can so influence their minds that the workers will take up arms against other nations, so long will it be impossible to prevent wars. As long as bourgeois theories and catchwords can sweep the workers into the tide of war and war-enthusiasm, so long will the ranks of the laboring class be disrupted again and again, so long will Socialism be a dream. One of these bourgeois catchwords is that of "Wars of Defense."

THE WAR OF DEFENSE

A number of American Socialists have expressed the opinion that the German Social Democrats were to blame for having failed to hinder the war; on the other hand they

maintain that the French and Belgian comrades were absolutely justified in defending their country when it was attacked.

If this judgment, which fundamentally arises out of an already fixed attitude in favor of one nation and against the other, was right, then the German comrades would stand exonerated, along with those of France and Belgium. For in Germany every worker and every Social Democrat was absolutely convinced that his nation was in danger of invasion by the enemy. They believed, as firmly as did the French Socialists, that they were taking up arms only for defense.

Who was right? Who was wrong? First let us look at France. For more than twenty years France has been in a firm alliance with Russia. In 1902 came the understanding with England, the Entente, settling all old conflicts with England, France, choosing sides with England in the growing antagonism between England and Germany. By France we here mean the French government, the clique of politicians, controlled by High Finance, doing the bidding of the money-wolves, and controlling Parliament by a corrupt party machine. The people have just as little influence in France as in Germany or in England. Of these governments we speak when we discuss the conflicts and alliances of France, England, Germany and Russia. The objects of their conflicts are always foreign lands which they desire to control as colonies or as "spheres of influence," seeking tremendous profits for their own capital. The Entente of 1902, for instance, consisted merely of an understanding concerning Egypt and Morocco, France relinquishing its claims upon Egypt and turning it over to the English, who have occupied it since 1882; England, on the other hand, turning over Morocco to the French capitalists. But here a new claimant came to the front.

Germany demanded the right to be heard. The English author Brailsford, whose book, *The War of Steel and Gold* (appearing shortly before the war) presents in its first part an excellent exposition of the economic foundations of Imperialism and modern politics, says:

"The German thesis was perfectly simple, and in principle defensible. It was that France and Britain had no right by an exclusive bargain to settle the fate of Morocco without consulting other Powers. The answer of the French and British press was more plausible than convincing. It was our case that as what we call the 'trade' of Morocco is mainly in French and British hands, Germany was not in any real sense an interested party. The 'trade' of Morocco, if by that word is meant the exchange of European manufactured goods against the raw produce of its agriculture, is at best inconsiderable. No one would risk the lives of soldiers and the money of taxpayers for the sake of the Moroccan market. What matters in Morocco is the wealth of its virgin mines. This was an

open field, and here Germany has as good or bad a claim as anyone else. A German firm, the Mannesmann Brothers, could indeed boast that it had obtained an exclusive concession to work all the mines of Morocco in return for money which it had lent to an embarrassed Sultan during its civil wars. That this was the real issue is proved by the terms which were more than once discussed between Paris and Berlin for the settlement of the dispute. A detente or provisional settlement of the dispute was concluded in 1910, which had only one clause—that German finance would share with French finance in the various undertakings and companies, which aimed at 'opening up' Morocco by ports, railways, mines and other public works. No effect was ever given to this undertaking, and German irritation at the delays of French diplomacy and French finance culminated in the despatch of the gunboat Panther to Agadir as a prelude to further 'conversations.' Had M. Caillaux remained in power we know, from the subsequent investigations before the Senate's Committee, how these conversations would have ended. They would have effected not merely an adjustment of French and German colonial interests, but a general understanding which would have covered the whole field of German-Franco relations. The points on which he had begun to negotiate were all economic, and chief among them was a proposal to put an end to the boycott by French finance of the Bagdad railway, and to admit German securities to quotation on the Paris exchange."

Like two hungry beasts that have both fastened their eyes upon the same prey, these governments watch and stealthily follow each other, growling and threatening, now ready to attack, now retreating—and then, when suddenly the whole pack springs up, jumping upon each others' backs, throttling and biting, shall the priest come and decide: this one here is to blame, he was the first to spring; the others are merely defending themselves? Among the servants of French capital it was Delcasse above all who strove, together with King Edward, to isolate Germany, to rivet more firmly the ring of its opponents, to loosen the bonds that bound it to its allies. Germany felt itself "penned in," was hindered on all sides in its efforts towards expansion of the Entente powers. This was true at the time of the Agadir crisis, when Lloyd George threatened in his Mansion House speech that England stood ready to place its armed strength at the disposal of France, and urged Germany to retreat. It is worthy of special notice that this threat, which might have precipitated war at that time, was agreed upon by three persons only, Asquith, Grey and Lloyd George: that is, the English Parliamentary government! This autocratic attitude on the part of three English ministers is one of the causes of the present war: For it left with the German bourgeoisie the firm conviction that its enemies, in order to prevent the growth of Ger-

many, had prepared to surround it with an ever increasing force, until the hour should come when they were ready to pounce upon it.

The immediate cause of the war came from the East. France was drawn in as an ally of Russia. This alliance chained it fast to Russia; we could speak of a French defense only if Russia as well had been forced to defend itself against a German attack. Was this the case? The first to attack was Austria, when it presented its ultimatum to Serbia and declared war. Russia stood behind Serbia and threatened Austria; Germany backed up Austria, and issued an ultimatum to Russia. Russia might have avoided a war by stopping its mobilization, Germany might have avoided it by bringing pressure to bear upon Austria. And should we say: "The real reason lies much further back; Russia mobilized because Germany had humiliated it in 1909; not Austria but Serbia was the first aggressor, when it inspired the murder of the Austrian prince"—it but proves that a close examination of the question as to who was the aggressor, leads us into a tangled web of past quarrels and antagonisms. We come across Austria harassing the Serbs striving for a large national state and export harbors; Austria aiming to extend its powers over the Balkans; imperialistic conflicts between Russia and Germany in Armenia.

The war of 1914 did not come because one nation attacked another voluntarily with malice aforethought; it came because at a certain degree of tension Russia and Germany both said to themselves: "If it must be, let it be now!" They grasped the opportunity. In the last days of July a fruitful attempt had been made to persuade Austria and Russia to come to terms in the Servian controversy; what prevented peace was the ultimatum issued by Germany—according to England; was the mobilization of Russia—according to Germany. In reality there is no way of distinguishing the aggressor from the defender; each one attacks and defends himself from the other. In this struggle for world-power any differentiation between "aggressive" and "defensive" wars is senseless.

Nevertheless this differentiation has played an important part in the Social Democratic movement. Repeatedly Socialists have declared openly that they were opposed to all war, but that they would defend their countries if attacked. Prominent party leaders like Bebel espoused this point of view. Kautsky opposed him in the convention of 1906 in Essen, calling attention to the fact that the government can always make it appear its nation is attacked. How true this standpoint is, the war of 1870 with Bismarck's falsified message, as well as the present war, plainly show.

But this does not entirely dispose of the matter. This point of view is founded on the conception that wars are precipitated at will by the action of one's own or a foreign government. The position of the proletariat then should be: Down with the disturbers

of peace! That may have been true at one time; but not to-day. War to-day is imperialistic war; the disturber is capitalistic development, capital hungry for world-power. They all want power, land, colonies. They threaten and are threatened by each other. None of them desired war voluntarily, knowingly, but they all knew that it was inevitable, and struck when chances were favorable. These circumstances make the war appear to every bourgeoisie, to every government, a war of defense. It was more than mere hypocritical attempts to deceive the people. It was a war *in defense of their world-power, their world-aims* against those of their competitors. Thus each felt that he was in the right, and went forth with all the energy and conviction he possessed to clear the track for the future. For the mass of the people the word defense has an entirely different meaning. Farmers and small citizens know nothing of world politics. When they are told, "The Russians threaten us, the Germans are attacking us," it means to them a defense of their peace and their livelihood. The catchword so many Socialists use, "Take part only in a war of defense," is the political translation of the old bourgeois and small farmer standpoint: "I will leave him alone who leaves me alone, but him who will disturb the peace of my home I shall strike upon the head."

So it was natural as well as necessary for the ruling class to make the war appear as a war of defense. This lie alone could make the mass of the people support war. The middle class and farmer elements came of their own accord, the Socialist party responded to the old formula that provides for participation in wars of defense. This formula at the present time serves only to make the workers willing to go to war for Imperialism. If in times to come wars are to be prevented by the action of the proletariat it will first be necessary that they become mentally free from bourgeois influence and middle class traditions. *A new International can be built up only upon one principle: "Down with all war, down with the war of defense!"*

ACTION AGAINST WAR

It is not enough for the workers to oppose war, every war, to refuse to be led astray by the cry of national defense. They must also have the power and the means to prevent war.

In the *International Socialist Review* for November a writer rightly condemns the European Socialists in no measured terms for having violated their duty as Socialists. He picks to pieces their flimsy arguments of "defense," "fatherland" and "culture." But when he comes to the question, "Gould the Socialists have acted otherwise than they did? Could they have prevented the war?" his answer is: "A careful analysis of the facts proves that they could. It lay within their power. There was just one course they

could have adopted. It was desperate. It was bloody, but it could have saved millions of lives. It was the only weapon that could have beaten down the murderous clash of militarism. It was revolution!"

This answer will fail to satisfy a great many readers. Furthermore, it will excuse the German Socialists in the eyes of a great many others. For there is not the slightest doubt that Germany, not to speak of the others, was not ready for a proletarian revolution. The number of those who oppose Socialists there is again as large as the number of those who cast Socialist votes. Even among the latter only a part would fight actively for Socialism. Behind the others stands the whole might of the nation. If Revolution were the only alternative, we should have to concede that the German Socialists, as well as the others, could not have acted differently, that they were forced to submit without opposition to the commands to war of the bourgeoisie.

But this conclusion is false. To make this clear let us first examine the meaning of the word "revolution." What seems in the distant horizon a single fine streak of color becomes, as we approach it a broad landscape with hills and valleys, full of variation. So a revolution, which in the distance looms up as one indivisible final goal, as one single, glowing deed, becomes as we approach it a whole historical period with peculiar characteristics, full of charges, of ascents and descents, of great events and deadening reverses. He who stands far from the goal in the midst of the first period of propaganda and rallying of forces, in the first period of the workers' awakening, is right when he points to the revolution as something in the distant future, as the signal for all great coming changes. There lies the mountain, the glowing summit, whose view inspires us with courage and patience as we painfully force our way through thicket and morass. But when the great masses have been organized and are filled with the spirit of Socialism, then Revolution ceases to be an ideal and becomes a practical question. The distant ideal becomes definite, difficult practice. How shall we go on? He who stands at the foot of the mountain still has the most difficult, the nearest way to go.

Now only can he see it plainly. This was, approximately, the position of the German working-class movement. To the comrades in other countries it seemed so large, so mighty, so strong, that they asked: Why do not the Germans make a Revolution? In reality they but stood at the foot of the mountain. In reality the German saw most clearly how difficult, how great a struggle still remained, how far off still was victory and Socialism.

Revolutions are not made; they grow out of deeds, movements, struggles, when circumstances have become ripe. This ripeness of conditions depends upon the existence of a revolutionary class internally so strong, possessing such great social

power, that every struggle, every action, results in a victory. The great French Revolution, for instance, was a long chain of rebellions, of meetings of delegated bodies, of peaceful legislation and bloody wars.

It was due to the strength and the stubborn self-confidence of the middle class that the beginning, the calling of the "Generalstände" for the alleviation of the financial straits of its governments, culminated in the Revolution. Every courageous word, every bold deed, every bitter battle with the government aroused energy and enthusiasm in thousands and drew them into the struggle. Their determination forced the government to make concessions, but each new concession, each new attempt at suppression weakened the position of the government. The first representatives that met in 1789 had only modest aims; they hardly knew the strength of their own class. Only during the Revolution and through it, their strength and the strength of the middle class grew and with its power grew its demands. In 1848 we see similar developments. The immediate cause was a parliamentary conflict between the middle class opposition and the government. The prohibition of a public demonstration resulted in tumults, which fed by the deep dissatisfaction of the masses and the small bourgeoisie grew until the whole governmental system was overthrown. And if we look upon the Revolution in a still wider sense, as the conquest of power by the new class of the bourgeoisie, we see a process that lasted for hundreds of years, bitter class struggles alternating with periods of quiet growth of economic power.

The proletarian revolution, which is once more to place a new class into power, will also be a long historical process, though it may be completed in a comparatively much shorter time than the ascent of the bourgeoisie to power on account of the rapidity of economic development. This process divides naturally into a number of individual revolutionary actions, which alternate with periods of quiet, of peaceful organization and even of periodic collapse.

For a revolutionary action of this kind it is not necessary that the majority of the workers think as Socialists, that they must be willing to sacrifice all for the Socialist Revolution. Minorities can undertake such actions when they feel that the unthinking masses will sympathize with its aim and can be swept along by the force of the movement. Of course, the might of the proletariat, its organization and class-consciousness, must have reached a certain stage to engage in this revolutionary action. And by this action hopefulness, energy and proletarian class-consciousness, the solidarity of the masses, in short the strength of the proletariat, are strengthened so that they will be capable of undertaking still more difficult struggles. The aim of such an action is not the Revolution. These actions are undertaken to gain more insignificant ends, that may be termed *important reforms*. But the success of the struggle or per-

haps the opposition which necessarily calls forth more energetic activity, will mean increased strength, courage, self-confidence. Aims will grow larger and higher as the scope of the struggle widens. The "Etats generaux" of 1789 thought neither of a republic nor of parliamentary government, the opposition of 1848 desired only more liberal Ministers. But the development of a feeling of power in the people carried them far beyond this original aim. To be sure, citadels may be won in such a storm that lie beyond the strength that has been gained, and may then be lost in a counter-revolution.

Reformists promise the workers that they can win improvements and reforms by uniting with capitalist parties and giving up the class-struggle, that these reforms will improve the condition of the workers, that they will receive constantly increasing rights and influence, so that the world will finally become quite an attractive place for them. Many Radicals speak of the final goal, the Revolution, for which we must strengthen our organization, so that we may, when the hour has struck, suddenly overthrow the rule of Capital by a gigantic rebellion. We maintain, on the other hand, that capitalist rule cannot be destroyed at one blow, that it will take a series of struggles, which, each in itself, will bring a partial gain in as much as the masses will force the ruling classes to give in. But each partial victory must be won by the revolutionary conflicts. In 1893 the Belgian Parliament, and in 1905 the Czar, were forced to give in to a mass strike. In Russia, in recent years, the workers were forced to fight for the most fundamental rights, for their organization and their press by the quiet means of collections and imprisonment, by the greater means of demonstrations and strikes. In America the workers fought for the right of organization and assemblage in a revolutionary manner, by sacrificing their own interests. They could not expect to win these reforms by begging and the good will of the bourgeoisie. They did not say: "Why fight for such insignificant measures? We want the Revolution!" In Germany the struggle for popular suffrage in Prussia was begun five years ago with the revolutionary means of colossal street demonstrations, in spite of police prohibition. This movement has since come to a standstill because the leaders feared that the government would crush the organizations of the workers. Each one of these actions strengthened the power, the courage, the organization of the workers. Their discontinuance marks the beginning of the decline, was the precursor of the present downfall.

At the time of the bourgeois revolutions the decisive actions were civil war, as in England in 1646; armed rebellions, as in Paris in 1790; street battles and barricades, as in 1848. In the proletarian movement the method of armed conflict played a part only in the earliest period, when the Army was still small, technique primitive, cities small and the people middle class in character. To-day we are in a period of gigantic armies and compulsory military service, centralized governments, gigantic cities with millions

of working-people;—and other methods prevail. The pressure the masses are now able to exert by demonstrating in the streets and expressing their wishes in spite of policemen's clubs, is a warning to the government; the readiness to sacrifice is the measure of their determination. More effective still is the mass strike, when the proletariat uses its power over production to cripple the whole industrial life of the nation; no government can rule for any length of time against the determined resistance of the masses.

These mass actions are the revolutionary method of the modern proletariat. They are only possible when the numbers, the readiness to fight, the solidarity, and the understanding of the proletariat has reached a high level. But, on the other hand, they awaken these qualities in no small degree, they attract new fighters who have stood aside, they increase their courage, their knowledge, their solidarity.

Instead of a single Revolution we find a series of revolutionary actions, which run through the whole historical period in which the proletariat is fighting for supremacy. Each of these actions has a concrete aim, which is not the whole Revolution and consequently can be granted by the ruling class if forced to it by necessity. Each of these struggles, each of these actions, increases the strength of the proletariat. Each one helps to build the foundation of its supremacy, and undermines a little the power of the ruling class. When, at last, the power of the proletariat has been completely built up, when its organization, its power and its solidarity, its class-consciousness and social understanding have reached the highest point, when at the same time the moral standing, the authority, the strength and the physical force of the government have broken down, then the class rule of capitalism will crumble like an empty shell. The Revolution will be accomplished.

If we ask again: could the German proletariat have done anything against the war—because it was strongest in organization and knowledge—the answer is yes. It could not have made a Revolution, but it could have used revolutionary action. It might have exerted an extraordinary pressure upon the government by calling mass demonstrations and mass-strikes in the week before the war broke out, had it been determined to combat war with all its might.

We know that the conditions were not ripe for such a struggle. There were great Socialist masses and strong organizations—such as will be necessary in other countries as well—but they did not know how to act on their own initiative, the leaders feared that a struggle would mean the destruction of the organization. The movement was not prepared for the use of revolutionary tactics— and mass action. But this war will not be the last one. In a few decades we may be facing a new and greater world war. Then the proletariat of Europe and America will again face the question: How can we

prevent this war? Then we must not beg the question as we did in Basel in 1912. Then the International of Labor must know that it must oppose the war spirit of the ruling classes in all nations with the revolutionary mass action of organizations and a Socialist working-class, lest it be again torn and crushed in the turmoil.

The determination to adopt a revolutionary tactic against war must be the foundation of the new International!

Source: aaap.be

THE 3rd INTERNATIONALE

BY ANTON PANNEKOEK

In: The New Review, Vol. IV, Nr 5, May 1916, p. 153-155

Note.—The following article is a translation of the introduction contained in the first issue of "Vorbote," the magazine published by Anton Pannekoek. This publication purports to give the views of the extreme left wing of the German Social-Democracy, and aims to apply Marxist principles to the solution of present day problems of the proletariat.— Editors.

We are standing in the midst of a catastrophe of the working class movement, such as it has never experienced in all its history. The collapse of the Internationale due to the world war is not simply a surrender of international sentiment before the power of intensified nationalism. It is at the same time a collapse of tactics, of methods of fighting, of the entire system which had been incorporated into the social-democracy and the working class movement during the last few decades.

The knowledge and the tactics which, during the early rise of capitalism, were of great service to the proletariat, failed in the face of the new imperialistic development. Outwardly this was apparent in the increasing impotency of the parliament and the labor union movement, spiritually in the substitution of tradition and declamation for clear insight and militant tactics, in stultification of tactics and the forms of organization, in the transformation of the revolutionary theory of Marxism into a doctrine of passive expectation.

During the period when capitalism was developing into imperialism, was establishing new aims for itself and was energetically arming for the struggle for world supremacy, this development of the majority of the Social Democracy remained unobserved. It allowed itself to be fooled by the dream of immediate social reforms and did nothing to increase the power of the proletariat to fight against imperialism.

Hence the present catastrophe does not mean only that the proletariat was too weak to prevent the outbreak of war. It means that the methods of the era of the second Internationale were not capable of increasing the spiritual and material power of the proletariat to the necessary extent of breaking the power of the ruling classes. Therefor the world war must be a turning point in the history of the working class movement.

With the world war we have entered into a new period of capitalism, the period of its intensive extension by force over the entire earth, accompanied by embittered struggles between nationalities and huge destruction of capital and men; a period therefore, of the heaviest oppression and suffering for the working class. But the masses are thereby driven to aspiration; they must raise themselves if they are not to be completely submerged.

In great mass struggles, alongside of which former struggles and methods are mere child's play, they must grapple with imperialism. This struggle for indispensable rights and liberties, for the most urgent reforms, often for mere life itself, against reaction and the oppression of the employing class, against war and poverty, can only end with the overthrow of imperialism and the victory of the proletariat over the bourgeoisie. It will at the same time be the struggle for Socialism, for the emancipation of the proletariat. Therefore with the present world war there also dawns a new period for Socialism.

For the new struggle our spiritual bearings must be taken anew. Lack of clear socialistic insight was one of the chief causes of the weakness of the proletariat when the war began—it knew neither imperialism or its own tactics. The fight against imperialism, this most recent and most powerful form of capitalism, made demands upon the highest spiritual and material, moral and organizational, qualities of the proletariat. It could not succumb to stupid, impotent desperation; but it was not enough that it break out into spontaneous actions against the unbearable pressure. If these are to lead anywhere and to gain new stages on the climb to power it is necessary that they be inspired with spiritual clarity in regard to the aims, the possibilities and the meaning of such actions. Theory must go hand in hand with practice, theory which transforms blind acts to conscious ones and spreads light over the path.

"Material force can only be broken by material force. But even theory becomes material force when it takes hold on the masses." (Marx.) The germs of this theory, this new spiritual weapon, were already at hand in the spiritual defeat of the former practice of imperialism and mass actions. Now the world war has brought much new insight and has shaken minds out of the sleep of tradition. Now is the time to gather together everything in the way of new ideas, new solutions, new propositions, to inspect them, to prove them, to clarify them by means of discussion and thus to make them of service in the new struggle. That is the purpose of our review.

An immense number of new questions lie before us. First of all the questions of imperialism, its economic roots, its connection with the export of capital, procuring of raw material, its effect upon politics, government and bureaucracy, its spiritual power upon the bourgeoisie and the press, its significance as a new ideology of the bour-

geoisie. Then those questions which relate to the proletariat, the causes of their weakness, their psychology and the phenomena of social-imperialism and social-patriotism. Added to these are the questions of proletarian tactics, the significance and possibilities of parliamentarianism, of mass actions, of labor union tactics, reforms and immediate demands, the significance and the future role of organization; also the question of nationalism, of militarism and colonial policies.

Upon many of these questions the old Socialism had settled answers, which had already crystallized into formulae—but with the collapse of the second Internationale even its formulae have gone by the board. In the old rules and ideas of the pre-imperialistic era the proletariat can find no guides for its actions under new conditions. Nor can the social-democratic parties furnish it with a firm foot hold. They have in the great majority surrendered to imperialism; the conscious, active or passive, support of war policies by the party and labor union representatives has dug too deep to make possible a simple return to the old pre-bellum point of view.

This support of imperialism in its most important and vital phases characterizes these working class organizations, no matter how strongly they subscribe to the old socialist solutions and combat the most intimate effects of imperialism. For in this way they come into conflict with the necessarily revolutionary aims of the proletariat and are themselves forced into a difficult crisis of their own. Between those who would make of the social-democracy a tool of imperialism and those who want to see it a weapon of revolution no unity is possible any longer.

The task of elucidating those problems, of offering solutions, of formulating the proper direction for the new struggle, falls to those who have not allowed themselves to be misled by war conditions and who have held fast to internationalism and the class struggle. In this their weapon will be Marxism. Marxism, regarded by the theoreticians of Socialism as the method to explain the past and the present and in their hands degraded more and more into a dry doctrine of mechanical fatalism, again is to come into its birthright as a theory of revolutionary acts. "The philosophers have interpreted the world in a number of differing ways: the real necessity is to alter it." As a live revolutionary method this sort of Marxism again becomes the most solid principles, the sharpest spiritual weapon of Socialism.

There is no more pressing task than this elucidation of the new problems. For it is a life and death question for the proletariat—and hence for the entire development of humanity—that it should see its way clear and bright before it leading to new heights. And there are no questions of the future whose solution can be postponed until we can once more discuss them in peace and quietness. They are not capable of

postponement. Even during the war and after its conclusion they form the most important and immediate vital questions for the working class of all nations.

Not merely the important question, which everywhere is the kernel of the object of struggle, whether and how the proletariat can emerge, hasten the end of the war and influence the terms of peace. At the conclusion of the war the immense economic shattering of the world will first be felt in its entirety, when, with the condition of general exhaustion, lack of capital and unemployment industry must be organized anew, when the fearful debts of all nations necessitate colossal taxes and state socialism, the militarization of agricultural pursuits, as the only way out of the financial difficulties. Then the problem must be met with or without theory; but then the lack of theoretical insight will entail the most disastrous errors.

There lies the greatest task of our journal: by discussion and elucidation of these questions it will support the material struggle of the proletariat against imperialism. As an organ of discussion and elucidation it is at the same time an organ of battle—the publisher and the contributors to the journal have the common will to give battle, the same point of view in regard to these chief questions of the practice to be adopted at this time.

First of all the struggle against imperialism, the chief enemy of the proletariat. But this struggle is only made possible by a simultaneous relentless struggle against all the elements of the former social-democracy, which would bind the proletariat to the chariot of imperialism; also the open imperialism which has become the mere agent of the bourgeoisie, and that social patriotism of all shades which would gloss over indisputable antagonisms and would rob the proletariat of the sharpest weapons in its struggle against imperialism. The reconstitution of the Third Internationale will only be made possible by an absolute break with social-patriotism.

With this knowledge we stand upon the same ground as the left wing of the Zimmerwald Conference. The principles put forth by this group of international socialists as their aim our journal will support by theoretical work; by the most intense struggle against social-patriotism, by merciless analysis of the errors of the old revisionism and radical socialism to pave the way for the new Internationale. If the proletariat recognizes the weaknesses and mistakes of the old points of view, the practical collapse of which it is now suffering from, it will gain the foresight for the new struggle and the new Socialism.

Source: aaap.be