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## The new Left in the Netherlands 1960-1977

Lucardie, Anthonie Paul Marius

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THE NEW LEFT IN THE  
NETHERLANDS (1960-1977)  
A Critical Study Of New  
Political Ideas And Groups  
On The Left In The Netherlands  
With Comparative References  
To France And Germany

ANTHONIE PAUL  
MARIUS LUCARDIE

1980

THE NEW LEFT IN THE NETHERLANDS (1960-1977)  
A Critical Study of New Political Ideas and  
Groups on the Left in The Netherlands with  
Comparative References to France and Germany

by

Anthonie Paul Marius Lucardie

A thesis submitted to the Department of Political  
Studies in conformity with the requirements for  
the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

Queen's University  
Kingston, Ontario, Canada

March 1980

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## ABSTRACT

This study deals with four groups that seemed typical of the Dutch New Left in its originality as well as its continuity with the past: the Pacifist Socialist Party, which renewed the old tradition of Revolutionary Socialism; Provo, which revived a form of Anarchism; Nieuw Links ("New Left") in the Labour Party which combined Social Democratic ideas with others; and the Political Party of Radicals, which recreated a Christian Left in a secular spirit. These groups shared some basic ideas, concerning democratisation of society, a strategy of direct action at the grass roots combined with legislative action, and a cultural revolution. They were often inspired by similar groups in France and Germany such as the Parti Socialiste Unifié (United Socialist Party) and the Sozialistische Deutsche Studentenbund (Socialist German Student League). The projects of all these groups suffered from certain ambiguities and specifically from a certain tension between elitism and populism. These ambiguities could be attributed to the new petty bourgeois class base of the New Left. However, the New Left was more than a new petty bourgeois ideology; it could also be seen as a response to real political issues and as a result of a long-term secularisation process.

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Naturally none of these people can be held responsible for the arguments--or lack of arguments--of the thesis.

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## INTRODUCTION

The New Left is dead, people say. It had lived for only 10 or 15 years, perhaps somewhere between 1960 and 1975. It died of an infantile disease. Or perhaps it never really lived, but only haunted the minds of old left bureaucrats and right-wing capitalists. It is time for historians and social scientists to try to understand this strange phenomenon.

The New Left appears to have had the greatest impact in the United States of America. At least, American scholars have written searching and possibly definitive studies on the American New Left.<sup>1</sup> In Europe only the French and to some extent the German and Italian New Left have attracted sufficient scholarly attention.<sup>2</sup> The New Left in smaller countries has been virtually neglected, at least by English-writing scholars. In some of the smaller countries it may have played a negligible role, but in others the neglect can only be attributed to linguistic barriers or a scarcity of scholarly resources. The Netherlands fall into the second

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<sup>1</sup>For instance, I. Unger, The Movement, a History of the American New Left, 1959-1972 (New York, 1974); a more journalistic but serious and detailed study is K. Sale, SDS (New York, 1973); for an analysis of the ideas of the American New Left see L. Sargent, New Left Thought (Homewood, Ill., 1972).

<sup>2</sup>This is an impressionistic judgment, which applies only to publications in English, French, German and Dutch.

category. In fact, one Dutch scholar has argued that the Dutch New Left had a greater impact on Dutch politics than the American New Left had on American politics.<sup>3</sup> This study will focus on the Dutch New Left, referring to its French and German counterparts for comparison.

The Dutch New Left has been neglected but not totally ignored by Dutch and foreign scholars. Several social scientists have tried to describe and explain it, or rather parts and aspects of it. They have taken two different approaches. On the one hand, they have written case studies or histories of particular New Left groups in particular periods. On the other hand, they have studied the general impact of the Dutch New Left on the political system of the Netherlands. Both approaches suffer from certain weaknesses which will be discussed briefly here.

The best example of the first approach is probably Kroes's comparative study of the New Left in the United States, Britain and the Netherlands.<sup>4</sup> It is presented as an interpretative analysis of strategies, based on a Michelsian model of "oligarchisation" and "democratisation waves." Though it offers many perceptive insights and useful descriptions, it cannot quite bridge the gap between the rather abstract interpretative model and the historical description of particular New Left groups. In the first place, although Kroes

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<sup>3</sup>R. Kroes, New Left, Nieuw Links, New Left (Alphen aan de Rijn, 1975), p. 109.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid.

gives a broad definition of "New Left," which applies also to Anarchist and Marxist groups, he concentrates on only one Dutch group, Nieuw Links ("New Left") within the Dutch Labour Party--a group that could be considered the extreme right wing of the international New Left. The historical development of the Dutch New Left as a whole remains somewhat obscure. Continuities between the Old and the New Left are insufficiently clarified, partly because Nieuw Links was a rather unique group in the history of the Dutch Left, unlike other Dutch New Left groups. In the second place, Kroes conceives of the New Left as a movement for democratisation, but describes the history of Nieuw Links in terms of a "changing of the guards" and a "conquest of power" within the Dutch Labour Party. He does not solve this contradiction satisfactorily by concluding that Nieuw Links "activated the social base" of the party and proved that it was still the party that emancipated the working class.<sup>5</sup> These conclusions imply a class analysis which is absent in the book. It will be argued below that Nieuw Links de-activated the old, more or less working-class base of the Labour Party, and activated or even created a new social base among elements of the new petty bourgeoisie.

Boivin, Hazelhoff, Middel and Molenaar describe the history of Nieuw Links in similar terms, but avoid Kroes'

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<sup>5</sup>Ibid., p. 70 and p. 109 in particular; cf. the critique of B. Tromp, "Een beweging beweegt niet zonder politieke analyse," Vrij Nederland, 1 May 1976.

theoretical dilemma by leaving out the theory.<sup>6</sup> They neglect the international context and the ideas of the Nieuw Links group, but provide a great deal of useful sociological and historical information. Quite similar histories have been written of other Dutch New Left groups such as the Pacifist Socialist Party, Provo, and the Political Party of Radicals. Most of them were written as masters' theses, and are useful but limited sources of information. Van der Land's doctoral dissertation about the foundation of the Pacifist Socialist Party is the only study with a theoretical framework--or at least the beginning of a theoretical framework.<sup>7</sup> Van der Land sees the party as a "pressure group for peace" which later grew into a real political party because it began to express feelings of discontent among large sectors of Dutch society.<sup>8</sup> As he does not elaborate on this explanation, it does not seem very enlightening. Moreover, it does not take into account the historical context of the Pacifist Socialist Party and its similarity with earlier revolutionary or leftist socialist parties in the Netherlands.<sup>9</sup>

While the first approach could be considered historical-

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<sup>6</sup>B. Boivin, H. Hazelhoff, B. Middel, and B. Molenaar, Een verjongingskuur voor de Partij van de Arbeid (Deventer, 1978).

<sup>7</sup>L. Van der Land, Het ontstaan van de Pacifistisch Socialistische Partij (Amsterdam, 1962).

<sup>8</sup>Ibid., Chapter 7.

<sup>9</sup>For a similar criticism see I. Cornelissen's review in Vrij Nederland, 27 October 1962.

descriptive and rather atheoretical, the second approach tends to be more systematic, analytical and abstract. Ideas are seen as important, insofar as the New Left is often defined as a "neo-democratic ideology." Thus Lijphart conceives of the "neo-democratic ideology" of Nieuw Links and other groups as one of the factors that caused the break-down of the consociational system.<sup>10</sup> However, he shows little interest in this ideology. For him it is probably an independent variable which can be taken as "given" in order to explain his dependent variable; the stability or instability of the Dutch political system. To a lesser extent this applies also to Daalder, who takes a more historical approach to the same problem. Daalder links the New Left ideology to the growing importance of television and the emergence of a new political elite of academics, students and social or cultural workers.<sup>11</sup>

Daalder's insight has proved quite fruitful. It may help to solve Kroes' dilemma of how New Left groups like Nieuw Links could strive for democratisation and activate the social base of the Left while trying to concentrate power in their own hands. In fact, Daalder argues, or at least implies, the new political elite has activated people mostly for its own

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<sup>10</sup>A. Lijphart, Verzuiling, pacificatie en kentering in de Nederlandse politiek, 3rd ed. (Amsterdam, 1979), pp. 206-207; this is a revised edition of A. Lijphart, The Politics of Accommodation, Pluralism and Democracy in the Netherlands (Berkeley, 1975) (1968).

<sup>11</sup>H. Daalder, Politisering en lijdelijkheid in de Nederlandse politiek (Assen, 1974), pp. 62-66.

benefit. Thus the notion "neo-democratic ideology" gains a critical, almost a Marxist dimension: ideas that disguise particular class interests as universal interests.<sup>12</sup> Unfortunately the notion has not been developed or analysed further by Daalder or by other authors who borrowed it from him. The origin, function and social context of the new elite, the "new liberated ones" (a poor translation of the equally monstrous Dutch term "nieuwe vrijgestelden"), have not been analysed in any depth either. The ease and frequency with which the term "nieuwe vrijgestelden" is used in Dutch books and magazines might even raise some suspicion; perhaps it is part of another ideology or counter-ideology, the "neo-technocratic ideology of the New Right?"<sup>13</sup>

In these studies, the notion of a neo-democratic ideology remains abstract and vague, an ideal type rarely confronted with empirical reality. It is not based on a concrete analysis of party platforms, manifestos or other publications of New Left groups or individuals. Nuances between different groups or tendencies are usually neglected. Hence, when authors like Van den Berg and Molleman criticise the neo-democratic ideology,

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<sup>12</sup>Almost, but not quite: a Marxist would analyse the socio-economic context of the new elite, which Daalder does not do; cf. K. Marx and F. Engels, "Die deutsche Ideologie," Marx-Engels Werke, vol. 3 (Berlin, 1958).

<sup>13</sup>For instance, H. Vuijsje, Nieuwe Vrijgestelden (Baarn, 1977); J. Van den Berg and H. Molleman, Crisis in de Nederlandse politiek (Alphen aan de Rijn, 1975); several articles in Haagse Post, Hollands Maandblad, etc. For a brief Marxist critique of the counter-ideology see S. Stuurman, Kapitalisme en burgerlijke staat (Amsterdam, 1978), pp. 181-183.

they attack a man of straw--their own "ideal type."<sup>14</sup>

A different approach will be followed here, to avoid the weaknesses of the two approaches discussed above but also to make use of their strong points. This study will focus on ideas, as expressed by New Left groups in party platforms, manifestos and journals. These ideas will be analysed "in their own right," as serious attempts to solve problems and to interpret the world; but also in their social and historical context, as expressions of socio-economic and political interests. This approach has been inspired by Habermas's "reconstruction of historical materialism" and, more specifically, by Pierre Ansart's analysis of political ideologies.<sup>15</sup>

The first chapter of the book deals with the pre-history of the Dutch New Left. In order to define and analyse the New Left one has to understand the Old Left. Too often the differences between the two have been exaggerated, particularly by New Leftists. Even a short and fragmentary description of Old Left groups in the Netherlands between 1870 and 1960 will confirm the suspicion that the New Left of the 1960s and 1970s was far from new in many respects. Its ideas differed from the ideological mainstream of the Social Democratic and

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<sup>14</sup>See Van den Berg and Molleman, *op. cit.*, pp. 95-107; as the authors do not discuss their methodology at all, it is not clear if they actually intend to construct an ideal type in the Weberian sense, or generalise from unspecified data.

<sup>15</sup>See J. Habermas, Zur Rekonstruktion des historischen Materialismus (Frankfurt am Main, 1976), especially Chapters 1 and 2; P. Ansart, Les idéologies politiques (Paris, 1974). Of course, inspiration does not imply complete agreement.



Communist Old Left of the 1930s or 1950s, but often resembled the ideas of more marginal Anarchist or Christian Socialist groups of the 1920s and 1910s, as well as those of earlier Socialist groups.

Of course this can become clear only after an historical overview of New Left groups and their main ideas, which is the subject of Chapter Two. Four groups that seem typical of the Dutch New Left in its originality as well as its continuity with the past will be described: the Pacifist Socialist Party, which renewed the old tradition of Revolutionary Socialism established by the Social Democratic League of the 1880s; Provo, which revived a form of Anarchism; Nieuw Links in the Labour Party, which resembled older Social Democratic factions of the left in only a few aspects but took most of its ideas from elsewhere; and the Political Party of Radicals, which recreated a Christian Left with many new and secular ideas. All of these groups have been labelled "New Left" by their leading members and by outside observers.<sup>16</sup> The Pacifist Socialist Party was founded in 1957, the other groups came into existence between 1965 and 1968. Their history will be pursued until 1977--an arbitrary date, but an eventful year in Dutch politics in which the first government with some New Left members fell and was replaced by a more conservative one.

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<sup>16</sup>For example in Kroes, op. cit., pp. 45, 47, 50; Van Duijn in Provo 7 (25 February 1966); Coppes in PPRAK 32 (March 1972); Interviews 1, 3, 9.

As "New Left" is not a registered trademark, other groups could claim it apart from the four mentioned above. Van den Berg and Molleman refer to Democrats' 66, for instance, in their discussion of the "neo-democratic ideology," though they conclude that it was a neo-liberal rather than a neo-democratic or New Left party.<sup>17</sup> Whether Democrats' 66 belongs or belonged to the Dutch Left remains an open question.<sup>18</sup> It all depends on one's definition of "Left," of course. This controversial term will be used rather loosely here, to refer to movements or groups that strive for a more egalitarian and more libertarian society; or, more specifically, to Socialist, anarchist and communist groups. Like most other definitions, this one creates more problems than it solves. It may exclude Democrats' 66--though not unambiguously--but does it include Marxist-Leninist groups that fight for equality but not necessarily for liberty? For the purpose of this study Marxist-Leninist groups will be regarded as "Left" but not "New Left," even if they were founded after 1960. This--somewhat arbitrary--decision seems to reflect the way these Marxist-Leninist groups defined themselves: in terms of a return to the "roots" of Marx, Lenin, Trotsky or Stalin.<sup>19</sup>

Furthermore, New Left ideas may have been expressed by

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<sup>17</sup>Van den Berg and Molleman, op. cit., p. 118.

<sup>18</sup>Founding members of Democrats' 66 tended to reject any "Left-Right thinking" and refused to classify their party--see De geschiedenis van D'66 (n.p., n.d.), pp. 53-55 for instance; see also I. Lipschits, Links en rechts in de politiek (Meppel, 1969).

<sup>19</sup>See below, Chapter 2.2, footnote 115 for references.

a wide variety of formal or informal action committees and interest groups of students, feminists, soldiers, trade-unionists, musicians, actors, school teachers, painters and so forth. In the 1960s the Netherlands was buzzing with dozens, if not hundreds of these groups. However, this study will focus on political groups in the strict sense, i.e. groups presenting a more or less complete project or programme for society as a whole--or in Eastonian terms: groups trying to control the authoritative allocation of values in society.<sup>20</sup> Again, the decision is somewhat arbitrary. One could argue that the Dutch Student Trade Union (Studenten Vakbeweging) and feminist groups like Man-Vrouw-Maatschappij ("Man-Woman-Society") should have been included; on the other hand, representatives of these groups were able to play an active part in the New Left groups under study, so one might argue also that the former do not require separate treatment. In other words, the Dutch party system is open to ideas and demands from interest groups, even radical and highly politicised ones. This cannot be said, it seems, of the German party system; hence an interest group like the German Socialist League could develop a complete project for German society in the late 1960s without exercising any significant influence on any political party.<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>20</sup>See D. Easton, The Political System (New York, 1953), pp. 126-128.

<sup>21</sup>See below, Chapter 3.2; in the process the Socialist Student League changed from an interest group (in a loose sense: representing the mostly intellectual interests of socialist students) into a political party or quasi-party, to use Van der Land's terms.

The working definition on the basis of which these four groups of the New Left were selected will be replaced by a more theoretical definition at the end of Chapter Two. The four groups differed in many ways, but they shared three basic ideas that could be considered the core of the New Left ideology in the Netherlands: (I) Dutch society is controlled by managers, technocrats and bureaucrats with or without capital; it needs a fundamental democratisation, aimed at self-management in industry, education and other sectors of society; (II) society should be changed "from below" as well as "from above," i.e. through direct action at the grass roots as well as through legislation and elections; (III) not only structural change is called for but also a "cultural revolution," which the Old Left neglected; a new culture should be created, based on creativity, self-expression and peaceful cooperation rather than on consumption of material goods, work, achievement and competition.

This definition is applied to French and German New Left groups in Chapter Three. Many groups of the Nouvelle Gauche and the Neue Linke seem to fit the Dutch definition of New Left, though they tended to differ in emphasis and in degrees of moderation. Dutch New Leftists expressed more confidence in parliamentary action and elections, more interest in cultural and religious questions, and less interest in Marxist theory or theory in general. Yet the similarities seem sufficient to justify a few tentative generalisations about the European--or to be more precise, West European--

New Left.

New Left ideas were expressed initially by very small and marginal anarchistic groups of intellectuals, the New Ultra-left or "gauchistes." In a second stage the ideas "contaminated" larger socialist organisations led by intellectuals, but supported also by fractions of other classes. In a third stage, similar though more moderate ideas penetrated the dominant mass organisations of the Left through informal groups of young activists. They inspired the programmes of the Dutch Labour Party and of the French Socialist Party, but to a much lesser extent the programmes of the German Social Democratic Party in the 1970s.

The ideas are analysed in more detail in Chapter Four. While in Chapters Two and Three they are presented as fragments or slogans, culled from different party platforms, manifestos and journals, here they are reconstructed into more or less coherent theories. Given the lack of theoretical sophistication among Dutch New Left groups, this reconstruction draws often upon French or German sources in order to throw light on the project of the Dutch New Left. The project is seen as an attempt to understand the world and to change it. More specifically, it contains theories about the role of science and the new or old working class, the relative autonomy of the state and of culture, a new conception of nature, and a critique of economism and determinism.

With some difficulty, the New Left theories about these subjects could be seen as part of a single New Left project.

Though relatively coherent, the project is not free from ambiguities and inconsistencies. These will be analysed critically in Chapter Five and interpreted in the social and historical context of the New Left. Some weaknesses can be used also as strengths. It will be argued below that the main ambiguities of the New Left, its abstract and utopian idealism, its wavering between populism and elitism and its cultural subjectivism, made it an attractive ideology for important sections of the new petty bourgeoisie.

The term "new petty bourgeoisie" is taken from Poulantzas, but used here in a more narrow sense. As the theoretical debate about this notion still continues, and this author does not feel qualified to contribute to it, he uses a simple working definition: the new petty bourgeoisie consists of intellectuals, civil servants and employees of the state or private capitalists who receive parts of the surplus produced by workers in "exchange" for certain services.<sup>22</sup> Owing to the concentration of capital, the increasing importance of science and technology, the growing intervention of the state in society and other

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<sup>22</sup>N. Poulantzas, Les classes sociales dans le capitalisme d'aujourd'hui (Paris, 1974); also A. Hunt, ed., Class and Class Structure (London, 1977). Perhaps the working definition comes closer to the conception of C. Baudelot, R. Establet, and J. Malemort, La petite bourgeoisie en France (Paris, 1975); however, most of these authors see the new petty bourgeoisie as a fraction or part of a class rather than as a class. Cf. J.K. Lindsey, "The Conceptualization of Social Class," in Studies in Political Economy 3 (Spring 1980). All of these definitions, including the one used here, suffer from important shortcomings; see below, Chapter Six.

factors, this class grew rapidly after the Second World War. Until the 1960s it remained loyal to the bourgeoisie and the state, on which it was economically, politically and ideologically dependent. Yet when the class struggle between the bourgeoisie and the working class intensified in the 1960s and 1970s, an important fraction of the new petty bourgeoisie turned towards the New Left in search of an alliance with the latter; a somewhat larger fraction may have turned towards the New Right.<sup>23</sup>

This is not an attempt to explain the New Left as merely the ideology of the new petty bourgeoisie. In the first place, other social classes, particularly the working class, also expressed support for New Left ideas on many occasions. In the second place, the New Left project is more than "ideology." It cannot be reduced simply to class interest.<sup>24</sup> While expressing the interests of (a fraction of) the new petty bourgeoisie, it also articulated new political issues and revived older issues which the Old Left had neglected. Moreover, it can also be seen as the result of the process of secularisation that has affected Western or European culture over the last 500 years or so. Now not only the relationship

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<sup>23</sup>The latter hypothesis goes beyond the scope of this study.

<sup>24</sup>This "class reductionism" which seems to have tempted Poulantzas and many other Marxists, is criticised effectively by E. Laclau, Politics and Ideology in Marxist Theory (London, 1977), pp. 81 ff.; of course a similar criticism could be made of non-Marxist social scientists who see the New Left as an ideology of the new political elite of nieuwe vrijgestelden, as discussed above.

between man and himself, his (and even more, her) identity or self-expression are secularised and politicised, in other words, perceived as man-made and changeable rather than God-given.

These rather hazardous speculations are elaborated in Chapter Six. They can be supported only to a limited extent by the analysis of four New Left groups in the Netherlands, supplemented with secondary analysis of a few New Left groups and theories in France and Germany. The analysis is based primarily on publications of these groups in the period 1960-1977. All issues of the main theoretical journals of the four groups, Bevrijding (Liberation) and Radikaal of the Pacifist Socialist Party, Provo of the Provo group, Socialisme en Democratie (Socialism and Democracy) of the Labour Party, and Radikalenkrant or PPRAK (Radical Paper or Action Paper) of the Political Party of Radicals, published in this period, were read. To complement these data, interviews were held with 10 Dutch politicians and (then) important members of the four groups, and with four members of French or German groups--many of them social scientists who provided general insights as well as direct information.<sup>25</sup> Survey data about voters, members or leaders of New Left groups have been used as illustration rather than evidence for the hypotheses about the social base of the New Left; too often, the surveys were based on small or biased samples and on different conceptual frameworks. Further research is especially needed in this area. The new petty bourgeoisie has only just started to

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<sup>25</sup> See Appendix III for a list of the interviews.



become conscious of its own existence--hopefully, this study contributes a little to this process!

## CHAPTER 1

### THE OLD LEFT IN THE NETHERLANDS (1870-1960)

#### Introduction

This chapter presents a brief history of the Old Left in the Netherlands; or to be more precise, a survey of Socialist, Anarchist, Communist, Social Democratic and leftist Christian groups in the period 1870-1960. Its purpose is to show the continuities as well as the differences between the Old Left and the New Left in the Netherlands. The New Left has been defined in the introduction in terms of three basic ideas; fundamental democratisation or self-management, a dual strategy of change from "above" as well as "below", and cultural revolution. These ideas are not really new, as will be demonstrated below, but they played a modest role in the Old Left.

The oldest organisations of the Dutch Left, which could be classified roughly as "Revolutionary Socialist," generally fought for fundamental democratisation of state and society, and often specifically for workers' self-management. Their strategy combined direct action with parliamentary action, but the former was usually considered more important. The term "cultural revolution" was not used, it seems, but many Revolutionary Socialists aspired to a new culture. However,

after 1920 these groups declined in numbers or disappeared completely. The Revolutionary Socialist tradition was continued by the Communist Party and its offshoots, with more emphasis on short term economic issues but not much interest in a new culture. This will be shown in Section 1.2 below.

Section 1.3 deals with the Anarchist Left which differentiated itself from the Revolutionary Socialist Left around the turn of the century. Most Anarchists seemed to strive for some form of workers' self-management and for a new culture, however ill-defined, but few of them expected any positive change "from above." Whereas the Anarchist Left enjoyed considerable support among the working class in the 1890s and early 1900s, after 1920 it became a marginal affair of intellectuals and "lumpen-proletarians."

The Social Democratic Left developed in the opposite direction, from a marginal group of intellectuals to a mass movement of the working class. On the other hand its concern with fundamental democratisation, workers' self-management, direct action, and new forms of culture, became marginal within the movement compared to its concern with economic planning, social security and parliamentarism. This development will be sketched in Section 1.4.

Until the 1960s very few Dutch Christians supported the Left. Some of them joined the groups described above, others founded parties with an explicit Christian orientation. Section 1.5 will focus on one of those especially, the League of Christian Socialists, because it and its offshoots

anticipated the New Left perhaps more than any other Old Left group did. However, it did not last very long.

A history of the Dutch Left, even a fragmentary and selective one like the one presented here, should take into account the context of Dutch society and politics in the period under study. Hence Section 1.1 will offer a brief survey of Dutch society and politics between 1870 and 1960. Like the rest of this chapter it will rely on secondary sources.

### 1.1 Dutch society and politics (1870-1960)

In spite of the early decline of feudalism and the growth of commercial capitalism in the 16th and 17th century, Dutch society remained predominantly agrarian until the second half of the 19th century.<sup>1</sup> After 1850 the textile industry, which had been in decline since 1700, was modernised and expanded in the East (Twente) and the South (Brabant). Heavy industry developed only slowly, partly due to a lack of raw materials and of a large market.<sup>2</sup> Ship-building and shipping, colonial trade and commercial agriculture were modernised and began to develop around 1870.<sup>3</sup>

The modernisation process was initiated by Liberal entrepreneurs and politicians in the economic sphere as well as in politics and culture. Between 1848 and 1888, the Liberals

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<sup>1</sup>J. Romein, De Lage Landen bij de zee (Amsterdam, 1973), Chapter 22.

<sup>2</sup>F.E. Huggett, The Modern Netherlands (London, 1971), p. 59.

<sup>3</sup>Romein, op. cit., Chapter 22.

modernised municipal and provincial administration, wrested control over the national government and its budget from the King and his Conservative supporters, expanded the franchise (from 5% to 14% of the adult population) and introduced compulsory education, conscription and very modest social legislation. Liberals also organised the first national federation of trade unions, the General Netherlands Workingmen's Association, in 1871.<sup>4</sup> The modernisation policy of the Liberals met with growing opposition, particularly in the sphere of education. Catholics as well as Calvinists, both substantial minorities in the Dutch population, insisted on having their own confessional schools. They resented the decision of the Liberal government to subsidise only neutral, non-confessional schools.<sup>5</sup>

The struggle over school subsidies and the expansion of the electorate changed the political system. From a two-party-system of loosely organised caucus parties--Protestant Conservatives opposing an alliance of Liberals and Catholics--it turned into a multi-party-system of tightly organised mass parties.<sup>6</sup> Catholics and Calvinists opposed a gradually disintegrating Liberal party, which was attacked on the Left

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<sup>4</sup>G. Harmsen and B. Reinalda, Voor de bevrijding van de arbeid (Nijmegen, 1975), pp. 44-45.

<sup>5</sup>Romein, op. cit., Chapter 24.

<sup>6</sup>The terms "caucus party" and "mass party" or "branch party" are used in the way defined by M. Duverger, Political Parties, Their Organisation and Activity in the Modern State (London, 1964), pp. 17-27.

by a growing Socialist movement. The Anti-Revolutionary Party (ARP), founded by the Calvinist theologian Dr. Abraham Kuyper in 1879, became the first modern mass party or branch party in the Netherlands. Through its tight organisation, its ideological cohesion, and its ties with the new Reformed Church--founded by the same Abraham Kuyper--the Anti-Revolutionary Party struck deep roots in the traditional petty bourgeoisie and the Protestant working class; the latter was organised in Protestant trade unions separated from the General Netherlands Working-men's Association.<sup>7</sup>

In the same period, the Socialists also left the General Netherlands Working-men's Association because of its policy of cooperation between classes. At first they founded a political party, the Social Democratic League, then a new federation of trade unions, the National Labour Secretariat (Nationaal Arbeids Secretariaat, NAS). Its federal structure, which allowed the local and industrial branches considerable autonomy, seemed to fit in well with the revolutionary syndicalist tendency that soon dominated the NAS.<sup>8</sup>

The Catholics, who had been treated as second class citizens in the Dutch Republic (1588-1795) and to some extent also under the monarchy throughout the nineteenth century, were the last to organise their own trade unions and a mass

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<sup>7</sup>Harmsen and Reinalda, op. cit., pp. 51-53; about the Anti-Revolutionary Party see, I. Libschits, De protestants-christelijke stroming tot 1940 (Deventer, 1977), pp. 17-31.

<sup>8</sup>Harmsen and Reinalda, op. cit., pp. 70-73.

party, under close supervision of the bishops. The process was not completed until the 1920s. Catholic members of parliament had formed a caucus in the 1890s and supported the Calvinist Anti-Revolutionaries in the struggle over school subsidies.<sup>9</sup>

Confessional, i.e. Calvinist-Catholic, and Liberal coalitions alternated between 1888 and 1913. Socialists played only a minor role in this period due to their small numbers and internal conflicts. Revolutionary Socialists and Anarchists clashed with reformist and parliamentarian Social Democrats, both within the Social Democratic League and within the National Labour Secretariat. The League fell apart in 1894, while the trade unions began to split a little later. The conflict was deepened by a failed general strike in 1903. In 1905 most Social Democratic or reformist trade unions joined a new federation, the Nederlands Verbond van Vakverenigingen (NVV: Netherlands Federation of Trade Unions) which had a more centralised structure.<sup>10</sup>

The Social Democratic Workers Party, established in 1894 by reformists who had left the Social Democratic League, had grown into a mass party of 25,000 members and 144,000 voters (16% of the electorate) by 1913. In that year the party was invited by the Liberals to join them in a coalition

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<sup>9</sup> Ibid., pp. 102-103, 158-160; see also I. Lipschits, Politieke stromingen in Nederland (Deventer, 1978), pp. 27-32 about the Catholic Party.

<sup>10</sup> Harmsen and Reinalda, op. cit., pp. 88-95.

government, but decided after some internal debate to lend a Liberal government only passive support in parliament.<sup>11</sup>

A Liberal minority government held office until 1918, and managed not only to keep the country out of the war, but also to bring the struggle over school subsidies to a peaceful end. After consultation with all major parties--the Pacification of 1917--it granted confessionnal and neutral schools equal state subsidies; but it also introduced universal suffrage and proportional representation in order to please the Social Democrats and the (progressive) Liberals. This package deal had been negotiated by the leaders of the major parties in a way that qualified Dutch politics as "the politics of accommodation."<sup>12</sup> Accommodation between elites entrenched in regional and religious segments of society, or "consociational democracy," was far from unusual in Dutch history, as Daalder points out, but it was only after 1913 that it was effectively institutionalised.<sup>13</sup> The religious segments developed into "pillars" (zuilen) of sub-societies, each with its own political parties, trade unions, university, schools, social clubs, etc.

The process of "pillarisation" and accommodation has

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<sup>11</sup>W. Kendall, The Labour Movement in Europe (London, 1975), pp. 379, 397.

<sup>12</sup>Lijphart, Politics of Accommodation (1968), particularly pp. 104-112.

<sup>13</sup>H. Daalder, "The Netherlands, Opposition in a segmented society," in R. Dahl, ed., Political Opposition in Western Democracies (New Haven, 1966), pp. 188-236, 417-425.



been interpreted by many observers as the emancipation of the "kleine luyden," the Dutch petty bourgeoisie of small businessmen, artisans, farmers and clerks that constituted the active core of the Calvinist Reformed Church and, to a lesser extent, of the Catholic Church.<sup>14</sup> Recently some scholars have drawn attention to the benefits that the Dutch bourgeoisie may have derived from pillarisation: by dividing the working class and integrating a fraction of religious workers with petty bourgeois and bourgeois groups, it prevented the development of a militant and united but large working class movement.<sup>15</sup> Perhaps the Pacification of 1917 can be seen as an "historical compromise" between the petty bourgeoisie and the bourgeoisie in the Netherlands.<sup>16</sup>

At any rate, the working class benefitted least from the process of pillarisation. Its political representatives, primarily the Social Democrats and the Communists, won only 24% of the popular vote in 1918 and not much more in subsequent elections until 1946. They remained isolated in the opposition

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<sup>14</sup>J. Goudsblom, Dutch Society (New York, 1967), pp. 31-33; P. Kraemer, The Societal State (Meppel, 1966), pp. 92-102.

<sup>15</sup>Harmsen and Reinalda, op. cit., pp. 51, 102 inter alia; M. Fennema, "Professor Lijphart en de Nederlandse politiek," Acta Politica XI:1 (1976): 54-77.

<sup>16</sup>Professor Goldman suggests this "speculative generalization" in his paper: P. Goldman, "The ideological legitimization of segregation: Neo-Calvinism in the Netherlands and South Africa," a paper presented to the Joint CPSA/Israel Workshop on Political Cleavages, Jerusalem, 1978.

until 1939, when the Social Democratic party was invited to join a National Unity government in the face of World War II.<sup>17</sup> The Social Democratic Federation of Trade Unions grew faster-- from 160,000 members in 1918 to 300,000 in 1939--and proved more influential than the party, perhaps because it could be more easily integrated into the quasi-corporatist system of labour relations established by the ruling coalition of Calvinists and Catholics.<sup>18</sup>

Corporatist ideas about class cooperation, social harmony, and a "public organisation of production" to reconcile free enterprise with central planning, gained wide-spread popularity in the 1920s and 1930s, not only among Calvinists and Catholics but to some extent also among Social Democrats.<sup>19</sup> These ideas did not prevent Dutch entrepreneurs from accumulating and centralising capital, establishing multinational corporations-- Royal Dutch Shell and Unilever, both in cooperation with British businessmen--eliminating small enterprises, and firing or locking out workers in times of trouble.<sup>20</sup>

Both Calvinists and Catholics advocated a liberal form of corporatism, rather than an authoritarian or "statist" form.

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<sup>17</sup>Daalder, in Dahl, op. cit., p. 424.

<sup>18</sup>J. Windmuller, Labor Relations in the Netherlands (Ithaca, 1969), particularly pp. 63-77.

<sup>19</sup>M. Broekmeyer and I. Cornelissen, Arbeidersraad of ondernemersstaat (Amsterdam, 1969), pp. 105-137; see also the forthcoming dissertation of I. Scholten about the ideological convergence of the Dutch "pillars."

<sup>20</sup>Huggett, op. cit., particularly p. 171.

Even during the Depression of the 1930s they tried to maintain free trade, the gold standard and a balanced budget, at the expense of wages, jobs and social expenditure. Their policy met with little opposition from the Liberal bourgeoisie.<sup>21</sup>

The state should protect and correct, but not change or control society, according to the Calvinist theory of "sovereignty in one's own sphere" (soevereiniteit in eigen kring) and the Catholic theory of "subsidiarity" (subsidiariteit) of the state.<sup>22</sup>

Nevertheless the state apparatus was expanded considerably under both Liberal and Confessional governments. As in other European countries, the Dutch state intervened more and more in society to correct social defects as well as to reconstruct or regulate parts of society; in fact this distinction was far from clear cut.<sup>23</sup>

World War II and its aftermath accelerated this process. This time the Dutch government failed to keep the country out of the war: the German army and air force invaded the Netherlands in May 1940, and kept the country occupied until May 1945. All political parties were abolished, except the

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<sup>21</sup>Romein, op. cit., Chapter 24.

<sup>22</sup>On the Calvinist theory, see the summary in H. Leih, Kaart van politiek Nederland (Kampen, 1962), pp. 115, 135 ff. On the Catholic theory see A. Cornelissen, Beginnelen der Nederlandse politieke partijen (Nijmegen, 1935), Chapter II.

<sup>23</sup>Cf. Kraemer, op. cit., pp. 43-58.

small National Socialist League.<sup>24</sup> All trade unions were forced to join the Netherlands Federation of Trade Unions, which was put under a National Socialist trustee. Partly as a result of, and partly as a reaction against the German measures, national unity grew stronger. Leaders of the major parties met in exile in London or in Dutch prison camps, while union leaders met with employers in a clandestine organisation, the Foundation of Labour (Stichting van de Arbeid).<sup>25</sup> At the rank and file level, workers united in protest strikes against the German authorities in 1941, 1943 and 1944. Communist workers played a major role in these actions.<sup>26</sup>

After the liberation of the Netherlands by the Allied Forces, both Communists and Social Democrats tried to continue and institutionalise the unity achieved during the war, but in different ways. The Communists tried to organise all workers in a Unity Trade Union Centre. The Social Democrats, however, hoped to preserve their own trade unions, but also to unite progressive Protestants, Catholics and secular people of different classes in one political organisation, the Dutch People's Movement, which soon became the Partij van de Arbeid (Labour Party).<sup>27</sup> Both efforts began successfully but turned

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<sup>24</sup>In 1935 the National Socialist League had won 8% of the popular vote, but by 1937 its electorate had dwindled to 4%--small, but not insignificant (see Daalder, in Dahl, op. cit., p. 234).

<sup>25</sup>Windmuller, op. cit., pp. 108-116.

<sup>26</sup>Harmsen and Reinalda, op. cit., pp. 208-216, 221-227, 238.

<sup>27</sup>On the Unity Trade Union Centre, see *ibid.*, pp. 252-255 and 266 ff. On the Social Democratic efforts see J. Hoek,

into failures within a few years. Pre-war traditions and organisations reasserted themselves. The Unity Trade Union Centre was pushed aside again by the three "official" trade union centres, and the new Labour Party won only slightly more votes than the pre-war Social Democratic Workers Party, but fewer than the Catholic Party.<sup>28</sup>

Corporatist ideas and institutions did not only survive World War II but became stronger and more effective after 1945. The three "official" trade unions, the employers' organisations, and the government were represented equally in the new Socio-Economic Council, which was to advise the government on economic policies. Having heard the Council's advice, the Minister of Social Affairs would issue general wage directives. A Board of Government Mediators was to apply these directives to the wage agreements negotiated by employers and trade union leaders within the Foundation of Labour, which had been legalised after the war. The Board had the right to cancel collective contracts or to declare them binding on all workers in a particular industry. Government intervention affected not only wages but also other working conditions. All hiring and firing of workers had to be approved by regional Labour Offices. Strikes were denounced by all "social partners," by trade unions as well as employers, as "outdated." As strikes were only supported by

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Politieke geschiedenis van Nederland (Leiden, 1970), Chapters 6 and 7.

<sup>28</sup>Ibid.; see also Daalder, in Dahl, op. cit.

"unofficial" unions, like the Communist Unity Trade Union Centre or its syndicalist offshoot, the Independent Federation of Trade Unions, they could be crushed easily with court injunctions or police actions.<sup>29</sup>

The Socio-Economic Council was to top a pyramid of corporatist institutions, reaching down to the Works Councils (Ondernemingsraden) at the shop level. A Works Council was to be elected by all employees of an enterprise--over a certain size--to "contribute its utmost to the best possible functioning of the enterprise ... with due recognition of the autonomous function of the employer."<sup>30</sup> The employer or manager presided over the council and heard its advice--about work regulations, holiday schedules or individual grievances. The system did not fulfill all expectations, and remained incomplete at the shop level and, even more at the level of industrial branches, which were to be organised in Public Industrial Organisations (Publiekrechtelijke Bedrijfsorganisaties). Nevertheless, it may have contributed to the decrease of strikes and the increase in apathy among workers in the 1950s. While most important decisions were taken at the national level, trade unions became more and more centralised and stronger at the top, but shop floor organisation atrophied.<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>29</sup>Harmsen and Reinalda, op. cit., pp. 338-347; cf. Windmuller, op. cit. for a more detailed and less critical description.

<sup>30</sup>Windmuller, op. cit., p. 412; see also Kendal, op. cit., pp. 274-276.

<sup>31</sup>Harmsen and Reinalda, op. cit., pp. 314-324; see also M. Van der Vall, De vakbeweging in de welvaartsstaat (Meppel, 1963).

The 1950s were characterised not only by corporatism and apparent class harmony, but also by economic recovery and accelerated industrialisation, motivated partly by the loss of the Indonesian colony. In 1947, agriculture employed 19.3% of the active population, while industry, mining and construction employed 33.3% and transport, commerce and services 40.7%; by 1960 these sectors provided work for 10.7%, 42.2% and 46.6% respectively.<sup>32</sup> At the same time the traditional petty bourgeoisie of independent farmers, artisans, and small businessmen diminished from about 30% to about 20% of the active population, no doubt due to concentration and centralisation of capital.<sup>33</sup>

The socio-economic changes of the 1950s found no parallels in the spheres of politics and culture. Dutch politics were affected by international events, especially the Cold War and the integration of West Europe through the Common Market, the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation and other organisations; but there was little endogenous change. The three major confessional parties--the Anti-Revolutionary Party, the moderate Protestant Christian Historical Union, and the Catholic Party--retained a majority at elections and dominated all coalition governments after 1946.<sup>34</sup> From 1946 to 1958 they

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<sup>32</sup>Yearbook of Labour Statistics, 1957 and 1966 respectively.

<sup>33</sup>Ibid.

<sup>34</sup>In 1945-1946 the government was dominated by members of the Dutch People's Movement and the future Labour Party; from 1946 to 1958 the Catholic Party governed with the Labour Party, joined in 1948 by the Christian Historical Union and

governed with the Labour Party, but in 1959 a new coalition was set up with the Liberal Party after a conflict between Catholics and Social Democrats over economic policy. The Christian pillars stood firm also in the sphere of education, where confessional schools enrolled 71% of all pupils of primary and secondary schools in 1947 and the same proportion in 1960.<sup>35</sup> Church membership did not decline either.<sup>36</sup>

Though there were attempts at innovation, especially in the arts, the poetry and paintings of Lucebert, Appel and other "Vijftigers" (1950 Generation), Dutch culture remained on the whole rather traditional.<sup>37</sup>

## 1.2 The Revolutionary Socialist Left

The groups discussed under this heading carried different names but all strove for a socialist revolution. The most important groups in this category were the Social Democratic League and the Communist Party; however, given the purpose of this chapter, a few smaller groups that may have anticipated

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in 1952 by the Anti-Revolutionary Party. The three confessional parties won together 54.3% of the popular vote in 1946 and 52.0% in 1959; see Daalder, in Dahl, op. cit., pp. 424-425 in particular.

<sup>35</sup>J. Kruyt, "The Influence of Denominationalism on Social Life and Organisational Patterns," in K. McRae, ed., Con-sociational Democracy, Political Accommodation in Segmented Societies (Toronto, 1974), pp. 128-136; see also Daalder, in Dahl, op. cit.

<sup>36</sup>In 1947 80.1% of the adult population, in 1960 79.5%, *ibid.*

<sup>37</sup>See K. Fens, "Vrij na de breuk-met gisteren," in A. Manning et al., Onze Jaren 45-70 (Amsterdam, 1975), pp. 1081-1083.



the New Left will receive as much attention as those two parties.

The first Revolutionary Socialist organisation in the Netherlands--probably also the very first leftist group-- may have been the Dutch Section of the First International Working Men's Association. It was founded in 1869 but disappeared again after a few years.<sup>38</sup> About ten years later a second attempt was made, partly by the same people; in the meantime, they had joined the General Netherlands Workingmen's Association, but objected to its a-political and conservative strategy. Starting as a local association in Amsterdam, the new organisation became the nation-wide Social Democratic League (Sociaal-Democratische Bond) in 1882. Its national programme resembled the Gotha Programme of the German Social Democratic Party, demanding universal suffrage, direct legislation by the people, universal conscription and education, progressive inheritance and income tax, and state support for productive associations.<sup>39</sup>

In 1885 the Social Democratic League published a more elaborate, but also more utopian programme "On the future organisation of society, or how to arrive at a new society

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<sup>38</sup>G. Harmsen, Historisch overzicht van socialisme en arbeidersbeweging in Nederland, vol. 1 (Nijmegen, 1971), pp. 10-15; see also J. Giele, De eerste Internationale in Nederland (Nijmegen, 1973).

<sup>39</sup>Ibid.; the programme is reprinted in A. Brummelkamp, et al., Onze politieke partijen (Baarn, 1918), p. 208.

from the old one."<sup>40</sup> Rejecting both "anarchist" workers' self-management--which would result in new monopolies and neglect of less profitable public services--and a centralised state, it argued for a federalist position. Municipalities and trade unions should run most public services and industries, while a national government would take care of public services like transport and mail. A world government was to undertake large public works like the fertilisation of the Sahara desert, to "recreate the earth into a great garden, making man the ... sovereign of the planet."<sup>41</sup> Money would disappear; people would receive goods and services according to their needs. Workers would elect their managers and take turns in fulfilling judicial and police duties.

The second part of the manifesto is less clear than the first one. A reformist strategy was considered possible, once workers had the right to vote; on the other hand, the proletariat of the big cities could "speed up economic reforms" by taking over the state as well as the large factories, mines and railways. A privileged vanguard was necessary, since the masses were still too weak.<sup>42</sup> Many of these ideas will return in later publications of socialist groups and especially New Left groups, but in a slightly less utopian

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<sup>40</sup>Toekomstige Inrichting der Maatschappij of Hoe men uit de oude Maatschappij kan komen tot de nieuwe (The Hague, 1885).

<sup>41</sup>Ibid., p. 12 (in Dutch: "de geheele aarde herscheppen in een grooten tuin, de menschheid in het bezit brengen van de planeet ... de mensch souverain van den aardbol....").

<sup>42</sup>Ibid., p. 20.

and more coherent form.

In spite of its theoretical weaknesses the Social Democratic League began to grow rapidly. This could be attributed to the strong personal, even charismatic leadership of Ferdinand Domela Nieuwenhuis, a former Lutheran minister who was often pictured by followers as well as enemies, in the image of Christ.<sup>43</sup> Initially he considered himself a Marxist, but gradually he evolved into an anarchist. His experience as a member of parliament from 1888 to 1891, and as a delegate at meetings of the Second International, made him question the use of parliamentary action and of bureaucratic mass parties.<sup>44</sup>

While anarchist tendencies grew stronger within the Social Democratic League--not only due to Domela Nieuwenhuis's influence--its membership became more proletarian and more rural. In 1886 it counted about 4000 members, most of them skilled or semi-skilled workers and--to a lesser extent--intellectuals in urban centres like Amsterdam, The Hague and the Zaan area.<sup>45</sup> By 1893 these branches had declined, whereas the provincial branches of Groningen and Frisia, the most agrarian parts of the Netherlands, comprised almost half

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<sup>43</sup>Harmsen, op. cit., p. 25.

<sup>44</sup>F. Domela Nieuwenhuis, Van Christen tot Anarchist (Utrecht, 1971) (1910), pp. 50-58, 84.

<sup>45</sup>P. Van Horssen and D. Rietveld, "De Sociaal Democratische Bond," Tijdschrift voor Sociale Geschiedenis 1 (1975): 5-71; see also J. Saks (P. Wiedijk), Kritische herinneringen (Nijmegen, 1977) (1929).

of the total membership.<sup>46</sup> The rural labourers in these areas suffered from a severe depression and exploitation; hence they may have appreciated the revolutionary strategy of the League and its anarchist tendency.

The intellectuals and skilled workers in the League showed less enthusiasm about its anarchist trend. Some of them left the League in 1894 and established a new party, the Sociaal Democratische Arbeiders Partij (Social Democratic Workers Party).<sup>47</sup> Modelling itself on the German Social Democratic Party, the Social Democratic Workers Party devoted more attention to theoretical study--particularly of Marx, but also of the British Fabians--than the Social Democratic League. In 1896 a group of young intellectuals joined the new party and began to publish a theoretical journal, De Nieuwe Tijd (The New Age). The journal criticised anarchist and syndicalist ideas, but also the reformist tendencies of Social Democrats. These tendencies became stronger with the growth of the party and its electoral success.<sup>48</sup>

The conflicts within the Social Democratic Workers Party became sharper with the foundation of another leftist journal, De Tribune, published by younger members, and full of polemics

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<sup>46</sup>Ibid.; of the 5000 members 1100 lived in Frisia, 1300 in the Province of Groningen, but only 600 in Amsterdam; in 1886 the League counted only 50 members in Groningen, 50 in Frisia and 1000 in Amsterdam.

<sup>47</sup>Harmsen, op. cit., pp. 27-29; see also Saks, op. cit., pp. 39 ff.

<sup>48</sup>Harmsen, op. cit., pp. 46-52; see also H. Roland Holst, Kapitaal en Arbeid in Nederland (Nijmegen, 1971) (1932), part 2, pp. 83 ff.

rather than theoretical arguments. In 1909 the editors of the new journal were expelled from the party after a personal attack on its parliamentary leader, who had refused to organise demonstrations against rising unemployment. With 400 supporters, the three editors founded a new party, the Sociaal Democratische Partij (Social Democratic Party).<sup>49</sup> Of the group around De Nieuwe Tijd, the poet Herman Gorter joined the new party, whereas his colleague Henriette Roland Holst decided to "stay with the masses," i.e. the 10,000 members of the Social Democratic Workers Party.<sup>50</sup>

The Social Democratic Party remained a small but tightly knit band of Marxist intellectuals until 1916. Its programme resembled that of the Social Democratic Workers Party, but lent more emphasis to the struggle against imperialism and militarism, demanding immediate independence for Indonesia. It also advocated forms of direct democracy like the referendum and recall of representatives.<sup>51</sup> Both the Social Democratic Workers Party and the Social Democratic Party were affiliated with the Second International, and maintained close ties with the German Social Democratic Party--the former especially with the leadership, the latter

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<sup>49</sup>Harmsen, op. cit., p. 56; see also D. Wijnkoop, "De S.D.P., Haar geschiedenis en haar beginselen," in Brummelkamp et al., op. cit., pp. 175-206.

<sup>50</sup>Harmsen, op. cit., p. 56; Roland Holst, op. cit., pp. 85-99.

<sup>51</sup>See Wijnkoop, op. cit., pp. 175 ff.; also, Parlement en kiezer, 1918, pp. 133-135.

with the left-wing around Rosa Luxemburg.<sup>52</sup>

While the Social Democratic Workers Party became more involved in local government and less interested in extra-parliamentary actions, the Social Democratic Party gave priority to the latter. At first it proved rather ineffective and failed to win the support from the Social Democratic trade unions. During the First World War, however, food shortages, price rises and unemployment drove many workers away from the Social Democrats who supported the government. The Social Democratic Party succeeded in mobilising many of these workers for demonstrations and other mass actions, in cooperation with the militant National Labour Secretariat. Many former anarchists and syndicalists must have joined the party.<sup>53</sup> So did a group of left-wing Social Democrats, led by the poet and De Nieuwe Tijd-editor Henriette Roland Holst, who had finally left the Social Democratic Workers Party because of its support for the Liberal government and for military mobilisation credits.<sup>54</sup>

The group around Henriette Roland Holst had existed as an independent organisation for about a year. Under the name "Revolutionary Socialist Association" (Revolutionair Socialistisch Verbond), it had published a platform that could be

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<sup>52</sup>In particular through Gorter; see H. De Liagre Böhl, Herman Gorter (Nijmegen, 1973), Chapter 3.

<sup>53</sup>A. De Jonge, Het Communisme in Nederland, de geschiedenis van een politieke partij (The Hague, 1972), pp. 36-37.

<sup>54</sup>Roland Holst had left the party already in 1911; see J.P. Van Praag, Henriette Roland Holst, Wezen en Werk (Amsterdam, 1946), p. 22.

regarded as "New Leftist" in two aspects. In the first place, it advocated a "dual strategy" of direct action and parliamentary action, both aimed at the conquest of state power. In the second place, it stressed cultural values like "moral grandeur," sacrifice and "proletarian community," as well as ideological development in general.<sup>55</sup> On the other hand, the cultural values pursued by the New Left differed somewhat in content, as will be shown below.<sup>56</sup>

While the Social Democratic Party grew, it lost its homogeneity. Already in 1917 international issues divided the party. The leaders around Wijnkoop expressed sympathy for the Entente and Kerensky, whereas the left-wing around Gorter showed more confidence in Germany, where Gorter expected a revolution, and in the Bolsheviks. By 1919 the positions had been almost reversed: Wijnkoop came to accept the Bolshevik regime while Gorter wrote a rather critical "Open Letter to Comrade Lenin."<sup>57</sup> The theoretical differences behind this disagreement became clear within a few years. In 1921 Gorter and his supporters broke away and founded the Communist Workers Party of the Netherlands (Kommunistische Arbeiders Partij

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<sup>55</sup> Wat wil het Revolutionair Socialistisch Verbond? (Amsterdam, 1915).

<sup>56</sup> See Chapters 2 and 4; New Leftists would not insist on "grandeur," nor on "sacrifice" and rarely on "proletarian" community.

<sup>57</sup> H. Gorter, Offener Brief an den Genossen Lenin. Eine Antwort auf Lenins Broschüre: Der Radikalismus eine Kinderkrankheit des Kommunismus (Berlin, 1920); quoted at length in De Liagre Böhl, op. cit., pp. 251-258.

Nederland).<sup>58</sup>

Though the Communist Workers Party has had a negligible impact on Dutch politics--it gathered at best 200 members and fell apart fairly soon--its theorists deserve some attention here. These theorists, Herman Gorter and Anton Pannekoek, can be considered the leaders of the "Dutch Marxist School," perhaps together with Henriette Roland Holst. Denounced by Lenin as "infantile communism," the ideas of the School appealed only to marginal groups of intellectuals and a few "lumpenproletarians" in the 1920s and 1930s. However, many of them seem to have inspired the New Left of the 1960s.<sup>59</sup>

Lenin's hostility towards the School seems understandable in view of the sharp critique of the Soviet regime by Gorter and Pannekoek. The latter, an astronomer and instructor at the party school of the German Social Democracy between 1906 and 1914, saw Lenin as the leader of a bourgeois rather than a proletarian revolution. Like so many other bourgeois revolutionaries, Lenin had used the illusion of universality to manipulate other classes; in his case, the illusion of a proletarian revolution which had brought him the support of the Russian workers. In fact, Pannekoek argued, Lenin's

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<sup>58</sup>De Jonge, op. cit., p. 30; De Liagre Böhl, op. cit., Chapter 7.

<sup>59</sup>For a good overview see the introduction of H. Bock, "Zur Geschichte und Theorie der holländischen Marxistischen Schule," in A. Pannekoek and H. Gorter, Organisation und Taktik der proletarischen Revolution (Frankfurt am Main, 1969), pp. 7-48; cf. W. Lenin, "Left-wing" Communism, an Infantile Disorder (New York, 1969) (1920).



theory was based on bourgeois materialism rather than historical materialism. Hence it proved

the right doctrine for the Russian intellectuals who, now that natural science and technics formed the basis of a rapidly developing production system under their direction, saw the future open up before them as the ruling class of an immense empire.<sup>60</sup>

The new ruling class had emasculated the workers' councils set up during the revolutionary years of 1917 and 1918. With rigorous party discipline, manipulation, and coercion, it extracted surplus value from the workers through the state apparatus. This system of state capitalism differed not much from capitalism in the West, which also came to depend more and more on state intervention. Pannekoek concluded that in both parts of the world intellectuals tried to win power by manipulating workers.<sup>61</sup>

The working class could be manipulated due to its ideological weakness, in particular its susceptibility to bourgeois ideas about nationalism and individualism. Social Democratic parties and trade unions had always given priority to socio-economic and organisational questions, while neglecting the development of a proletarian ideology. A proletarian ideology should include a new morality, based on class solidarity, personal sacrifice, independence and internationalism. It required a new kind of political party, decentralised and

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<sup>60</sup>A. Pannekoek, Lenin as a Philosopher (1938) (London, 1975), p. 100.

<sup>61</sup>Ibid., pp. 101-109; see also A. Pannekoek, Partij, raden, revolutie (Amsterdam, 1972), pp. 143-156.

oriented towards ideological discussion and propaganda, rather than parliamentary action and elections. The party should help the workers educate themselves, especially through discussion and direct action at the work-place. It should encourage but never dominate workers' councils, which Pannekoek conceived of as both the best organisations for the class struggle and the embryos of a socialist society.<sup>62</sup>

On most of these questions Pannekoek and his supporters could agree with anarchists, in theory as well as in practice. On the other hand, Pannekoek remained a rather orthodox Marxist in his materialist analysis of ideologies, and in his deterministic statements about the "death crisis" of capitalism and the final victory of the working masses.<sup>63</sup> His supporters, organised in the Group of International Communists from 1926 to 1940, and again in Daad en Gedachte (Action and Thought) from 1965 onward, did not deviate much from this way of thinking.<sup>64</sup> In the 1960s, they would criticize

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<sup>62</sup>A. Pannekoek, De Arbeidersraden (Amsterdam, 1946), *passim*.

<sup>63</sup>E.g. Pannekoek, De Arbeidersraden, pp. 276-277: "Capitalism will be more powerful than ever after this war. But more powerful will become the struggle of the working masses, sooner or later" (My translation of the Dutch text: "Machtiger dan ooit zal zich na de oorlog het kapitalisme verheffen. Maar sterker zal daar tegenover, langzamer of sneller, de strijd van de arbeidende massaas opkomen"); see also H. Bock, *op. cit.*, pp. 7-48.

<sup>64</sup>Except perhaps with respect to the determinist ideas, see, for instance, Daad en Gedachte 1:11 (1965) and 3:2 (1967); however, Pannekoek seems to have modified some of his own ideas as well; see also R. Gombin, Les origines du gauchisme (Paris, 1971), pp. 114-125.

New Leftists as "petty bourgeois idealists," even if they shared the New Left ideals of workers' self-management, direct action and a new culture.<sup>65</sup>

While Pannekoek retained at least a small following in both Germany and the Netherlands, the other leaders of the Dutch Marxist School ceased to play a significant role in politics. Gorter, who had split with Pannekoek in 1926, fell ill and died soon afterwards.<sup>66</sup> Henriette Roland Holst had never joined the Communist Workers Party but stayed--again "with the masses"--in the Social Democratic Party, which changed its name into "Communist Party in the Netherlands" (CPN) (Communistische Partij in Nederland) in 1918.<sup>67</sup> Before long, however, she began to oppose the party line as well.

The party line of the CPN changed somewhat during the 1920s. In 1921 the Communists argued for a proletarian democracy, "self-management through councils of workers, soldiers and poor farmers," and could still expect a revolution in Western Europe.<sup>68</sup> A few years later proletarian democracy had been suppressed completely in the Soviet Union,

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<sup>65</sup>However, their ideas about the new culture differed somewhat, as will become clear in Chapter 2; for criticisms of New Left groups see Daad en Gedachte 2 (1966): 2:2 on the PSP; 2:4 on Provo; and 2:10 and 2:12 about the group Nieuw Links in the Labour Party.

<sup>66</sup>De Liagre Böhl, op. cit., pp. 258-264.

<sup>67</sup>De Jonge, op. cit., pp. 31-32; see also Van Praag, op. cit., pp. 21, 29-34.

<sup>68</sup>G. Sterringa, Wat willen de Communisten? (Amsterdam, 1921); my translation from the Dutch "proletarische democratie, d.w.z. een stelsel van zelfbestuur in raden van arbeiders, soldaten en arme boeren."

and dropped from the platform of the Communist Party in the Netherlands. The revolution had failed in Germany and Italy, and never started in the Netherlands. The CPN was in disarray for many years, suffering serious splits, internal fights--including fist fights--and several changes of leadership. Around 1930 the party began to recover. A new and more proletarian, but also more Stalinist leadership established firm control over the party and adopted a militant but rather defensive programme.<sup>69</sup> Given the economic depression and the rise of fascism, defense of established rights, wages and jobs seemed a realistic approach; the party grew rapidly in terms of members as well as votes.<sup>70</sup>

The new line had been opposed by many older members, especially intellectuals like Roland Holst but also workers and trade unionists like Henk Sneevliet. Sneevliet, a former railway employee who had helped to organise the Communist party in Indonesia and China before he was elected president of the National Labour Secretariat, had met Trotsky in Moscow and agreed with his criticism of Stalin. On the other hand, he disagreed with Trotsky's strategy of "entrism," i.e.

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<sup>69</sup> See De Jonge, op. cit., pp. 45-55; the election platform of 1933 called for shorter working hours, paid holidays, freedom of assembly for soliders and sailors, subsidies for poor farmers, and opposed wage cuts and salestaxes and the like (Parlement en Kiezer (1934), pp. 82-84.

<sup>70</sup> In 1929 two factions of the Communist Party presented separate lists at the elections and together received 1.9% of the popular vote. The re-united party won 3.2% in 1933; membership increased even faster, from 1100 in 1930 to 5500 in 1933 and almost 10,000 by 1938 (De Jonge, op. cit., pp. 49, 54, 57, 64).

internal opposition in Social Democratic or Communist organizations, and preferred to maintain an independent trade union, and to found a new independent political party. This party, the Revolutionary Socialist Party (Revolutionair Socialistische Partij, RSP), would cooperate closely with the National Labour Secretariat and combine extra-parliamentary action with agitation in parliament. Even in a non-revolutionary period, revolutionary vanguards should take an aggressive approach, according to Sneevliet. As trade union leader he succeeded in expanding the National Labour Secretariat from 13,000 to 23,000 members between 1924 and 1933; as leader of the Revolutionary Socialist Party he managed to win a seat in parliament.<sup>71</sup>

Revolutionary hopes rose again in 1934. Riots broke out in Amsterdam when the government announced a reduction of unemployment benefits. Left-wing Social Democrats joined Revolutionary Socialists and Communists in the riots and tried to organise a general strike. Again the revolution did not come; the riots were put down by military forces.<sup>72</sup> Efforts to maintain unity among the revolutionaries foundered on the intransigence of the Communist Party. Only a small group of left-wing Social Democrats, who had left the Social

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<sup>71</sup>M. Perthus, Henk Sneevliet (Nijmegen, 1976), Chapters 14 and 15; see also Harmsen and Reinalda, op. cit., pp. 155-158 and 430-432.

<sup>72</sup>Perthus, op. cit., pp. 365-367; Harmsen and Reinalda, op. cit., pp. 179-182; for a slightly different view see J. De Kadt, Politieke herinneringen van een randfiguur (Amsterdam, 1976), Chapter IV.

Democratic Workers Party in 1932, proved willing to merge with the Revolutionary Socialist Party in 1935. The new Revolutionary Socialist Workers Party (Revolutionair Socialistische Arbeiders Partij, RSAP) started with 4200 members and one seat in parliament--still held by Sneevliet, who became leader of the party. Yet within a few years it lost half its membership as well as the seat in parliament.<sup>73</sup> Its militant programme of a revolutionary class front, socialisation and workers' control, national disarmament, and "free development of a new anti-bourgeois culture," appealed to few workers.<sup>74</sup> It would be taken up again in a different form by the New Left.

While the Communist Party became stronger but also more moderate in the late 1930s, the Revolutionary Socialist Workers Party declined and suffered from a split between loyal Trotskyites and supporters of Sneevliet.<sup>75</sup> In 1940 both parties went underground. The Revolutionary Socialist Workers Party continued as a small resistance group under the name "Spartacus League" (Spartacusbond), while the Communist Party joined the resistance a little later--after the German attack on Russia. The Russian invasion of Poland and Finland led Sneevliet to question the proletarian nature of the Russian

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<sup>73</sup>Perthus, op. cit., Chapter 18.

<sup>74</sup>"Verkiezingsprogram van de Revolutionair-Socialistische Arbeiders Partij," in Parlement en Kiezer (1935): 105-113.

<sup>75</sup>Perthus, op. cit., p. 403; cf. P. Frank, La Quatrième Internationale (Paris, 1973), pp. 37-38.

state. Some of his comrades, however, agreed with Trotsky that the Soviet Union remained a workers' state, even if a degenerate one, which had to be defended against imperialist attacks. The debate had only just started when most of its participants were arrested and imprisoned or shot. Sneevliet kept his faith in a proletarian victory even at the moment of his death.<sup>76</sup>

The Spartacus League survived the Second World War and became a small study group of ultra-leftists in the Dutch Marxist tradition.<sup>77</sup> Most of its Trotskyite members left the League during or after the war and established a Dutch section of the Fourth International. Under the name "Revolutionary Communist Party," the section took part in the elections of 1948 and won 0.1% of the popular vote. In 1952 the party dissolved, while many of its members joined the Dutch Labour Party.<sup>78</sup>

The Communist Party survived the war in much better shape. Its important role in the resistance against the

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<sup>76</sup>Sneevliet's last words were "Ik heb de strijd gestreden en het geloof behouden. Het geloof in de zaak van de Internationale. Er moet nog veel gestreden worden, maar de toekomst is aan ons." Roughly translated into English: "I have fought the struggle and preserved my faith, the faith in the cause of the International. The struggle will be a long one, but the future is ours." Quoted in Perthus, op. cit., p. 467.

<sup>77</sup>G. Mergner, ed., Die Gruppe Internationale Kommunisten Hollands (Reinbek bei Hamburg, 1971), p. 12.

<sup>78</sup>I. Cornelissen, "PALVU. Bij de honderdste verjaardag van Leo Trotski," Vrij Nederland 40 (November 3, 1971); at the same time the Fourth International turned again to "entrism," see Frank, op. cit., pp. 76-80.

Germans and the increased prestige of its model, the Soviet Union, contributed to a big jump in votes and members. In 1946 the party could boast 502,963 voters--10% of the popular vote--and 53,000 members.<sup>79</sup> Moreover, party members held most important positions in the new Unity Trade Union Centre, which counted 176,000 members in 1948. However, internal conflicts and external pressure--the Cold War raged also in the Netherlands--destroyed the Unity Trade Union Centre within a few years and reduced the Communist Party again to an isolated "sect" of perhaps 15,000 members and 144,000 voters.<sup>80</sup>

The Communist Party pursued a moderate strategy after the war, but opposed the growing corporatism in Dutch labour relations, and supported or organised several "wild-cat" strikes. As in the late 1930s, the party strove for a broad national alliance of workers, intellectuals, farmers, artisans, small businessmen and civil servants against Big Capital. The alliance would be led by the proletariat, represented by the Communist Party. The party claimed the heritage of Marx, Lenin and Stalin, but also of Erasmus, Spinoza, Domela Nieuwenhuis and Gorter. The party platform no longer mentioned workers' councils, but praised "scientific management" as well as workers' co-determination. It also demanded tax cuts

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<sup>79</sup>Kendall, op. cit., pp. 387, 397; see also De Jonge, op. cit., p. 91.

<sup>80</sup>Kendall, *ibid.*; De Jonge, op. cit., Chapters 8 and 9.



for small businessmen and new land for small farmers.<sup>81</sup>

The denunciation of Stalin in the Soviet Union and the revolt in Hungary caused quite a shock in the Dutch Communist Party. An opposition group that had emerged at the end of the war around the main resistance leaders took the last step and broke with the party. In 1959 it took part in the general elections and won 0.6% of the vote, under the name "Bruggroep" (Bridging Group), which was later changed into "Socialist Workers Party" (Socialistische Werkers Partij). Its platform resembled that of the Communist Party but put more emphasis on economic democracy and workers' power, disarmament and peaceful revolution. It did not insist on support for small farmers and businessmen. Though expressing solidarity with the Soviet Union, it criticized the bureaucratisation and the lack of "socialist democracy" in Russia. It rejected both the reformism of the Dutch Labour Party, and the dogmatism and sectarianism of the Communist Party.<sup>82</sup> Most members of the party seem to have joined the Pacifist Socialist Party in the 1960s--not surprisingly, in view of their "new Leftish" platform.

The Socialist Workers Party was the last Revolutionary Socialist Party established in the period under study; the last member of a family that began with the Social Democratic League and continued through the Social Democratic Party or

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<sup>81</sup> "Beginselverklaring van de Communistische Partij van Nederland," Parlement en Kiezer (1951): 100-104; "Eisen" (election platform), pp. 105-107.

<sup>82</sup> Beginselprogramma Socialistische Werkers Partij (Bruggroep) (Amsterdam, 1960).

Communist Party, the Communist Workers Party and the Revolutionary Socialist Party. They shared a concern for working class interests and particularly workers' self-management as well as a new culture of proletarian solidarity, sacrifice and community. Their strategy was usually ill-defined but oriented towards direct action rather than election campaigns and parliamentary action. Both the ends and the means were clarified somewhat in later years. However, the number of Revolutionary Socialists dwindled in later years, especially after 1920. Only the Communist Party retained a mass base--and continued to grow until 1946--but it moved away from the Revolutionary Socialist tradition by adopting more limited, short-term economic goals and less revolutionary means.

### 1.3 The Anarchist Left

The Anarchist Left in the Netherlands is almost as old as the Revolutionary Socialist Left. In fact the difference was far from clear in the early years of the First International and the Social Democratic League. In 1888 a journal was founded called "The Anarchist".<sup>83</sup> It may have exercised some influence on Social Democrats. At any rate, a strong Anarchist tendency emerged within the League. In 1893 its Annual Congress decided by a narrow majority "not to participate in parliamentary elections under any circumstances,

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<sup>83</sup>H. Ramaer, ed., De piramide der tirannie (Amsterdam, 1977), pp. 15-17; see also J. Nieuwenhuis, Uit den Tijd der Voortrekkers (Amsterdam, 1927), p. 14.

(not) even for the purpose of agitation."<sup>84</sup> Several Social Democrats left the party, which was renamed "Socialist League," and switched its attention from campaigns for universal suffrage to direct action and trade union organisation.<sup>85</sup>

While the League helped to found the National Labour Secretariat and provided many of its leaders, some Anarchists within the League denounced all trade unions as "mere bandages on the wounds of capitalism."<sup>86</sup> They preferred direct action by unorganised workers. Domela Nieuwenhuis, the leader of the League, came close to this anti-organisational position. Though he did not object to trade unions as such, he could not see them as agents of an anarchist or socialist revolution. He began to doubt if any organisation could perform that role; in 1898 he even left the Socialist League he had helped to build and devoted the rest of his life to pedagogic and propagandistic activities.<sup>87</sup> Most Anarchists had deserted

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<sup>84</sup>In Dutch: "onder geen enkele omstandigheid, ook niet als agitatiemiddel, aan de verkiezingen deel te nemen"; quoted in D. Wansink, Het socialisme op de tweesprong (Haarlem, 1939), p. 121.

<sup>85</sup>The name had to be changed because the government had banned the Social Democratic League when it resolved to strive for a socialist revolution "by all means, legal or illegal"; the name "Socialist" appealed to both Anarchists and Revolutionary Socialists in the League (see Harmsen, op. cit., p. 29).

<sup>86</sup>Ramaer, op. cit., p. 75.

<sup>87</sup>Domela Nieuwenhuis, op. cit., p. 101; he justified his step in a way one might expect from a Protestant minister: "I would stand by myself with a clear conscience rather than be carried by popular favour at the expense of myself and my conscience" (My translation from the Dutch "liever stond ik alleen met mijn geweten in het reine dan dat ik gedragen werd door de volksgunst, maar ten koste van mijzelf en mijn geweten").

the League by 1898, leaving it in the hands of the "parliamentarist" minority which decided to merge with the Social Democratic Workers Party in 1899.<sup>88</sup>

While the Anarchist movement broke up into several smaller groups, it remained an important political force at least until 1920. Some Anarchists tried to restore some unity by setting up an Anarchist Federation, but that never attracted large numbers. Other Anarchists devoted their attention to the National Labour Secretariat, the International Anti-Militarist Association or the Association for Collective Landownership (Gemeenschappelijk Grondbezit).<sup>89</sup>

The Association for Collective Landownership was set up by Frederik van Eeden, a famous Dutch novelist and psychiatrist, in order to develop a network of productive associations of farmers and artisans. This network was to grow into an agrarian socialist society without class struggle or violence. In each productive association people would work and live together, holding most property in common and taking decisions together in a general meeting. Van Eeden had founded the first productive association on a piece of land not very far from Amsterdam in 1898; inspired by the American philosopher, Thoreau, he had named it "Walden."<sup>90</sup> Between 1900 and 1905

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<sup>88</sup>By 1898 the League had been reduced from about 5500 to less than 600 members; only 200 would end up as members of the Social Democratic Workers Party; see Harmsen, op. cit., p. 30.

<sup>89</sup>Ibid., pp. 42-44; see also F. Beckers and J. Frieswijk, Bedrijven in eigen beheer (Nijmegen, 1976).

<sup>90</sup>Beckers and Frieswijk, op. cit., Chapter 1; see also Ramaer, op. cit., pp. 25-30.

several other associations came into being. They were often joined by anarchist or syndicalist workers who had lost their jobs after a strike, and who regarded the associations as defensive strongholds in the class struggle rather than germs of a new society. These workers clashed frequently with artists and intellectuals like Van Eeden. After 1905 there was an ebb in the class struggle as well as in the growth of productive associations. Between 1918 and 1924 both flourished again, but during the Depression most associations closed down or went bankrupt. The Association for Collective Land-ownership still existed in 1976, but its number of member associations had been reduced from 102 to 5. The surviving associations had adapted themselves to the capitalist society they were supposed to replace; workers' self-management had been replaced by professional management.<sup>91</sup>

After the First World War and the Russian Revolution, the Anarchist movement began to decline. The Russian Revolution widened disagreement among Anarchists. Some of them, organised in a Federation of Social Anarchists, lent support to the Bolsheviks and ended up as members of the Communist Party.<sup>92</sup> Others, like Domela Nieuwenhuis, condemned the Bolshevik regime from the beginning. A third tendency, more syndicalist than anarchist, wanted to cooperate with Communist organisations while maintaining its own independence. Harm

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<sup>91</sup>Beckers and Frieswijk, op. cit., pp. 300-313.

<sup>92</sup>Ramaer, op. cit., pp. 33-35; see also G. Harmsen, Daan Goulooze (Utrecht, 1967), Chapter 1.

Kolthek, the president of the National Labour Secretariat from 1908 till 1914, founded the Socialist Party to provide anarchist or syndicalist voters with an alternative to the Communist Party; yet when elected to parliament he tried to cooperate closely with the latter.<sup>93</sup> In the National Labour Secretariat, Communists and Social Anarchists fought for affiliation with the Red Trade Union International. When they won the fight in 1923, the anti-communist minority broke away and founded the Netherlands Syndicalist Trade Union Confederation.<sup>94</sup> Both organisations were dissolved in 1940. The former returned after the war in a different form when syndicalist and independent socialist workers split from the Communist-led Unity Trade Union Centre to set up an Independent Federation of Trade Unions in 1948.<sup>95</sup> The Syndicalist Confederation survived the war as a propaganda and study group until 1967.<sup>96</sup>

While the overwhelming majority of the Dutch working class followed Communist, Social Democratic or Christian organisations in the 1920s and 1930s, a few young workers

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<sup>93</sup>Ramaer, op. cit., p. 43; Harmsen and Reinalda, op. cit., p. 124; see also De Socialistische Partij, Haar ontstaan, Doel en Streven (n.p., n.d.).

<sup>94</sup>Harmsen and Reinalda, op. cit., p. 156.

<sup>95</sup>Ibid., pp. 291-293; the Independent Federation (Onafhankelijk Verbond van Bedrijfsorganisaties) still existed in the 1960s and 1970s, long after the Unity Trade Union Centre had disappeared.

<sup>96</sup>See R. De Jong, "Over mijn vader Albert de Jong (1891-1970)," Mededelingenblad NVSG 39 (1971): 16-62; the membership of this study group could be combined with that of the Independent Federation.

turned to more extreme forms of anarchism. One group roamed the countryside in communal groups, sleeping in cabins or barges, living off theft and the sales of their journal, "The Sledgehammer" (De Moker); "all work is criminal," they declared, "Work destroys life," the "great pure cosmic Life" which should be free and creative.<sup>97</sup> Another group took to direct individual action, either terrorism or simply "Take and eat," the direct satisfaction of basic needs. Kooyman, an advocate of this position, argued that only individual action could change a technologically advanced but socially repressive society, since the working class had lost its revolutionary potential.<sup>98</sup> Both groups could be seen as predecessors of New Left groups like Provo and its offshoot "Bastard."

While the working class generally turned away from Anarchism, small groups of middle class--to be more exact, new petty bourgeois--intellectuals established new anarchist groups. They often differed from the proletarian anarchists in their ideas, especially about ethics and culture. Instead of self-discipline, monogamy and personal sacrifice they tended to advocate free love, a "free cult of the body" (vrije

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<sup>97</sup>Ramaer, op. cit., pp. 137-141; the quotation is from the work of Herman Schuurman, Werken is misdaad (1924); the Dutch text: "Werken is misdaad ... werken is levensvijandig ... werken is intens levensleed"; "Scheppen is intense levensvreugd," "Dan is er slechts Leven--groot zuiver kosmisch leven ...".

<sup>98</sup>See P. Kooijman, "De vooruitzichten van de arbeidersbeweging," first published in Bevrijding (1935); partly also in Ramaer, op. cit., pp. 165-170.

lichaamskultuur) and personal development.<sup>99</sup> In this respect they anticipated New Left ideas about a cultural revolution, even if their hedonism tended to be more qualified than that of the New Left.<sup>100</sup>

The most interesting group in this category was undoubtedly the League of Religious Anarchist-Communists, founded by former Christian Socialists in 1920 and renamed "League of Anarchist Socialists (Bond van Anarcho-Socialisten) in 1931. It began as a rather heterogeneous group of Tolstoian Christians, Pantheists and Theosophists, led by a Protestant theologian, Bart de Ligt.<sup>101</sup> Its programme called for a "total social, economic and religious revolution" to bring about a society based on common property in the means of production, management by workers' councils and equality of income; but also a new world culture based on cosmic solidarity and unity of man, nature and the invisible world. Socio-economic change had priority, but spiritual and cultural change was seen as the ultimate goal. Change had to be peaceful, violence and dictatorship were rejected as "bourgeois errors"; a dictatorship of

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<sup>99</sup> See Harmsen, Daan Coulooze, pp. 10-57; and in greater detail, G. Harmsen Blauwe en rode jeugd (Assen, 1961), particularly Chapter 7.

<sup>100</sup> Even "free love" was usually seen as part of "clean living" and not only as "fun" in the 1920s or 1930s; alcohol, tobacco and meat were often avoided as "unclean" or immoral

<sup>101</sup> For a brief history of the League of Christian Socialists, of which De Ligt led the left-wing, see below, Section 1.5. About De Ligt see B. De Ligt, Naar een vrije orde (Arnhem, 1951); in particular the biographical introduction by his wife, M. De ligt-van Rossem, pp. 7-29.



the proletariat would not result in the Kingdom of God which the Religious Anarchist-Communists hoped to build.<sup>102</sup>

Operating in a secular environment, the group seemed to lose its religious inspiration. The writings of Tolstoi and Krishnamurti were replaced by those of Wilhelm Reich and the Frankfurt School. In 1931 the League dropped the attribute "Religious" and became the League of Anarchist Socialists. It published a theoretical journal, Bevrijding (Liberation), which attracted contributions from different currents of thought--for instance from Henriette Roland Holst, who had turned to religious socialism but still considered herself a "council-communist" in the Dutch Marxist tradition.<sup>103</sup>

While the League renounced its religion, it conceived of socialism as a religious hope for a better future or an irrational and utopian belief. It rejected the Marxist conception of scientific socialism as a positivist and bourgeois illusion. In this respect it agreed with the Belgian revisionist De Man; but it also rejected his reformist and nationalist alternative to Marxism as a way to "state capitalism, worse than that in Russia."<sup>104</sup> It showed more sympathy for Wilhelm Reich, who tried to fill the "psychological vacuum" in Marxism with Freudian psycho-analysis in theory as well as practice. Socialism required liberation of sub-consciousness from Oedipal

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<sup>102</sup>J. Giesen, Religieus Anarcho-Communisme (Leiden, n.d.).

<sup>103</sup>Ramaer, op. cit., pp. 26-28; Van Praag, op. cit., pp. 37-39; later she came to reject Marxism altogether.

<sup>104</sup>A. Storm, "Sociale grondslagen," Het Vrij-Socialistisch Program (Loosdrecht, 1935), pp. 1-16.

fixation on authorities through self-education and direct action.<sup>105</sup> Self-liberation and personal development were the ultimate goals of socialism.

The League agreed with Pannekoek's critique that Social Democratic and Communist parties or trade unions tended to manipulate the workers as objects instead of emancipating them as subjects. It also considered the spiritual or ideological struggle to be more important than the struggle for material interests such as wages. Informal shop committees and, eventually, workers' councils were to wage both forms of struggle, and to take over all enterprises and other institutions like hospitals or schools. The League did not share Pannekoek's distrust of intellectuals; it expected them to play an important role in the ideological struggle. Intellectuals should educate themselves and take the initiative in setting up shop committees in their own areas, as well as in other areas where they could create a "core" of conscious workers to lead the committees. Though critical of all authority, the League did not reject the "leadership principle" altogether but aimed at a synthesis between leadership and individual independence. Leaders should follow their own convictions, not the masses. Both collectivism and individualism had to be avoided, but society should become an organic

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<sup>105</sup>J. De Haas, "Psychologische Grondslagen," Het Vrij-Socialistisch Program, pp. 17-25. De Ligt seemed to prefer Adler to Freud, but recognised that the masses were driven by economic and sexual motives; see for instance De Ligt, op. cit., pp. 88-103.

unity, preferably at a global level. Materialism and class-consciousness should give way to "mankind-consciousness," a new culture and a new personality.<sup>106</sup> Thus the League of Anarchist Socialists would fit our definition of New Left almost perfectly--it only missed the second leg of the dual strategy; in other words, it did not combine direct action with parliamentary action.<sup>107</sup>

Like most anarchist groups, the League of Anarchist Socialists did not survive the Second World War. A few anarchists started a Dutch League of Free Socialists in 1945, but this organisation never played an important role.<sup>108</sup> By 1960, the Anarchist Left had practically disappeared from the Dutch scene; only De Vrije Socialist (The Free Socialist), the journal founded by Domela Nieuwenhuis in 1898, continued its publication.

#### 1.4 The Social Democratic Left

Though Domela Nieuwenhuis and the League he led were the first to call themselves Social Democrats, Dutch Social Democrats today tend to trace their lineage no further back than the foundation of the Social Democratic Workers Party in 1894. This party adopted the structure and programme of

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<sup>106</sup>M. Van Praag, "De zelf-organisatie van de revolutie," Het Vrij-Socialistisch Program, pp. 39-57; see also De Ligt, op. cit., passim.

<sup>107</sup>However, quite a few groups of the German Neue Linke or the French Nouvelle Gauche did not engage in electoral or parliamentary action either; see below, Chapters 3 and 4.1-4.2.

<sup>108</sup>Ramaer, op. cit., p. 60; cf. L. Bot, Neuerland in de mist (n.p., n.d.).

the German Social Democracy and committed itself to parliamentary democracy--even if its founding father Troelstra cherished some doubts about its usefulness.<sup>109</sup> The party grew slowly, first winning support only in rural areas and among skilled urban workers like the diamond-cutters in Amsterdam. Only in 1904 did it break the record of the Social Democratic League and register its 6000th member. Its growth did not slow down when its revolutionary left-wing broke away in 1909; the party won 7% of the popular vote in the same year and doubled its vote in the elections of 1913.<sup>110</sup>

By 1913 the Social Democratic Workers Party seemed well integrated in the Dutch political system. The Liberal government appointed one of its members as burgomaster in a fairly large town, Zaandam, and invited the party to appoint three ministers.<sup>111</sup> Party Congress declined the invitation, but by a narrow majority. The year before, it had revised its declaration of principles, adding a moral condemnation of capitalism to its Marxist analysis of capital concentration and imperialism, as well as an appeal to the emerging "new middle classes" of technicians and clerical workers to realise their common interests with the proletariat. The

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<sup>109</sup> Harmsen, Historisch overzicht ..., pp. 29 ff; cf. Van Leeuwen, "De Sociaal-Democratische Arbeiderspartij," in Brummelkamp et al., op. cit., pp. 143-174; on Troelstra, see also Broekmeyer and Cornelissen, op. cit., pp. 105-117.

<sup>110</sup> Harmsen, Historisch overzicht ..., pp. 46, 65; Kendall, op. cit., pp. 384, 397.

<sup>111</sup> Harmsen, Historisch overzicht ..., pp. 66-67.

party would endorse any reforms that would improve conditions for the working class, provided they also contributed to its class-consciousness and political power.<sup>112</sup>

During the First World War, the Social Democratic Workers Party cooperated with the Liberal government and its successful efforts to solve the burning questions of confessionnal school subsidies and of universal suffrage. However, in 1918 Troelstra, the party leader, spoilt all the goodwill earned during the war by announcing in a public speech that the Revolution had started in Germany and would not stop at the Dutch border. The speech shocked the reformist majority of the party, which disavowed Troelstra openly. It alarmed and enraged the confessionnal Right, which began to mobilise Catholic and Calvinist volunteers for a counter-revolutionary militia.<sup>113</sup> The Right won the elections of 1918, in spite of--or rather because of--the universal suffrage which it had resisted for so long. The Social Democratic Workers Party won only 22% of the popular vote.<sup>114</sup>

Effectively isolated in parliament, but unwilling to pursue a revolutionary strategy, the party entered a period of stagnation and crisis. Looking for new issues and new

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<sup>112</sup>Van Leeuwen, op. cit., pp. 143-174; the declaration of principles (Beginselprogramma) of 1912 is reprinted in the Appendix of the same volume.

<sup>113</sup>I. Cornelissen et al., De taaie rooie rakkers, een documentaire over het socialisme tussen de oorlogen (Utrecht, 1965), pp. 15-40.

<sup>114</sup>Kendall, op. cit., p. 397; the percentage rose to 24% in 1925 but fell again to 22 in 1933.

voters, the party produced several elaborate plans for reforms. In the 1920s it developed a scheme for socialisation of monopolistic industries and for participation of workers in the management of private enterprise. Through personnel councils or works councils, the workers would play an advisory and supervisory role, but never a dominating one. Any form of workers' self-management was denounced by Social Democrats as "syndicalism" and dangerous inefficiency.<sup>115</sup> The scheme did not differ much from corporatist proposals of Catholic theoreticians, but this affinity did not result in cooperation between the two parties, nor in implementation of the plans.<sup>116</sup>

Slightly more successful was a campaign of the Social Democratic party and trade unions against a government proposal to increase the defense budget in order to expand the fleet. Mass demonstrations and the collection of a million signatures may have persuaded enough Catholic members of parliament to vote with Social Democrats, Communists and Liberal Democrats so that the bill was defeated.<sup>117</sup>

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<sup>115</sup> Broekmeyer and Cornelissen, op. cit., pp. 118-137; see Het Socialisatievraagstuk, Rapport uitgebracht door de Commissie aangewezen uit de SDAP (Amsterdam, 1920); Bedrijfsorganisatie en Medezeggenschap, Rapport uitgebracht door de kommissie ingesteld door NVV en SDAP (Amsterdam, 1923). See also the debate between Bonger and Wibaut in De Socialistische Gids 8 (1923): 1016-1018, 1143-1154, 1154-1164.

<sup>116</sup> Broekmeyer and Cornelissen, *ibid.*; see also Harmsen and Reinalda, op. cit., pp. 142-145.

<sup>116</sup> Cornelissen et al., op. cit., pp. 110-115.

The left-wing of the Social Democratic Workers Party wanted more extra-parliamentary actions of this kind, in combination with action in parliament. Stenhuis, the president of the Netherlands Federation of Trade Unions since 1919 and member of the Executive Committee of the Social Democratic Workers Party, approved of this "dual strategy," and wished to strengthen the ties between the trade unions and the party. Instead of waiting for another invitation to join the government, he felt the party should take a more active and militant approach. He predicted a major economic crisis around 1930 and feared the Social Democrats would be unable to benefit from it unless they changed their strategy. Events proved him right; but before that, Stenhuis was forced to resign from his positions in the party as well as the trade union federation.<sup>118</sup>

While Stenhuis anticipated a New Left "dual strategy" and a revolutionary form of reformism, the Marxist wing of the Social Democratic party still expected a real revolution. The Depression raised its hopes, expressed in the slogan "Socialism Now!". When the revolutionaries began to publish their own journal and to strive for a common front of Social Democrats, Communists and Syndicalists, they were expelled from the party and founded the Independent Socialist Party (Onafhankelijke Socialistische Partij).<sup>119</sup> Though fairly

<sup>118</sup> H.F. Cohen, Om de vernieuwing van het socialisme (Leiden, 1974), pp. 83-158; see also Harmsen and Reinalda, op. cit., pp. 164-166.

<sup>119</sup> Cohen, op. cit., pp. 159-175; see also the autobiography of De Kadt, op. cit., Chapter III.

small--counting about 7000 members in 1932, its first year--the new party was quite heterogeneous. Its right-wing, led by the former Communist De Kadt, remained Social Democratic and vague in its ideas about the revolution; De Kadt saw the party as a theoretical vanguard of intellectuals.<sup>120</sup> The left-wing leaned towards Revolutionary Socialist ideas, and wished to merge with the Revolutionary Socialist Party led by Sneevliet. After the riots of 1934, in which the left-wing took an active part, most Social Democrats began to leave the Independent Socialist Party. Reduced to 3000 members, the party merged with Sneevliet's group in 1935.<sup>121</sup>

Not all Marxists in the Social Democratic Workers Party had joined the Independent Socialist Party in 1932.<sup>122</sup> Nonetheless the Social Democratic party veered further to the right after 1932. In 1934 it produced another grand reform scheme, the Plan for Labour, which contained a programme of public works and economic planning that would create employment as well as consumer demand.<sup>123</sup> In 1937 the party dropped its commitment to disarmament, and adopted a new

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<sup>120</sup> Ibid.; De Kadt left the new party in 1934 to found a small theoretical journal, De Nieuwe Kern (The New Core).

<sup>121</sup> See above, Section 1.2.

<sup>122</sup> The Marxist economist Sam De Wolff, for instance, regarded the Depression as a serious but not a fatal crisis of capitalism, and denounced the Independent Socialists as pseudo-radicals; see S. De Wolff, Voor het land van belofte (Bussum, 1954), pp. 253-254.

<sup>123</sup> Cornelissen, et. al., op. cit., pp. 90-93; Harmsen and Reinalda, op. cit., pp. 195-199.



declaration of principles which stated that "the working class has become part of the national community of the people"; hence the defence of "spiritual freedom and parliamentary democracy" against fascists and communists gained priority over the class struggle.<sup>124</sup>

Though the majority of the party in the late 1930s could be described as "right-wing," this does not mean it shared a common ideology. Marxist ideas often co-existed with Christian Socialism, and romantic idealism with technocratic reformism.<sup>125</sup>

De Man's ideas about the need for a socialist "ethos" and culture inspired quite a few Dutch Social Democrats, especially younger ones.<sup>126</sup> The youth organisation of the party, the *Arbeiders Jeugd Centrale* (Workers Youth Centre), was reorganised by Kees Vorrink, a young teacher, in the spirit of De Man's ideas. The Centre was to become a "proletarian elite" and a "life community" (levensgemeenschap) that would practise a socialist ethos in everyday life and educate the masses. The socialist ethos was defined in terms of solidarity, self-discipline and natural simplicity. Clad in colourful dresses

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<sup>124</sup>In Dutch: "... nu de arbeiders een plaats in de nationale volksgemeenschap hebben verworven," "geestelijke vrijheid en parlementaire democratie"; "Beginselprogram van de Sociaal-Democratische Arbeiders Partij," Parlement en Kiezer (1938).

<sup>125</sup>R. Kuyper, Het socialisme, de hoofdarbeiders en de komende cultuur (Amsterdam, 1926); the author describes himself as a positivist and idealist Marxist, while his opponent Bonger could be called a technocratic reformist; see also below, note 134.

<sup>126</sup>Cohen, op. cit., p. 224; about De Man see P. Dodge, Beyond Marxism, the Faith and Works of Hendrik de Man (The Hague, 1966).

or shirts and shorts, wearing sandals, the boys and girls marched through woods and heath; they camped outdoors, played the guitar and joined in folk dancing. The folk dances and folk songs often borrowed themes from ancient Germanic pagan myths. Relationships between the boys and girls were expected to be open and "comradely" but not intimate. They were to avoid "stadium and cinema, cigarettes, alcohol and flirtation."<sup>127</sup>

Though the Workers Youth Centre attracted no more than 7000 members, mostly young clerical or skilled manual workers, it had a strong impact on the party. Thus Vorrink was elected party president in 1934.<sup>128</sup> However, not all Social Democrats agreed with his approach. Older members often mocked the attempt "to create a new culture by camping on the heath" and pointed out the similarities between the Workers Youth Centre and the reactionary, petty-bourgeois youth movement in Germany.<sup>129</sup> Instead of trying to create a new culture and a proletarian elite, they felt the party should preserve the best from the old bourgeois culture and recruit intellectuals outside the working class.<sup>130</sup>

Both the Workers Youth Centre and its critics agreed, however, that the Social Democratic Workers Party should

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<sup>127</sup> Kuyper, op. cit., p. 24; see also Harmsen, Daan Goulooze, Chapter VIII, 2 and Cohen, op. cit., pp. 211-227.

<sup>128</sup> Cohen, op. cit., pp. 229-244.

<sup>129</sup> Ibid.; cf. W. Bongger, "Intellectuelen en socialisme," De Socialistische Gids 10 (1925): 993-1012.

<sup>130</sup> Bongger, op. cit.

devote more attention to cultural issues and combat the growing materialism in Dutch society. There were different ways to do this. Apart from the Workers Youth Centre, there were workers choirs, workers sporting clubs, a Workers Education Institute and a broadcasting association, the Association of Workers Radio Amateurs (Vereniging van Arbeiders Radio Amateurs, VARA). The latter was founded in 1926 and counted 140,000 members by 1933, almost twice as many as the Social Democratic party. The Association broke the monopoly of the General (i.e. Liberal) Broadcasting Association and was granted equal broadcasting time in 1930.<sup>131</sup> It would broadcast Social Democratic commentaries, songs and plays as well as less political shows.

The interest in cultural issues began to wane again under the impact of the Second World War and its aftermath. Liberation from the German occupation and economic reconstruction required most attention. Social Democracy overcame its isolation and stagnation, but paid a price for it: in 1946 the Social Democratic Workers Party disbanded, its members joined the new Labour Party (Partij van de Arbeid) together with progressive Liberals, Catholics and Protestants. The new party was a "people's party" with a personalist rather than a Marxist philosophy, and a clearly reformist programme. It denounced both capitalism and state socialism, ignored the

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<sup>131</sup>Cornelissen et al., op. cit., p. 246; H. Van Hulst, A. Pleysier and I. Scheffer, Het roode vaandel volgen wij (Utrecht, 1969), pp. 144-145.

class struggle and argued for planning, industrial organisation and social security. Its principles included the fundamental values of family and marriage, the unity of the Dutch nation within Western civilisation, and the ethical foundation of the state.<sup>132</sup>

Yet in spite of its new name and moderate programme, the Labour Party won only 28% of the popular vote in 1946. It had probably retained a Social Democratic and proletarian image in the eyes of the electorate. A large majority of its cadre indeed came from the Social Democratic Workers Party; but according to a survey held around 1955 there were more clerical and administrative workers than manual workers among them.<sup>133</sup> Christian Socialists, who had already played an increasing role within the Social Democratic party in the 1930s, exercised considerable influence; they were allowed to set up a Protestant and a Catholic "working community" (werk-gemeenschap) and to publish a journal.<sup>134</sup>

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<sup>132</sup>"Beginselprogramma van de Partij van de Arbeid," Parlement en Kiezer (1948): 111-116.

<sup>133</sup>Herkomst, Positie en Opvattingen van het kader van de PvdA, (n.p., n.d.), Chapter 1 in particular; 32% of a sample of 486 cadre, i.e. members of local branch committees, were manual workers, 42% clerical or administrative workers, salesmen, etc., 7% professionals and intellectuals.

<sup>134</sup>Christian Socialists had already joined the Social Democratic Workers Party around 1900, but had little influence until the 1930s; in 1946 a small group of Catholics and a larger group of Protestants joined the Labour Party, providing almost 1/4 of the party cadre; cf. W. Banning, Terugblik en perspectief (Baarn, 1972); also D. Houwaart and L. Ruitenbergh, Driekwart eeuw socialisme en religie (Utrecht, 1977); below, Section 1.5.

The Marxist minority of the party was denied this privilege. It tried twice to organise a "Social Democratic Centre" but to no avail; the first time it atrophied within a few years, the second time it was dissolved by the party leadership.<sup>135</sup> Its platform contained New Leftish demands for democratisation of state and economy, a new culture and a new ethic, but also more "Old Leftish" items like the class struggle, the need for socialisation or nationalisation of the means of production, and state planning.<sup>136</sup> The Marxists opposed the corporatist policies of the Social Democratic-Christian coalition, as well as its colonial war against the new Indonesian republic in 1946-1959, though without much effect in either case.

At least in the late 1940s and early 1950s, the coalition with Christian parties seemed to benefit the Labour Party in terms of votes and members.<sup>137</sup> The government improved social security, regulated labour relations and stimulated the economic reconstruction and modernisation of the country. However, by 1960 it had more or less completed its programme. The Christian parties grew tired of Social Democratic reform

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<sup>135</sup> C. Wiedijk, Sam de Wolff en het ontstaan van het Sociaal-Democratisch Centrum in de PvdA (Haarlem, 1971).

<sup>136</sup> The qualification "New Leftish" is relative and loose; in the 1960s most New Leftists would denounce them as "Old Left": see Chapter 2, section 4; also W. Romijn, Het Sociaal-Democratisch Centrum (n.p., n.d.).

<sup>137</sup> By 1956 the Labour Party had 140,000 members and almost 2 million voters, 33% of the popular vote (Kendall, op. cit., pp. 379, 397).

proposals and preferred a coalition with the Liberal Party. At the 1959 elections, the Labour Party lost votes for the first time since its foundation in 1946.<sup>138</sup> The party leadership decided to revise its principles again, eradicating the last remnants of its Marxist heritage. The new declaration of principles was drafted by Willem Banning, a Protestant theologian. It praised free enterprise, cooperation between all classes, parliamentary democracy, religion and authority in general. Income and wealth should be redistributed according to need and achievement, and workers should acquire more influence over their enterprises; but socialisation of a private enterprise was seen as an emergency measure only. Classes would not be abolished, but education would provide all citizens with equal chances to climb the social ladder on the basis of character and ability. If some felt deprived or frustrated, social work was to prevent or solve disruptive social tensions.<sup>139</sup> A young economist, Joop Den Uyl, defended the new principles with a simple statement: "Social Democracy has become bourgeois, and rightly so."<sup>140</sup>

Indeed the Labour Party had been integrated fully into bourgeois society, dominated by an Atlantic bourgeoisie with

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<sup>138</sup> Ibid.

<sup>139</sup> "De in-selprogramma van de Partij van de Arbeid," Parlement en Kiezer (1960): 147-153.

<sup>140</sup> Quoted by S. Couwenberg, Modern Socialisme (Alphen aan de Rijn, 1972), p. 100; the speech was also published as an article: J. Den Uyl, "Marxisme anno 1959," Socialisme en Democratie (1959): 474-483.

a liberal-technocratic or corporatist ideology. In the 1960s the New Left would rebel against all these things, and in the 1970s it would replace the "Old Left" principles of 1959 by New Left principles; yet many of the latter were in fact older than the former. Marxist ideas about class conflict, democratisation and socialisation, but even more clearly Stenhuis's dual strategy, and some of De Man's or Vorrink's ideas about a new culture returned, albeit in a different and often more radical, anarchistic form.<sup>141</sup>

### 1.5 The Christian Left

Christian organisations in Dutch politics have been generally classified as right of centre. The Social Democratic League consisted mostly of Freethinkers and counted the Church among its main enemies. The Social Democratic Workers Party displayed indifference rather than outright hostility, regarding religion as a "private concern" irrelevant to politics. Nevertheless, around 1900 a few Christians, all Protestants, began to move to the Left, drawing socialist conclusions from a radical interpretation of the Gospel. Following Dutch tradition, they divided themselves into liberal

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<sup>141</sup>The "return of ideas" is always relative, since ideas rarely disappear completely; in this case they were probably still present in the minds of somewhat marginal party members, or were given little emphasis--in the case of Vorrink, for instance, who was president of the Labour Party until 1955 but could not save "his" dying Workers Youth Centre; see A. Van der Louw, Rood als je hart, 'n geschiedenis van de AJC (Amsterdam, 1974), pp. 60 ff.

and fundamentalist groups.<sup>142</sup>

The liberal group, led by Dutch Reformed ministers who had studied theology at Leiden University, joined the Social Democratic Workers Party. From 1902 the group published a journal, "The Joyful World" (De Blijde Wereld), which continued after 1931 under the name "Time and Task" (Tijd en Taak). Its influence grew slowly within the party. One of the journal's editors was Willem Banning, who became a member of the Executive Committee and one of the founding fathers of the new Labour Party. He also led the Woodbrokers Institute at Barchem which organised courses and seminars for workers in a liberal Protestant spirit.<sup>143</sup>

The fundamentalist group was led by ministers who had studied theology at the University of Utrecht, as well as by laymen and laywomen. Most of them had been impressed by Abraham Kuyper's critique of capitalism but disappointed by the conservative social policy of his Anti-Revolutionary Party. Considering the Social Democratic Workers Party too atheistic, they founded their own party, the League of Christian Socialists (Bond van Christen-Socialisten) in 1907.<sup>144</sup> At first the League would only admit members who accepted the Calvinist Apostolic Confession. Ignored and often harassed by the

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<sup>142</sup> See Houwaart and Ruitenbergh, op. cit.

<sup>143</sup> Ibid.; also Banning, op. cit., particularly pp. 39-58.

<sup>144</sup> D. Van der Zee, Een tijdsverschijnsel. De voormalige Bond van Christen-Socialisten (The Hague, n.d.), Chapter 2.



Protestant churches, the League could not recruit more than 250 members. It condemned capitalism as a "shame for Christianity" and called for socialisation of the means of production in order to achieve "a Divine moral order in the world, which every Christian is called upon to fight for."<sup>145</sup>

After 1912 the League became more open and more radical. Anyone who believed in "the principle of Divine love" and in Matthew 22:37 and 22:39 could join the party.<sup>146</sup> While some of the older members withdrew, a group of younger members around Bart De Ligt, an orthodox minister who gradually turned to pantheism, began to dominate the League. During the First World War, De Ligt advocated conscientious objection to military service and was imprisoned for a while.<sup>147</sup> Whereas before 1912 Christian Socialists tended to join demonstrations of the Social Democratic Workers Party, after 1914 they often demonstrated together with Revolutionary Socialists and Anarchists. This cooperation led in 1918 to the establishment of a Revolutionary Socialist Caucus which consisted of two Communists, one Christian Socialist--Kruyt, another Protestant minister--and Kolthek, leader of the Socialist Party.<sup>148</sup>

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<sup>145</sup>In Dutch: "een strijd voor Gods zedelijke wereldorde, tot welke te vestigen ... iedere Christen geroepen is," D. Van der Zee, Het Christen-socialisme (Schiedam, n.d.), p. 162.

<sup>146</sup>Van der Zee, *ibid.*, p. 161; he quotes from the new programme of the League; Matthew 22:37 and 39 refer to love also: "Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord, thy God, with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. (This is the first and great commandment.) And the second is like it, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself."

<sup>147</sup>De Ligt, *op. cit.*, pp. 7-29.

<sup>148</sup>Van der Zee, Het Christen-socialisme, Chapters 6-10;

The League of Christian Socialists had won one seat in parliament in 1918 with a rather revolutionary platform. It called for unilateral disarmament, socialisation of the means of production through productive associations, abolition of inheritance, free education, and independence for Indonesia.<sup>149</sup> At the same time the League continued to oppose secular education and pointed out that religion was a "task for life rather than a private concern" (levenstaak, geen privaatzak).<sup>150</sup> It also insisted that the proletariat, while acting as agent of the revolution, ought to "recognise fellow-man even in its enemy" and to "recover the sense of unity of all men ... lost since the Middle Ages due to capitalism."<sup>151</sup>

Soon after 1918 the League fell apart. The member of parliament and a few others joined the Communist Party, a more moderate group went to the Social Democratic Workers Party, and the group around *De Licht* founded the League of Religious Anarchist-Communists.<sup>152</sup> Others kept looking for more explicitly Christian organisations; in 1926 they founded the Christian Democratic Union, together with other

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about Kolthek see above, Section 1.3 (footnote 93 in particular).

<sup>149</sup>Parlement en kiezer (1918): 62-66.

<sup>150</sup>Van der Zee, Het Christen-socialisme, pp. 35 ff, 142-145.

<sup>151</sup>*Ibid.*, (my translation).

<sup>152</sup>About the new League see above, Section 1.3.

small progressive Protestant groups.<sup>153</sup> The new party won 10% of the popular vote in 1933, enough for one seat in parliament; in 1937 it doubled its number of votes and seats.<sup>154</sup> Its programme referred to the Bible and to a conception of responsible rather than competitive social relations. More specific demands resembled those of the Social Democratic Workers Party: workers' participation in industry, more progressive taxes, national disarmament. Unlike the Social Democrats, the Christian Democrats did not drop the demand for national disarmament in the 1930s.<sup>155</sup>

While the Christian Democratic Union united most progressive Protestants, some of them sought contacts with non-Christian religious people in the Religious Socialist Association. Christian Socialists, Theosophists and Pantheists like Henriette Roland Holst--at an earlier stage a "Dutch Marxist"--met there for discussions and conferences.<sup>156</sup>

The Religious Socialist Association did not survive the Second World War. The Christian Democratic Union merged with

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<sup>153</sup> Lipschits, De protestants-christelijke, pp. 53-54; the other groups were the Christian Social Party and the Christian Democratic Party, an offshoot from the Anti-Revolutionary Party; the former combined a progressive economic programme with reactionary demands for a national Protestant (i.e. Dutch Reformed) State.

<sup>154</sup> Lipschits, *ibid.*, p. 57.

<sup>155</sup> The Social Democratic Workers Party dropped it in 1937; for the programme of the Christian Democratic Union see Parlement en Kiezer (1938): 75-77.

<sup>156</sup> Van der Zee, Het Christen-socialisme, Chapter 6; Houwaart and Kuitenberg, *op. cit.*, p. 33; cf. Van Praag, *op. cit.*, p. 121.

the Social Democratic Workers Party and other groups in the new Labour Party. Disappointed by the colonial and defence policy of the Labour Party, several former Christian Democrats joined the left-wing opposition in the party--the Social Democratic Centre around 1950--or left the party altogether. The latter group continued its political activity often through pacifist organisations like Kerk en Vrede (Church and Peace) and played a part in the foundation of the Pacifist Socialist Party in 1957.<sup>157</sup>

The Christian Left did not play an important role in Dutch politics before 1960. It consisted of several small and short-lived groups of intellectuals and very few workers, isolated from the masses and often harassed by the church leadership. Catholics stayed even more faithfully with their own "pillar" than the Protestants. Yet some of these groups produced interesting ideas; in particular the League of Christian Socialists, which anticipated the ideas--as well as some of the development--of the Political Party of Radicals in the late 1960s and early 1970s.<sup>158</sup>

## 1.6 Conclusion

Before contrasting the Old Left with the New Left in the Netherlands, we can sum up some of its characteristics as shown by the historical sketches in this chapter.

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<sup>157</sup>Lipschits, De protestants-christelijke, p. 56; R. Leijser, Socialisme zonder atoombom (Bussum, 1976), pp. 10-13; also Interview 3.

<sup>158</sup>See Chapter 2 section 5 below.

In the first place, the Dutch Left never won a majority of votes or seats in the period 1870-1960. At best it could win 40% of the popular vote, and more often only 30%. Its social base was restricted by the religious segmentation or pillarisation of the Dutch working class and petty bourgeoisie: most Catholic and many Protestant workers remained loyal to the religious trade unions and political parties which opposed the Left. The Old Left reacted to this by building its own pillars and by adopting other religious or quasi-religious traits. Moral and spiritual-ideological questions received considerable attention in party publications and discussions. Furthermore, several (former) religious leaders--specifically Protestant ministers--played an important role in Old Left groups: Doemla Nieuwenhuis, De Ligt, Kruyt, Banning, Buskes....<sup>159</sup>

In the second place, the Old Left fell apart soon after its emergence around 1880. By 1900 one could already distinguish four groupings or tendencies, Revolutionary Socialists, Anarchists, Social Democrats and Christian Leftists. At that time the first three were of almost equal strength. After 1920 Social Democracy dominated the Left, in terms of votes, memberships and influence. Revolutionary Socialists divided

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<sup>159</sup> About Domela Nieuwenhuis, the leader of the Social Democratic League, See Sections 1.2 and 1.3 above; about De Ligt, Sections 1.3 and 1.5; Kruyt was elected member of parliament for the League of Christian Socialists in 1918 but joined the Communist Party in the same year and died as a resistance leader in the Second World War; Banning and Buskes were both active within the Dutch Labour Party, the former on the Right, the latter on the Left (the Social Democratic Centre)--see Section 1.4 and Houwaart and Ruitenbergh, op. cit.

into Communists and "the rest"; the former maintained a solid but isolated proletarian base, while the latter dwindled to small sectarian groups in the 1920s and 1930s. The Anarchist Left disappeared as a political force after 1920, while the Christian Left remained a small and controversial but dedicated group.

Thus by 1960 the Social Democrats, united in the Dutch Labour Party, could determine the image of the Old Left. The Labour Party had become a somewhat bureaucratic mass party, oriented towards election campaigns and government coalitions-- usually with the Catholic Party. It had adopted a reformist, perhaps even bourgeois liberal programme, and dropped any reference to Marx, the proletariat, the class struggle and the like. Although it maintained some interest in workers' co-determination in industry and in cultural policies, it showed more concern with socio-economic policy, and with the Cold War. In the 1960s this party would become the target of most New Left criticism. The Communist Party would share this fate to a lesser extent. In its critique of the Old Left and its attempts to replace or renew it, the New Left would very often revert to ideas of an even older Old Left. These ideas, regarding self-management by workers' councils, direct action and cultural change, have been described briefly in this chapter.

## CHAPTER 2

### THE NEW LEFT IN THE NETHERLANDS (1960-1977)

#### Introduction

This chapter follows the same pattern as the preceding one. The first section offers a brief description of socio-economic and political changes which occurred in the Netherlands between 1960 and 1977: economic growth, the rise of a "new petty bourgeoisie," social and political polarisation, the decline of the consociational "pillarised" system, cultural liberalisation. The next four sections deal with the main New Left groups in the Netherlands, the Pacifist Socialist Party, Provo, Nieuw Links and the Political Party of Radicals. At the end of each section the New Left group will be compared briefly with similar Old Left groups, described in Chapter One.

The Pacifist Socialist Party could be considered the oldest New Left group. Founded in 1957 by people who had, in many cases, belonged to Old Left groups, it appeared far from new to many critical observers. In many respects the new party continued the Revolutionary Socialist tradition of the Revolutionary Socialist (Workers) Party, the Communist Workers Party or even the Social Democratic League of the late 1880s. Yet it differed from all these in some important

aspects, particularly in its social base, its "dual strategy," and its ideas about ethics and culture. However, not all members of the party were happy about these differences; the "New Left tendency" could only dominate the party after bitter internal conflicts throughout the 1960s and 1970s, and its victory may have been a pyrrhic one.

Provo was a very small and ephemeral group which resembled in many ways the group of young Anarchists around the journal De Moker (The Sledgehammer) or the "Take and Eat" people of the 1920s and 1930s. Their goals were very similar, but their strategies differed significantly. Provo's "two hand" strategy of provocation and reformism, typically New Left, proved much more successful than the revolutionary extremism of the Old Left Anarchists. Provo was succeeded by the "Elf Movement" (Kabouters), which seemed to pursue the "two hand" or dual strategy to absurd lengths. Their utopian experiments could be compared to the efforts of the Association for Common Landownership.

The semi-organised group within the Dutch Labour Party which called itself "New Left" (Nieuw Links) borrowed its ideas from Provo and the Pacifist Socialist Party rather than from older leftist Social Democratic groups. While in some things it resembled the groups around De Nieuwe Tijd, Stenhuis and De Kadt, as well as Vorrink's Workers Youth Centre, their approach was quite different, and more effective. The group practically conquered the party and changed its programme as well as--to a lesser extent--its organisation. However,



these changes may have appeared more dramatic than they really were.

The Political Party of Radicals followed--no doubt unintentionally--the example of the League of Christian Socialists. Founded as moderate, almost Social Democratic but Christian groups, both radicalised and secularised rapidly. Both were influenced by anarchist and revolutionary socialist ideas. However, the League remained small and powerless, whereas the Political Party of Radicals became a real political force. There are other differences as well, such as the dual strategy and the emphasis on self-development or self-expression of the Radicals.

In the concluding section of this chapter the four New Left groups are compared with each other. In spite of different historical and cultural backgrounds they seem to have shared at least three basic characteristics that distinguish them from Old Left groups (as well as groups of the Right). Firstly, they all strove for a fundamental democratisation of Dutch society, and more specifically for workers' self-management in industry. Secondly, they pursued a dual or "two hand" strategy of direct, extra-parliamentary action "from above." This strategy implied a new type of political organisation; it tended to go together with a new petty-bourgeois social base. Thirdly, the New Left groups aimed at a "cultural revolution" which would orient people towards creativity, self-expression and peaceful cooperation instead of material goods, work, achievement and competition.

Taken together, these three characteristics define the Dutch New Left. The next chapter will examine whether this definition can be applied to the French and German New Left as well. It will also contain a schematic comparison of the development of New Left groups within the three countries.

## 2.1 Dutch society and politics (1960-1977)

The 1960s and early 1970s were years of economic, social, political and cultural change in the Netherlands. They can be summed up in terms like economic growth, mass consumption, the rise of a new petty-bourgeoisie, social and political polarisation, depillarisation and cultural liberalisation.<sup>1</sup>

Production continued to grow at a rate of 6% a year until 1971 when it started to slow down; it decreased, for the first time since the war, in 1975, but went up again by 1976.<sup>2</sup> Industrial production increased faster, but employed fewer people in the 1970s than in the 1960s. Only chemical industries and oil refineries expanded their work force, while textile, leather and food industries reduced their work force considerably.<sup>3</sup> But while employment stagnated in industry and declined in agriculture—from 10.7% to 6.1% of the work force—through the 1960s, more jobs were created in

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<sup>1</sup>R. Inglehart, "Political Dissatisfaction and Mass Support for Social Change in Advanced Industrial Society," Comparative Political Studies 10:3 (1977): 455-472.

<sup>2</sup>OECD Economic Survey of the Netherlands, 1977.

<sup>3</sup>ILO Yearbook 1976.

commerce, transport and public or private services. However, after 1970 employment started to stagnate in the service sector and to decline in industry, so that unemployment and underemployment rose rather quickly, from 1.4% of the dependent work force in 1970 to 5.1% by 1975 (registered unemployed).<sup>4</sup> Differentiating between occupational categories, one observes between 1960 and 1971, an increase of professional and technical workers (from 9.2% to 13.3% of the work force), clerical workers (from 12.3% to 15.4%) and of sales workers, at least insofar as they were wage-earners rather than self-employed; the latter category declined from 3.8% to 3.1%.<sup>5</sup> The number of managerial or administrative workers and of production workers rose, but their proportion of the work force dropped slightly over the same period. The percentage of self-employed workers declined in all categories. One could infer therefore that the traditional petty bourgeoisie declined while the new petty-bourgeoisie grew.

Concentration and centralization of capital increased, particularly after the "wage explosion" of 1964, as the growing number of mergers and take-overs indicates. By 1970, the 10 largest industrial corporations of the Netherlands employed 24% of the industrial work force. The turnover of the 4 largest of them (Royal Dutch Shell, Unilever, Philips and AKZO) was estimated at \$21,100,000,000 while the Dutch

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<sup>4</sup>OECD Economic Survey of the Netherlands, 1977.

<sup>5</sup>ILO Yearbook 1976.

Gross National Product was calculated at \$28,400,000,000 in the same year.<sup>6</sup> The Dutch economy may well be "entirely dominated by the sheer size of the first four companies and through their joint structure," as Levinson has asserted.<sup>7</sup> These four corporations had their head offices in the Netherlands (as well as in Britain, in the case of Shell and Unilever) but employed more workers in other countries than at home. Their foreign investment and exports of goods and services, as well as that of many smaller companies made the Dutch economy more and more dependent on foreign markets.<sup>8</sup>

Yet the domestic market expanded also during the 1960s, particularly for durable consumer goods. The number of registered television sets increased from 1,040,000 in 1960 to 3,086,000 in 1974.<sup>9</sup> Consumption of non-material goods increased almost as fast. The number of students at universities more than doubled between 1960 and 1970. The public sector grew, both in terms of people employed--13% of the work force by 1975--and money spent; 31% of the National Income of 1974 was spent on taxes, and 20% on social security payments, compared to 25% and 9% respectively in 1960.<sup>10</sup>

The rapid growth of production and the increasing shortage

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<sup>6</sup>C. Levinson, Capital, Inflation and the Multinationals (London, 1971).

<sup>7</sup>Ibid., p. 80.

<sup>8</sup>Van Doorn et al., De beheerste vakbeweging (Amsterdam, 1976), pp. 321 ff.

<sup>9</sup>CBS, Historical Statistics of the Netherlands (The Hague, 1975).

<sup>10</sup>Van Doorn et al., op. cit., p. 566.

of labour, as well as inflation, undermined the policy of rigorous wage restraints enforced throughout the 1950s by centralized corporatist institutions like the Social Economic Council. The Liberal-Confessional coalition that came to power in 1959 tried to differentiate between more and less productive sectors when allowing wage increases, but clashed repeatedly with the trade unions, particularly the Social Democratic NVV. Unlike the Confessional unions, the NVV preferred a centralized wage policy to a differentiated one. It found a temporary ally in the Liberal Federation of Employers, but eventually both came to accept the trend towards differentiation and free bargaining. The second Liberal-Confessional coalition, which took office in 1963, left most of the decisions concerning wages to the Foundation of Labour (consisting of representatives of employers and unions). A series of strikes, usually initiated outside the official unions, led to a "wage explosion" in 1964 which brought Dutch wages close to the European average. After 1964, conflict between employers and unions began to reduce the effectiveness of the Foundation of Labour. A coalition of Social Democrats and two Confessional parties attempted to regain control over wages in 1965, but was voted out of office in 1966. Thus free bargaining appeared inevitable; only independent businessmen continued to fight it.<sup>11</sup>

When another Liberal-Confessional coalition tried to

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<sup>11</sup>Most of this and the following paragraph is based on Van Doorn et al., op. cit.; and on Windmuller, op. cit.

restrict wages and cancel collective contracts again in 1968, the unions effectively opposed it. The three major unions also fought a new Wage Bill which institutionalized free bargaining but allowed for government interference in certain cases. In spite of a one hour general strike organized by the NVV the bill became law in 1970. The law did away with the Board of Government Mediators, and reduced the function of the Social Economic Council to general advice. The trade union centres lost some of their power to their member unions, and could now devote more attention to political issues like industrial democracy, protection of the environment and government spending. The member unions which negotiated wage agreements began to consult their rank and file. The Catholic and the Social Democratic unions of industrial workers introduced plant committees (bedrijfscontactcommissies) and shop stewards (bedrijfscontactman) although they maintained territorial units (districten) as the basis of their organization.<sup>12</sup>

Workers became more militant during the late 1960s, encouraged by some trade union leaders and staff members organized loosely in a Working Party for a Critical Trade Union Movement (Werkgroep voor een Maatschappijkritische Vakbeweging), but also by Marxist-Leninist groups outside the unions. In 1970, a Maoist committee called Workers Power (Arbeidersmacht) led a march of 10,000 striking dock workers

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<sup>12</sup>Van Doorn, op. cit., pp. 472-475; Harmsen and Reinalda, op. cit., pp. 387-389.

in protest to the office of the Social Democratic Transport Workers Union when the latter ended its support for the dockers strike in Rotterdam.<sup>13</sup> In the early 1970s, rising inflation and unemployment were met by government and employers with cutbacks, price and fee increases--university fees were raised by 500% for example--as well as lay-offs; the unions reacted by offering wage restraints in exchange for more jobs and public services. When AKZO planned to close down an important chemical plant in Breda, the unions supported the occupation of the plant by the workers and achieved a modification of the plan.<sup>14</sup> While attempts at trilateral social contracts (between government, employers and unions) failed in 1972 and 1973, the number of strike days increased from 96,8000 in 1971 to 583,800 in 1973, the highest number since 1946. One of the main reasons for the strikes was the union demand for wage increases "in cents instead of percentages" (centen in plaats van procenten) to reduce the inequality of incomes; both employers and unions of senior employees--growing rapidly in those years--opposed the demand bitterly, but ended up conceding most of it.<sup>15</sup>

The trend towards radicalization and polarization of class conflicts was soon reversed, however, when the Labour Party returned to government in a coalition with Liberal

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<sup>13</sup>Van Doorn, op. cit., p. 370; Harmsen and Reinalda, op. cit., pp. 383-385.

<sup>14</sup>Harmsen and Reinalda, op. cit., pp. 402-404.

<sup>15</sup>Van Doorn, op. cit., pp. 484-503, 535.

Democrats, Radicals and some Confessionals in 1973. To counter the effects of the oil embargo in the fall of 1973 the government introduced a Special Powers Bill to control wages, prices, dividends and other incomes. Thanks to domestic natural gas resources, the energy crisis passed quickly, but the government continued to regulate wages and prices. The unions, unable to reach agreements with the employers, and faced with growing unemployment, grudgingly accepted wage restraints in exchange for (modest) expansion of the public service sector. Only towards the end of 1976 did the government return to a more liberal policy, allowing free bargaining and restricting the growth of the public sector. Yet when bargaining broke down again, this time over price compensation, and unions organized "spearpoint strikes" in several sectors, the government mediated a compromise. The strikes showed that the unions had not yet returned to the complacency and class cooperation of the 1950s.<sup>16</sup>

Both the Catholic and the Social Democratic Trade Union Centres, since 1976 united in a Federation of Dutch Trade Unions (FNV), tried to develop a strategy of limited class conflicts aiming at a new socio-economic order of democratic planning and social ownership of the means of production under workers self-management. Proceeding step by step,

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<sup>16</sup>Ibid., p. 538; OECD, op. cit.; Keesing's Contemporary Archives, 1974, p. 26838A; Peper in S. Barkin, ed., Worker Militancy and Its Consequences (New York, 1975), pp. 118-153.



they hoped to expand the powers of Works Councils and plant committees while reducing that of shareholders and directors, and to accumulate capital gains or surplus profits in funds controlled by the workers.<sup>17</sup> The government introduced legislation concerning works Councils and profit sharing (vermogensaanwasdeling), but failed to enact it due to resistance from Christian Democrats and Liberals.

Polarization and politicization characterized not only Dutch trade unions and their opponents in this period, but also categories like students, artists, conscripts, women, farmers, Catholics and professionals. In fact, farmers had organized the first political action group in the Netherlands in order to protest against the corporatist Public Organization of Agriculture (Landbouwschap) and its mandatory membership. When the action group of Free Farmers refused to pay the membership fee, many of their farms were confiscated and sold. Subsequently, the action group became a political party, the Boerenpartij (Farmers Party), which won 3 seats in parliament in 1963 and 7 seats (4.7% of the popular vote) in 1967.<sup>18</sup> The successes of the Farmers Party in rural Catholic and Protestant areas, as well as in some urban strongholds of the Labour Party, scared the leaders of these parties out of their consociational complacency. The Farmers Party declined

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<sup>17</sup>NRC, 31 May 1977, 11 June 1977, 1 December 1977.

<sup>18</sup>A. Nooij, De Boerenpartij (Meppel, 1969), pp. 32-46. The Public Organisation of Agriculture was set up by the government as an agency to regulate production and distribution. Like a municipality, it could regulate and tax its members and the members were represented through "official" unions.

soon after 1967, but a host of other new parties took over its function of expressing general discontent; together they won 28% of the popular vote in 1971. The most important of them, as well as the most permanent one, seems to be Democrats '66. This was founded in 1966 by liberal intellectuals who felt ill at ease in the rather conservative Liberal Party (VVD), and who hoped to replace the pillarized multi-party system by a more open bipolar party system through electoral reforms.<sup>19</sup>

The multiplication of protest parties and action groups, and the corresponding decline of the major parties, made elite accommodation between the latter increasingly difficult. After the breakdown of the Catholic-Labour coalition in 1958, a Liberal-Confessional coalition stayed in power till it also broke down in 1965, apparently because of divergent views about commercial television.<sup>20</sup> The Catholic-Labour coalition was restored, with Anti-Revolutionary support, but was voted out of office in 1966 by a majority of Catholics, Liberals and Christian-Historicals who objected to expansion of the public sector. They formed another Liberal-Confessional coalition with the Anti-Revolutionaries which governed until 1971. In the general elections of that year the coalition, which had tried to accommodate action groups and unions with

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<sup>19</sup>J. Gruijters, *Daarom D'66* (Amsterdam, 1967); J. Godschalk, "Enige politieke en sociale kenmerken van de oprichters van D'66," *Acta Politica* 5 (1969-70): 62-74.

<sup>20</sup>J. Bosmans in Manning *et al.*, op. cit., pp. 2307-2311.

rather modest reforms, lost its majority. A fifth party joined the coalition, Democratic Socialists '70, which had broken away from the Labour Party in 1970 and won 8 seats (5.3% of the popular vote) in the parliament of 1971. A year later it left the coalition in disagreement over economic policy, government cutbacks, and wage and price controls. New elections were held which confronted the five rightist parties with a progressive alliance of the Labour Party, the Political Party of Radicals and Democrats '66. The latter alliance won and the former lost several seats, but neither block gained a majority big enough to govern.<sup>21</sup>

After five months of negotiations, a progressive coalition cabinet took office with ministers (and conditional support) from the Catholic Party and the Anti-Revolutionary Party. The government introduced many reforms, but was often paralyzed by internal conflicts and restrained by worsening economic conditions. It collapsed in March 1977, only a few months before the end of its term, when the Confessional ministers resigned over a bill against land speculation. The three Confessional parties had merged in a Christian Democratic Appeal (CDA) in 1976, and managed to halt their electoral decline--from 49% in 1963 to 31% in 1972--at the 1977 elections. The Liberal Party, which had led a strong opposition, increased its number of seats to 28 (17.9% of the vote), but the Labour Party did even better with 53 seats (33.8%).<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>21</sup>D. Houwaart, Storm rond partij en parlement (Apeldoorn, 1973).

<sup>22</sup>NRC, 26 May 1977.

Negotiations began between Labour and the Christian Democrats but broke down after six months. A Liberal-Christian Democratic coalition came about in December 1977, ending the longest governmental crisis in Dutch history.<sup>23</sup>

Most political scientists concluded that the Dutch political system had been in a crisis since 1966. According to Van der Berg and Molleman, the party leaders of the 1960s, who had replaced the generation of post-war Reconstructors, could not cope with the pressure from political activists and interest groups. Consequently, they gave way around 1970 to a new generation of more aggressive and less accommodation-oriented leaders who sought polarisation and publicity rather than compromise and secrecy.<sup>24</sup>

Socio-economic and political change coincided with cultural liberalization and depillarization. In the 1960s Dutch people turned away from puritan work ethics and sexual repression towards more hedonistic and secular moral values.<sup>25</sup> While the Confessional parties lost votes, the Churches lost members and attendance, though at a slower rate. In many respects the Catholic Church under the influence of Vaticanum II and modern theologians like Schillebeeckx, encouraged the liberalization process and stopped supporting the Catholic

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<sup>23</sup> Keesing's Contemporary Archives, 1978, p. 28837A; see also R. Andeweg, et al., Kabinets formatie 1977 (Leiden, n.d.).

<sup>24</sup> Van den Berg and Molleman, op. cit., pp. 133-164; see also Daalder, op. cit.; and S. Wolinetz, Party Realignment in the Netherlands (New Haven, 1973).

<sup>25</sup> Emde Boas in Manning, et al., op. cit., pp. 3216-3222.

Party.<sup>26</sup> As in other countries, a youth culture developed that cut through religious and class barriers while emphasizing immediate individual experience--in music, speech, dance and sexual relations--rather than long-term collective or institutional action.<sup>27</sup> A militant student movement--first organized as a Student Trade Union Movement on the French UNEF model, but after 1968 increasingly fragmented in local action groups--mobilized and politicized both secular and Catholic or Protestant students; in fact its strongholds were in the Catholic universities of Nijmegen and Tilburg, where Marxist and Maoist groups exercised a strong influence.<sup>28</sup> The mass media, above all television, reached members of almost all religious groups. While the Catholic, Protestant and Socialist Broadcasting Systems declined or stagnated--around 500,000 members each--the more liberal and less pillarized General Broadcasting System and the conservative "populist" TROS System grew rapidly and claimed 750,000 members each in 1977.<sup>29</sup> Many Catholic, Protestant and Socialist voters appeared to prefer the programmes of the TROS to those of their own pillars.<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>26</sup> Goddijn in Manning, et al., op. cit., pp. 2201-2204; H. Bakvis, Electoral stability and Electoral Change, the Case of the Catholic Party in the Netherlands (Doctoral dissertation; publication forthcoming). The Second Vatican Council encouraged individual freedom and tolerance within the Catholic Church.

<sup>27</sup> De Haas, in Manning, et al., op. cit., pp. 3203-3205.

<sup>28</sup> Smeets, in Manning, et al., op. cit., pp. 3321-3324; see also H. Kijne, Geschiedenis van de Nederlandse studentenbeweging (Amsterdam, 1978).

<sup>29</sup> NRC, 8 June 1977.

<sup>30</sup> C. Boef, "Wetenschap, VARA en nog wat," Socialisme

One could argue, therefore, that Catholics, Calvinists and Socialists have finally achieved equality and emancipation in Dutch society.<sup>31</sup> Surveys show a trend away from reformism in public opinion after 1973.<sup>32</sup> Perhaps proletarian as well as traditional petty bourgeois subcultures have been replaced, to some extent, by a more liberal and hedonistic, but essentially bourgeois culture or ideology. This interpretation would fit in with the observations made above concerning the growth of the Liberal party and liberal mass media as well as multinational corporations. On the other hand, fractions of the new petty bourgeoisie and the working class have been radicalized in action groups and trade unions, as well as in political parties of the Left. The religious pillars have partly broken down, and the historical compromise between their petty bourgeois segments and the bourgeoisie has lost most of its impact. It remains to be seen whether the new petty bourgeoisie that has almost replaced the traditional one will make a new compromise with the bourgeoisie or, perhaps, ally itself with the proletariat. The latter may occur, as I will argue below, through the New Left parties which find a social base in the new petty bourgeoisie.

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en Democratie (1976): 370-382.

<sup>31</sup>Daalder, op. cit., p. 47.

<sup>32</sup>Inglehart, op. cit., pp. 455 ff; see also, NRC, 2 April 1977; for another interpretation, see B. Tromp, "Restauratie, de mythe van de jaren zeventig," Vrij Nederland, 24 December 1977.

Now that the most important changes of the Dutch political system have been mentioned, perhaps a few words should be said about its stable features. From 1814, the Netherlands have been a relatively decentralised unitary state and a constitutional monarchy. According to the constitution, the monarch shared the legislative authority with parliament and appointed a cabinet or government "at his/her pleasure". By 1870, however, parliament had established its supremacy and its control over the government. Henceforth, most governments consisted of ministers who enjoyed the support of a parliamentary majority.

Parliament consisted of two houses, or chambers; the First Chamber or Senate was elected by the states or councils of the eleven provinces that make up the Netherlands, while the Second Chamber was elected directly by the electorate. The Second Chamber, which had more powers than the First Chamber, was elected by universal suffrage and proportional representation since 1917. Its members represented a wide spectrum of political parties, ranging from the extreme right to the extreme left. Due to the electoral system of proportional representation and the absence of an electoral threshold any group or list of candidates that gathered a minimum of about 50,000 votes (to be more precise:  $\frac{2}{3}$  of  $\frac{1}{150}$ th of the electorate) would gain a seat in the Second Chamber. The extreme Right consisted of small but stable fundamentalist Calvinist parties and small but less stable secular parties that could be described as 'right wing populist' or even fascist. Most important were the moderate confessional parties of the Right, of which the

Catholic Party was the largest. Together with two Protestant parties, the Anti-Revolutionary Party and the Christian Historical Union, the Catholic Party dominated almost all governments between 1917 and 1973. The Dutch liberals remained rarely united in one party but were usually divided into right wing and left wing groups, one of which might enter government while the other would occupy some of the opposition benches. About the Left, enough has been said in the preceding Chapter and the remaining sections of this chapter.



## 2.2 The Revolutionary Socialist New Left: the Pacifist Socialist Party

After 1945, several groups sprang up to the left of the Labour Party that could claim to continue the Revolutionary Socialist tradition in the Netherlands. All but one failed to build a stable party organization or to win at least one seat in parliament; therefore this section deals with only one party.

The Pacifist Socialist Party was founded in 1957 by a group of pacifists and leftist socialists who had gone through several other attempts to build a party and even tried to operate within the Labour Party on the condition that they would have one member in parliament. When the Labour Party turned them down, they continued alone. Of its founding members, 20% came from Kerk en Vrede (Church and Peace) a Protestant pacifist group, 15% from De Derde Weg (The Third Way), a group of intellectuals opposed to the Cold War and nuclear arms, 25% had been members of the Labour Party, 5% of the Communist Party, 12% of the pre-war Christian Socialists, 4% of the Liberal Democratic League--also an antimilitarist party before 1940--and 25% of various post-war parties left of the Labour Party.<sup>33</sup> A large number belonged to the Dutch Reformed Church (29%) but dissenters of all kinds--Quakers, Theosophists, Free Masons, World Federalists, Esperantists, Vegetarians--were well represented; only

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<sup>33</sup>Van der Land, op. cit., Chapter 2 and 6; categories overlap.

Catholics failed to join at all. Almost half of the founding members were intellectuals or professionals, particularly teachers and ministers; 21% were clerical workers and only 9% manual workers.<sup>34</sup>

At its first congress the party adopted a rather short programme and declaration of principles, concentrated on three basic issues: disarmament, economic democracy and spiritual renewal. International and national disarmament, if necessary on a unilateral basis, received priority both in the programme and the name of the party, as well as in the columns of the party journal Bevrijding (Liberation). The second issue, industrial or economic democracy, was often discussed by the first party chairman, Van Steenis, who saw his own cooperative engineering bureau as a model for the future; however, it remained a little vague in the party programme. The last statement applies also to the third plank of the programme, a "spiritual renewal" of moral values and ways of thinking, to replace materialism, embourgeoisement and competitiveness by love, cooperation and free personal development. The only concrete proposal here refers to a national broadcasting system that should help to break down pillarization.<sup>35</sup> Yet the third issue was considered very important, particularly by Van Steenis who wrote: "the revolution we preach is an inward rather than an outward

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<sup>34</sup>Ibid. (on paper there was one Catholic; however he had previously been a Communist and (theosophist) Free Catholic).

<sup>35</sup>Bevrijding, 20 February 1957.

revolution ... a revolution of the spirit."<sup>36</sup> Rejecting both capitalism and communism, he defined his party as "not on the Left ... not on the Right... but certainly not in between."<sup>37</sup>

No wonder most commentators predicted that the party was going nowhere. Schaper, an historian and member of the Labour Party, compared it to a comet that drew a lot of attention but would disappear quickly.<sup>38</sup> De Kadt, also a member of the Labour Party and a former Revolutionary Socialist, passed a more severe judgment on the new party: "nothing but a substitute Communist Party with an atomic (bomb) touch ... to be regarded as a case of political pathology."<sup>39</sup> The hostile reaction of Social Democrats towards the PSP can be explained partly in terms of the votes that the Labour Party lost to its leftist rival, beginning with provincial elections in 1958 when the PSP campaigned for "Socialism without the Atom bomb"; even worse, voters who switched from PvdA to PSP appeared to be young civil servants and employees, i.e. categories in which the PvdA (Labour Party) showed particular interest.<sup>40</sup> Other

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<sup>36</sup>Ibid., my translation of "De revolutie die wij prediken is meer een innerlijke dan een uiterlijke revolutie ... een revolutie van de geest."

<sup>37</sup>Ibid., in Dutch "We zij niet links, we zij niet rechts, maar we zijn er zeker niet tussen in."

<sup>38</sup>B. Schaper, "De PSP, planeet of staartster?," Socialisme en Democratie (1958): 366-373.

<sup>39</sup>J. De Kadt, "Na de nederlaag," Socialisme en Democratie (1958): 431 ff.

<sup>40</sup>A. Van Braam, "Misnoegen der middengroepen," *ibid.*,

parties were hardly less hostile, even if they did not ignore the newcomer completely. A Catholic newspaper called the PSP "another invasion route for the Kremlin", and an Anti-Revolutionary paper described it as "a Trojan horse ... threatening Western culture and freedom."<sup>41</sup> A member of the Communist Party on the other hand accused the PSP of being "part of the great conspiracy of imperialists against peace" and a "bourgeois obstacle in the labour movement," "petty bourgeois" "parliamentarist" and anti-communist, though in a more subtle way than the PvdA.<sup>42</sup>

The Pacifist Socialists replied in kind to their critics. They advertised Pacifist Socialism as an alternative to Communism and denounced the lack of democracy within the CPN and within Russia.<sup>43</sup> They mocked the PvdA as "a confessional party for non-believers," a "party of yesterday" and "a government party at rest rather than an opposition party" after it had left the government. Moreover the Labour Party leadership was criticized for its betrayal of socialist and internationalist principles and for its authoritarian action both within the party and in government. In criticizing the latter, the Pacifist Socialists agreed to some extent with

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pp. 510-535; also R. Leijser, Socialisme zonder Atoombom (Bussum, 1976), pp. 23-24.

<sup>41</sup>De Tijd, quoted by Van der Land, op. cit., p. 53; Trouw, 12 February 1960.

<sup>42</sup>R. Haks, "Vier jaar praktijk van de PSP," Politiek en Cultuur (1961): 108-119 and 173-182.

<sup>43</sup>Bevrijding, 31 December 1957; January 1960; 6 July 1961.

the Liberals who never ceased to attack "dirigisme," the bureaucratic intervention of the state in society.<sup>44</sup> The two parties also shared a rather critical attitude towards corporatist institutions and codetermination as favored by both Confessional and Social Democratic parties and unions. Of course they criticized these institutions for different reasons: the Liberals for their restrictions on free enterprise, the Pacifist Socialists for their lack of democracy and grass root participation.<sup>45</sup> At times the PSP went beyond verbal criticism and took action in support of wild cat strikes and unofficial unions like the syndicalist Confederation of Independent Industrial Organizations (OVB): as, for example, when fishermen near The Hague rejected a union contract and went on strike, the PSP collected money for their strike fund, while the official unions tried to break the strike.<sup>46</sup>

That kind of action occurred rarely, however, in the early years of the party's history. Demonstrations against the atom bomb and against Dutch military action in New Guinea--claimed and infiltrated by Indonesia in the 1950s and finally surrendered in 1962--were more common but rather modest in terms of numbers.<sup>47</sup> After 1962 (also the year of the Cuba

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<sup>44</sup> Bevrijding, March 1958; April 1958; January 1961; etc.

<sup>45</sup> Bevrijding, 6 March 1959, 17 September 1959, etc; however the PSP was more critical than the Liberal Party.

<sup>46</sup> Bevrijding, 25 January 1964; see also Leijser, op. cit., p. 28.

<sup>47</sup> Bevrijding, 12 August 1960 and 20 January 1961.

crisis and detente afterwards), attention began to shift away from pacifist issues towards socio-economic and domestic issues. Articles in the party journal Bevrijding, sold in the streets at 10,000 or even 15,000 copies, reflect this trend.<sup>48</sup> From a "pressure group for peace" (Van der Land) or a "disinfection centre against militarist thinking" (Van Steenis) the PSP had grown into a full-fledged political party with almost 4000 members and four seats in parliament by 1963.<sup>49</sup> When the Socialist Workers Party and the Social Democratic Centre in the Labour Party were dissolved (in 1965 and 1959 respectively), most of their members seem to have joined the PSP.<sup>50</sup> At the same time some pacifist members left the party, which had in their eyes fallen prey to "dogmatic socialism" and "anti-Americanism."

Thus the continuity between the Revolutionary Socialist Old Left and the PSP became more obvious in the 1960s. Yet other traditions, particularly Anarchism and Social Democracy,

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<sup>48</sup> Bevrijding counted 48 pages in 1957, i.e. 4 pages per issue; roughly 9 pages were devoted to problems of peace and war, 8 to other international questions, 8 to socio-economic issues and 2 to other domestic affairs. In 1964 Bevrijding counted 200 pages, i.e. 8 pages per issue; roughly 40 pages (20%) were devoted to problems of peace and war, 55 (27%) to other international issues, 45 (23%) to socio-economic ones, 20 (10%) to other domestic affairs.

<sup>49</sup> Van der Land, op. cit., pp. 128 ff; see also Van Steenis, in Bevrijding, June 1957.

<sup>50</sup> On the Socialist Workers Party, see Chapter 1, section 2 above; on the Social Democratic Centre in the Labour Party, see Chapter 1, section 4 above.

continued to inspire the party as well.<sup>51</sup> According to a survey held in 1963, the party membership had become more secular and more proletarian since 1957. In 1963, more than 60% of the members did not belong to a Protestant or Catholic church, compared to 56% in 1957. Also in 1963, 24% of the members were manual workers, 15% clerical workers, and 26% intellectual workers or professionals; in 1957 these numbers were 9%, 21% and 46% respectively.<sup>52</sup> As an interesting detail, the first two party chairmen, as well as the two members of parliament elected in 1959 were Protestants; two of the four had studied theology. In 1963, the two theologians had been succeeded by more secular people.

Before 1963 the party had been far from homogeneous, but Christian Socialists and Pacifists, Social Democrats and Revolutionary Socialists had respected a certain division of labour in the party, allowing the Pacifists to write and talk about war and peace, while Socialists with a Marxist background would analyze and comment on wages and prices.<sup>53</sup> Even then there had been a few debates, e.g. about the class struggle, which one leading member (a former Social Democrat) considered outdated, and another one (a Christian Socialist) inevitable; or about violence and revolution in the Third World; however,

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<sup>51</sup>Van der Land, op. cit., Chapter 6; Cornelissen in Vrij Nederland, 27 October 1962; other traditions will be discussed later.

<sup>52</sup>PSP Hoe en wat (Amsterdam, n.d.), p. 7.

<sup>53</sup>My impression from reading Bevrijding, confirmed in interview 3.

significant debates about theory or strategy were rare in that period.<sup>54</sup> Between 1963 and 1967 the party continued to grow, reaching a peak of 300,000 votes (5%) at the provincial elections of 1966; membership never exceeded 5,500, but turnover seemed quite high. This period of relative consolidation marked the beginning of internal party debate and conflict.<sup>55</sup>

Debates were usually of a low theoretical level--due to a lack of political education of the members, as party leaders later admitted--and positions rarely crystallized into tendencies or factions. Only the Trotskyites, who had usually come to the party through the Social Democratic Centre, started organizing a faction around 1966 which later took the name "Proletarian Left" (Proletarisch Links). Confrontation with this faction forced the rest of the party to elaborate alternative ideas and strategies in the late 1960s, so that by 1969 one could distinguish roughly three tendencies within the party:

(I) The Proletarian Left, hoping to turn the PSP into a Revolutionary Socialist Workers Party of class-conscious cadres spearheading and coordinating the class struggle in factories and elsewhere, which the Trotskyites felt was going to reach a revolutionary stage, possibly very quickly. As a first step the party should give priority to socio-economic questions like workers control and price inflation rather than

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<sup>54</sup> Bevrijding, April and May 1957; 21 June 1963, etc.

<sup>55</sup> Leijser, op. cit., p. 32.



to war and peace.<sup>56</sup> Furthermore, the party should contact other revolutionary groups like the Fourth International, Maoists and independent Socialists in order to build the Revolutionary Socialist Workers Party.

(II) A "structural reformist" tendency, dominated to some extent--particularly after 1970--by Marxists who had come to the PSP through the Socialist Workers Party, or who agreed with the former but had joined the PSP after 1965, but also joined by many Pacifists. Observing the renewal of the Labour Party and the emergence of Christian Radicals and Democrats '66, they advocated a Progressive Alliance of the PSP with these parties in order to achieve structural reforms like central investment planning and nationalizations, as well as industrial democracy. The PSP would act as a pacifist and socialist pressure group within the Progressive Alliance, and possibly as a bridge between it and the Communist Party.<sup>57</sup>

(III) A rather heterogeneous tendency, identified at times with the New Left, insisting on the independence of the PSP and on involvement in extra-parliamentary action rather than reformism, but opposed to the "economism" and "Leninism" of Proletarian Left; it united old-time Pacifists, Revolutionary Socialists, and anti-authoritarian Socialists or Anarchists of old and New (Provo) varieties; they often defined the PSP

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<sup>56</sup>When this debate started, the PSP devoted most attention to the Vietnam War and the monarchy-question in the Netherlands: about 15% and 19% respectively of Bevrijding, 1966.

<sup>57</sup>Bevrijding, 24 October 1964; e.g. Harmsen.

as a "conscience party" representing the long-term interests of humanity rather than the short-term or material interests of (manual) workers only.<sup>58</sup> With its emphasis on self-management, direct action and cultural issues, it fully deserved the label "New Left" as defined above; whereas the tendencies I and II also called for self-management but showed less interest in direct action and cultural revolution.

The history of the PSP from 1967 to 1977 is largely the history of conflicts between these three tendencies. Though the "structural reformist" tendency (II) prevailed in the executive committee from 1967 to 1973, none of the tendencies won a clear majority during that period. The open and relatively democratic structure of the PSP allowed all three to pursue their own strategies almost independently; local and regional branches enjoyed substantial autonomy of action, and could check the executive committee through Party Congress as well as Party Council, a kind of parliament elected by the regional branches.<sup>59</sup>

The revolutionary tendency Proletarian Left, which controlled the important Amsterdam branch of 750 members, initiated some actions like information and legal aid for

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<sup>58</sup> Bevrijding, 26 September 1964 (Engels), 10 October 1964; Radikaal, 22 May 1968; N.B. since 1966 the party journal has been called Radikaal (Radical).

<sup>59</sup> Cf. Lipschits, "De organisatorische structuur der Nederlandse politieke partijen," Acta Politica 2 (1966-67): 265-296.

tenants in conflict with their landlords.<sup>60</sup> In 1969, its adherents organized an open conference to discuss a revolutionary socialist alliance with other Trotskyites, Maoists and the like. The conference, financed by the PSP, produced a Tentative Programme based on a Marxist analysis of monopoly capitalism, and including a list of demands that appeared incompatible with capitalism but that would raise anti-capitalist consciousness;<sup>61</sup> but it produced no unity among the Left. Proletarian Left also controlled the Socio-Economic Commission of the PSP which organized meetings and conferences with radical trade unionists, but it failed to strike roots in the labour movement at large.<sup>62</sup>

In 1968, the Executive Committee, dominated by "structural reformists" of tendency II, opened negotiations with the three progressive parties PvdA, PPR, and D '66, on the basis of a platform approved by the party congress the year before. The negotiations broke down after several months, mainly because of disagreement about NATO and about electoral reforms--which the PSP opposed out of fear for its existence but which D'66 considered the main purpose of its existence and that of a progressive alliance. In 1969, the PSP congress

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<sup>60</sup> Radikaal, 8 May 1968; the initiative was taken by Schilp, a former member of the Revolutionary Socialist Workers Party.

<sup>61</sup> Congres Links Nederland (Nijmegen, 1969): cf. Radikaal, 15 May 1969.

<sup>62</sup> Radikaal, 14 May 1970, 18 September 1969; initially the body was called the "Socialism and Trade Union Commission" (Commissie Socialisme en Vakbeweging).

voted against further participation in the negotiations, which were to continue until 1972.<sup>63</sup> That vote did not stop the "structural reformists" from concluding local and regional alliances with other progressive parties, in particular for the 1970 provincial and municipal elections. The results of this rather confused situation, where the PSP joined a progressive alliance list in four (northern and eastern) provinces and presented its own list in most others, proved disastrous for the party as a whole: it lost more than half the votes it had gathered in 1966, mostly to PvdA, D'66 and CPN.<sup>64</sup>

Thus by 1970 the strategies of both the Proletarian Left and the "structural reformists" had been tried and proven ineffective, at least in the eyes of the PSP majority. Now the "new left" tendency (III) gained influence and tried to engage the party in massive direct action. One of its adherents, a Quaker and philosophy teacher, had set up a Vietnam Action Group in 1967 which no longer respected all the legal restrictions on demonstrations concerning slogans, itinerary and permits, and cooperated with the Provos. His actions caused some controversy in the party which had already lent support to a more moderate Vietnam Committee led by a former Communist resistance leader and PSP member.

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<sup>63</sup> Radikaal, 4 September 1969; the University of Amsterdam occupation, supported by the PSP but criticized by PvdA, D'66 and PPR, was mentioned as the immediate cause, but it seems to me that the other two factors played a more important role in the long run.

<sup>64</sup> PSP lists received only 1.6% of the vote; Radikaal, 26 March 1970.

The latter decided to withdraw from the party and to keep the Vietnam Committee free from partisan positions; it soon mobilized 10,000 people, including Anti-Revolutionary and Catholic Party members, in the streets of Amsterdam.<sup>65</sup> The leader of the Action Group however was elected to the First Chamber (Senate)<sup>66</sup> and continued to draw attention by actions like presenting a toy tank to the Minister of Defense during a parliamentary debate.<sup>67</sup> He resigned in 1969 out of disappointment with the parliamentary system, thus inviting a comparison between him and Domela Nieuwenhuis.<sup>68</sup> Anti-parliamentarism became popular in 1969 and 1970, not only in the PSP but also among action groups and student organisations. When a student group in Amsterdam occupied the University Administration building, only the PSP and CPN supported their action for more student power. Both parties gained influence and members among students.<sup>69</sup> The new party members in turn involved the party in more direct actions, for example,

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<sup>65</sup>Radikaal, 24 April 1967, 11 May 1967, 25 May 1967; Elseviers Weekblad, 1 July 1967.

<sup>66</sup>The First Chamber, elected by the provincial legislatures, has lost most powers to the directly elected Second Chamber and can only postpone or veto legislation.

<sup>67</sup>Radikaal, 20 September 1969.

<sup>68</sup>Nederlands Dagblad, 20 January 1969; Haagsche Courant, 24 June 1969; on Domela Nieuwenhuis see section 1.2 above.

<sup>69</sup>According to Kortelink's survey, 13% of the students voted PSP in 1970; in Amsterdam 16%, Tilburg (Catholic) 41% Radikaal, 26 November 1970. In both universities students occupied buildings in 1969.

against pollution around Amsterdam.

In 1970 the PSP mounted its first (and last) mass campaign of actions against the military apparatus, Krak'et (Break it (down)) with the help of Kabouters.<sup>70</sup> By demonstrating in front of military camps and barracks, the party, or rather the participating branches and action groups, hoped to raise the consciousness of conscripted soldiers and to break down the apparatus in four years. The campaign proved rather ineffective, apart from causing a panic among Veteran Legions and rightwing newspapers--the former asking the government to ban the PSP, the latter writing about "AL Fatah methods" and "East German agents." Only the educational work of the League of Conscripts inside the army may have had some impact in the long run, contributing to an improvement of the legal and financial conditions of the conscripts; the PSP maintained close relations with this League, which operated as a secret organization (of about 600 members) within the more moderate and legal Union of Conscripted Military.<sup>71</sup>

By 1971 none of the three tendencies appeared particularly successful, although the success of the extra-parliamentary strategy would be more difficult to evaluate given its vague aims like raising consciousness. The electoral platform

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<sup>70</sup>Radikaal, 17 September 1970, 1 October 1970; about Kabouters see section 2.3 below.

<sup>71</sup>Parool, 11 September 1970; Telegraaf, 3 October 1970; De Groene Amsterdammer, 10 October 1970; the Union of Conscripted Military, (VVDM) organized 34,000 conscripts, i.e. 3/4 of the total, from 1967 onwards; Radikaal, 20 January 1972.

looked like a compromise between them, defining the party as a vanguard, articulating and coordinating extra-parliamentary action, and striving for structural reforms through parliament, notably more power for Works Councils, non-violent defence, and a more democratic European Community. The platform also expressed support for action groups like Kabouters, Feminists, and the Working Party for a Critical Trade Union Movement.<sup>72</sup> The "structural reformists" of tendency II were not very happy with the last point, fearing that many action groups alienated the masses of the working class and detracted from unity among the Left, while mobilizing more elements in the petty bourgeoisie on superstructural issues.<sup>73</sup> They had doubts about the New Left style campaign of the party as well, particularly about a poster picturing a naked girl in a meadow with a cow in the background entitled "PSP: disarming" (PSP Ontwapenend).<sup>74</sup>

Their doubts were confirmed by the election results. Again the PSP went down, from 2.9% (1967) to 1.4% of the popular vote. However, it increased its vote in Amsterdam, Tilburg and Nijmegen--three university towns, the first two strongholds of Proletarian Left, the latter a stronghold of the "structural reformists." The Tilburg branch was quick to point this out and to recommend its (Maoist) "mass line"

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<sup>72</sup>PSP Werkprogram 1971-75; cf. Radikaal, 12 November 1970, 17 December 1970.

<sup>73</sup>E.G., Radikaal, 4 August 1972 (Aalders).

<sup>74</sup>Radikaal, 1 April 1971 (Gortzak).

to the whole party.<sup>75</sup>

Proletarian Left went onto the offensive now, sending copies of a memorandum "Back to political reality, forward to Socialism" to party cadres, and opening an angry debate in the party journal and in party meetings. It even resulted in fist fights in Rotterdam where PL almost controlled the party branch.<sup>76</sup> The group hoped to be recognized as a tendency, but found itself bitterly attacked by both "structural reformists" and "new leftists" together. At the end of 1971 it was expelled from the party. When its expulsion by the Executive Committee was challenged in the Party Council, members of Proletarian Left were allowed to return if they dissociated themselves from the group; many of them did, and only 50 or so went on to found the International Communist League (Internationale Kommunisten Bond) which affiliated later with the Fourth International.<sup>77</sup>

The disappearance of Proletarian Left did little to abate the internal conflicts within the PSP. The Executive Committee, still dominated by "structural reformists," had produced an "Analysis and Policy Plan" in 1971 (mainly in response to the Proletarian Left memorandum) which implied a progressive alliance with the Labour Party in the long run--

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<sup>75</sup> Radikaal, 27 May 1971; PL was divided between Trotskyites and Maoists by this time, though few were aware of all the differences.

<sup>76</sup> Haagse Post, 23 November 1974.

<sup>77</sup> Radikaal, 20 January 1972; NRC, 22 November 1971, 13 December 1971.



though it also saw a role for the PSP in articulating and coordinating extra-parliamentary actions "except for petty bourgeois purposes."<sup>78</sup> Party congress approved of the plan, but the more extreme adherents of tendency III, concentrated in The Hague, rejected any suggestion of an alliance with the "neo-liberal" PvdA.<sup>79</sup> The Executive Committee went ahead anyway, and came to limited agreement with PvdA, PPR and D'66 in 1972; in exchange for permanent consultation, it promised support for a progressive government of the latter, except in matters of NATO, defence and electoral reforms.<sup>80</sup> Agreement between PSP and PPR went further, but did not lead to formal changes, in spite of some suggestions for a merger.<sup>81</sup> Congress approved these agreements, but compensated the opposition by electing one of its adherents, Van der Lek, leader of the list of parliamentary candidates, instead of Wiebenga, former party chairman and "structural reformist" (though not a Marxist); a referendum among the members confirmed the choice of congress.<sup>82</sup>

In spite of the sudden change in leadership, the PSP

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<sup>78</sup>PSP, Analyse en Beleidsplan, (2nd ed. (Amsterdam, 1976).

<sup>79</sup>Radikaal, 14 October 1971.

<sup>80</sup>Radikaal, 24 November 1972; Volkskrant, 10 November 1972.

<sup>81</sup>Radikaal, 23 June 1972.

<sup>82</sup>Radikaal, 29 September 1972; Volkskrant 28 September 1972; the list leader, i.e. number 1 on the ballot, generally becomes leader of the parliamentary party.

did not lose any more votes in the 1972 elections. It received 1.5% of the popular vote, enough for two seats again. Both seats were now occupied by "new leftists" who saw themselves as spokesmen for action groups as well as "watchdogs" for a progressive government.<sup>83</sup> At the party congress of 1973, the "new leftists" completed their capture of the party by electing one of their own as party chairman, again defeating Wiebenga, the candidate proposed by the Executive Committee. Moreover they rejected the socio-economic orientation of the old Executive Committee towards mass organisations--particularly towards NVV unions rather than action groups and unofficial unions like the syndicalist OVB. Even worse, the most outspoken advocate of structural reformism and progressive alliances in the Executive Committee, Zanen, was voted out of office, and replaced by a former Proletarian Leftist with Maoist leanings. Now tendency II formed the party opposition; even the "structural reformist" editor-in-chief of Radikaal, the party journal resigned in protest, and was replaced by a "new leftist."<sup>84</sup>

The two tendencies clashed on every possible occasion and issue--foreign policy, economic policy, housing, environment, parliamentary strategy--in the party journal and at meetings such as the thematic conferences organized by the

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<sup>83</sup> Radikaal, 8 December 1972, 12 January 1973.

<sup>84</sup> Radikaal, 23 March 1973; the former, Gortzak, was a former Communist resistance leader, the latter, Branderhorst, a (temporary) PPR member.

Executive Committee in 1973 and 1974. A few pacifists or moderates left the party when it spoke out in favour of the Arab oil embargo against the Netherlands.<sup>85</sup> At another congress late in 1973 the vast majority of the party approved of conditional support for the Den Uyl government of the PvdA, D'66, PPR and Christian Democrats and of cooperation with the first three parties "provided its goals and content make it possible to establish counter-power at the base in order to realize effective structural reforms in a socialist sense."<sup>86</sup> The "structural reformists" had tried to replace the word "provided" by "in order to," but suffered another defeat.<sup>87</sup>

They maintained their influence in the northern and eastern branches of the party, where they could campaign in the provincial and municipal elections of 1974 for unity of the Left and for socio-economic reforms. In other parts of the country, environmental and cultural issues--"no more highways," "for a more playful way of life," "biological farming"--played a more important role.<sup>88</sup> The PSP lost 8 of 12 provincial seats (receiving 1.3% of the vote), among them

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<sup>85</sup> Radikaal, 7 December 1973; Volkskrant, 29 November 1973.

<sup>86</sup> Radikaal, 7 December 1973; the Dutch text was: "mits de doelstellingen en de inhoud van de samenwerking mogelijkheden openen tot het vestigen van macht aan de basis, teneinde effectieve structuurveranderingen in socilistische zin te kunnen doorvoeren."

<sup>87</sup> In Dutch: "mits" by "teneinde"; the "structural reformist" motion received 30% of the votes at the congress.

<sup>88</sup> Radikaal, 1 March 1974.

all the seats held by "structural reformists." The editor of Radikaal interpreted this as another confirmation of the "new left" line.<sup>89</sup>

On the other hand progressive alliances appeared fairly successful in Amsterdam and other municipalities. In Amsterdam a left front of CPN, PvdA, PPR and PSP had won a clear majority, and formed a municipal government in which Riethof, a former student activist with Trotskyite sympathies, but now vice-chairman of the PSP, became alderman (wethouder) for art and urban transport.<sup>90</sup> New Leftists like Van der Lek, the parliamentary party leader, expressed strong reservations about Riethof's step, maintaining that:

a revolutionary party in a capitalist society like the PSP does not take part in parliaments, provincial or municipal councils to exercise power primarily ... but to show where power lies.<sup>91</sup>

Tensions within the party reached a climax in November 1974. When the Amsterdam city council had to vote on the construction of a subway line through an old and popular neighbourhood (Nieuwmarkt), Riethof voted with CPN, the PvdA rightwing, and the parties of the Right in favour, although his party had campaigned with the slogan "Stop the subway!".<sup>92</sup>

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<sup>89</sup>Radikaal, 3 April 1974.

<sup>90</sup>Radikaal, 22 May 1974; aldermen retain their seats on city council.

<sup>91</sup>Radikaal, 1 March 1974; in Dutch: "een revolutionaire partij als de PSP zit in een kapitalistische maatschappij niet in de eerste plaats in dat parlement en de raden en staten om macht uit te oefenen ... maar om aan te tonen waar de macht eigenlijk zit...."

<sup>92</sup>NRC, 12 November 1974; Radikaal 25 November 1974.

The other PSP member in city council, the left-wing of the PvdA and the PPR were out-voted. Riots broke out in the neighbourhood concerned the same night; a few months later a bomb was planted in the subway tunnel under construction. Reithof resigned from the city government and was even recalled from the city council by his party branch.<sup>93</sup>

Meanwhile the "structural reformists," now more or less organised as a faction, and accused of being "power-hungry Moscow-oriented Social Democrats" and "Stalinist infiltrators," met in a northern village and decided to leave the party. When their motion "against the administrative chaos and moral derailment of the Executive Committee" was rejected at the next party congress, their spokesman (and former party chairman) announced his departure. Immediately "new leftists" started singing the "International" while one of them, a police inspector, shouted "Away with the Reaction!"<sup>94</sup> Nevertheless the Executive Committee proposed to continue "critical cooperation" with the progressive government parties and to regard the PSP as part of the Dutch labour movement--both rather "structural reformist" positions. It also proposed to devote more attention to political education, and to restrict internal debates to a members' bulletin; until then they had taken place in the journal Radikaal, which the party

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<sup>93</sup> Volkskrant, 27 February 1975, 10 March 1975; Radikaal, 12 March 1975.

<sup>94</sup> Radikaal, 25 November 1974; Haagse Post, 30 November 1974; Interview 1.

sold to bookstores and members alike, requiring more and more space as years went by.<sup>95</sup> Not all "structural reformists" left the party, possibly less than 100, but the ones who left had been active party cadres whose sudden departure caused disarray in several branches.<sup>96</sup>

The party recovered slowly, counting 5000 members again by 1977. Most new members were very young, inexperienced though well educated, and earning low incomes--as the party treasurer noticed with dismay, since contributions varied with income. Therefore the party had to reduce its full-time staff, close its publishing house, and also its scientific bureau which had produced a theoretical journal, Socialistisch Perspektief, since 1972. The rejuvenation of the party rank and file affected also the Executive Committee which counted 11 (out of 15) members aged 30 years or less in 1975.<sup>97</sup>

Though rejuvenated and radicalized, the party seemed to return to its roots as well, giving more attention again to questions of war and peace instead of wages and prices, as well as to social and cultural issues characteristic of the 1970s like nuclear energy, ecology and feminism.<sup>98</sup> Foreign affairs had always attracted the attention of Pacifist

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<sup>95</sup> From 6% in 1967 to 21% in 1971 and 1973.

<sup>96</sup> Cf. Radikaal, 19 December 1974; Interviews 1 and 6.

<sup>97</sup> Radikaal, 27 December 1975.

<sup>98</sup> The changes are small, however, if one compares party journals e.g. of 1971 and 1975: peace and war questions take up 8% and 9% respectively, socio-economic and domestic issues 47% and 31%, international questions 15% and 37%, and cultural issues 3% and 11%.

Socialists, but the models changed slightly. Around 1975, Portugal inspired them because of its experiments with workers control and direct democracy.<sup>99</sup> Non-violent forms of action and defence were studied again, though in a more political-strategical than moralist context--i.e. as a way to build a socialist society 'from below' rather than to avoid evil. Pacifism was (re)defined as "the attempt to minimize violence; this attempt can be motivated by (moral) principles and/or practical motives."<sup>100</sup> More rigorous pacifists objected to this attitude but were defeated; subsequently they set up a Working Party "Appeal" (Appel) which was allowed by the party majority to act as a pressure group within the party.

The Appeal group, to a large extent older pacifists, presented an alternative platform for the 1977 general elections. When it was rejected by Party Congress with a large majority, many Appeal members left the party to set up a Working Party for Ecology, Pacifism and Socialism.<sup>101</sup> A motion for an electoral agreement with PvdA and PPR was also defeated, though with a smaller majority. Congress voted instead for a radical platform; for "a really socialist policy," demanding nationalization of major industries under

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<sup>99</sup>Radikaal, 26 March 1975, 19 July 1975.

<sup>100</sup>In Dutch: "een streven naar minimalisering van geweld. Dit streven kan gemotiveerd zijn door principiële en/of praktische motieven"; De PSP over het vraagstuk van het geweld (Amsterdam, n.d.), p. 4.

<sup>101</sup>See Volkscrant, 24 January 1977 and De Nieuwe Linie, 19 May 1976; on the Working Party for Ecology, Pacifism and Socialism see its manifesto: Om mens en wereld (Delft, 1978).

workers control, abolition of the army, withdrawal from NATO and EEC, small-scale socialized agriculture, and democratic self-management for workers, students, teachers, artists, scientists, old aged people--a "socialist council-republic, i.e. a republic with direct democracy."<sup>102</sup> Realisation of these demands would require a united left front of all working-class parties, as well as direct action from below, for example at the shopfloor. In the general elections of 1977, the PSP went down from 1.4% to .9% of the popular vote, and lost one of its two seats in parliament. Yet in the same year the party membership grew again; so the party could celebrate its 20th birthday with some gaiety.<sup>103</sup>

In 20 years the party had often changed leaders and platforms but preserved most of its principles, its structure and probably also its social base. International and national disarmament, economic democracy and spiritual renewal continued to be its principal goals, even if they were expressed in more radical terms--"self-management" instead of "economic

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<sup>102</sup>My English translation of the originally slightly more elaborate Dutch text: "Onze keuze voor een republiek is niet die voor een burgerlijke staat met een gekozen in plaats van een erfelijk staatshoofd, maar gericht op een socialistische radenrepubliek, het oude ideaal van uiteenlopende socialistische stromingen, van anarchistisch tot marxistisch. Daarin bestaat een direkte democratie, die is samengesteld uit volksvergaderingen van alle betrokkenen." PSP Aktieprogramma 1977-1981 (Amsterdam, 1977), p. 9. The English translation is based on a shorter Dutch version, distributed during the 1977 election campaign.

<sup>103</sup>Personal observation, April 16, 1977; by the end of 1977 the party counted 6500 members (Hoe ziet de PSP eruit? (Amsterdam, n.d.), p. 12).



democracy," "fighting culture" instead of "spiritual renewal." With the intensification of the class struggle, Marxist or Neo-Marxist notions had gained popularity; and so had Anarchist notions of direct action. New issues had entered the political arena, often introduced by Pacifist Socialists: pollution control, feminism, nuclear energy.

Party organisation had remained rather loose and decentralised. The 90 or so local branches often initiated actions independently of party headquarters. They would elect delegates to provincial and national congresses, which were held at least once a year. Since 1960 the provincial congresses would elect the Party Council (Partijraad) which acted as a kind of parliament, checking the Executive Committee, arbitrating internal conflicts--not very rare within the PSP--and drafting lists of candidates for parliament. The lists were to be discussed in congress, and approved or altered by the rank-and-file in a referendum. Party Congress would vote on general policies and party platforms, it would elect the Executive Committee and hear the member(s) of parliament. Membership of any (national, provincial or local) executive committee could not be combined with membership of elected bodies (parliament, provincial or municipal council) except under special circumstances. Contacts between the former and the latter group of party members were maintained by a consultation committee. Members of the executive committees also maintained contacts with the various working parties and and action groups that operated at the national or local level

in areas like foreign affairs, environment and technology, feminism, homosexuality, housing and urban planning, socio-economic issues.<sup>104</sup>

Though the party defined its own function in terms of political action and education, it also performed "latent functions" like providing opportunities for social intercourse and self-expression. The branch in The Hague, for instance, described its active core as "young, competent, enthusiastic, easy to get on with and almost homogeneous"; it reported several political actions as well as street cabaret and parties with beat music among its annual activities.<sup>105</sup> The Women Talk Groups and Men Talk Groups set up since 1973 served functions like self-expression and personal communication even more explicitly.<sup>106</sup>

These internal and "expressive" functions may distinguish the Pacifist Socialist Party from its Revolutionary Socialist ancestors. Perhaps this difference could be related to the different social base of the PSP, which recruited most of its members from "new petty bourgeois" categories like teachers, students, professionals and from clerical workers, whereas

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<sup>104</sup>Hoe ziet de PSP eruit? op. cit., pp. 12-18; see also I. Lipschits, "De organisatorische structuur der Nederlandse politieke partijen," Acta Politica II:4 (1966-1967): 265-296.

<sup>105</sup>Radikaal, 12 January 1973; the Dutch text of the quotation: "jong, capabel, enthousiast, prettig in de omgang en vrijwel homogeen."

<sup>106</sup>See Radikaal, 24 November 1973, 1 February 1974; Bevrijding, 1 December 1979.

its predecessors seemed to have had more proletarian members. According to an internal discussion paper, 60% of the employed party members in the late 1970s were affiliated with unions of teachers or civil servants.<sup>107</sup> One might infer from election surveys held between 1970 and 1972 that manual workers were better represented among Pacifist Socialist voters; in 1971, for example, almost 1/3 of PSP voters in the sample were manual workers, but more than 1/3 were professionals and intellectuals. The numbers of PSP voters in these surveys were very small, but they followed a consistent trend.<sup>108</sup>

Given its heterogeneous social base, the Pacifist Socialist Party could not be expected to give as much attention to working-class interests as its Revolutionary Socialist ancestors. It shared with the Revolutionary Socialist Workers Party or the Communist Workers Party a concern with self-

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<sup>107</sup>"Demokratische machtsvorming voor het socialisme," in On(s) genoeg 39 (10 August 1979): 130.

<sup>108</sup>The Dutch Election Study 1970-1972 used a sample of 1838 individuals, of which only 32 respondents reported a PSP vote in 1967 and 15 intended to vote PSP at the next election; of the 15 possible voters 4 were industrial workers and 4 clerical or service workers. For comparison; of 45 possible Communist voters, 26 were industrial workers (Data from the International Consortium for Political Research, Nr 7261). The National Election Study of 1971 used a sample of 2495 respondents, of which 24 reported a PSP vote; 8 of the 24 were professional workers, 7 industrial (manual) workers, 3 administrative or sales (clerical) workers. Of 39 CPN voters, 19 were industrial workers. The European Community Study of Inglehart and Rabier shows an even higher proportion of intellectuals and professionals among PSP voters in 1970: 43%; clerical and manual workers made up 18% and 7% respectively. Again, the numbers are too small to draw any firm conclusions.

management, direct action, and cultural change, but it did not restrict these to workers. In this respect the PSP resembled Christian Leftist and some Anarchist groups--such as the League of Anarchist Socialists--which also attracted little proletarian support. With the same groups it shared its pacifist principles--especially in the late 1950s and early 1960s--and its interest in moral questions. Only its dual strategy seemed relatively novel.<sup>109</sup>

Whereas the Pacifist Socialist Party shared at least its basic aims with the Revolutionary Socialist groups of the 1930s and before, it had very little in common with the Communist Party of the 1960s and 1970s. The Communist Party of the Netherlands had preserved its Marxist-Leninist principles, its centralised organisation, and its proletarian base, as well as its emphasis on short-term economic issues throughout these years.<sup>110</sup> The party denounced the demand for workers' self-management as "self-deception." It called for "democratic rights" and a government of the Left, but did not develop a dual strategy. It pleaded for democratic education and cultural freedom but not for a new culture.<sup>111</sup> Though the party did modify some of its ideas and demands, for instance

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<sup>109</sup> For a more elaborate analysis of Pacifist Socialist ideas see below, Chapter 4, section 1.

<sup>110</sup> De Jonge, op. cit., pp. 148-169; see also the platform Actie- en eisenprogramma 25e Congres CPN juni 1975 (Amsterdam, 1975).

<sup>111</sup> Ibid.; for a Communist critique of self-management see R. Milikowski, "Zelfbestuur en zelfbedrog," Politiek en Cultuur 34:6 (1974): 247-255.

about art and science, it remained basically an Old Left group. In the early 1970s it won votes and probably members as well among artists and intellectuals, but its electorate remained overwhelmingly working class.<sup>112</sup> Its electoral strongholds were old working-class neighbourhoods in industrial urban centres as well as rural areas in the North--the same areas where the Social Democratic League had mobilised its first voters. Once in the frontline of social change, these areas were now in decline. The Communist Party articulated the discontent in these areas but did not translate it into a new project.<sup>113</sup> Though critical of the Soviet Union in the late 1960s and early 1970s, the party never advocated "Euro-communism." While many European Communist parties moved away from the Soviet position in the late 1970s, the Dutch party moved in the opposite direction. Perhaps as a consequence, it suffered a severe electoral defeat in 1977, going down from 4.5% to 1.7% of the popular vote.<sup>114</sup>

Apart from the Pacifist Socialist Party and the Communist Party there were several other smaller groups in the Netherlands during the 1960s and 1970s that could claim the label "Revolutionary Socialist": Maoist groups like the Socialist

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<sup>112</sup>See note 108.

<sup>113</sup>De Jonge, op. cit., pp. 188-189; for a more balanced but also critical view see G. Harmsen, "Tegen arbeiderisme en sociologisme," Ter Elfder Ure 9/10 (1971): 429-474.

<sup>114</sup>NRC, 26 May 1977: CBS Election Statistics.

Party and the Communist Unity Movement, or Trotskyite groups like the International Communist League or the Movement for Workers' Self-management. Though some of them were new in the 1960s or 1970s and all of them were on the Left, none of them would meet our definition of the New Left; none of them would probably claim this label either.<sup>115</sup>

### 2.3 The Anarchist New Left: Provo's and Kabouters

Provo's and Kabouters are difficult to describe in spite of their small size, their short-lived existence and well-documented history.<sup>116</sup> Both groups were so heterogeneous, open and ephemeral, and their activities so bizarre, that any attempt to analyze and interpret them runs the risk of being rebutted if not ridiculed.

This applies to the Provo's even more than to the Kabouters. The term "provo" had been used first by Dr. Buikhuizen, a social scientist, to refer to unruly street youth that spent its free time provoking the police in many Dutch cities around 1960. In 1965 a handful of young workers

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<sup>115</sup>For a critical survey of most of these "new Old Left" groups see Harmsen, "Tegen arbeiderisme en sociologisme"; for the ideas of the International Communist League see Een socialisties antwoord op de crisis van het kapitalisme (n.p., 1978); about the Socialist Party see Op weg naar het socialisme! Een maatschappij voor mensen (Rotterdam, 1974); this party, probably the largest among the "New Old Left," won 0.3% of the popular vote in 1977 (NRC, 26 May 1977).

<sup>116</sup>Most of this section is based on the Provo Archives owned by the University of Amsterdam Library, and supplemented with material related to Provo and Kabouters from its Documentary Service for Social Movements.

and students with some sympathy for Anarchism decided to publish a paper with this name. Pessimistic about progress and the possibilities of change, the group announced that "it must be the loser in the end, but it will not forego the chance to provoke this society wholeheartedly at least once more."<sup>117</sup> Provocation would be its full-time occupation and major goal, without any ulterior purpose, the first issue of Provo declared:

We cannot convince the masses, we hardly want to (convince) ... that mindless bunch of cockroaches, beetles and ladybugs.<sup>118</sup>

As an example Provo contained a few instructions about how to make bombs and dynamite, reprinted from "The practical anarchist," as well as a smallfire-cracker taped on a page. The police accepted the provocation and confiscated the issue.<sup>119</sup>

The full-time provocators devoted only part of their time to writing, printing and selling their paper--a means of subsistence for many of them--while they spent the rest in the streets and squares of Amsterdam provoking policemen and passers-by in so-called happenings. Happenings were originally non-matrixed forms of theatre, i.e. performed without time,

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<sup>117</sup> Provo pamphlet, 25 May 1965; in Dutch: "(Provo ziet in dat het) de uiteindelijke verliezer moet zijn, maar de kans deze maatschappij altans nog eenmaal hartgrondig te provoceren wil het zich niet laten ontgaan."

<sup>118</sup> In Dutch: "We kunnen de massa niet overtuigen, we willen het nauwelijks ... die geestloze troep kakkerlakken, torren en onzehieveheersbeestjes"; Provo 1 (12 July 1965).

<sup>119</sup> J. Lambrecht, Anarchisme bij Provo (Louvain, 1974), Masters thesis, p. 223.

place or characters that differ from the "real" time and place of the audience or the characters of the performers.<sup>120</sup>

Artists like Kaprow, Whitman and Oldenburg introduced them in New York around 1960, and Dutch artists followed their example in Amsterdam a little later. An imaginative jack-of-all-trades and native Anarchist, Robert Jasper Grootveld, started initiating happenings on the Spui Square in downtown Amsterdam in 1964. He chose this square not only because of its central location but also because of a small statue donated in part by a Dutch tobacco company. Almost every Saturday night from midnight onwards, Grootveld would speak there about the dangers of tobacco and the consumer society in general, distribute artifacts made by himself, and chant slogans with his audience; strange exchanges like "What does the farmer sow?--The farmer sows hemp," "Ugh, ugh, a happy smoker is not a firebrand" or simply "Image!"<sup>121</sup> Usually policemen would watch the happening but not interfere with it. That changed when the Provo joined in.

Grootveld welcomed the Provo but the police, suddenly worried about disturbance of the peace and subversion, reacted rather violently. Passers-by who shouted at the policemen were arrested, beaten and on one occasion burned

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<sup>120</sup>M. Kirby, ed., Happenings (New York, 1965), pp. 9-42; Lambrecht, op. cit., pp. 76 ff.

<sup>121</sup>"Wat zaait de boer?--De boer zaait hennep," "Uche, uche, een tevreden roker is geen onruststoker," "image"; in Dutch these words do not make any more sense than in English; they refer, of course, to drugs and tobacco, or to mass media (images) that seemed to attract as well as to repel Grootveld.



in the face. Thus the Provos gained some publicity in the local press and sympathy at least among some Amsterdam citizens. Most publicity was negative, stressing the "workshyness," lack of regular jobs and "negative attitude" of the Provos; at a conference of the Royal Dutch Academy of Sciences, a physician named Professor Prick explained them in terms of cultural decadence and a general inability to deal with affluence and leisure.<sup>122</sup> In spite of--or because of--this negative image, the Provos and Grootveld attracted growing crowds at the Spui Square on Saturday nights, mostly artists and students as well as street youth from nearby working class districts. Most of the happenings began with relatively innocent provocations like painting the statue or a bicycle, distributing leaflets or currants (as biblical symbols of love), but ended in massive police action and tactical retreats and returns of the Provos.<sup>123</sup>

Through these happenings the Provos hoped to mobilize the "provotariat," full-time or part-time unemployed and dissatisfied youth not yet integrated in the consumer society. Unlike the working class, which had "fallen asleep in front of its television set," the non-working provotariat had a revolutionary potential--comparable to the proletariat in underdeveloped countries, its potential ally. However, the provotarian revolution would be cultural as well as political,

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<sup>122</sup>NRC, 20 April 1966; earlier Volkskrant, 9 August 1965; Telegraaf, 24 July 1965.

<sup>123</sup>Lambrecht, op. cit., pp. 223 ff.

rather than socio-economic. It would usher in a new culture oriented towards "useless creativity" rather than commercial production and mass consumption. Since the Old Left parties, including the "colourless PSP" and "senile Marx-worshippers" of the CPN, had proved incapable, especially on the cultural front, a New Left was deemed necessary, of which Provo could be the vanguard.<sup>124</sup> This analysis, expounded by Provo theorists Van Duijn and Van Lindt in various issues of Provo, provoked the anger of older Anarchists as well as Marxists. The former took offence at their "elitist" rejection of the working class as a potential ally, while the latter added criticisms of their "bourgeois ideas" and idealism.<sup>125</sup>

Provo strategy proved effective, however, in attracting attention and some following among the street youth and students. Sales of the periodical (appearing monthly from July 1965 to March 1967) went up from 500 in July 1965 to 5000 in October, 10,000 in April 1966 and 20,000 in June and August 1966.<sup>126</sup> Soon similar groups sprang up in many Dutch and even Belgian towns, and began to publish their own

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<sup>124</sup>Van Duijn, in Provo 1 (12 July 1965), 7 (25 February 1966); Van Lindt (Ananar) in Provo 2 (17 August 1965), 4 (28 October 1965).

<sup>125</sup>De Lobel, in Ramaer, op. cit., pp. 209-213; R. De Jong, "De provo's en hun verhouding tot het anarchisme," Buiten de Perken 58 (1965): 19-22; G. Harmsen, "Provo's, anarchisten en marxisten," Buiten de Perken 57 (1965): 1-13; O. Brendel, "Open Brief aan Provo Roel van Duijn," Daad en Gedachte 2:5 (1965)--the first two were Anarchists, the last two were Marxists.

<sup>126</sup>R. Künzel and G. Rotgers, Aktionistische Formen politischer Praxis am Beispiel Provo/Kabouter in Amsterdam (Hannover, 1974).

papers.<sup>127</sup>

Provocative action did not remain the only component of Provo strategy. Many Provos wanted to show alternatives to the existing society to mobilise their potential followers (though they would hate that term), and also partly to provoke the authorities. These alternatives were presented in Provo or in leaflets as "white plans": White Bicycles, to be owned and operated by the municipality as free public transport to replace polluting and murderous automobiles; White Cars, running on electrical power, for the same purpose; White Chicken, i.e. Policemen, unarmed and provided with pieces of chicken, bandages, and candy to help rather than repress people; White Wives, promiscuous and well protected against pregnancy, etc.<sup>128</sup> Most of the plans sounded simple and sensible enough to appeal to a wide audience, but also radical enough to articulate discontent with the prevailing system. An architect and former Situationist, Constant (Nieuwenhuis), who had inspired some of the Provos, tried to integrate the White Plans into his utopian model New Babylon.<sup>129</sup>

Not all Provos liked the White Plans and their reformist implications. A small group decided to realize utopia here and now, and set up a commune, "Bastard," while making a

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<sup>127</sup> Desperado in Rotterdam, Scandal in Groningen, Ontbijt op Bed (Breakfast in Bed) in Maastricht, Revo in Brussels.

<sup>128</sup> Provo, passim; Lambrecht, op. cit., Chapter III.

<sup>129</sup> Constant, "New Babylon," Provo 4 (28 October 1965); see also below, Chapter 3 section 1.

living by breaking vending machines; before long the whole group was arrested and put in jail.<sup>130</sup> Gradually the remaining Provos polarized into a more activist and a more moderate or reformist wing. The activists seemed to prevail during the campaign against the wedding between Princess Beatrix and Claus von Amsberg, a German and former member of the Hitler Jugend, and for both reasons rather unpopular among many Dutchmen. Yet the finale of the campaign proved somewhat disappointing for the activists, since only a few smoke bombs were thrown at the royal couple.<sup>131</sup> The most spectacular smoke bomb was thrown in fact by a moderate, De Vries, a student who had joined the Provos during the campaign. Mainly because of this bomb, he was offered the leadership of the list which Provo presented at the municipal elections in Amsterdam. Participation in the elections had been decided upon by a group of 40 Provos both as a form of provocation, and as a way to realize some of the White Plans but it was resented by some of the activists.<sup>132</sup>

The election campaign was full of action, like the launching of a White Whale in a canal, and cycle tours with posters saying "Vote Provo, for a good laugh!" (Stem Provo, keje lachen!). It brought Provo 13,000 votes (2.6%) in Amsterdam, enough for one seat. According to a survey held

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<sup>130</sup>Lambrecht, op. cit., pp. 223 ff.

<sup>131</sup>Ibid.

<sup>132</sup>R. Van Duijn, Het witte gevaar (Amsterdam, 1967) pp. 178 ff.

by Dr. Van der Maassen, most of the votes came from well-educated professionals, managers and skilled workers in the old city.<sup>133</sup> De Vries occupied the seat for one year while continuing to take part in happenings. He conceived of Provo as a "reservoir of capable people," furthering "personal freedom, radical non-conformism, militant anti-militarism and 'sweet' anarchism," while "giving priority to well-being over affluence" and seeking to "break down the barriers of life philosophies."<sup>134</sup> The Prime Minister showed an interest in this capable young man and invited him for an interview.<sup>135</sup>

Soon after the municipal elections, a major "happening" in Amsterdam caught the Provos completely off guard. Construction workers, who mainly belonged to a union led by Communists and not affiliated with one of the official confederations, were suddenly forced to pay an administration fee to the official unions for holiday coupons. When they held a sit-down demonstration in front of the Social Democratic trade union office to protest this measure, scuffles with policemen who were trying to disperse the workers left one worker dead

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<sup>133</sup>C. Van der Maesen, "Kiezers op drift," Acta Politica II (1966-1967): 169-200.

<sup>134</sup>In Dutch: "reservoir van capabele mensen) (Volkskrant, 2 May 1966) "persoonlijke vrijheid ... radicaal non-conformisme, militant antimilitarisme en een 'lief' anarchisme," "welzijn voor welvaart," "communicatie ... door schil van levensbeschouwingen heen breken" (B. De Vries, "Provo van binnenuit," in E. Frenkel, ed., Provo, Kanttekeningen bij een deelverschijnsel (Amsterdam, 1967), pp. 19-31.

<sup>135</sup>Parool, 3 June 1966; De Vries went to Italy in 1967 to play a minor part in a film returning later to become a teacher.

on the pavement--dead because of a heart attack, as physicians later declared. The construction workers, feeling that the police had killed one of their colleagues, went on strike and marched through the city, beating up policemen and breaking windows of Social Democratic and Rightist newspapers. Special troops were called into the city and succeeded in suppressing the riots with tear gas and rifle fire, leaving 90 people wounded.<sup>136</sup> Provos played hardly a role in the riots; a few wrote "Murder!" on walls and took part in the attack on a Rightist newspaper building--"a corrupt stronghold of undemocratic forces ... which should have been burned down" according to theorist Van Duijn.<sup>137</sup> On the other hand, Provo condemned the violence, as did the Communist Party; only the Council Communists welcomed it as an intense moment in the class struggle.<sup>138</sup>

Though the riots led to the dismissal of the burgomaster and police chief responsible for the hard line against Provo happenings, they sounded the death-knell rather than victory bells for Provo. The activist wing grew increasingly uneasy with the "revisionist" trend and set up a "Revolutionary Terrorist Committee", whereas the reformists turned more and more away from violence. With the new line of flexible police

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<sup>136</sup> Parool, 3 June 1966, 15 June 1966; Telegraaf, 15 June 1966.

<sup>137</sup> Van Duijn, Het witte gevaar, pp. 190 ff.; cf. Provo, 10 (30 June 1966).

<sup>138</sup> Daad en Gedachte 2:7 (1966).

response (rather than massive retaliation), non-violent provocation became more difficult. Only a few activists drew the logical conclusion and tried to blow up a statue of a colonial war hero--unsuccessfully--as an example of more militant provocation. Others joined the Vietnam Action Group at illegal demonstrations, occasionally smashing windows of the American Consulate--against the advice of Provo.<sup>139</sup> Feeling that Provo was dominated by moderates, the activists published their own papers in Amsterdam.<sup>140</sup> The reformists started a campaign for a member of the Labour Party at the general elections of 1967, mixing hope with irony, though their theorist Van Duijn advised people to vote PSP.<sup>141</sup> Provos now became respectable, often invited to give lectures, or to appear at the suddenly popular teach-ins, and other groups adopted their tactics at demonstrations. At a castle in the South of the Netherlands, Provos conferred with German, British and French Anarchists and beatniks, as well as with Nieuw Links members of the Labour Party (PvdA).<sup>142</sup> While Provos began to act within the law, some of their enemies took to illegal action: rockers destroyed a Provo boat and

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<sup>139</sup>Provo, 9 (12 May 1966), 15 (March 1967); cf. NRC, 3 November 1966.

<sup>140</sup>Image and God, Nederland en Oranje (God, Netherlands and Orange).

<sup>141</sup>With slogans like "Egas for President"; Provo 14 (February 1967); Egas was an older member of the Labour Party with some sympathy for Provo; he had been a state secretary (junior minister) in 1965-1966.

<sup>142</sup>Ontbijt op Bed 9 (February 1967); about Nieuw Links see Chapter 2, section 4 below.

seamen organized a trip to Amsterdam to beat up Provos.<sup>143</sup>

The last issue of Provo was published in March 1967. In May 1967 after confused debates between activists and reformists, the group Provo dissolved itself at a last happening in a park where the new municipal government had opened a Speakers Corner.<sup>144</sup> Soon hippies and flower children would take their place and dominate the Amsterdam scene. Only the Amsterdam city council continued to have (ex-)Provos in its midst. They rotated their seat every year and tried to propagate their White Plans but most of them left the council disappointed.<sup>145</sup>

Anarchism was to revive again in 1969, while Roel Van Duijn occupied the Provo seat in the Amsterdam city council. Students and artists demonstrated and occupied buildings in order to achieve control over their own affairs; environmentalists agitated against pollution and economic growth; squatters invaded deserted buildings. Van Duijn tried to speak for these groups in city council, asking questions and presenting memoranda with greater frequency than any other councillor. Towards the end of 1969, he took the initiative to unite many activists of these groups in the Orange Free State (Oranjevrijstaat).<sup>146</sup>

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<sup>143</sup> Lambrecht, op. cit., pp. 270 ff.

<sup>144</sup> Algemeen Handelsblad, 16 May 1967.

<sup>145</sup> Parool, 4 March 1967; Haagse Post, 6 March 1976.

<sup>146</sup> Volkskrant, 15 September 1969; Vox Carolina, 1 May 1970.



Orange Free State was to be an alternative society (or to be more precise, the state apparatus for an alternative society and counter-culture) which would grow "like a toadstool on a rotting trunk," drawing juices from the trunk, i.e. elements of the old society worth conserving like knowledge, liberal traditions, socialist ideals. But it would develop a new non-aggressive ("soft") technology, an economy oriented to needs rather than profits, non-violent defence, a system of self-government through councils in factories, schools and neighbourhoods, and a non-authoritarian erotic culture based on "the unity of life." This society could be called socialist, since all means of production would be owned collectively; but it would be "socialism of the erect penis ... rather than of the clenched fist," to be realized through a "sweet revolution ... (or) rather evolution" instead of violence and class struggles.<sup>147</sup>

General decisions in Orange Free State were taken by a weekly People's Meeting (Volksvergadering), and executed or specified by People's Departments. These were set up parallel to Dutch government departments, but given 'alternative' names and tasks: Subculture and Creativity instead of Culture and Recreation, Sabotage instead of Defence, Mental Health instead of Justice, Need Satisfaction instead of Economy. The Department of Need Satisfaction consisted of (perhaps a dozen)

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<sup>147</sup>In Dutch "sweet revolution," lieve revolutie, sounds like "rather evolution," liever evolutie; pamphlet Proklamatie Oranje Vrijstaat, in R. Van Duijn, Schuldbekentenis van een ambassadeur (Amsterdam, 1970), pp. 23-27.

productive associations, often communes, that operated biological farms, health food stores and clothing cooperatives. A Department of Social Affairs ran drug counselling programmes and a rather efficient service for old aged people that delivered meals and carried out odd jobs free of charge. The Housing Department provided lists of empty buildings for squatters. A Department for Public Works tried to plant trees in streets and squares of Amsterdam, and developed plans for gardens on the roofs of houses and cars (!). The Sabotage Department was to follow up a Sabotage Memorandum which had been presented by Van Duijn in City Council--causing quite an uproar--and to replace military and civilian defense by non-violent mass action, in cooperation with the PSP.<sup>148</sup>

Roel Van Duijn played a pivotal role in these activities, representing Orange Free State as ambassador in the Amsterdam City council and trying to "turn around" (convert) the local authorities.<sup>149</sup> When municipal elections were held in 1970 he headed a list called "Amsterdam Elf Town" (Amsterdam Kabouterstad) which won a surprising 38,000 votes (11%) and 5 seats in City Council; most votes came from the old city where they exceeded those for the Labour Party, Amsterdam's

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<sup>148</sup> Sabotagenota, in Van Duijn, *ibid.*, pp. 30-35; cf. Parool, 11 September 1970. Because civilian defense is a municipal concern, Van Duijn could raise the issue in City Council; however, it refused to publish his memorandum.

<sup>149</sup> In Dutch omturnen, hip term derived from English (to turn) Vrij Nederland, 10 January 1970.

major party, but many also came from older working class districts and well-to-do residential areas.<sup>150</sup> Similar lists obtained seats in municipal councils in The Hague, Leeuwarden, Leiden, Alkmaar and Arnhem.<sup>151</sup> The seats were usually occupied by young professionals, artists or students.

Several former Provos joined the Kabouters (Elfs)--as Orange Free State supporters called themselves--but others denounced the movement as too constructive, naive and bureaucratic.<sup>152</sup> Older Anarchists and Council Communists expressed similar criticism--one of the latter publicly called Roel Van Duijn a correct popularity-seeker and a fascist.<sup>153</sup> Two activists in the student and artist movement criticized the Elfs (Kabouters) as petty-bourgeois amateurs and "court-jesters" who presented no danger to capitalist society. In a debate with Van Duijn, one of them predicted that Orange Free State would be integrated in bourgeois society without much friction, unlike better organized movements like the Communist Party that had roots in the daily class struggle. Van Duijn, shocked by the "hard attack," pointed to the militant and activist side of Orange Free State--squatting, sabotage--that complemented the constructive or playful side,

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<sup>150</sup>Gemeente Statistiek Amsterdam, 1970.

<sup>151</sup>NRC, 4 June 1970; these are mostly non-industrial towns of about 100,000 inhabitants, though The Hague is larger.

<sup>152</sup>Stolk, e.g., Vox Carolina, 1 May 1970, Vrij Nederland, 13 June 1970.

<sup>153</sup>Van den Berg, quoted in Telegraaf, 6 March 1970.

and argued that his critic (and the CPN) ignored the cultural and psychological aspects of social revolution.<sup>154</sup>

The critic's prediction about the integration of Orange Free State into bourgeois society came true, however, perhaps even sooner than the critic had expected. Already in the summer of 1970 participation in the movement seemed to decline. The Elf Town (Kabouter) party in the Amsterdam city council displayed activities in many areas like slum clearance projects, popular allotment gardens and drugs--smoking hashish in council until they were forcibly removed. But the link between the caucus and the People's Meetings became weaker. Internal disagreement arose, in particular when Roel Van Duijn proposed to run candidates in the 1971 general elections, and "Stinging Nettle Elfs" (Brandnetelkabouters) confronted "Crocus Elfs" (Crocuskabouters); the former even attempted a coup and published a paper called "The Elf Colonel" (De Kabouterkolonel).<sup>155</sup> The last People's Meeting was held in June 1971 with only 20 people present--whereas in 1970 about 500 would attend regularly--and the Kabouterkrant (Elf Gazette) stopped publishing soon after that.<sup>156</sup>

Some People's Departments continued as independent action groups and so did the Kabouters in City Council. In 1973 the caucus decided to expel Roel Van Duijn who subsequently

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<sup>154</sup> De Nieuwe Linie, 4 April 1970; T. Regtien and K. Boehmer, Van provo naar oranjevrijstaat (Amsterdam, 1970).

<sup>155</sup> Parool, 16 October 1973; Kabouterkolonel, February 1971.

<sup>156</sup> Roots, January 1973.

joined the Political Party of Radicals.<sup>157</sup> A few Kabouters took part in the 1974 municipal elections on the list of the Amsterdam Action Party (Amsterdam Aktie Partij) but this list failed to win any seats. Most former Kabouter strongholds went to the Political Party of Radicals and a few to the PSP.<sup>158</sup> Some former Kabouters and Provos remained active in neighbourhood committees and action groups, but others ended up in a mental institution, prison or at odd jobs.<sup>159</sup>

Though both Provo and Orange Free State proved to be short-lived and ephemeral movements, they may have had a long-lasting impact on Dutch culture and politics. Provo in particular seems to have acted as a catalyst in the "quiet cultural revolution" of the 1960s that turned Amsterdam from a puritan and parochial town into a centre of moral freedom and counter culture.<sup>160</sup> Even critics of Provo and Orange Free State had to admit that their playful provocations inspired other New Left groups, students, feminists, environmentalists and even workers,<sup>161</sup> not only in the Netherlands

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<sup>157</sup>Volkskrant, 17 September 1973; Parool 16 October 1973; see also below, section 2.5.

<sup>158</sup>Volkskrant, 18 March 1974; Gemeente Statistiek Amsterdam, 1974.

<sup>159</sup>Stolk kept printing pamphlets, etc., for local groups, Schimmelpenninck, city councillor in 1967-68, presided over a neighbourhood committee; Bronkhorst and Tuynman went to prison convicted of theft and drug charges (Panorama, 12 May 1972, Knack, 17 April 1974, Haagse Post 6 March 1976, Parool, 7 December 1977).

<sup>160</sup>W. Gortzak, "Breken is geen scheuren," in Manning et al., op. cit., pp. 2321-2326.

<sup>161</sup>For instance Regtien, De Nieuwe Linie, 4 April 1970.

but even in France, Germany and the U.S.A.<sup>162</sup>

The strategy of playful provocation combined with reformism (White Plans), distinguished Provo and Orange Free State from the Anarchist Old Left. Other characteristics like their "idealist" emphasis on psychological and cultural revolution, their contempt for the working class, and their utopian experiments with productive associations (in Orange Free State), can be traced back to older Anarchist groups like the League of Anarchist Socialists, the "Sledgehammer" or the "Take and Eat" people, and the Association for Common Landownership.<sup>163</sup> Most of these groups seem to have had a rather marginal or bohemian social base, similar to that of Provo, whereas the more proletarian Anarchist mass movement of the turn of the century showed more concern with economic issues, strike action, etc. With the latter, Provo shared only the general anarchist principles of self-management or direct democracy, direct action, and moral or cultural freedom to experiment. But no Anarchist groups before 1966 had tried to combine direct action with electoral action.<sup>164</sup> As an older Anarchist scholar remarked,<sup>165</sup> this unique combination could perhaps explain Provos' success.

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<sup>162</sup>Lambrecht, op. cit., pp. 196-207.

<sup>163</sup>See above, Chapter 1, section 3; cf. Ramaer, op. cit., p. 65.

<sup>164</sup>Van Duijn, Het witte gevaar, pp. 52-76.

<sup>165</sup>R. De Jong, "Provos and Kabouters," in I. Apter and J. Joll, eds., Anarchism Today (New York, 1972), pp. 191-209.

#### 2.4 The Social Democratic New Left: Nieuw Links in the Labour Party

Throughout the 1950s there had been some leftist opposition against the increasing revisionism of the Labour Party (Partij van de Arbeid, PvdA) which reached a peak with the new declaration of principles approved with an overwhelming majority by Party Congress in 1959. The Social Democratic Centre, which had tried to organise the leftist opposition, was dissolved by the same Party Congress.<sup>166</sup> Some of its members remained active within the party, while others joined the Pacifist Socialist Party. As a group they had never exercised much influence in the Cold War era, when their rather orthodox Marxism was confused too easily with Soviet Marxism.<sup>167</sup>

In the 1960s a new leftist opposition emerged with a rather different style and background, more in tune with that of the party leadership. Already in 1960 a few members cautiously criticized the "American approach," the intolerant anti-marxism, the lack of socialist goals, and the meritocratic tendencies of the Labour Party.<sup>168</sup> Yet this opposition seemed to accept the basic orientation of the party towards cultural issues, income distribution, codetermination of workers in the context of a "mixed economy"--i.e. capitalism with

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<sup>166</sup>Wiedijk, op. cit.; Vrij Nederland 5 September 1970.

<sup>167</sup>Ibid.; see also Chapter 1, section 4 above.

<sup>168</sup>E.g. articles by Barents, Brouwers, Koopman et al., in Socialisme en Democratie (1960): 77-87, 117-123, 679-685.

substantial state intervention. To most of them even the manifesto "Socialism for Tomorrow," written by young leftwing members of the British Labour Party, appeared too Marxist, too economic, and too biased in favour of trade unions, although they had some good words to say for it as well.<sup>169</sup> In the area of foreign policy they criticized even more cautiously the rabid anti-communism of the PvdA rightwing--which advocated more "cultural imperialism" through Peace Corps volunteers and regretted Kennedy's "soft approach to Communism."<sup>170</sup> They also expressed concern about the alienation of the rank and file from the leaders of trade unions, but suggested as a solution more personal service, rather than a "return to ideology." Even so they differed clearly from other party members who denounced all strikes--because they "encourage Communist infiltration"--and any participation of rank and file in union decision-making--because that might "lead to anarchy."<sup>171</sup>

Naturally, the losses of the PvdA at the provincial elections of 1962 were attributed by the internal 'left' opposition to the party's "governmentalism," and its failure to offer clear alternatives to the ruling Confessional-Liberal

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<sup>169</sup> Van den Doel, Dolman, Dankert, in Socialisme en Democratie (1961): 644-648, 655-659, 660-665 respectively.

<sup>170</sup> S. Tas, "Kinder-kruistocht?," Socialisme en Democratie (1961): 718-726; K. Roskam, "Afrika op de wip," Socialisme en Democratie (1962): 72-75.

<sup>171</sup> Buiter et al., Socialisme en Democratie (1962): 3-22, 172-182 730-750; and Van Praag, *ibid.*, pp. 212-231.



coalition.<sup>172</sup> The party leadership, on the other hand, reacted by replacing the flamboyant parliamentary leader Burger with the more pragmatic, professional and "sensible" Professor Vondeling. It also drafted a moderate though reformist electoral platform, "For the Quality of Life," which followed Galbraith in calling for more public services (housing, education, public transport) rather than more private consumption, as well as for more planning and workers' codetermination.<sup>173</sup> Yet at the general elections of 1963, the PvdA lost 5 seats, 2.3% of the popular vote; most of these votes went to the PSP and the Farmers Party (Boerenpartij). While the right wing of the party explained the losses in terms of leadership problems and the general satisfaction of the voters with their society, the left wing argued that affluence created greater aspirations, and thus greater discontent, which could express itself in a more radical "new left" or support for protest parties like the Boerenpartij.<sup>174</sup> A staff member of the Catholic trade union centre came to their support, and warned that progressive Catholics might bypass the PvdA if the latter provided no clear alternative

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<sup>172</sup>F. Mooij, "Falerde oppositie," Socialisme en Democratie (1962): 368-371.

<sup>173</sup>J. Eijkelboom, "Impressies van het congres," Socialisme en Democratie (1963): 191-193; "Om de kwaliteit van het bestaan," Parlement en kiezer (1964): 189-194; the term 'reformist' is used here in contrast with the more conservative platform of 1959.

<sup>174</sup>E. Van Thijn, "De lange golf kort en klein," Socialisme en Democratie (1963): 54-63 for the left wing; for the right wing see W. Drees, "De Tweede Kamerverkiezingen," *ibid.*, pp. 409-418.

to the Catholic Party.<sup>175</sup>

Both leftists and rightists in the PvdA argued for more workers' participation in decision-making in industry, although rightists showed more concern about the need for hierarchy and class cooperation within the enterprise.<sup>176</sup> One leftist even suggested socialization of economic power, but only in vague terms.<sup>177</sup> Again, the Left was reinforced by an outsider, employed in fact by the Liberal Telders Foundation (the scientific bureau of the Liberal Party), who suggested regulation rather than repression of class conflict through a parliamentary system of industrial democracy.<sup>178</sup>

At the end of 1965, the time seemed to have come to realize some moderate reforms, as envisaged by the platform "For the Quality of Life," when the PvdA returned to government in a coalition with Catholics and Anti-Revolutionaries. Unfortunately for the Social Democrats, the government only lasted until 1966, when a majority of the Catholic Party voted with the Opposition against the increase in government

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<sup>175</sup>T. Coppes, "De wenselijkheid van politieke vernieuwing in Nederland," Socialisme en Democratie (1964): 337-343.

<sup>176</sup>H. Wallenburg, "De medezeggenschap in een ideologische impasse," Socialisme en Democratie (1965): 101-112; cf. H. Versloot, "Het rapport-Verdam in het perspectief van de onderneming," *ibid.*, pp. 249-273.

<sup>177</sup>H. Eijsink, "Verantwoordelijkheid in machteloosheid," Socialisme en Democratie (1965): 81-88.

<sup>178</sup>W. Top, "De democratisering van het bedrijfsleven," Socialisme en Democratie (1965): 548-556; the author soon joined Democrats '66 and the Social Democratic NVV.

spending required by the programme of reforms.<sup>179</sup> In the same year, the PvdA reached a new electoral low at the provincial elections, receiving only 23% of the popular vote. According to a survey held in Utrecht, many voters turned from the PvdA to either PSP or Boerenpartij (Farmers Party) because of the PvdA's embourgeoisement, and its financial policy (raising sales taxes).<sup>180</sup>

Thus it is not surprising that the leftist opposition became more vocal in 1966. Nagel, one of its younger members, and the only one who had been elected to the Executive Committee in 1965, published a provocative book "Hi there, PvdA!" (Ha die PvdA!) in which he analysed the decline of the party, and proposed a "new left" approach of radical but undogmatic "modern socialism" similar to that of the PSP, in order to win back the youth that the PvdA had alienated.<sup>181</sup> Shortly before the extraordinary party congress of 1966--called to discuss the fall of the government and its consequences--Nagel met with a group of friends of different backgrounds, but with similar feelings of discontent about the state of the party. The group decided to write another book to specify the approach and platform the party should adopt. The book, "Ten over Red. The Labour Party challenged by New

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<sup>179</sup>A. Vondeling, Nasmaak en voorproef (Amsterdam, 1968), pp. 169, 171-176.

<sup>180</sup>Van Dam and Van Steenberg, "Het verlies van de PvdA in een oude arbeiderswijk bij de Statenverkiezingen van 23 maart 1966," Sociologische Gids (1966): 368 ff.

<sup>181</sup>J. Nagel, Ha die PvdA! (Amsterdam, 1966).

Left," struck the party like a thunderbolt. Its demands sounded radical, though far from revolutionary: redistribution of power and income through workers participation in management following the American Scanlon model, a centralized income and investment policy, nationalization of banks, as well as more foreign aid, recognition of the Viet Cong and the German Democratic Republic, and an unspecified "socio-cultural revolution."<sup>182</sup>

The group presented the book to the surprised party leadership as a "contribution to the discussion," and kept quiet about its further ambitions--to replace the existing leadership and to return the party to the opposition benches.<sup>183</sup> Several members of the group, now referred to as Nieuw Links because of the subtitle of the book, were delegated by local branches to the party congress. With "civilized manners and dark blue suits" they won the respect and sympathy of many older members, and the attention of the mass media. The group had already established direct links to the media through its members, 16 of whom were journalists, 4 publishers and 2 market researchers. Most of the 52 others held faculty or teaching positions.<sup>184</sup> The group had no territorial or organizational base in the party, but it soon mobilized a nationwide

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<sup>182</sup>Van den Doel, et al., Tien over rood. Uitdaging van Nieuw Links aan de PvdA (Amsterdam, 1966).

<sup>183</sup>Van den Doel, in Haagse Post, 9 October 1976; Interview 4.

<sup>184</sup>Van den Berg and Molleman, op.cit., p. 112.

following through a series of national and local meetings and teach-ins. Membership remained more or less informal, though a mailing list was administered by the group's secretary Van der Louw. A somewhat secretive "core group" (kerngroep) exercised leadership, chairing the meetings and editing publications.<sup>185</sup>

Three publications appeared in 1967, dealing with socio-economic policy, internal party reform, and cultural policies. The first one, written by the more radical members of Nieuw Links, in collaboration with former members of the Old Left Social Democratic Centre, caused some discontent among moderate Nieuw Links members; yet it contained little more than an elaboration of the socio-economic ideas of the earlier publication in more Marxist language, except for the one major issue of income policy. Whereas the moderates insisted on a centralized control over wages, prices and other incomes, the radicals showed more concern about free bargaining for the unions.<sup>186</sup> The second publication contained proposals for greater internal democracy and "horizontal communication" in the party.<sup>187</sup> The third booklet resulted from a conference of Nieuw Links members and Provos in the South of the Netherlands, and expounded many Provo ideas about creativity for

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<sup>185</sup>Kroes, op. cit., pp. 56-57.

<sup>186</sup>H. Lammers, et al., De macht der rooie ruggen (Amsterdam, 1967); critical comments came from Van den Doel, see H. Van den Doel, Lastig Links (Utrecht, 1976), pp. 129-133.

<sup>187</sup>Van der Louw et al., Een partij om mee te werken (Amsterdam, 1967).

creativity's sake, free access to information, all round self-development and a total socio-cultural revolution.<sup>188</sup>

In 1967, the Labour Party adopted a few ideas of the group when it voted on a new electoral platform. The platform included demands for an income policy, more foreign aid (2% of the National Income), election of worker directors, more accessible education, and "socio-cultural development for all."<sup>189</sup> The party took a more critical position with respect to American bombing of North Vietnam, also under pressure from Nieuw Links and against angry resistance from the right wing which denounced the former's "Communist propaganda within the PvdA."<sup>190</sup>

This modest shift to the Left could not prevent another electoral defeat in 1967. The PvdA lost 6 of its 43 seats in parliament (4.5% of the popular vote), mostly to the new Democrats '66 but also to CPN and Boerenpartij (Farmers Party). Only one Nieuw Links member, Van den Doel, was elected to parliament. A staff member of the Scientific Bureau of the Labour Party close to Nieuw Links attributed the success of Democrats '66 to its democratic structure and image, which

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<sup>188</sup>Gregoor et al., De meeste mensen willen meer (Amsterdam, 1967).

<sup>189</sup>PvdA Program, Parlement en Kiezer (1968): 262-265; cf. Haagse Post, 9 October 1976.

<sup>190</sup>E.g. E. Van den Beugel, "De brief over Vietnam," Socialisme en Democratie (1966): 740-744. In 1965 the PvdA had tabled a motion in parliament expressing "sympathy and support" for the American effort "to throw up a dam against aggression from Communist China" in Vietnam.

contrasted favourably with the (lack of) internal democracy in the PvdA.<sup>191</sup> Several Nieuw Links members soon advocated cooperation with Democrats '66 and the emerging Christian Radical movement in a "Progressive Alliance," or Progressive People's Party, to renew party life and to allow the voter a real choice between a progressive and a conservative bloc or party. They felt Democrats '66 to be kindred spirits--both were "political amateurs," dissatisfied with the "Establishment" of the Dutch party system.<sup>192</sup> Other Nieuw Links members opposed this idea, however, out of fear that socialist principles would be further diluted.<sup>193</sup> Since the rest of the party appeared equally divided about this issue--moderates like Vondeling arguing for a Progressive People's Party, more extreme rightists opposing it--the debate was rather confused, open-ended, and not very fruitful until 1973, when Party Congress finally rejected the plan for a Progressive People's Party.<sup>194</sup>

Meanwhile Nieuw Links reinforced its position within the party. In 1967 it captured 7 of the 24 seats on the Executive Committee, partly through clever tactics.<sup>195</sup> Older

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<sup>191</sup>R. De Rooi, "Kantekeningen bij de verkiezingsuitslag," Socialisme en Democratie (1967): 161-167.

<sup>192</sup>E.g. M. Van Dam, "Zonder tolerantie geen concentratie," Socialisme en Democratie (1967): 486-491.

<sup>193</sup>W. Schermerhorn, "Gedachten over een progressieve concentratie," Socialisme en Democratie (1967): 498-504.

<sup>194</sup>Socialisme en Democratie (1973): 453-476; cf. Couwenberg, op. cit., Chapter V.

<sup>195</sup>Kroes, op. cit., p. 59.

party members often resented the tactics, but felt sympathy for the dynamic and pragmatic style of the group, and its emphasis on cultural policies and militant socialism. To counter the decline of membership and electorate, they argued, the PvdA had to listen to Nieuw Links and appeal to young people.<sup>196</sup> Possibly, as Van den Berg and Molleman have asserted, the new and middle-aged leaders of the party lacked the self-confidence and toughness of the post-and pre-war generation.<sup>197</sup> Furthermore there was no trade union opposition to Nieuw Links, as Wolinetz pointed out, because the ties between NVV and PvdA had been loosened, and union leaders feared New Left opposition in their own ranks.<sup>198</sup> Nonetheless some opposition against Nieuw Links was organized within the Labour Party by local branch leaders and Cold War extremists who felt threatened in their organizational or ideological positions respectively. In 1968 they set up a committee called "New Right" (Nieuw Rechts), later renamed "Democratic Appeal" (Democratisch Appel).<sup>199</sup> They put pressure on the Executive Committee to expel Nieuw Links, but failed to prevent a

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<sup>196</sup>G. Ruygers, "Over de inhoud van een progressieve politieke in de tweede helft der zoste eeuw," Socialisme en Democratie (1968): 201-216; C. Egas, "De tweede helft van de zoe eeuw vergt een mentaal radicale politiek," *ibid.*, pp. 304-310.

<sup>197</sup>Van den Berg and Molleman, *op. cit.*, pp. 146-149.

<sup>198</sup>S. Wolinetz, "The Dutch Labour Party: a Social Democratic Party in Transition," in W. Paterson and A. Thomas, eds., Social Democratic Parties in Western Europe (London, 1977), pp. 342-387.

<sup>199</sup>I. Lipschits, "Slytage in het Midden," in Manning, *op. cit.*, pp. 3305-3310.



compromise being reached which ended the national meetings and the existence of the "core group," but not the local teach-ins and meetings.<sup>200</sup>

Perhaps the growing divergence of opinions within Nieuw Links made the group look more harmless in the eyes of the party leadership. With its increasing influence, the group's internal differences became more manifest, especially since it lacked a coherent political analysis or theory. Already in 1967 moderates like Van den Doel had criticized the more radical and Marxist statements of the group, whereas a radical member had accused Van den Doel and Lammers, another founding member, of personal ambitions.<sup>201</sup> In 1968 Van den Doel was expelled from the core group.<sup>202</sup> Nieuw Links members in Rotterdam tried to provide a more theoretical analysis, criticizing corporatism and advocating "conflict theory" instead.<sup>203</sup> The Federation of Youth Groups in the Labour Party, close to Nieuw Links but generally more radical, carried the analysis further in a Neo-Marxist direction inspired by Gorz, Galbraith and Mandel (bien étonnés de se trouver ensemble). Critical of the Social Democratic reliance on the bourgeois state, the Federation argued for a strategy of "reforms from above supported by extra-parliamentary action from below," in order

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<sup>200</sup>Kroes, op. cit., p. 61.

<sup>201</sup>Van der Zwan, in Voorwaarts 7:4 (1967).

<sup>202</sup>Haagse Post, 9 October 1976.

<sup>203</sup>C. Boef et al., Mooi rood is niet lelijk (Rotterdam, 1968).

to socialize the means of production under workers control, and to democratize the state apparatus.<sup>204</sup> However, neither analysis was fully accepted by Nieuw Links as a whole.

Extra-parliamentary actions did involve more and more members of the Labour Party in 1969 and 1970, but not without causing conflicts within the party and (to a lesser extent) within Nieuw Links. When students occupied the administration building of the University of Amsterdam in 1969, militant Nieuw Links members joined them, while the Executive Committee--including its Nieuw Links members--condemned the action and praised the police intervention that ended the occupation.<sup>205</sup> On the other hand, the party approved of more moderate action like the rent information service started by Van den Doel and other Nieuw Links members.<sup>206</sup>

At the 1969 Party Congress, Nieuw Links achieved several successes. Congress voted for recognition of the German Democratic Republic, against tacit opposition from the powerful West German sister party--a symbolic issue which had aroused emotions on all sides. More important to Dutch politics was the resolution against another coalition with the Catholic Party, another favourite demand of Nieuw Links, which Congress

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<sup>204</sup>W. Van de Zandschulp, De crisis van de sociaal-demokratie (Amsterdam, 1969).

<sup>205</sup>Kroes, op. cit., pp. 62-63; the action was praised by Grosfeld as a revolutionary step towards a higher, more direct form of democracy (Socialisme en Democratie (1969): 461-476) but denounced by De Jonge as totalitarian and Leninist (ibid., (1970): 94-99).

<sup>206</sup>Kroes, op. cit., p. 66; Haagse Post, 9 October 1976.

endorsed. Congress also voted for restrictions on the cumulation of functions within the party, and elected 9 members of Nieuw Links to the Executive Committee. Only with respect to Dutch membership of NATO did it refuse to follow the left opposition.<sup>207</sup>

These successes worried not only the right wing, but also the centre of the party. Den Uyl, parliamentary leader since the resignation of Vondeling in 1966, even referred to the New Left's "fascistic methods of grabbing power."<sup>208</sup> However, a new compromise was reached in 1970. Firmly entrenched in the party apparatus and many local branches-- Amsterdam, Groningen, Rotterdam--Nieuw Links could afford to dissolve its semi-formal organization. For the right wing it was too late. The group around Democratic Appeal left the Labour Party in 1970 and founded a new party, Democratic Socialists '70 (Democratisch Socialisten '70). Nieuw Links had finally conquered the party posthumously as it were; its former secretary Van der Louw became party chairman in 1971 and about half the seats on the Executive Committee went to (ex-) Nieuw Links members.<sup>209</sup>

In his first address as party chairman, Van der Louw described the PvdA as a "party in action" that was to reflect

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<sup>207</sup>Keesing's Historisch Archief, 8 March 1969.

<sup>208</sup>Vrij Nederland, 5 April 1969.

<sup>209</sup>Kroes, op. cit., p. 65; Van den Berg and Molleman, op. cit., p. 121. N.B. to avoid cumbersome prefixes, I will continue to refer to 'Nieuw Links' as a tendency within the PvdA after its official dissolution in 1970.

the society it aspired to, a less competitive society that allowed for love and lust instead of sexual repression. The party should translate human problems into political action outside as well as inside parliament. Moreover, "horizontal communication" within the party could be improved.<sup>210</sup> Local and regional party branches acquired more power, particularly concerning the selection of candidates for parliament. Through the Party Council elected by the regional branches (federations) the latter also increased their influence on general policy positions. The Executive Committee in turn tried to expand its influence over the parliamentary party, which had so far escaped Nieuw Links control.<sup>211</sup> Since Nieuw Links supporters tended to take a more active part in party affairs, enhanced rank and file participation generally reinforced Nieuw Links influence.

Clever use of bloc voting, informal pressure, late night meetings, and other forms of manipulation may have contributed to the Nieuw Links victory, but they do not explain it completely. A survey among 2000 party members in 1971 showed considerable support for the group--50% approved and only 24% disapproved of its activities--not only among younger members and intellectuals but also among some older Social

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<sup>210</sup> A. Van der Louw, "De PvdA meer dan een kiesvereniging," Socialisme en Democratie (1971): 1-7.

<sup>211</sup> See J. Vande, W. Bles and Verbaas, De procedures van kandidaatsstelling voor de Tweede Kamer, Centrum voor de studie van politieke partijen, (Groningen, 1972) (mimeograph); A. Schilthuis, "De PvdA alsvereniging," Socialisme en Democratie (1971): 200-205.

Democrats with a certain nostalgia for the pre-war Social Democratic Workers Party.<sup>212</sup> Furthermore, the electorate appeared to approve of the changes in the party by endowing it with 1.2% more votes and 2 more seats at the general elections of 1971--in spite of competition from Democratic Socialists '70 which won 5.3% of the popular vote and 7 seats. Of course a vote for the PvdA does not necessarily imply agreement with its programme. On the one hand, surveys showed substantial public support for demands for a more equal distribution of wealth, income and power, particularly for workers in their enterprise; these demands figured prominently in the electoral platform of the Labour Party and had always been pressed by Nieuw Links.<sup>213</sup> On the other hand, voters disagreed with other demands like increased foreign aid and higher taxes, and required more "law and order" than PvdA leaders and in particular Nieuw Links wished to see.<sup>214</sup>

The elections of 1971 could be seen as another victory for Nieuw Links, the more so because 5 of its members now entered parliament. Yet they aggravated the disagreement between its moderate or reformist and its radical, more activist wing. The former advocated closer cooperation with

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<sup>212</sup>30% of the survey sample had been members of the Social Democratic Workers Party (SDAP), 37% felt nostalgia; only 24% had joined the PvdA after 1960; H. Van Stiphout, "Proeftuin der democratie," Socialisme en Democratie (1971) 436-459.

<sup>213</sup>Verkiezingsprogramma 1971-75, Parlement en Kiezer (1972); Surveys: National Election Study, 1971; Dutch Election Study 1970-72; see De Nederlandse Kiezer '71 (Meppel, 1971); J. Thomassen, Kiezers en gekozenen in een representatieve democratie (Alphen aan de Rijn, 1976).

<sup>214</sup>Ibid.

Democrats '66--with 11 seats and 6.8% of the popular vote the greatest beneficiary of the elections--and the Political Party of Radicals, if necessary even in a coalition with Confessional parties. Since the Right had lost its parliamentary majority, and the three progressive parties had really won the elections with a "shadow cabinet" and a (rather sketchy) common programme, they argued that the PvdA had a moral obligation to form a government, but needed Confessional support to do so.<sup>215</sup> The radicals, on the other hand, stuck to the resolution of 1969 and the "polarization strategy" vis-a-vis Confessionals and Liberals.<sup>216</sup> The radicals carried the day, the PvdA remained in opposition while Democratic Socialists '70 joined the coalition of Liberals and Confessional parties. Taking a rather tough stand against welfare and education expenditures, the new government proved an easy target for many action groups and trade unions, which the radicals successfully urged the Labour Party to support.<sup>217</sup>

The radical strategy appeared to have benefited the PvdA in the next general elections. They were held as early as 1972, when Democratic Socialists '70 left the government over their opposition to wage and price controls.<sup>218</sup> The PvdA won 4 more seats, recovering from its recent losses and returning to its position of 1963, with 43

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<sup>215</sup>Van den Doel, Socialisme en Democratie (1971): 189-194.

<sup>216</sup>Peper, *ibid.*, pp. 414-424; cf. Houwaart, *op. cit.*

<sup>217</sup>Houwaart, *op. cit.*, pp. 37-57.

<sup>218</sup>*Ibid.*, pp. 7-36.

seats and 27.3% of the popular vote; Nieuw Links adherents occupied about a quarter of the seats.<sup>219</sup> The three progressive parties, PvdA, D'66 and the PPR, had fought the elections on a common platform, "Turning Point 1972" (Keerpunt '72) with proposals for electoral reforms and for social reforms concerning Works Councils, profit sharing, comprehensive education, defense cuts and foreign aid increases.<sup>220</sup> Nieuw Links members objected to some points, such as the rather modest measures against pollution and depletion of resources, but accepted it in principle.<sup>221</sup> Now they were faced again with the dilemma of 1971; whether to form a government with Confessional support or to remain in opposition.

The second option appeared to be an unrealistic one since the Right (Liberals and Confessionals) could no longer muster a majority in parliament. Realizing this, some radicals suggested a progressive minority government based on trade union support.<sup>222</sup> To most Labour Party members, including Nieuw Links supporters, this third option seemed too risky an adventure and the first option carried the day without too

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<sup>219</sup> 10 or 12 seats, depending on one's criterion of Nieuw Links membership, cf. Wolinetz, "The Dutch Labour Party," pp. 356, 375; Kroes, op. cit., p. 50.

<sup>220</sup> Keerpunt '72 (Amsterdam, 1972).

<sup>221</sup> J. Pronk, "Keerpunt getoetst," Socialisme en Democratie (1972): 560-564.

<sup>222</sup> B. Peper, "Progressieve minderheidsregering en bedrijfsleven," Socialisme en Democratie (1972): 475-481; even with CPN and PSP support a progressive government could muster only 67 of the 150 votes in the (Second Chamber of) parliament.

much resistance. When party leader Den Uyl presented a cabinet with 10 members of PvdA, D'66 and PPR and 6 Confessional ministers, after five months of negotiations, only 3 Nieuw Links members of the caucus voted against it.<sup>223</sup> Pronk, a fairly radical Nieuw Links supporter, became minister for foreign aid and justified it as a chance to politicize people through government.<sup>224</sup> One other minister (out of the 7 PvdA members of the cabinet) had been close to Nieuw Links and 3 of the 6 PvdA state secretaries (staatssecretarissen: junior ministers) could be considered active members of the group.<sup>225</sup>

Given the political and economic constraints at the time--dependence of the government on Confessional support in parliament, oil embargo, economic recession, pressure from big businessmen--the impact of the Nieuw Links and other Labour ministers was necessarily limited. Pronk may have succeeded in shifting foreign aid priorities to the poorest and most progressive countries--Cuba, Tanzania, Sri Lanka--but continued aid to less progressive countries like Indonesia, Colombia and Egypt. He did give more attention to "conscientization" at home, in schools and mass media. At international conferences he tried to mediate between developed and underdeveloped countries, often to the dismay of his more conservative

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<sup>223</sup> De Groene Amsterdammer, 23 May 1973.

<sup>224</sup> De Groene Amsterdammer, 20 December 1972; NRC, 12 January 1973.

<sup>225</sup> Kroes, op. cit., p. 50.



Labour colleague for Foreign Affairs.<sup>226</sup> While foreign aid declined in most Western countries from .34% of the National Income in 1970 to .31% in 1977, it went up from .61% to .85% in the Netherlands.<sup>227</sup> In education a Labour minister and his state secretary, another active member of Nieuw Links, prepared a grand scheme for comprehensive high schools to break down the existing hierarchy of schools based only on intellectual abilities (and class background).<sup>228</sup> Another Nieuw Links state secretary contributed to decentralization of power and subsidies in welfare, and to more public involvement through hearings in physical planning. Labour ministers and state secretaries also shifted priorities in housing--from construction to renovation, and from general to individual rent subsidies related to income--and tried with some success to narrow the gap between higher and lower incomes.<sup>229</sup>

Nevertheless the left wing of the PvdA--even more so the CPN, PSP and PPR--could accuse the government of failing to implement its platform, particularly with respect to defence, which received more rather than less money, and economic policies dealing with unemployment and investment, which

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<sup>226</sup>NRC, 24 May 1977.

<sup>227</sup>Le Monde, 30 June 1978.

<sup>228</sup>Departement van Onderwijs en Wetenschappen, Contourennota (The Hague, 1975).

<sup>229</sup>See A. Peper and A. Van der Louw, "Keerpunt '77--de weg terug?," Socialisme en democratie (1975): 329-356; see also W. Gortzak, ed., De kleine stappen van het kabinet Den Uyl (Deventer, 1978).

proved rather ineffective.<sup>230</sup> Important reform bills regarding profit sharing, investment controls, codetermination of workers in Works Councils and land speculation were proposed but vetoed by the Confessional parties. A conflict about the land speculation bill led in 1977 to the collapse of the coalition only three months before the end of its term.<sup>231</sup>

The frustrations suffered by the PvdA in government exacerbated the tensions within the party, in particular between radical Nieuw Links activists and trade unionists on the one hand and an Old Guard of moderate rightists on the other hand who identified strongly with "their" government; moderate Nieuw Links supporters often held a centre position. Some "Old Guard" members left the party, which had become too "anarchistic" and too secular for them.<sup>232</sup> When the Party Congress decided to revise its 1959 Declaration of Principles, many intense debates were held in the party journal Socialisme en Democratie about all the basic issues--industrial democracy, strategy, local politics, feminism, education, cultural policy, NATO. Most of these will be analyzed further in Chapter 4, but a brief summary here may serve to show the polarization and radicalization of the party and its New Left current.

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<sup>230</sup> See for instance Radikaal, 12 February 1976 and 17 July 1976; also Volkskrant, 12 June 1976 and S. Poppe, "Arbeiderscontrole op het ondernemingsinkomen," Socialisme en Democratie (1975): 445-460.

<sup>231</sup> Keesing's Contemporary Archives, 1977, p. 28574A.

<sup>232</sup> G. Van Walsum, "Brief aan het partijbestuur," Socialisme en Democratie (1973): 129-143; also A. Mozer, "De vlag en de lading," *ibid.*, pp. 157-164.

The question of industrial democracy had been studied extensively by a committee of social scientists in the party who sympathized with Nieuw Links. Their report recommended the Yugoslavian model of workers' self-management, to be realized by legislative reforms as well as direct action and organization at shop floor level.<sup>233</sup> Right wing members criticized the report for its ignorance of economic conditions, its "typically Dutch" preference for class conflict over class cooperation, and its distrust of managers, whereas left wing trade-unionists agreed with the conclusions but objected to the moderate strategy of the report.<sup>234</sup>

Polarization and politicization of local politics increased with the municipal and provincial elections of 1974, resulting in party conflicts in Amsterdam and Groningen. A few Old Guard members tried to resurrect the SDAP (Social Democratic Workers Party) in the Province of Groningen when Nieuw Links captured the Labour party and removed the Old Guard from executive and legislative bodies.<sup>235</sup> The new municipal government of Groningen (city) devoted considerable attention to experiments with comprehensive high schools and

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<sup>233</sup> Wiardi Beckman Stichting, Op weg naar arbeiderszelfbestuur (Deventer, 1976).

<sup>234</sup> Stevens, Van Rhijn, Van Ameringen, Socialisme en Democratie (1974): 497-502, 503-517; (1975): 59-72 respectively, on the Right; Laterveer, Socialisme en Democratie (1974): 518-525, on the Left.

<sup>235</sup> B. Middel, De nieuwe elite van de PvdA (Groningen, 1976); Vrij Nederland, 1 June 1974, Nieuwsblad van het Noorden, 8 March 1974, Volkskrant, 14 November 1974, R. Van Duijn, En Tranen (Amsterdam, 1976): the new SDAP soon disappeared again.

neighbourhood councils, and to urban rather than private cars.<sup>236</sup> Also in 1974, the Party Congress gave local and provincial branches the right to recall party representatives in municipal or provincial governments and councils, in order to guarantee that the latter would carry out the platform on which they were elected.<sup>237</sup> The Old Guard denounced this decision as "anti-parliamentarism" and "anarchism."<sup>238</sup>

Feminism penetrated the PvdA in the early 1970s and transformed its quiet Women's Club (Vrouwencontact) into a militant activist group of Red Women (Rooie Vrouwen). Siding usually with the left wing of the party, but occasionally clashing with it, the feminists called for a "cultural revolution" to achieve equality of rights at work and in the family, but also to replace dominant masculine values of competition, achievement and production with more feminine values.<sup>239</sup> In 1975 they succeeded in electing a woman chairman of the party.<sup>240</sup>

Cultural renewal or revolution was also envisaged by the

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<sup>236</sup>NRC, 30 December 1975; Interview 7.

<sup>237</sup>J. Van der Bergh, and P. Jansens, "Recall niet herroepen," Socialisme en Democratie (1974): 146-156.

<sup>238</sup>B. Schaper, "Om de fundamenteën onzer democratie," Socialisme en Democratie (1974): 93-96.

<sup>239</sup>H. D'Ancona, "De noodzaak van een culturele revolutie," Socialisme en Democratie (1972): 103-109; also J. Kool-Smit, "Feminisme en socialisme," Socialisme en Democratie (1974): 380-390; for criticism from the right wing see A. Van Rhijn, "De grondslag van 'Socialisme nu' een wrak fundament," Socialisme en democratie (1974): 93-95; for criticism from the left wing see C. Pronk, "Een vrouwenorganisatie in de PvdA," Socialisme en democratie (1972): 252-254.

<sup>240</sup>NRC, 15 April 1975.

Working Party for Socialist Education and Working Party for a Socialist Broadcasting System. The former played a modest role in the heated debate about the comprehensive school and the "emancipatory content" of education.<sup>241</sup> Not only Liberals and Christian Democrats, but even Labour Party members worried about the egalitarian implications of the plan.<sup>242</sup> Radicals on the other hand considered it too individualistic and technocratic.<sup>243</sup> A somewhat similar debate took place about broadcasting. The Working Party for a Socialist Broadcasting System, set up by Nieuw Links activists with members of PPR and PSP, acted inside and outside the VARA (Worker Radio Amateur Broadcasters Association) as a pressure group for more socialist information and education.<sup>244</sup> Its opponents in the party preferred a more pluralist VARA that would be able to compete with the conservative broadcasting systems by entertaining the masses.<sup>245</sup> Occasionally, the young New

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<sup>241</sup>W. Baars, "Opmerkingen over de relatie tussen onderwijs en arbeidsmarkt," Socialism en Democratie (1975): 491-500.

<sup>242</sup>D. Mantel, "Verdwalen de socialisten in de gelijke onderwijs-kansen jungle?," Socialisme en Democratie (1976): 323-330.

<sup>243</sup>P. Reckman, "Hoger onderwijs in de toekomst," Socialisme en Democratie (1976): 294-304; W. Baars and J. Van Iersel, "Een bijdrage aan de onderwijsdiscussie," *ibid.*, pp. 521-529.

<sup>244</sup>Bardoel et al., "De VARA verder onder het mes," Socialisme en Democratie (1976): 360-369; T. Pauka, "Een middelbaar echtpaar in een versleten bed," *ibid.*, pp. 84-100.

<sup>245</sup>C. Boef, "Bedden schudden," Socialisme en Democratie (1976): 114-126 and 370-382; M. Anstadt, "De VARA en het socialisme," *ibid.*, pp. 67-83.

Left advocates of emancipatory socialist culture were joined by Old Leftists who objected to the "sexual licence and aggressiveness of today's youth" and called for a return to "spiritual foundations and noble passions"; but they were uneasy allies as best.<sup>246</sup>

Foreign policy issues also divided radicals and moderates, particularly the question of Dutch membership of NATO. Against the will of the Executive Committee--dominated by Nieuw Links moderates--Party Congress voted in 1975 for only conditional membership.<sup>247</sup> The polarization of the party, or to be more exact its division into three different currents, was brought out more clearly in the discussion about general strategy and economic policy. In response to rising unemployment, the right wing led by Finance Minister Duisenberg proposed restraints on wages as well as on government expenditure in order to allow more profit and hence (he hoped) more investment in jobs.<sup>248</sup> The reformist centre of the party, represented here by Nieuw Links leader Van den Doel, insisted even more on wage restraints but also on increased government expenditure to create jobs, particularly in the public service sector.<sup>249</sup>

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<sup>246</sup>J. In't Veld, "Karl Marx in een nieuw perspectief," Socialisme en Democratie (1975): 1-14; J. Buskes, "Voor mij hoeft het niet meer," Socialisme en Democratie (1973) 183-189.

<sup>247</sup>NRC, 12 April 1975.

<sup>248</sup>W. Duisenberg, "Een alternatief verkiezingsprogram," Socialisme en Democratie (1976): 211-224; D. Wolfson and B. Le Blanc, "Een linkse norm," *ibid.*, pp. 55-66.

<sup>249</sup>H. Van den Doel, in Vrij Nederland, 29 May 1976; Haagse Post, 9 October 1976.

The left wing opposed both wage restraints and government cutbacks and suggested strict investment controls to prevent further reduction of the labour force.<sup>250</sup> These economic strategies implied different political strategies. Duisenberg presented an alternative electoral platform to party congress and argued for a coalition between PvdA and CDA (Christian Democrats), while the left wing rejected his platform as a "Christian Democratic, if not a Liberal product" and expressed severe doubts about a coalition with the Christian Democrats.<sup>251</sup> On the other hand, rightists and centrists came to question the "populist" orientation towards extraparliamentary action favoured by the Left.<sup>252</sup>

The electoral platform of 1977 seemed to reconcile all three currents by demanding wage restraints, a modest expansion of the public service sector, and stricter investment controls.<sup>253</sup> Duisenberg, probably the main loser, campaigned loyally for the platform and contributed to an unexpected electoral victory of the Labour Party. The party won 53 seats and 33.8% of the vote, more than ever before; this was

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<sup>250</sup>S. Van der Gaast, "Gewoon doorgaan met links ademen," Socialisme en Democratie (1976): 538-548; also Volkskrant, 12 June 1976.

<sup>251</sup>Ibid.; also E. Van den Brink, "Doorgaan zonder partij?," Socialisme en Democratie (1976): 397-401.

<sup>252</sup>B. Schaper, "Het ontwerp verkiezingsprogramma," Socialisme en Democratie (1976): 49-51; similarly B. Tromp, "Socialisme, organisatie en democratie," ibid., pp. 155-172.

<sup>253</sup>Voorwaarts.... Het verkiezingsprogramma van de Partij van de Arbeid voor de Tweede Kamerverkiezingen op 25 mei 1977 (n.p., 1977).

mostly at the expense of PPR, PSP and CPN. Commentators disagreed whether the shift signified a radicalization of the PvdA or de-radicalization of the Dutch voter.<sup>254</sup> The left wing of the PvdA was encouraged by this and succeeded in voting down a coalition agreement negotiated by the parliamentary leaders of the PvdA, D'66 and CDA in Party Council. At the end of 1977 the PvdA returned to opposition.<sup>255</sup>

At the same time the PvdA Congress approved of a new and more radical Declaration of Principles. It defined its main purpose as free and autonomous self-development for all through a more equal distribution of power, income and knowledge, without endangering the future by over-exploiting natural resources. More specifically, the party would strive for workers' self-management in industries and services, socialization of key industries and banks, democratic planning, more small-scale production, political decentralization, more democratic and creative education, more foreign aid, and equality for men and women at work and at home. It was to achieve these ends through parliamentary action as well as support for action groups, while itself acting as a model for the future, a "movement of active and liberated people."<sup>256</sup>

One might conclude that the Labour Party had returned to

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<sup>254</sup>NRC, 26 May 1977, 11 June 1977; CBS Election Statistics.

<sup>255</sup>Keesing's Contemporary Archives, 1978, p. 28837A.

<sup>256</sup>In Dutch, "een beweging van aktieve en bevrijde mensen," PvdA Beginselprogramma, PK 9:10 (1978): 46.



the traditional Social Democratic principles which it had dropped or diluted in 1959; but also that it had mixed these with typical New Left ideas of Revolutionary Socialist or Anarchist origin--workers' self-management, direct action, cultural change, small-scale production and decentralisation. Old Left Social Democrats often had mixed feelings about the renewal of the party, approving of the former but objecting to the latter change.<sup>257</sup>

Not only the programme, but also the organisation and style of the Labour Party had changed between 1960 and 1977. Power had shifted from the centre to the periphery, in particular to regional and local branches. Elected representatives in parliament, provincial or municipal councils had lost much of their prestige and independence. They could even be recalled by their party. Extra-parliamentary action had become a legitimate and popular activity, at least among younger or female (feminist) party members. From a fairly centralised, homogeneous and disciplined mass party the PvdA had turned into an often chaotic, pluralist "movement of active and liberated people."

Most of these changes could be attributed to the influence of Nieuw Links and--not unrelated to this--the influx of new members of a new petty bourgeois rather than a proletarian background. As mentioned above, according to a survey held

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<sup>257</sup> See references under footnote 246; also J. Scheps, Kink in de kabel (Apeldoorn, 1972); unlike the Old Guard of the right wing, these Old Leftists rarely deserted the party.

around 1955, clerical and administrative workers had almost dominated the party cadre in the 1950s, while manual workers made up about one third. In the late 1970s, a survey showed that only 14% of party cadre--delegates to a party congress--were engaged in agriculture or industry, while 47% exercised a profession in public service or independently. Whereas in the 1955 sample, 69% had left school at twelve and only 4% had received any higher (college or university) education, only 8% of the delegates in the 1970s had not gone beyond elementary school and 58% had gone to college or university.<sup>258</sup>

As there are no data available about rank and file members, one can only speculate that they changed in the same direction, although perhaps slower than the top of the party. The electorate may not have changed very much. Lijphart held a survey in the 1960s which showed that 48% of Labour Party voters were blue-collar workers and 21% white-collar workers. The national election studies of the 1970s present figures of 32 or 33% manual (production) workers and 12 or 13% clerical and sales workers; but the figures may not be comparable.<sup>259</sup>

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<sup>258</sup> Unfortunately the two surveys use different definitions of "cadre"; the 1955 survey included executive committee members of local branches, whereas the later survey regarded all delegates to the party congress of February 1978 as "cadres"--but of course the two categories overlap and often coincide, as many local branches delegate members of their executive committees to party congresses. On the first survey see above, footnote 133. On the second survey see, I. Lipschits, L. Middel, and W. Van Schuur, "Het middenkader van de Partij van de Arbeid," Socialisme en Democratie (1979): 51-67.

<sup>259</sup> The survey in the 1960s was held by or for Professor Lijphart, see Lijphart, Politics of Accommodation, p. 29

While maintaining its traditional working-class electorate, the PvdA renewed its party cadre, taking in more radical, New Leftist intellectuals to replace more conservative, Old Leftist clerical workers and manual workers. This might explain the relative success of Nieuw Links, which could recruit and mobilise these intellectuals--unlike its many predecessors like the Social Democratic Centre in the 1950s, the groups around De Kadt and Stenhuis in the 1930s, or the Marxists around De Nieuwe Tijd and the Tribune in the early 1900s. Nieuw Links also differed from its predecessors in other respects. It did not present a coherent ideology or strategy which the party had to swallow or reject entirely; not did it organise itself in any formal sense as a faction or around a journal. Hence it could be integrated easily in the party but also diffuse its ideas without too much resistance. When the resistance grew, the resisters found themselves opposed and isolated in the party. Outside forces no doubt played an important role as well: a changing socio-cultural climate, intensified class struggle, the electoral threat from New Left groups like the PSP and the (future) Political Party of Radicals or even Democrats '66.

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(Unfortunately few details are given, apart from the number of respondents, which was 1595). On the election studies of 1970 and 1971 see footnote 108. The criteria for manual or blue-collar work may be different in these studies; moreover, they count housewives separately which Lijphart does not seem to do. Inglehart and Rabier arrive at an even lower proportion of manual workers among PvdA voters: 26%. Gortzak, Director of the Scientific Bureau of the Labour Party, estimated that more than 50% of PvdA voters, but less than 50% of its members, were manual workers--again excluding housewives, one presumes; see W. Gortzak, "De PvdA en de arbeiders," Roos in de vuist 4 (1975): 9-13.

## 2.5 The Christian New Left: The Political Party of Radicals

Until the 1960s the Christian or Confessional parties in the Netherlands maintained a high degree of organization and unity among the Protestant and Catholic segments of Dutch society. This allowed them to dominate parliament and government. Their unity began to crumble around 1965 under the impact of new theology, changes in the churches, and secularization, especially within the Catholic subculture.<sup>260</sup> The largest Confessional party, the Catholic People's Party, opened a discussion of its foundations and character which divided the party into five factions with conflicting views about the future. The largest faction hoped to merge the party with the two major Protestant parties in a Christian Democratic Union on the German model. A smaller but rather vocal faction preferred a Christian Radical party that would cooperate with the PvdA.<sup>261</sup> These Catholic Radicals contacted like-minded Protestants and published a common programme.<sup>262</sup> When efforts to stop the movement towards a Christian Democratic Union seemed to fail, the Catholic Radicals left the Catholic Party and founded the Political Party of Radicals in January 1968.<sup>263</sup>

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<sup>260</sup>Bakvis, op. cit., pp. 175-226.

<sup>261</sup>Ibid., pp. 233-290; D. Hoekstra, ed., Partijvernieuwing in politiek Nederland (Alphen aan de Rijn, 1968), pp. 9-62.

<sup>262</sup>B. De Gaay Fortman and W. Veld, eds., Christen-radicaal (Hilversum, 1967), especially pp. 11-28.

<sup>263</sup>Bakvis, op. cit., pp. 233-254; M. Van Hulten, ed., Van spijtstemmers tot KVP radicalen (Utrecht, 1967); F. Van Ginneken, De PPR van 1968 tot en met 1971 (Breda, 1976), pp. 6-10; Interview 8; only a few Protestants joined the new party.

The party started with almost 2000 members, mostly young Catholic intellectuals or white-collar workers with at least secondary education. To the disappointment of its leaders, very few manual workers joined the party, while most Catholic trade union leaders stayed aloof.<sup>264</sup> The first party chairman, a prominent trade unionist and former Minister of Housing, soon resigned and returned to the Catholic Party.<sup>265</sup> He was succeeded by Jurgens, a young lawyer and son of a Unilever executive with a great interest in the new theology. Though still hoping to attract Confessional voters, he helped to give the PPR a more secular and activist orientation, partly inspired by Nieuw Links in the Labour Party.<sup>266</sup> The Party Congress adopted a platform in 1969 that called for electoral reforms, equal influence for Capital and Labour, a maximum income, more foreign aid, less defence spending, and free public transport. The Political Party of Radicals defined itself as an "action party that wants to change mentality and social structures" in order to achieve freedom, self-development and solidarity with mankind and nature.<sup>267</sup> To emphasize its activist orientation it called local branches "action centres" (aktiecentra).

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<sup>264</sup> Van Ginneken, op. cit., pp. 12, 152.

<sup>265</sup> Ibid., pp. 13-14.

<sup>266</sup> Ibid., pp. 100-111; Het Vaderland, 17 September 1968; Volkskrant, 3 October 1968.

<sup>267</sup> In Dutch: "aktiepartij die mentaliteit en maatschappelijke structuren wil veranderen," PPR Ronduit, Radikalenkrant 12 (October 1969).

In fact, the PPR was to support rather than initiate actions, but many of its members also belonged to action groups, especially environmentalist and Third World groups.<sup>268</sup> A large majority of the membership approved of revolution in Latin America, though only a minority supported illegal extra-parliamentary action in the Netherlands, such as students occupying the University of Amsterdam.<sup>269</sup> Jurgens justified (peaceful) extra-parliamentary action mainly as a way to raise political consciousness among voters, and to exercise pressure on members of parliament.<sup>270</sup>

In a little book published just before the provincial elections of 1970, Jurgens stressed three planks of the party platform; support for underdogs in society, codetermination in industry, and European security. While criticizing the trade unions for staying aloof from politics, he advocated a progressive alliance with PvdA, PSP and D'66.<sup>271</sup> At the 1970 provincial and municipal elections, the PPR tried to present common lists with the PvdA and occasionally PSP or D'66. The Radicals won only 2.5% of the popular vote and 19 provincial seats, mostly in the Catholic South--possibly partly because of the many former priests and nuns on their lists.<sup>272</sup> At

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<sup>268</sup> Interviews 2, 8; Radikalenkrant, passim.

<sup>269</sup> Radikalenkrant 4 (October 1968); 10 (July 1969); Vrij Nederland, 12 October 1968.

<sup>270</sup> E. Jurgens, De PPR op aarde (Nieuwendijk, 1970), pp. 30-31.

<sup>271</sup> Ibid.

<sup>272</sup> NRC, 6 February 1970; CBS Election statistics.

the municipal elections the party did generally better in small towns and in suburban communities than in large cities.<sup>273</sup>

Disappointed by the election results, the Party Congress elected a new Executive Committee--still dominated by Catholics, but including three Protestants and one non-Christian--and even discussed dissolution of the party. After an "X-ray Commission" had presented a report and recommended a more independent position and more attention to Confessional voters, Congress decided to refrain from dissolving the party and to accept the recommendations. Some moderates and trade-unionists had opposed the report, which was couched in fairly radical and trendy language, and left the PPR; a few joined the PvdA.<sup>274</sup>

The general elections of 1971 caused more disappointment and self-doubt among the Radicals, who had fought them with a "shadow cabinet" and a common platform with D'66 and the PvdA. The PPR polled 1.8% of the popular vote, enough for only 2 seats; most of the voters were young intellectual or clerical and sales workers of Catholic origin.<sup>275</sup> This time Party Congress gave up hope of winning over Catholic or Protestant workers, and decided to focus on the "partisans of the poor" instead of the poor themselves.<sup>276</sup> The "cane

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<sup>273</sup> Radikalenkrant 19 (June 1970).

<sup>274</sup> Van Ginneken, op. cit., p. 34.

<sup>275</sup> Ibid., pp. 156-157; National Election Study 1971: of 29 PPR voters in the sample, 7 were industrial workers, 12 professional, clerical or sales workers.

<sup>276</sup> Radikalenkrant 27 (July 1971); De Tijd, 29 October 1971.

sugar wing" of radical activists had won out against the "trade union wing," as party historian Van Ginneken put it.<sup>277</sup> Rather than concentrate on elections, the party was to spread a new mentality and take action outside parliament with respect to issues like peace, foreign aid and ecology.<sup>278</sup>

The new strategy was elaborated further by a new party chairman, Dolf Coppes, a former priest and social worker. He conceived of the PPR as part of the European New Left, striving for socialization of production and workers self-management, as well as personal development and solidarity with all of mankind. Though capitalism remained the main enemy for him, socialism and class struggle appeared outdated.<sup>279</sup> The PPR was to build a bridge between extra-parliamentary action groups in workshops, schools and neighbourhoods on the one hand, and parliament on the other.<sup>280</sup>

The three Radical members of parliament who had split from the Catholic party in 1968 were not very happy with the new line. Two of them, both close to the trade unionist wing, had left the PPR by 1971; the third was reelected in 1971, but fell ill and resigned the next year. Thus a new team

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<sup>277</sup> Van Ginneken, op. cit., p. 15; Vrij Nederland, 13 November 1971; cane sugar was sold by Radicals and others in Third World shops, mainly as a symbol of positive foreign aid.

<sup>278</sup> Radikalenkrant 28 (September 1971).

<sup>279</sup> Radikalenkrant 32 (March 1972); published separately as well, as D. Coppes, Nu is het meest radikale nog niet goed genoeg.

<sup>280</sup> Trouw, 22 September 1971; Haagsche Courant, 4 November 1971.



filled the list of candidates in 1972, headed by Bas de Gaay Fortman, a young lawyer and professor of economics, who had just returned from Zambia and given up his membership of the Anti-Revolutionary Party. He led a rather playful campaign in American style--talking to people in the streets, introducing himself, using gadgets like an American army cap--directed against the Liberal Party rather than the Confessional parties which had been the targets of the PPR in 1970 and 1971. The campaign proved very successful; the PPR won 7 seats in parliament and 4.8% of the popular vote, mostly from first-time voters, but also from the Confessional parties and PvdA. Only 45% were Catholics, 25% Protestants and 30% non-Christian.<sup>281</sup> The parliamentary party still over-represented Catholics, but included two Protestants. It could also boast two trade unionists, both active in the Working Party for a Critical Trade Union Movement; one of them, Van Gorcum, led a small union of Protestant senior employees.<sup>282</sup>

Bas de Gaay Fortman, the parliamentary party leader, described the PPR as a "long-term, mentality and vanguard party" (lange termijn, mentaliteits- en voorhoedepartij) that was rooted in action groups but was also ready to take part in a progressive government.<sup>283</sup> The latter statement proved

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<sup>281</sup>B. De Gaay Fortman, Politiek op termijn (Baarn, 1974); De Nederlandse Kiezer '72 (Alphen aan de Rijn, 1973).

<sup>282</sup>Radikalenkrant 36 (November 1972); 37 (December 1972).

<sup>283</sup>De Gaay Fortman, De Nederlandse, Chapter 2; Haagse Post, 6 January 1973.

true when Den Uyl, the Labour party leader, offered the Radicals two positions in his cabinet and a state secretariat. The PPR accepted, but against the opposition of a strong left wing.<sup>284</sup> This left wing had grown rather rapidly, mostly from young members who joined the party in great numbers after 1971, often after a disappointing experience in the PvdA or without any political experience at all. The new party chairman, a Protestant education worker and former PvdA member, showed sympathy for the left wing, while emphasizing the distance between PvdA and PPR, arranging meetings and exchanges of articles in party journals with the PSP.<sup>285</sup> The left wing seemed far from homogeneous, inspired by anarchism as well as Marxism, but often united in opposition to the "embourgeoisement" and "governmentalism" of the party members in government and parliament.

Internal conflicts soon ravaged the party, both at the national and the provincial or municipal level. Already in 1973 the Party Council--called Core Group (Kerngroep) in the PPR--clashed with the parliamentary party over the defence budget, which the latter refused to reject.<sup>286</sup> In 1975 the Executive Committee, led by a female teacher with sympathy for the Left, fought similar conflicts with the parliamentary

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<sup>284</sup>Volkskrant, 12 February 1973; De Groene Amsterdammer, 6 June 1973; Radikalenkrant/PPRAK (March 1973); the vote was 342 against 242.

<sup>285</sup>PPRAK (October 1973) (December 1973); NRC, 12 June 1972; De Nieuwe Linie, 7 February 1973, Het Binnenhof, 10 February 1973.

<sup>286</sup>De Tijd, 15 December 1973.

party over Dutch membership in NATO and cooperation with Christian Democrats.<sup>287</sup> Van Gorcum, the leader of the Protestant union of senior employees, and the only member of parliament who supported the left wing à outrance, resigned and joined the PSP in 1976.<sup>288</sup> At the national level, conflicts could still be controlled until 1977, but in Groningen they came to a head in 1975. The Radical member of the progressive provincial government clashed with the majority of his party branch when he voted for the establishment of a large chemical plant that could pollute the environment, but would bring jobs to an area with high unemployment; he changed his vote only when threatened with recall.<sup>289</sup> In the City of Groningen a Radical alderman came also under attack from his own party when he sided with the PvdA against Communist agitation in working class neighbourhoods.<sup>290</sup>

The internal conflicts as well as the rather idealist demands of the PPR made it a difficult ally for the other progressive parties. In Amsterdam, Radicals joined a leftist municipal government after the elections of 1974, which had given them 3 seats (6% of the popular vote) on City Council.<sup>291</sup>

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<sup>287</sup>Volkskrant, 24 June 1975; PPRAK 72 (5 December 1975).

<sup>288</sup>Volkskrant, 27 June 1975; NRC, 8 June 1976; PPRAK 65 (August 1975), 85 (June 1976).

<sup>289</sup>Nieuwsblad van het Noorden, 28 August 1975, 22 September 1975, 11 June 1976.

<sup>290</sup>Nieuwsblad van het Noorden, 11 February 1976.

<sup>291</sup>Gemeentestatistiek (Amsterdam, 1974); the PPR did best in old parts of the city and in new suburbs, like the Kabouters in 1970.

Roel Van Duijn, former Provo and Kabouter, but member of the PPR since 1973, was elected alderman for energy affairs. He attempted to practice his "theory of two hands"--reforming through government and experimenting with utopia at grass root level--by stimulating solar and wind energy production, biological farming on municipal farms, and a local broadcasting system, and by provoking his colleagues. He proved only moderately successful in the former, but extremely successful in the latter. Tensions rose in the municipal government when Van Duijn supported the resistance against subway construction in the inner city, which all his colleagues had voted for.<sup>292</sup> Soon after the city had calmed down, Van Duijn was expelled from the municipal government. The PPR remained united behind him and refused to nominate a successor, so that the left coalition in Amsterdam fell apart.<sup>293</sup>

The Radical members of the national government showed more moderation than Van Duijn, but even they often took minority positions that aroused the indignation of their more conservative colleagues. Their ideas about social defence-- "The Netherlands an open city"-- were denounced as "utopian" and "fatally dangerous" by Catholics and Democrats '66 respectively.<sup>294</sup> Efforts to stop industrial expansion and

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<sup>292</sup> Van Duijn, En tranen.

<sup>293</sup> Ibid.; NRC, 4 December 1975, 10 January 1976.

<sup>294</sup> De Tijd, 22 March 1974; Telegraaf, 26 March 1974; the memorandum "The Netherlands an open city" was published by the party but with approval of its members in the government; it proposed reduction of military defense and preparation of social or non-violent defense.

save the natural environment were opposed by both Right and Left, Liberals and Communists. When the Radical minister of Culture, Recreation and Social Work, proposed "relevance to society" as one of the criteria for subsidizing works of art, he ran into angry opposition from the leftist League of Designing Artists, the Communist Party and the Liberals.<sup>295</sup> By 1977 the PPR had become somewhat isolated in the Dutch political system, to the dismay of most moderates. With great difficulty it accepted an electoral alliance with the PvdA and a common platform--in spite of disagreement about industrial democracy, economic growth and cultural policies--but it refused to consider another coalition that would include Christian Democrats.<sup>296</sup> This relative isolation may have contributed to its electoral defeat in 1977; from 7 seats and 4.8% of the popular vote in 1972 (or 5.4% at the provincial elections of 1974) it went down to 3 seats and only 1.7% of the vote. While many of its 1972 voters switched to PvdA, D'66 and even the new Christian Democratic Appeal, the remaining or new voters of 1977 were more secular (34% did not belong to a church, 34% belonged to the Catholic Church) and possibly more radical, since they had often voted PvdA or PSP before.<sup>297</sup>

The electoral decline led to another period of self-

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<sup>295</sup> NRC, 7 February 1977, 8 February 1977.

<sup>296</sup> Volkskrant, 7 March 1977; PPRAK 99 (18 March 1977).

<sup>297</sup> PPRAK 106 (August 1977); figures from Intomart Election Survey, publication forthcoming.

analysis and internal debate, resulting in the resignation of the Executive Committee and a victory for the moderate, parliamentarist Old Guard. The new Executive Committee, though more moderate than the old one, was headed again by a typical activist, a former priest and PvdA member who worked in a printing cooperative and lived in a commune in Groningen.<sup>298</sup> However, the Marxist vice-chairman of the old Executive Committee, who favoured a popular front of PPR, PvdA and CPN, was not reelected.<sup>299</sup>

Though losing voters, the PPR continued to win members. From 3500 in 1971 and 6000 in 1973 it grew to 13,000 in 1975 and 16,000 by 1977.<sup>300</sup> In the early days every member could attend a party congress, but now local branches (action centres) could delegate only 10% of their membership to a congress. A measure of direct democracy was retained through the right of local or provincial branches to recall party members from municipal or provincial governments or councils. The party council or Core Group, elected by provincial branches, could recall the national Executive Committee, elected by Party Congress. Party Congress in turn could recall party members of parliament or even government.<sup>301</sup> Internal party democracy

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<sup>298</sup> PPRAK 112 (11 November 1977); 113 (25 November 1977).

<sup>299</sup> The Marxist vice-chairman, De Jong, had received 93 out of 386 votes for the chairmanship in 1976, PPRAK 92 (19 November 1976).

<sup>300</sup> PPRAK 63 (June 1975); 113 (25 November 1977); Haagse Post, 30 March 1974.

<sup>301</sup> By-laws in PPRAK 87 (10 September 1976).

seems to have been as great as in the PSP--apart from the latter's referendum among the membership--and possibly greater, if one uses circulation of elites as an indicator; in the first ten years of its existence, the PPR had 8 different chairmen, whereas the PSP could boast only five over the first ten years of its existence and four during its second decade.<sup>302</sup>

Party members enjoyed not only considerable influence on decisions of the party, but also many opportunities to take part in local or national actions. At the national level they could choose among 50 groups, concerned with environmental or energy questions, foreign aid, boycotts of Angolan coffee (until 1975) or (South-African) Outspan oranges, support national liberation movements, feminism, and so forth. The 350 local branches or action centres tried to stimulate and coordinate local actions and discussions, while also aspiring to be "real communities" for their members by, for example, having common meals.<sup>303</sup> The Amsterdam branch practised more direct democracy by rotating executive functions. Four thematic working parties at national and local levels studied the four main themes of Radical ideology: power, peace, environment and well-being (welzijn). The party journal--entitled Radikalenkrant (Radicals' Journal) from 1968 to 1973 and PPRAK (short for "Political Party of Radicals Action Journal,"

<sup>302</sup>The PvdA has had only seven chairmen over 30 years; in fact, turnover in the PPR Executive Committee was considered too high by the party leadership, PPRAK 106 (August 1977).

<sup>303</sup>Speech of chairman Van Dam, in, PPRAK (January 1974).

but also meaning "hash" or "leftovers" in Dutch) after 1973-- published theoretical studies (not very often) and reports on actions and decisions of the party, as well as a column on "practical radicalism" with advice about yoga, health food and meditation. Radicals, after all, were expected to change themselves as well as the world through a "soft revolution."<sup>304</sup>

The attention given to individual consciousness and personal involvement may betray the Christian heritage of the Political Party of Radicals. It may also remind the reader of the League of Christian Socialists as well as of Anarchist groups like the League of Anarchist Socialists. Both the League of Christian Socialists and the Political Party of Radicals broke away from Confessional parties (though the former only indirectly) and developed into radical activist groups with anarchist tendencies, while failing to mobilize Christian workers. However, whereas the anarchist tendencies destroyed the League, they may have reinforced the PPR, at least in terms of members. The Radical combination of extra-parliamentary activism and parliamentary reformism--Roel Van Duijn's strategy of the "two hands"--has often been considered the party's main asset, though it has also produced severe conflicts and could still destroy the party in the long run; it does distinguish it from the Christian Old Left.<sup>305</sup> Though heterogeneous in ideological and religious background,

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<sup>304</sup>M. Ter Borg, De zachte revolutie (Amsterdam, 1976).

<sup>305</sup>PPRAK 102 (6 May 1977); see section 1.5 above.



all Radicals seemed to accept this strategy, as well as basic planks of the party programme like workers self-management without nationalization --by converting shares into bonds and turning power away from (former) shareholders to workers councils--direct action, cultural revolution and individual self-development.<sup>306</sup> They also tended to share a similar social background of white collars, higher education and middle class incomes: 37% were "senior employees" and 35% "junior employees," according to a survey held at the end of 1968; only 9% were manual workers. About 30% had enjoyed some form of higher (college) education.<sup>307</sup>

## 2.6 Conclusion

The brief histories of the four main New Left groups in the Netherlands have filled a rather long chapter. From them we can now extract the elements for a definition of the Dutch New Left--as well as elements for a critical evaluation of the New Left project, which will be the topic of Chapter Five.

To some extent the Pacifist Socialist Party, Provo, Nieuw Links and the Political Party of Radicals continued or

<sup>306</sup>A special party congress voted an elaborate plan for workers' self-management in 1975; see PPRAK 71 (November 1975); see also PPRAK 80 (April 1976) and PPRAK 91 (November 1976).

<sup>307</sup>Van Ginneken, op. cit., p. 152; according to interviewees 2 and 8 these proportions changed little during the 1970s; manual workers never joined the party in large numbers, but perhaps the number of students and unemployed increased while social and cultural workers became more important within the (vague) category of (senior?) employees.

revived different Old Left traditions: Revolutionary Socialism, Anarchism, Social Democracy and the Christian Left. Yet they also shared three basic characteristics that distinguish them from the Old Left, or at least the mainstream of the Old Left:

(I) They all strove for a fundamental democratisation of society, and specifically for workers' self-management in industry. They often started with rather vague notions of economic democracy in the 1960s, but developed more specific and radical plans in the 1970s.<sup>308</sup> The Social Democratic and Communist mainstream of the Old Left had rejected the idea of self-management as an anarchist or syndicalist deviation; the more marginal Revolutionary Socialist and Anarchist groups as well as some Christian Leftists had supported--and indeed introduced--the idea but rarely elaborated it in specific plans.<sup>309</sup> The Right remained opposed to self-management in the 1970s, though it came to accept proposals for more powerful Works Councils and possibly Worker Directors.<sup>310</sup>

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<sup>308</sup> Especially PvdA (Nieuw Links) and PPR; the PSP did not produce a plan but discussed many details in conferences and working parties; only Provo neglected this question, during its short existence; however, its successor, Oranjevrijstaat, experimented with self-management in its own organisation; these ideas are analysed in more depth in Chapter 4.

<sup>309</sup> See above, Chapter 1; in the 1920s Social Democrats published elaborate plans for a form of industrial democracy which they would reject out of hand as too authoritarian in the 1970s (see Op weg naar arbeiderszelfbestuur, op. cit., p. 16); the utopia of 50 years ago may seem a realistic if not already outdated plan now!

<sup>310</sup> See the government programme of the Liberals and Christian Democrats in 1977, "Bestek '81," quoted in NRC, 30 June 1978; for the platforms of these parties see Parlement en kiezer (1971), especially pp. 110, 165-167, 368-369, 512-513; and I. Lipschits, ed., Verkiezingsprogramma's (The Hague, 1977), especially pp. 10 and 229-230.

(II) All four groups adopted a dual strategy of "two hands" or "two tracks"; direct extra-parliamentary action "from below" and parliamentary or legislative action "from above." Their direct action tended to serve instrumental as well as expressive ends; in other words, it was a means towards other ends but also an end in itself.<sup>311</sup> Thus it was a form of pressure on authorities or a way to raise political consciousness among participants or observers, but also a form of play and self-expression and an experience of solidarity for New Leftists. Old Leftists might use direct action for instrumental ends--only moderate, mainstream Social Democrats would refuse these means--but not for expressive ends. Moreover, they rarely combined direct action with electoral action in a dual strategy, but generally subordinated the former to the latter (Social Democrats, Christian Left) or the latter to the former (Anarchists, to a lesser extent Revolutionary Socialists).<sup>312</sup>

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<sup>311</sup>The distinction between instrumental and expressive action is taken from F. Parkin, Middle Class Radicalism (Manchester, 1968), p. 34. It is similar, of course, to Weber's distinction between zweckrational and wertrational; see also Kroes, op. cit., p. 11.

<sup>312</sup>See Chapter One; Anarchists conceived of direct action as a means towards revolution, culminating in a general strike or mass insurrection, to which electoral action might contribute as a form of agitation--though more often it detracted from the main goal, hence it was rarely used by Anarchists; Revolutionary Socialists attached more importance to it but relied also on direct action, culminating in a takeover of the bourgeois state by armed workers, as the only secure way to socialism; however, some of them did not define their strategy clearly but suggested an unspecified "peaceful road to socialism"--but none of them developed a dual strategy.

Notitie:

Door een fout in de paginering, ontbreekt pagina 185. Het vervolg van pagina 184 vindt u op pagina 186.

The organisational structure of the New Left groups to some extent reflected the strategy of "two hands." Generally they allowed more power to local branches and to action groups or working parties than Old Left groups would--except perhaps for the Anarchist Federation. The New Left groups also recruited more new petty bourgeois members, intellectuals and professionals, and fewer manual workers than most Old Left organisations. This might explain differences in style and organisation.<sup>313</sup>

(III) All four groups called for a cultural revolution and a new mentality oriented towards self-expression, creativity, solidarity and peaceful cooperation, rather than individual achievement, economic growth and competition. This new mentality was expressed by protests against the Cold War and the American intervention in Vietnam, by support for "Third World" countries but also by the counter-culture of beat music, drugs, happenings and the "sexual revolution" in the 1960s and the ecological movement or feminism in the 1970s. Some Old Left groups such as the League of Christian Socialists, the Moker (Sledgehammer) group or the Workers Youth Centre had adhered to somewhat similar values but in a different context: the class struggle, which required self-discipline and sacrifice; individual pleasure, self-expression and creativity were secondary to them.

If one adds up the three elements one could define the

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<sup>313</sup>This somewhat speculative and incomplete explanation will be developed further in Chapter 6 below.

New Left in the Netherlands as a movement for fundamental democratisation of society aiming at self-management and for a new culture oriented towards self-expression, creativity and peaceful cooperation, which it tried to achieve by combining direct extra-parliamentary action with parliamentary and legislative action in a dual strategy. The four groups described here met these criteria, though some more than others; also, most of them were divided into factions or tendencies, some of which were more "new leftish" than others.

The next chapter will examine whether one could apply this definition to the New Left (Neue Linke, Nouvelle Gauche) in Germany and France. In Chapter Four the ideas sketched here will be further analysed and related to German and French ideas. These ideas will be evaluated in Chapter Five, in the social and political context described earlier in this chapter. Since these last two chapters take a systematic rather than a historical approach, it may be useful to dwell a little on the historical pattern found in this chapter here.

Around 1960 only the Pacifist Socialist Party could be classified as a New Left group--with difficulty. By 1965 a pure New Left group sprang up: Provo. It inspired in turn the PSP--to more direct action--and some young members of the Labour Party. In 1966 the latter started Nieuw Links, at first only mildly New Leftish, but by 1970 generally within our definition. In 1968 a group of Christians set up the Political Party of Radicals, which evolved in a New Left direction within a few years. In the 1970s, the Labour Party

as a whole accepted the basic New Left ideas. This pattern will be compared to the development of the New Left in France and Germany in Chapter Three.

## CHAPTER 3

### COMPARATIVE COMMENTS ON THE NEW LEFT IN FRANCE AND GERMANY

#### Introduction

A systematic comparison of the Dutch, French and German New Left would encounter difficulties of many kinds. In spite of their geographical proximity France, Germany and the Netherlands have different histories, languages, social structures and political systems. The number of relevant variables seems too great to bring any comparative analysis to a satisfactory conclusion. Therefore the purpose of this chapter is a more modest one: to apply and generalise the definition of the Dutch New Left of the previous chapter to groups that are considered part of the French or German New Left. A few comparative comments will help to understand the peculiar characteristics of the Dutch New Left.

In spite of some important differences, the New Left groups in the three countries seem to share the basic characteristics summed up in Chapter 2.6, especially the goals of fundamental democratisation and cultural revolution. Not all French and German groups pursued a dual strategy, however, as parliamentary or legislative action appeared impossible or unattractive to them. These groups--the "Subversive Action" tendency in Germany, the Situationists, Neo-Anarchists and



Socialisme ou Barbarie in France--will be classified as "New Ultra-Left" here. They remained small and marginal but played an important "seminal" role in the first stage of the New Left movement in these countries, comparable to that of Provo in the Netherlands.

Even groups in France and Germany that shared all three characteristics and pursued a dual strategy lent less emphasis to parliamentary action than their Dutch counterparts. They also displayed more interest in theoretical questions, and Marxist theory in particular, but less interest in moral and cultural issues. Nevertheless they resembled Dutch New Left groups in many respects. Particularly striking were the similarities between the Dutch Pacifist Socialist Party and the French Unified Socialist Party, as well as those between the Dutch Labour Party and the French Socialist Party. The German Young Socialists could be compared to Nieuw Links in the Dutch Labour Party, but the German Socialist Student League seemed relatively unique. It proves equally difficult to find German or French counterparts of the Political Party of Radicals.

The similarities between groups in the three countries go beyond their basic characteristics.. They concern also the social base of the New Left movement, which seems "new petty bourgeois" in most cases, and to a lesser extent proletarian or semi-proletarian--i.e. clerical or white collar workers rather than manual workers. Furthermore, the movement followed a somewhat similar pattern of development in the three countries.

Started by radical, more or less anarchist groups in the margins of the political system, it would gradually "contaminate" larger leftist, usually Revolutionary Socialist parties--such as the Dutch PSP, the French Unified Socialist Party, to some extent the German Socialist Student League. In a third stage it might involve large mass organisations like the Dutch PvdA, the French Socialist Party and the German Social-Democratic Party.

These comparative comments should convince the reader that the Dutch New Left was not a unique and isolated phenomenon which could be attributed to peculiar Dutch circumstances such as pillarisation or consociationalism, or personal factors alone. The similarities found here suggest that it was a movement of ideas--which can be shared or borrowed easily--rooted in certain social conditions, which may be typical of Western Europe and possibly of other advanced capitalist and industrial societies. The last point goes beyond the scope of this study, but will be taken up in a speculative way in Chapter Six. Chapters Four and Five will deal in more depth with the ideas of the New Left.

### 3.1 The New Left in France

The French Left has a long and impressive history which often served as an example to the Left in other countries such as the Netherlands.<sup>1</sup> Anarchism was quite important in the late

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<sup>1</sup>Especially in the 1880s and 1890s, when Domela Nieuwenhuis and other members of the Social Democratic League turned away from the "state socialism" of the German model to the libertarian and anarchist socialism of France; see Ramaer, op. cit.,

19th and early 20th century but became marginal after the First World War. By 1940 the Left was dominated by two mass parties, the Communist Party and the Socialist or Social-Democratic Section Française de l'Internationale Ouvrière; a third party, the Parti Radical, had joined them occasionally--for instance in the Popular Front of 1936--but switched to the Right at other times.<sup>2</sup> With the liberation of France from German occupation the Left reached a peak of popularity and power. Socialists and Communists together won majorities at the polls and carried out important reforms in a coalition with Christian Democrats.<sup>3</sup>

However, disillusionment, disagreement and decline set in soon afterwards. The Cold War divided the two mass parties of the Left. In 1947 the Communists were forced to leave the government and returned to a rather dogmatic and isolated form of opposition; yet they maintained mass support among large numbers of workers and peasants--between 20 and 25% of the electorate.<sup>4</sup> To remain in government the Socialists had to cooperate with parties of the Right; but after 1951 they rarely did this. Yet the party lost many working-class

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p. 19; and R. De Jong, "Le mouvement libertaire aux Pays-Bas," Le mouvement social 83 (1973): 167-180.

<sup>2</sup>See G. Lefranc, Les gauches en France, 1789-1972 (Paris, 1973); also; D. Ligou, Histoire du Socialisme en France, 1871-1961 (Paris, 1962).

<sup>3</sup>Ibid.; also J. Chapsal and A. Lancelot, La vie politique en France depuis 1940 (Paris, 1975), particularly pp. 98-99, 107-110.

<sup>4</sup>R. Tiersky, French Communism 1920-1972 (New York, 1974), pp. 156-159, 320 ff.

voters and became a rather conservative party of notables, town councillors and rural burgomasters, though it maintained its Old Left Marxist or "Guesdist" programme.<sup>5</sup> In the 1950s the party played a rather ambivalent role in colonial wars in Indo-China and Algeria. Eventually France lost its vast colonial empire and recovered, like the Netherlands, by expanding and modernising its industry; but it was General De Gaulle rather than the Socialist party who guided the country through this difficult period. De Gaulle was supported by a new mass movement which was classified as right wing by scholars but which drew many voters from the Left.<sup>6</sup>

In view of the decline of the Old Left, France seemed ready for a New Left at a time when the Dutch Old Left was still going strong. As early as 1948 the philosopher Sartre and other Existentialists attempted to organise a new party, the Rassemblement Démocratique Révolutionnaire. Critical of both the Socialist and the Communist party, it folded soon afterwards in the Cold War.<sup>7</sup> Several other groups also sprang up in the late 1940s and early 1950s, trying to organise leftist Catholics, Radicals, Socialists and Communists who were dissatisfied with their parties. The most important

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<sup>5</sup>Ligou, op. cit., pp. 554, 596; see also M. Levin, Fission and Fusion on the French Left (Ithaca, 1970), pp. 101-181; and J. Touchard, La gauche en France depuis 1900 (Paris, 1977), pp. 297-305, on the influence of Guesde.

<sup>6</sup>For an analysis of the right wing character of Gaullism see, R. Rémond, La droite en France (Paris, 1968).

<sup>7</sup>Levin, op. cit., pp. 245-250.

group was probably the Mouvement de Libération du Peuple, originally a social and cultural organisation of Catholic working-class families, which had been radicalised and politicised in the 1940s. Committed to socialism and direct action, the group maintained its interest in cultural issues and in a "révolution intérieure"--a typical New Left trait.<sup>8</sup>

With several other groups, the Mouvement de Libération du Peuple set up a Committee of Liaison and Initiative for the New Left in 1954. In 1957 the Committee became a political party, the Union de la Gauche Socialiste. Like the Pacifist Socialist Party--founded in the same year--it was a rather heterogeneous group of intellectuals and clerical workers, united by an important issue, that of war and peace. Like its Dutch counterpart the Union de la Gauche Socialiste attracted groups of dissident Social Democrats and Communists; however, the groups were much larger in this case and required a formal merger. The new party came into being in 1960 and was called the Parti Socialiste Unifié (PSU). Its members shared a concern about the Algerian War and, to a lesser extent, about democratisation of state and society and opposition to the Gaullist regime, but little else.<sup>9</sup>

Conflicts erupted within the party as soon as the Algerian

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<sup>8</sup>Ibid., pp. 202, 210-220; J. Poperen, La gauche française (1958-1965) (Paris, 1972), pp. 68-72; and J-M. Donegani, "De MPF en PSU: un mouvement entre en socialisme," Autrement 8 (1977): 116-125.

<sup>9</sup>Levin, op. cit., pp. 251-258, 176-180; see also G. Nania, Le PSU avant Rocard (Paris, 1973), pp. 61-64; E. Depreux, Servitude et grandeur du PSU (Paris, 1974), passim.

War approached its end. At the 1963 congress, seven tendencies competed for party support, ranging from liberal reformism to revolutionary socialism of Trotskyite inspiration. The "revolutionary reformist" tendency, which fitted our definition of the New Left better than any other, won a small majority. Without rejecting parliamentary action it lent emphasis to extra-parliamentary action; it hoped to mobilise the "new working class" of skilled technical and clerical workers for democratisation of the economy and the state.<sup>10</sup> Internal conflicts continued to divide the party--and to contribute to its decline--until the Revolutionary Reformists won a clear 2/3 majority at the 1967 congress and monopolised the Executive Committee.<sup>11</sup> Most adherents of other tendencies, especially the moderate ones, left the party to join one of the political clubs which mushroomed in the mid-1960s; they attracted many intellectuals who rejected the Old Left parties and aspired to a more "modern" and "democratic" France.<sup>12</sup>

Thus by 1968 the Parti Socialiste Unifié was a fairly small but homogeneous party with a coherent and rather

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<sup>10</sup>Levin, op. cit., pp. 337-362; Nania, op. cit., pp. 191-203; Depreux, op. cit., pp. 277-283 (text of the "revolutionary reformist" motion).

<sup>11</sup>Depreux, op. cit., pp. 141-156; J. Poperen, L'Unité de la Gauche (1956-1973) (Paris, 1975), pp. 68-71; between 1960 and 1967 the Executive Committee had represented different tendencies.

<sup>12</sup>Poperen, La gauche française, distinguishes the reformism or "gauche moderne" of these moderate clubs from the "revolutionary reformism" or "gauche nouvelle" of the PSU; however, the distinction is not a clear one, as some clubs were less "reformist" than the PSU--e.g. Poperen's own club; about the clubs see also J. Mossuz, Les clubs et la politique en France (Paris, 1970), especially pp. 5-14; Touchard, op. cit., pp. 319-323.

sophisticated project. George Lichtheim, an historian and political theorist, summed up the project as "technocratic revisionism" and concluded that

the PSU had the merit of not being tainted with either Stalinism or reformism. This was perhaps another way of saying that it possessed neither a mass following nor a political platform; but intellectuals rarely bother about such things, and in any case the PSU could be regarded as a stimulant to the two major organisations.<sup>13</sup>

Lichtheim exaggerated a little; intellectuals made up only 40% of the membership according to a survey of 1968, and most of its voters were probably manual workers--but it was indeed a small party, counting at most 10,000 members and about 500,000 voters in 1967.<sup>14</sup> It won a few seats in parliament but concentrated its activities on political education, public meetings and demonstrations.<sup>15</sup>

Lichtheim made a useful distinction between the "technocratic revisionism" of the PSU and the "radical syndicalism" of more extreme and marginal groups which also tried to renew the French Left.<sup>16</sup> In France these groups would be considered "gauchiste" rather than "nouvelle gauche"--perhaps one could translate this as "New Ultra-left" and "New Left" respectively.

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<sup>13</sup>G. Lichtheim, Marxism in Modern France (New York, 1966), p. 167.

<sup>14</sup>Nania, op. cit., pp. 114-117; see also M. Rocard, Le PSU et l'avenir socialiste de la France (Paris, 1969), pp. 5-44.

<sup>15</sup>Nania, op. cit., pp. 207-228; Depreux, op. cit., passim.

<sup>16</sup>Lichtheim, op. cit., pp. 183-192 especially; these notions will be clarified somewhat in Chapters 4 and 5 below.

Unlike the New Left proper they rejected all parliamentary and electoral action, but like the New Left they fought for self-management in society and for cultural revolution. In fact, they often inspired the New Left in these two areas, as will be argued below. Three of them will be described briefly here.

The first one had split from the Fourth International in 1948 and published the journal Socialisme ou Barbarie from 1948 to 1965. Like the Dutch Spartacus League, it moved away from Trotskyism to a form of Council Communism, inspired by the Dutch Marxist Pannekoek. However, it went further and began to revise Marxism, criticising its positivist and bureaucratic-totalitarian elements. While the group's most important achievements may have been theoretical, it also engaged in action on a modest scale.<sup>17</sup>

The second group had broken away from the Anarchist Federation in 1956 and published a journal, Noir et Rouge, between 1961 and 1970. As the name of the journal suggests, it tried to bridge the gap between 'Black' Anarchism and 'Red' Marxism; it did not develop a coherent theory or project but remained a rather open discussion group.<sup>18</sup>

The third group was the most extreme and the most

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<sup>17</sup>Gombin, op. cit., pp. 33-48; also D. Howard, The Marxist Legacy (New York, 1977), chapters 9 and 10; see also Howard's interview with the main theoretician of the group, Cornelius Castoriadis, in Telos 23 (1975): 131-155.

<sup>18</sup>C. Lagant, "Sur le Neo-anarchisme," Noir et Rouge 46 (1970): 21-29; see also, A. Laude, "Les anarchistes," La Nef 48 (1972): 117-129.



interesting one. Founded in 1957 by intellectuals and artists who had often sympathised with Surrealism and cooperated in the international COBRA group and counting branches in France, Italy, Scandinavia, Germany and the Netherlands, it could be considered the first New Left or Ultra-left International.<sup>19</sup> In order to overcome the alienation and passivity of everyday life in capitalist society, they hoped to "create situations" of political and artistic action; hence they called themselves "Situationists." Their direct action often used or abused existing symbols and messages, such as advertisements and comics, to ridicule and debunk dominant ideology. Their aim was to abolish all "separate activities" of work, art, politics and so forth and to integrate them into one total creative act of free self expression. This would require a total revolution, led by workers' councils.<sup>20</sup> The Situationist International never had more than 30 members, according to its own account, and kept the number down by recurrent purges and expulsions of members who appeared inconsistent, dishonest or deviant.<sup>21</sup> The group could be compared to Provo, which it had inspired through one of its Dutch members, Constant

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<sup>19</sup>G. Bartsch, "Die Situationistische Internationale," Osteuropa 26:4 (1976): 287-300; the COBRA group consisted of artists from Copenhagen, Brussels and Amsterdam.

<sup>20</sup>See Internationale Situationniste (Amsterdam, 1970), a reprint of the 12 issues of this journal which appeared between 1958 and 1969; for a more elaborate discussion of its ideas see below, Chapter 4.2.

<sup>21</sup>See Internationale Situationniste 12 (1969): 105-106; Bartsch estimates a membership of 1000 but without indicating his source (op. cit., p. 296).

Nieuwenhuis--but "disowned" Provo because of the latter's technocratic and elitist tendencies.<sup>22</sup>

The three groups of the New Ultra-left remained small and were often divided by internal quarrels. Yet their influence spread beyond their own circles, through their books, pamphlets and journals. Early in 1968 a radical group of students, called "les enragés" in analogy with revolutionaries of the 1790s, began to disrupt classes and to agitate among students at Nanterre with Situationist slogans. Radicals of different backgrounds, Maoists, Trotskyites and Anarchists, joined a loosely organised Mouvement du 22 mars on the initiative of a young sociology student, Daniel Cohn-Bendit. Within a few weeks the Nanterre campus was closed down and its students moved on to the Sorbonne in Paris. Soon the Sorbonne was occupied by students, headed at first by the enragés from Nanterre who covered the walls of the respectable old building with Situationist slogans, such as "Prenez vos desirs pour la réalité" or "L'humanité ne sera heureuse que quand le dernier capitaliste sera pendu avec les tripes du dernier bureaucrate."<sup>23</sup> From the Sorbonne a wave of occupations, strikes and other more or less revolutionary actions spread through Paris and all of France like wild-fire.<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>22</sup>Internationale Situationniste 11 (1967): 65-66.

<sup>23</sup>R. Viénet, Enragés et situationnistes dans le mouvement des occupations (Paris, 1968); also R. Gombin, Le projet révolutionnaire (Paris, 1969), pp. 32-35; for a slightly different view see A. Dansette, Mai 1968 (Paris, 1971), pp. 50-51, 69, 152.

<sup>24</sup>The literature about these events is too vast to be quoted here in detail; apart from the works quoted in footnote

Though the events of May and June 1968 in France could not be explained by one simple factor, the influence of the New Ultra-left may have been substantial if not crucial. B.E. Brown, a rather critical observer, concluded that "the spirit of '68 was perhaps best captured, one might even say incarnated, by the situationists."<sup>25</sup> Ultra-leftist ideas about workers' councils and self-management, direct action, cultural revolution and self-expression inspired posters and graffiti in the streets, and also speeches and platforms of more moderate leaders such as the Socialists and Social Democrats at the Charlety Stadium.<sup>26</sup>

The New Ultra-left did not survive its triumphs of 1968. At first the small groups attracted scores of new members and supporters, but soon afterwards they collapsed, exhausted and confused. Some Maoist groups took up their ideas about direct action and direct democracy, but within a few years they tended to disappear as well.<sup>27</sup> However, in a different and

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23 the following reader seems useful, C. Posner, ed., Reflections on the Revolution in France: 1968 (Harmondsworth, 1970); for a good journalistic account see P. Seale and M. McConville, French Revolution 1968 (Harmondsworth, 1968).

<sup>25</sup>B.E. Brown, Protest in Paris. Anatomy of a Revolt (Morristown, N.J., 1974), p. 90; for similar views see Bartsch, op. cit., p. 288 and J-F. Bott, "Les situationnistes et l'économie cannibale," Les Temps Modernes 299:300 (1971): 2175-2181; a good summary of explanations or interpretations of the events is provided by Ph. Bénétou, and J. Touchard, "Les interprétations de la crise de mai-juin 1968," Revue Française de Science Politique (1970): 503-514.

<sup>26</sup>Poperen, L'Unité de la Gauche, pp. 139-140, 414; Dansette, op. cit., pp. 283-285; Depreux, op. cit., pp. 229-244.

<sup>27</sup>See "Ni pleurs ni couronnes," Noir et Rouge 46 (1970): 1-20; G. Debord and G. Sanguinetti, La véritable scission

diluted form their ideas were taken over by New Left parties like the PSU and trade unions like the Democratic Confederation of Labour.<sup>28</sup>

At its 1969 congress the PSU adopted a new programme which called for self-management in factories and schools and a new, socialist culture.<sup>29</sup> To carry out the platform, the party decided to expand its modest number of factory cells and to give them more weight within the party organisation.<sup>30</sup> With the platform it won 4% of the popular vote in 1968, almost twice as much as in 1967. Membership went up again to 15,000; many new members were Catholics who had been radicalised by the events of 1968 but objected to the anti-clerical character of the Communist Party and the Socialist party.<sup>31</sup> Many of them held radical and almost New Ultra-leftist ideas; hence they often criticised the party leadership's "technocratic" and "reformist" leanings.

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dans l'internationale (Paris, 1972), pp. 11-80 and 83-95; about the Maoist groups in question see P. Kessel, "Vive la Révolution," La Nef 48 (1972): 105-115; J. Moreau, "Les maos de la Gauche Prolétarienne," ibid., pp. 77-103.

<sup>28</sup>The French Confederation of Democratic Labour (Confédération Française Démocratique du Travail) had been a Catholic organisation until 1964; throughout the 1960s it became more radical and "New Leftish," i.e. interested in workers' self-management, direct action and cultural change; see E. Descamps, ed., La C.F.D.T. (Paris, 1971).

<sup>29</sup>Rocard, op. cit., pp. 125-183.

<sup>30</sup>Ibid., pp. 179-180; cf. K. Evin and R. Cayrol, "Les partis politiques dans les entreprises," Projet 106 (1976): 633-648.

<sup>31</sup>Rocard, op. cit., p. 115.

Michel Rocard, elected party leader (National Secretary) in 1967, achieved personal successes at the presidential election of 1969 and at a parliamentary by-election in the same year; at the former he won 4% of the popular vote, not much less than the Social-Democratic candidate Defferre, while at the latter he defeated the Gaullist Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Couve de Murville. However, electoral successes did not make him popular among his Ultra-leftist critics.<sup>32</sup> Between 1969 and 1972 Rocard was often outvoted at party meetings by the radical opposition, which only failed to capture the party because of its internal divisions. About five more or less Maoist and Trotskyite tendencies clashed with Rocard's New Left tendency, and with each other.<sup>33</sup> By 1972 Rocard seemed to have restored some unity in the party, around a new and more radical platform, the Manifesto of Toulouse.

Workers self-management, democratic planning and cultural revolution remained the party's main goals, but they were interpreted in a more radical perspective of direct democracy, abolition of the social division of labour and creation of new desires. Moreover the manifesto committed the party to pursue a more revolutionary strategy of popular mobilization

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<sup>32</sup>Poperen asserts slightly facetiously, "dans le parti d'après mai 1968, il n'est pas recommandé d'être candidat et il est franchement déconseillé d'être élu," L'Unité de la Gauche, p. 407.

<sup>33</sup>Ibid., pp. 223-226, 407-413; R. Voog, "Le PSU dix ans après," Chronique Sociale de France 5:6 (1971): 5-39.

and direct action, primarily at work-places to fight for workers' control, and secondarily in neighbourhoods, schools and consumer organizations in order to weaken bourgeois ideology and to prepare the way for a new culture.<sup>34</sup> Most of the demands would have been acceptable to the New (and to some extent the Old) Ultra-left of 1968, for example the Mouvement du 22 Mars founded by Cohn Bendit.<sup>35</sup> The PSU established contacts with several Ultra-leftist groups as well as the PCF in these years, but nothing more than temporary tactical alliances at local elections resulted from these meetings.<sup>36</sup>

When the Communist Party and the Socialist Party agreed on a Common Programme in 1972, the PSU criticized its electoralist and statist aspects but offered its critical support to a future Socialist-Communist coalition. The criticism did not satisfy the bulk of the Ultra-leftists, who began to leave and join existing groups like the Ligue Communiste (affiliated with the Fourth International) or establish new parties.<sup>37</sup> On the other hand the moderates around Rocard were attracted by the renewal of the Socialist Party and

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<sup>34</sup>Manifeste du parti socialiste unifié (Paris, 1972).

<sup>35</sup>Sauvageot, Geismar, Cohn-Bendit, Duteuil, La révolte étudiante (Paris, 1968), particularly pp. 63, 67, 81; cf. Gombin, Le projet révolutionnaire, pp. 19-23.

<sup>36</sup>Voog, op. cit.; Poperen, L'Unité de la Gauche, p. 409.

<sup>37</sup>Ibid.; also Lefranc, op. cit., pp. 241-245; some extremists had left before 1972, some were expelled, e.g. the Maoist faction of Peasants and Workers.

finally joined it after the presidential election of 1974.<sup>38</sup>

After the splits and expulsions of the early 1970s the PSU seemed to achieve some stability and coherence, of practice as well as theory, but no uniformity. Three or four tendencies kept competing for support at party congresses, which agreed on principles and objectives but differed on the strategic question concerning electoral alliances with the Socialists and Communists or with Trotskyites and other extremist groups. Generally, the left wing of the party worried more about its independence with respect to the Union of the Left (PCF and PS).<sup>39</sup> The 1977 party congress adopted a new platform, almost unanimously, though three alternatives had been presented.<sup>40</sup> It again promised critical support for a Socialist-Communist coalition, hoping that popular unity and mobilization following an electoral victory of the Left would create a dual power structure and force the government to take steps towards socialism and self-management (le socialisme autogestionnaire). Its concrete demands resembled those of the 1972 Manifesto, but were more specific and more radical in some aspects, for instance elimination of the school as a separate institution,

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<sup>38</sup> Tribune Socialiste, 20 December 1974; Politique Hebdo, 27 March 1975.

<sup>39</sup> Le Monde, 12 October 1974, 16 May 1976; Politique Hebdo, 19 December 1974; Liberation, 1 February 1975; Quotidien de Paris, 3 October 1974.

<sup>40</sup> Tribune Socialiste 722 (15 December 1976); alternative A represented the majority view favourable to cooperation with PCF and PS, alternative B preferred the extreme left, alternative C a maoist line independent of other groups; cf. Interview 13.

establishment of consumer councils to control retail prices, and collective household services.<sup>41</sup> It defined its theory as an "open Marxism," allowing the relative autonomy of suprastructures, particularly religion; its National Secretary, Mousel, had been active in Catholic organizations.<sup>42</sup>

Though party members campaigned actively in local and general elections (in 1976, 1977 and 1978) they devoted more time and energy to direct action in neighbourhoods, factories and schools; PSU members played a leading part in the strike and occupation at the LIP plant at Besançon, in tenant and commuter committees in Paris, in neighbourhood councils in Grenoble, and in the national consumers' union, the Confédération syndicale du cadre de vie.<sup>43</sup> At the municipal elections of 1977 it made alliances mostly with the Socialists and Communists, but also with the Trotskyite Ligue Communiste Révolutionnaire or with other radical groups like the Ecologists. In 1978 it again failed to win any seats in the National Assembly.<sup>44</sup>

Comparing the development of the French PSU with that of the Dutch Pacifist Socialist Party, one is struck by the many

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<sup>41</sup>"Propositions de programme pour la construction du socialisme autogestionnaire en France," Critique Socialiste 29 (1977).

<sup>42</sup>Ibid., p. 88; about Mousel see La Croix, 17 December 1975.

<sup>43</sup>M. Rocard, ed., Des militants du PSU (Paris, 1971); Tribune Socialiste, 15 November 1975; Le Monde, 20 June 1976; PSU Documentation 106:107 (1976); Interview 13.

<sup>44</sup>Tribune Socialiste, 23 March 1977; Le Monde, 21 March 1978.



similarities. Both had started around 1960 in opposition to the militarism and class collaboration practiced or condoned by the major Socialist (or Social Democratic) party in their War and the Algerian War, but won new members and adopted new and more radical ideas during the late 1960s; internal conflicts raged in both, resulting in the departure of extreme leftists, of Trotskyite or Maoist persuasion, as well as of reformists in the early 1970s. In the late 1970s, both united (though not completely) around radical platforms for workers' self-management, direct democracy and cultural revolution, to be pursued through direct action as well as through activity in parliaments or municipal councils. Of course there were important differences as well; the PSU used more Marxist language, tried to organize workers in sections d'entreprise (factory cells), and showed more tolerance for competing factions or tendencies--institutionalizing them through proportional representation in the Executive Committee (Direction Politique Nationale) and the presentation of alternative motions and "orientation texts" or programmes at party congresses.<sup>45</sup> Both attracted many committed Christians,

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<sup>45</sup> PSU Documentation 106:107 (1976); Rocard, Le PSU, p. 178-182; both PSU and PSP were organized in three tiers, branch (section)-region (fédération)-nation; party congress was elected by branches in the PSP but by regions in the PSU; it would elect the Executive Committee (Direction Politique Nationale or Partijbestuur), larger in the PSU than in the PSP; the latter would select a National Bureau or Dagelijks Bestuur; between congresses a party council (Conseil National, Partijraad) could check the Executive Committee--it played an important role in 1974 in resisting Rocard's attempt to merge with the PS.

mostly Catholics in the case of the PSU and Protestants in the case of the PSP. The similarities between PSU and PSP were not entirely fortuitous. Contacts between them were frequent and friendly; the larger and intellectually more productive PSU often acted as the elder brother and no doubt transmitted ideas to the PSP.<sup>46</sup>

Meanwhile the Social Democrats of the SFIO and many political clubs had also digested the events and ideas of May 1968. The SFIO itself did not survive the May events, nor its subsequent defeats at the general election of 1968 and the presidential election of 1969--where its candidate, Defferre, received only 5% of the popular vote. Between 1969 and 1971 it merged with a majority of the clubs under the new name Parti Socialiste, and under a new leader, François Mitterrand, leader of the largest confederation of clubs and former minister under the Fourth Republic.<sup>47</sup> Under Mitterrand's leadership the Socialist Party negotiated a Common Programme with the Communist Party which attracted 47% of the voters in the 1973 elections.<sup>48</sup> The PS also renewed its own programme

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<sup>46</sup>At congresses and celebrations like the annual summer festival of the PSU near Paris and the PSP festival at Utrecht in 1977 leading members from the other party would be present (Personal observations, June 1976 La Courneuve; April 1977 Utrecht).

<sup>47</sup>Actually Mollet had resigned in 1969, but his successor (until 1971) Savary was generally seen as a caretaker and Mollet supporter; cf. Poperen, L'Unité de la Gauche, pp. 228-336; P. Guidoni, Histoire du nouveau parti socialiste (Paris, 1973).

<sup>48</sup>Popperen, *ibid.*, pp. 360-399, 428; Guidoni, *op. cit.*, pp. 339 ff.

and attracted many new members, mainly from progressive Catholic circles like the CFDT (Confederation of Democratic French Labour) but also from the PSU. An open conference on socialism and cooperation during Mitterrand's presidential campaign in 1974 helped to recruit most of the new members. Self-management (autogestion) was discussed intensively at the open conference--not surprisingly, as one commentator observed, since it had long been the hobby-horse of progressive Catholics.<sup>49</sup> In 1975 the Socialist Party adopted a special platform on self-management, prepared by a former PSU member, Martinet. The platform called for the socialization of major industries under the management of workers councils, with some supervision by representatives of consumers and of the state and in the context of democratic planning; it also called for a democratic transformation of the state "from below and from above" and for changes in education, urban planning and "le cadre de la vie" in general. To achieve this the PS would have to take extra-parliamentary as well as governmental action, in alliance with other leftist parties based on a "front de classe" of manual and clerical workers, professionals and farmers; it would also have to democratize its own organization.<sup>50</sup>

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<sup>49</sup>H. Portelli, "Au rendez-vous du PS," Esprit 4:5 (1977): 178-183, "la référence à l'autogestion, importée de la CFDT et du PSU et qui allait devenir l'axe doctrinal du parti, constituait jusqu'alors la caractéristique du progressisme catholique." (p. 179).

<sup>50</sup>"Quinze thèses sur l'autogestion," Le Poing et la Rose, 15 November 1975.

The new party achieved a considerable degree of internal democracy, at least insofar as it allowed many conflicting tendencies to coexist in its midst and compete for office and for new members. Practically all types of Old and New Left were present: Old Left "Guesdist" Social Democrats in the group Bataille Socialiste, more radical Marxists around Poperen in ERIS (Etudes, Recherches et Informations Socialistes), Modern Leftists around Defferre, Mauroy and Mitterrand, New Leftists around Rocard and Martinet and more radical New Leftists in CERES (Centre d'Etudes, de Recherches et d'Education Socialistes).<sup>51</sup>

The two New Left currents cooperated for a while, publishing Frontière together. But they split over tactical issues in 1975, when Martinet and Rocard joined the party leadership whereas CERES formed the main opposition to Mitterrand and was ousted from the Secretariat. The theoretical and personal backgrounds of the two currents were slightly different, though both included many Catholics and higher civil servants, professionals and academics. The group around Rocard and Martinet, which started to publish Faire, came from the PSU and showed more concern about statism (étatisme) and socio-cultural issues like ecology.<sup>52</sup> CERES,

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<sup>51</sup>N. Lieber, "Ideology and Tactics of the French Socialist Party," Government and Opposition 12:4 (1977): 455 ff; also (more biased), Guidoni, *op. cit.*, pp. 77-86; Poperen, L'Unité de la Gauche, pp. 322-335, 433 ff.

<sup>52</sup>Lieber, *op. cit.*; e.g. Faire 23 (1977); M. Rocard, "Changer les enjeux," La Nef 52 (1973): 57-78; G. Martinet, L'avenir depuis vingt ans (Paris, 1974); M. Rocard, Questions à l'Etat socialiste (Paris, 1972).

which published Répères, had remained loyal to the SFIO of Mollet, although it was radicalized during the 1960s. Some of its members and some of its ideas also came from the PSU, but these ideas were integrated into a more Marxist perspective inspired by Gramsci, Lefèbvre and Gorz, and by Castoriadis and Bourdet of Socialisme ou Barbarie.<sup>53</sup> With Rocard and Martinet it shared ideas about workers self-management, cultural revolution, the quality of life and the need for a dual strategy of parliamentarism and extraparliamentary action, but it put more emphasis on economic issues and in particular on expansion of the state sector through nationalizations.<sup>54</sup> CERES also disagreed with the party majority--which included Rocard and Martinet since 1975--about foreign policy and preferred an alliance with left wing Gaullists or Nationalists to the existing alliance with left wing Radicals.<sup>55</sup>

CERES was dissolved as an "organized tendency" in 1977 but continued to publish Répères and to organize conferences.<sup>56</sup> It controlled about 15 of the 95 party federations, including Paris; in Paris its members engaged in several extraparliamentary actions, against the construction of a freeway and against

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<sup>53</sup>M. Charzat, et al., Le CERES un combat pour le socialisme (Paris, 1975), pp. 244-249.

<sup>54</sup>See Répères 43 (1977); and Interviews 11 and 12; the differences between the two New Left tendencies will be clarified further in Chapter 4.3.

<sup>55</sup>CERES hoped to realise socialism in France independent of the EEC, whereas Rocard c.s. preferred a more internationalist, European strategy; see Répères 41 (1977): 20-48 especially; also Le Monde, 22 March 1978.

<sup>56</sup>Le Monde, 19 June 1977.

land speculation; they were active in 45 sections d'entreprise, mainly at banks, post offices and government agencies.<sup>57</sup> At the 1977 party congress, 25% of the delegates voted for the CERES motion.<sup>58</sup>

Both New Left tendencies, CERES and the Faire-group around Rocard, contributed to the renewal and radicalisation of the Socialist Party. To some extent it became a New Left party, appealing to voters with slogans like "Vivre autrement" and "Changer la vie" and demands for "autogestion" and "espaces verts" (green spaces, parks), and supporting or initiating various extra-parliamentary actions.<sup>59</sup> Its appeals were successful, insofar as its share of the popular vote rose from 17% in 1968 to 23% in 1978. Most of its new voters and members were probably white collar workers. Membership went up from about 70,000 in 1969 to 150,000 by 1975.<sup>60</sup>

The growth of the Socialist Party may have worried its Communist ally. When the 1978 election came closer, tensions increased. Negotiations about a revised Common Platform broke down. Divided, the French Left narrowly failed to win a

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<sup>57</sup> Rapport d'activité 1971-1973, Fédération de Paris (mimeograph).

<sup>58</sup> Le Monde, 19 June 1977.

<sup>59</sup> See A. Meyer, "Réflexions sur l'originalité du PS," La nouvelle revue socialiste 12:13 (1975): 5-24; R. Cayrol, "Le PS et l'autogestion," Projet 88 (1975): 969-974; Le Monde, 6 July 1975.

<sup>60</sup> V. Wright and Machin, "The French Socialist Party, 1971-75," Political Quarterly 46:1 (1975): 36-52; C. Ysmal, "La gauche française et les classes sociales," Projet 106 (1976): 649-658; Le Monde, 21 March 1978.

majority--and may have entered another period of internal conflicts, self-doubt and renewal.<sup>61</sup>

A brief comparison of the French Parti Socialiste with the Dutch Partij van de Arbeid shows many similarities, especially in the years after 1960. Both parties had declined in the 1960s while they were in opposition--after a period of participation in government in the late 1940s and 1950s--and both revived themselves around 1970, achieving a record vote in the late 1970s. Both attracted many new voters and members from the Catholic segment of the working class--although probably more white than blue collar workers--and improved their relations with the Catholic trade unions. Both adopted more or less New Leftist platforms in the 1970s, demanding workers' self-management, cultural change, decentralization of the state, democratic planning and education; both hoped to realize this through parliamentary as well as extra-parliamentary action. Both were radicalized and renewed under pressure from the Left, from outside (PSU or PSP) and inside (CERES or Nieuw Links); both lost their extreme anti-communist right wing (the DS'70 in the Netherlands, the Mouvement Démocrate Socialiste de France and other groups in France).<sup>62</sup>

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<sup>61</sup>Le Monde, 29 June 1976, 10 January 1978, 21 March 1978.

<sup>62</sup>Le Monde, 7 November 1974, 21 March 1978: in 1978 the MDSF won one seat in the National Assembly through an alliance with other Centre parties, the Union pour la démocratie française; DS'70, its Dutch counterpart, also won one seat, in the 1977 election.

Of course, there were striking differences as well. Though both the PS and the PvdA became their countries' largest parties in terms of votes, the former had to compete with an almost equally large Communist Party whereas the latter almost wiped the Dutch Communist Party from the electoral map.<sup>63</sup> Furthermore, the PvdA had led a government coalition with Christian Democrats from 1973 to 1977 and negotiated for its renewal in 1977 though without success, whereas the PS refused any alliance with the Centre and maintained a rather uneasy opposition front with the Communist Party in 1978. Thus the PS often took more radical positions than its Dutch counterpart and defined itself as revolutionary and Marxist--though its voters and its members may well have been even less proletarian than those of the PvdA.<sup>64</sup> The French Socialists, on the other hand, tried to organize workers in sections d'entreprise, which Dutch members of the PvdA only started to discuss in 1977.<sup>65</sup> The organization of

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<sup>63</sup>The PCF received 21% of the popular vote in 1978, the CPN less than 2% in 1977; the PCF membership exceeded that of the PS by 2:1, if not more; cf. Borella, op. cit., pp. 159, 176.

<sup>64</sup>L'identité du PS, Dossier Formation 2; Meyer, op. cit.; a survey held by Inglehart and Rabier in 1970 showed that the PvdA attracted slightly more blue collar workers than the PS--26% and 23% of their respective electorates; on the other hand PvdA voters expressed more often support for revolution than PS voters in 1970: 7.7% and 5.5% respectively; but Dutch voters in general showed more sympathy for revolutionary action than French voters in that year. According to one survey, manual workers made up 3% of party delegates to the 1973 congress, professionals and intellectuals about 60%; see R. Cayrol, "Les militant du Parti Socialiste," Projet 33 (1974): 929-940.

<sup>65</sup>B. Middel, "Partij van Arbeid: ook voor arbeiders," Socialisme en Democratie (1977): 3-12.



the PS resembled that of the PvdA, but appeared more tolerant of tendencies and factions; on the other hand, First Secretary Mitterrand may have held more personal power in the PS than parliamentary party leader Den Uyl or party chairwoman Van den Heuvel in the PvdA.<sup>66</sup> The New Left currents or tendencies within the two parties differed even more. Both found support among young intellectuals, some of Christian background, but the French CERES was much better organized and grounded in Marxist theory than the more moderate, open and heterogeneous Nieuw Links group; perhaps the current around Rocard and Martinet was more similar to the latter.<sup>67</sup>

A comparison between the Communist Parties in France and the Netherlands could prove interesting as well, but would go beyond the framework of this thesis. Both parties seemed to have maintained Old Left traditions, though the French party may have accepted New Left ideas to a greater extent.<sup>68</sup>

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<sup>66</sup>The organisational structure of the PS differed only slightly from that of the PvdA; its Party Congress would elect a Comité Directeur, which would in turn elect a Bureau Executif but which would be led by the Secrétaire National. Delegates to party congresses and conventions--cf. the party councils of the PvdA--were elected by the regional branches or fédérations; see F. Borella, Les partis politiques dans la France d'aujourd'hui (Paris, 1973), pp. 158-161.

<sup>67</sup>"Better organised" does not mean "more effective"; indeed, the more informal and chaotic Nieuw Links probably exercised more influence over the PvdA than CERES over the PS.

<sup>68</sup>Thus Poperen perceives an interpenetration of ideas and a certain convergence between the two main parties of the Left, PS and PCF, and the two main theoretical traditions, Marxism and Catholicism, L'Unité de la Gauche, p. 417; cf. Touchard, op. cit., pp. 359-362; however, the nature and impact of the transformation of the PCF towards "Eurocommunism" seems to remain an open question--by 1978 the process had not been completed.

### 3.2 The New Left in Germany

The German Left has been dominated for more than a century by the Social Democratic Party, the Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschlands (SPD). Only in the 1920s and early 1930s did it have to face serious competition from the Communist Party. Both parties were suppressed brutally by the National Socialist regime but emerged again after the German defeat in 1945. Whereas the Communist Party enjoyed Russian protection in East Germany and could control the first German government in that part of the country which became the German Democratic Republic, it did not do very well in the Western parts which became the Federal Republic of Germany. Already in decline, the party was banned by the Federal Court in 1956. Thus the SPD became not only the largest but also the only party of the Left represented in the Federal Parliament. Yet it failed to win a majority or to join a coalition government, as neither Liberals nor Christian Democrats--the other main parties--showed any interest in a coalition with Socialists. Fearing no competition from the Left but only from the Right, the SPD began to moderate its approach and to revise its principles. This process culminated in the Bad Godesberg congress of 1959, where the party adopted a new programme similar to the one adopted by the Dutch Labour Party in the same year.<sup>69</sup>

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<sup>69</sup>H-J. Brauns, et al., Die SPD in der Krise (Frankfurt, 1973), pp. 176-180; SPD, Grundsatzprogramm (Bonn, 1959); see also G. Mann, The History of Germany since 1789 (Harmondsworth, 1974).

During the 1950s the SPD had occasionally supported extra-parliamentary mass actions, particularly against nuclear armament ("Kampf den Atomtod," 1958) and against German membership of NATO (Paulskirchenbewegung, 1955). But after 1959 it directed all its efforts towards achieving electoral results.<sup>70</sup> Its efforts bore fruit; the Social Democratic share of the vote grew from 32% in 1957 to 36% in 1961, 39% in 1965, 43% in 1969 and finally surpassed that of the Christian Democrats in 1972 with 46%.<sup>71</sup> While winning voters in the Centre, the SPD alienated its left wing and in particular its student organization, the SDS (Sozialistischer Deutscher Studentenbund), or German Socialist Student League, which was excluded from the party in 1961 because of its "pro-communist" positions.<sup>72</sup> The SDS and its older supporters--organized later in the Socialist League--soon became the core of the "homeless Left" (heimatlose Linke) of radical democrats, pacifists and Marxists outside the SPD who tried to continue extra-parliamentary action against rearmament and against the political restoration of authoritarian tendencies.

Throughout the 1950s attempts had been made to found neutralist or pacifist parties to the Left of the SPD, but

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<sup>70</sup>E. Richert, Die radikale Linke (Berlin, 1969), pp. 70, 81-84; cf. Von Freyberg, et al., Geschichte der deutschen Sozialdemokratie 1863-1975 (Cologne, 1975), Ch. VII.

<sup>71</sup>Brauns, op. cit., p. 339.

<sup>72</sup>Richert, op. cit., pp. 88-89; H.M. Bock, Geschichte des 'linken Radikalismus' in Deutschland. Ein Versuch (Frankfurt, 1976), pp. 192-193.

without any electoral success. A new attempt in 1960 to unite the "homeless Left" in the German Peace Union (Deutsche Friedens-Union, DFU) promised to be more successful. However, in the 1961 general election, the new party won only 1.9% of the popular vote, and no seats, in spite of--or because of--support from Communists who had also become "homeless" in 1956.<sup>73</sup> The force of anti-communist and Cold War ideology in West Germany may have prevented the Peace Union from emulating the successes of its Dutch counterpart, the Pacifist Socialist Party; the 5% threshold of the German electoral system may also have discouraged potential voters.

Disappointed with electoral action and--equally ineffective--extra-parliamentary action, many "homeless Leftists" in the SDS and elsewhere turned to "philosophical action," i.e. the study of Marx and various Neo-Marxists like Castoriadis, Williams, C.W. Mills and the Frankfurt School. These intellectuals established contacts with New Left Clubs in Britain and the Parti Socialiste Unifié in France, and began to identify themselves as the German New Left (Neue Linke).<sup>74</sup> Skeptical about the political potential of the German working class, and in particular its political and socio-economical organizations--the SPD and DGB (DeutscherGewerkschaftsbund, German Trade Union Federation)--they came to reject both the Stalinist and the Social Democratic Old Left. This development within

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<sup>73</sup>Richert, op. cit., pp. 92-93.

<sup>74</sup>Ibid., pp. 88-89; Bock, Geschichte des 'linken Radikalismus', p. 196; J. Seifert, "Die neue Linke," Frankfurter Hefte 18:1 (1963): 30-40.

the "homeless Left" led to conflicts within the German Peace Union and the SDS. In the SDS the New Left won control in 1961, lost it in 1964 and, in a different form, regained it in 1966.<sup>75</sup>

By 1966 the political scene had changed. The cooperation between Social Democrats and Christian Democrats in a Grand Coalition resulted in (among other things) Emergency Laws, seen by many observers as "creeping fascism"; this seemed to confirm the New Left's critique of Social Democracy. Though resistance against the coalition and its policies also grew within the SPD--reviving its left wing--the main burden of it was borne by the SDS and its allies.<sup>76</sup> These allies were mostly other student organizations such as the Liberal Student League and the Social Democratic College League. In a few places, however, members of the SDS joined with liberal intellectuals and professionals, as well as leftist union leaders, in Republican Clubs and in mass rallies opposing the government. This so-called Extra-Parliamentary Opposition failed to prevent the Emergency Laws from being passed and fell apart soon afterwards, divided over tactics and ultimate ends.<sup>77</sup> In 1969 some of its members formed an electoral coalition

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<sup>75</sup>Bock, Geschichte des 'linken Radikalismus', pp. 195 ff.; the New Left of 1961-64 differed from the New (Ultra) Left that took over in 1966, as is shown below.

<sup>76</sup>Richert, op. cit., pp. 97 ff; the small Liberal Party carried out some opposition within parliament, particularly against the Emergency Laws, but agreed with the Grand Coalition on many other issues.

<sup>77</sup>K. Shell, "Extraparliamentary Opposition in Postwar Germany," Comparative Politics 2:4 (1970): 653-680; Bock, Geschichte des 'linken Radikalismus', pp. 213-217.

with the German Peace Union and the resurrected Communist Party, but failed to win more than 0.6% of the popular vote-- even less than the Peace Union won by itself in 1961 and 1965.<sup>78</sup> Many other members of the Extra-Parliamentary Opposition must have voted for the SPD, probably hoping that a clear victory over the Christian Democratic Union would allow the Social Democrats to pursue a more progressive policy.<sup>79</sup>

By 1969 the SDS had changed considerably; from the (New) Social Democratic Left it had moved towards a New Ultra-Left similar in many ways to the New Ultra-left in France. The moderate New Left leadership of the early 1960s had been interested in extra-parliamentary action and in the theories of C.W. Mills, Galbraith, Mallet, etc.; whereas the group which prevailed after 1966 was inspired by Marcuse, Reich, and in a practical way by the Dutch Provos and the International Situationists and sought to turn extra-parliamentary action into anti-parliamentary action.<sup>80</sup> The core of the new leadership came from a small circle of artists and students around Dieter Kunzelmann, who had been a leading member of the Situationist International from 1961 to 1962. The Subversive Aktion, as the circle called itself, started to

<sup>78</sup>In 1965 the Peace Union (DFU) won 1.3%, Brauns, op. cit., p. 339.

<sup>79</sup>Shell, op. cit., p. 679; L. Edinger, "Political Change in Germany," Comparative Politics 2:4 (1970): 559.

<sup>80</sup>Bock, Geschichte des 'linken Radikalismus', pp. 194-221; some Provos went to see the SDS in Berlin.

publish a rather esoteric journal, Anschlag (Attack), in 1963, discussing the integration of the working class into bourgeois society, the Third World, automation, and other theoretical questions. On the other hand the group also initiated direct actions of a provocative nature notably at meetings of German advertising specialists, during the visit of Tshombe, then Prime Minister of the Congo, to Berlin in 1964.<sup>81</sup> Only the last action mobilized a sizeable crowd of 1000 demonstrators and proved a fruitful exercise in flexible demonstration tactics. Just before this, most Subversive Aktion members had joined the SDS and formed an "anti-authoritarian faction" within it. Two years later, in 1966, they formed the majority faction. One of the Subversive Aktion members, Rudi Dutschke, came to represent the SDS, and the Extra-Parliamentary Opposition as a whole, at many meetings and conferences, until a fanatical rightist shot him in 1968.<sup>82</sup>

Dutschke, who had fled from East Germany and maintained a Marxist perspective, broke with Kunzelmann and the more anarchist (if not nihilist) wing of Subversive Aktion in 1965. While more optimistic about the role of the working class and the chances for a revolution in Germany, Dutschke seemed to share the anti-authoritarian and counter-cultural concerns

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<sup>81</sup>Ibid.; F. Böckelmann and H. Nagel, eds., Subversive Aktion (Frankfurt, 1976), pp. 35, 55, 69, 146-147, 262-264, 294-295; the relative success of the Tshombe action shows the sensitivity of the New Left to international and Third World issues.

<sup>82</sup>Richert, op. cit., pp. 107 ff.; see also G. Statera, Death of a Utopia (New York, 1975), pp. 94, 97, 111.

of the anarchist wing. Dutschke hoped, however, that a "long march through the institutions," (factories, schools and colleges), by revolutionary activists might provoke and enlighten the masses of younger workers and intellectuals, and make them aware of their real needs which had been repressed or manipulated by the class in control of those institutions; by the same process the revolutionaries would change themselves and overcome their internalized repression and fragmentation.<sup>83</sup>

The ideas of Dutschke and other anti-authoritarian SDS leaders like Krahl and Wolff in Frankfurt--who adopted and radicalized the theory of the Frankfurt School--were tried out in student occupations of universities and institutes, particularly in Berlin and Frankfurt in 1968 and 1969. Student activists set up (or took over existing) seminars and workshops to articulate and politicize student needs, as well as organising projects for young workers and apprentices.<sup>84</sup> Though the German working class as a whole remained rather hostile towards these projects, some young workers took part in the projects and in street demonstrations organized by the SDS. Possibly as a result of this, the demonstrations

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<sup>83</sup>Böckelmann and Nagel, op. cit., pp. 190-195, 293-294, 307-328; see also U. Bergmann, et. al., Rebellion der Studenten oder die neue Opposition (Reinbek, 1968); these ideas will be discussed further in Chapter 4.2 below.

<sup>84</sup>See Statera, op. cit., pp. 100, 109 ff. See also B. Rabehl, "Von der anti-autoritären Bewegung zur sozialistischen Opposition," in Bergmann, op. cit., pp. 151-179; P. Mosler, Was wir wollten, was wir wurden (Reinbek, 1977), passim.



became more violent and aggressive.<sup>85</sup> The implications of this escalation, coupled with the disintegration of the Extra-Parliamentary Opposition, divided the anti-authoritarian majority of the SDS. The resurgence of the "traditionalist" Marxist wing, though weakened by expulsions, compounded the internal conflicts. The last national conference of the SDS broke up in chaos, intensified by an action of militant feminists against "Prick Power" within the movement.<sup>86</sup> In 1970, a kind of post-mortem conference was held by the various groups that claimed its legacy to dissolve the organization and divide up its archives.<sup>87</sup>

The descendents of the SDS, and of the Extra-Parliamentary Opposition in general, could be divided into four categories. The most extreme activists, often excluded from the SDS or operating only on its fringe, continued the escalation of militancy into terrorism; Kunzelmann, for example, who was expelled from the SDS in 1968, went to a Palestinian training camp and returned as a member of the Red Army Faction led by Baader and Meinhof until 1976.<sup>88</sup> The terrorists' pessimistic

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<sup>85</sup>F. Wolff and E. Windaus, eds., Studentenbewegung 1967-69 (Frankfurt, 1977), pp. 173-192; K. Hartung, "Versuch, die Krise der anti-autoritären Bewegung wieder zur Sprache zu bringen," Kurshuch 48 (1977): 14-44.

<sup>86</sup>Wolff and Windaus, op. cit., pp. 219-232; the feminist Weiberrat (Women's Council) also disrupted many lectures at the University of Frankfurt, particularly in Adorno's last course, Spring 1969 (Personal observation).

<sup>87</sup>Bock, Geschichte des 'linken Radikalismus', p. 264; Statera, op. cit., p. 243.

<sup>88</sup>Hosler, op. cit., pp. 115-116; Bock, *ibid.*, pp. 273-280.

view of the German working class as an integrated element of bourgeois society was shared to some extent by moderate neo-anarchist elements who continued more or less playful forms of action within the university or in communes of squatters.<sup>89</sup>

A third category agreed with the anti-authoritarian practice of the neo-anarchists but tried to mobilize and coordinate a greater variety of groups and interests among intellectuals as well as workers and to develop some kind of Marxist theory; most of this category consisted of local action groups affiliated with the Socialist Bureau, but some may have joined the S D Youth Organization (JUS).<sup>90</sup> Finally, many anti-authoritarians returned to Old Left Marxism-Leninist positions of a Maoist, Trotskyite or Soviet-Russian variety, trying to reconstruct a revolutionary workers party along Leninist, i.e. democratic centralist lines.<sup>91</sup>

Most of these groups remained small and isolated during the 1970s. The Communist Party, reborn in 1969, may have recruited 40,000 members by 1975, but at the 1976 elections

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<sup>89</sup>H. Grimminger, "Hausbesetzungen in Frankfurt," Beiträge zur Konfliktforschung 6:3 (1976): 91-124; Cohn-Bendit, exiled from France in 1968, had joined the SDS in the same year and led a group of Neo-Anarchists or Sponti's after 1970, active in squatting actions and later in ecological action in Frankfurt.

<sup>90</sup>H. Mewes, "The German New Left," New German Critique 1:1 (1973): 22-41; Bock, Geschichte des 'linken Radikalismus', pp. 264-267; Links 79 (1976); Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung, 10 June 1978; the boundary between this category and the second one was not very sharp: Cohn-Bendit also took part in the Congress against Repression, see Links 79 (1976).

<sup>91</sup>Statera, op. cit., pp. 234-247; Bock, ibid., pp. 267-277; Mosler, op. cit., pp. 64 ff.

could muster only 120,000 votes, 0.3% of the electorate.<sup>92</sup> Its student organization, the Marxist Student League "Spartakus" proved more successful in student elections, winning 8% of all German student council seats in 1972-1973.<sup>93</sup> The various Maoist groups fared worse, together gathering less than 10,000 members and less than 0.2% of the popular vote in 1976. Their student organisations won 7% of the seats in 1972-1973.<sup>94</sup> The Trotskyites did even worse, with about 2000 members and 5,000 votes (less than 0.1%) in 1976.<sup>95</sup> Compared to these (more or less) Old Left groups, the New Left appeared slightly more popular among German youth. New Left groups rarely put up candidates for general elections, but they won roughly 25% of the student council seats in 1972-1973 and mobilized 20,000 participants at a Congress against Repression at Frankfurt in 1976.<sup>96</sup> Even more important, however, were the Young Socialists, affiliated with the SPD, who had developed from loyal party career-seekers into militant party rebels during the 1960s. In 1969 they adopted a New Leftist platform with demands for workers self-management,

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<sup>92</sup>Mewes, op. cit., p. 24; G. Minnerup, "The Bundesrepublik Today," New Left Review 99 (1976): 3-44.

<sup>93</sup>Mewes, ibid.; J. Pazurek, "MSB Spartakus--Mode oder Gefahr?," Politische Studien 201 (1972): 42-51.

<sup>94</sup>Mewes, ibid.; Minnerup, ibid.; in 1976 two Maoist parties ran candidates for the federal elections.

<sup>95</sup>Minnerup, ibid.; only one Trotskyite group took part; the low rate of voters-members (3:1) could indicate isolation.

<sup>96</sup>Links, 79 (1976).

socialization of key sectors in the economy, democratization of all sectors of society and particularly of education and the mass media.<sup>97</sup>

The Jung-Sozialisten (JUSOS: Young Socialists) also articulated New Left goals like free self-realization, real communication and solidarity between men (and women) as well as harmony between man and nature.<sup>98</sup> They elaborated a "dual strategy" (Doppelstrategie) of direct action at the grass roots combined with legislative and electoral action, in order to realize structural or system-transcending (system-uberwindende) reforms and to democratize the state--ideas which they borrowed from Gorz and from Claus Offe, a young member of the Frankfurt School.<sup>99</sup> Direct action at the grass roots level was intended to put pressure on legislators and governments but also to contribute to self-organization and the articulation of needs by the working class.

From 1969 onwards, the Young Socialists initiated several direct actions, usually in the sphere of circulation and consumption rather than production: construction of childrens' playgrounds, organization of day-care centres (particularly

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<sup>97</sup>"Zustand und Aufgaben der SPD," in O. Flechtheim, ed., Dokumente zur parteipolitischen Entwicklung in Deutschland seit 1945 (Berlin 1971), pp. 188-190; more elaborated later, cf. N. Gansel, ed., Ueberwindet den Kapitalismus oder was wollen die Jungsozialisten? (Reinbek, 1971), pp. 55, 81, 98, 107, 141, 177.

<sup>98</sup>Ibid., pp. 98, 143, 153.

<sup>99</sup>Gansel, op. cit., pp. 59, 99, 135; see also H. Heimann, Theoriediskussion in der SPD (Frankfurt, 1975), p. 228 inter alia.

for foreign immigrants) and urban renewal projects.<sup>100</sup> There was talk of shop-level organization, but as most Young Socialists seemed to be students and junior civil servants rather than workers, they could do little more than support actions taken by others, like left-wing trade unionists.<sup>101</sup> In some cities, like Wiesbaden, the JUSO and its older sympathizers were able to control the municipal government and carry out reforms, such as the construction of parks and pedestrian streets instead of new freeways, and of apartments instead of offices in downtown areas, while also trying to involve citizens in hearings; in this they resembled Nieuw Links members of the Dutch Labour Party.<sup>102</sup>

Direct action could lead to a confrontation with party leadership, particularly when the action involved people outside the SPD and, worse, members of Communist groups.<sup>103</sup> Of course these incidents were played up by the rightist mass media and the Christian Democrats, who formed the official

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<sup>100</sup>Gansel, op. cit., pp. 107-108; see also V. Mauersberger, ed., Wie links dürfen Jusos sein? (Reinbek, 1974), pp. 66-127.

<sup>101</sup>Brauns, op. cit., pp. 261-263; the relationship between JUSO and the trade-unionists in the SPD was often uneasy, though it improved towards the end of the 1970s, see K. Bachsleitner, "Zu Entstehung und Funktion der AfA als 'Arbeitnehmerflügel der SPD,'" Blätter für deutsche und internationale Politik (1976): 802-816; also Der Spiegel, 3 September 1979.

<sup>102</sup>See Mauersberger, op. cit., pp. 117-127; about Nieuw Links see Ch. 2.4 above.

<sup>103</sup>Gansel, op. cit., pp. 68-78; see also P. Arend, Die innerparteiliche Entwicklung der SPD 1966-1975 (Bonn, 1975) pp. 146-153.

opposition after 1969. The leadership of the SPD often reacted sharply to JUSO actions. In 1977 it even suspended the new chairman of the Young Socialists, Benneter, when he declared "for us JUSOS membership in the party is not a dogma on which we insist at all costs."<sup>104</sup> On the other hand, the Young Socialists often found allies among older and more moderate left-wing party members. Together they pushed through some reforms of the party organization--making expulsion more difficult, and circulation of elites easier--as well as certain modifications in party platforms, concerning financial, economic and foreign policy. Thus a long-term programme presented by Schmidt--a right-wing member and from 1974 Chancellor (Bundeskanzler), i.e. leader of the coalition government--was rejected by the party congress and revised by a more leftist commission, which gave more emphasis to investment controls, workers codetermination and extra-parliamentary party action, without, however, going beyond the Godesberg programme of 1959.<sup>105</sup> The left wing of the party captured a third of the seats on the Executive Committee (Partei Vorstand) in 1973, partly because of support from the centre, and raised its representation in parliament from 20 to 45 members

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<sup>104</sup>In German: "Für uns Jusos ist die Mitgliedschaft in der Partei kein Dogma, an dem wir nun in jedem Fall festhalten," quoted in G. Langguth, "Jusos, Kommunisten, Sozialdemokraten," Die politische Meinung 173 (1977): 95.

<sup>105</sup>Arend, op. cit., pp. 115-119; also M. Hirsch, "L' évolution récente de la social-démocratie allemande," Esprit 7:8 (1973): 155-170; see also the SPD Oekonomisch-politischer Orientierungsrahmen für die Jahre 1975-1985 (Bonn, 1975), and Jungsozialisten Informationsdienst 15 (1975).

between 1969 and 1972; its support among the rank and file was estimated at 40% by 1975.<sup>106</sup> After 1975 its influence may have declined somewhat, due to "counteraction" taken by the right wing and the Chancellor, to a general rightist "mood" among the electorate (indicated by the electoral losses of the SPD in regional and federal elections), and to internal conflicts within the left wing.<sup>107</sup>

These internal conflicts increased with the radicalization of the Young Socialists. The New Left and Neo-Marxist leadership elected in 1969 was soon faced with a growing opposition from the Left, led by a more Old Left faction which defined its position as "Marxist Left" but was soon called Stamokap because of its emphasis on the connection between the state and monopoly capital.<sup>108</sup> This "Marxist Left" was challenged in its turn by a growing "Anti-revisionist Left" which condemned both the leadership and the Marxist Left as revisionists and advocated a revolutionary strategy based on mass mobilization through direct action.<sup>109</sup> When the Anti-revisionists made an alliance with the Stamokap-faction in 1977, they defeated the Neo-Marxist candidate for the leadership and elected Benneter to the chair; a few months later he was

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<sup>106</sup> Arend, op. cit., pp. 153-164; in 1969 the SPD had 224 members of parliament (Bundestag), in 1972, 230.

<sup>107</sup> Arend, op. cit., pp. 165 ff.

<sup>108</sup> See F. Duve, ed., Der Thesenstreit um 'Stamokap' (Reinbek, 1973).

<sup>109</sup> Heimann, op. cit., pp. 203-208.

suspended by the party.<sup>110</sup> This development may have alienated the JUSOS from the older and more moderate left wing of the SPD around Steffen and Von Oertzen, while these internal debates and intrigues probably reduced the effectiveness and attraction of the Young Socialists outside the party.<sup>111</sup>

As an organization of all members of the SPD under 35, the JUSOS have no counterpart in the Netherlands; the Membership of the Federation of Youth Groups in the Partij van de Arbeid is voluntary and quite small--estimated at 2000 in 1977--whereas the Young Socialists of the SPD numbered 250,000 in 1972.<sup>112</sup> They acted as an officially recognized working party (Arbeitsgemeinschaft) within the SPD, trying to reform and radicalize the party. They shared this intention with the Dutch Nieuw Links group and the French CERES. The ideas of the three groups about workers self-management, direct action and cultural revolution seemed similar, though more moderate in the Netherlands, more vague in France and more abstract in Germany. All three groups suffered some setbacks in the 1970s--Nieuw Links dissolved itself in 1970, but its influence may have peaked around 1975; CERES stagnated after 1975; the JUSOS appeared to decline after 1975.<sup>113</sup> The

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<sup>110</sup> Langguth, op. cit.; also H. Wiczorek-Zeul, "Jusos in der Krise," Die neue Gesellschaft 24:4 (1977): 593-598; the differences between the factions should not be exaggerated, cf. Heimann, op. cit.

<sup>111</sup> Mewes, op. cit., p. 38; confirmed in Interview 14.

<sup>112</sup> Mewes, op. cit., p. 25, and O. De Jong and G. De Bruyn, "De PvdA en de 'beloftevolle jeugd'," Roos in de vuist 4 (November 14, 1977): 11-15.

<sup>113</sup> Arend, op. cit., pp. 165 ff; cf. Van der Louw and Peper, op. cit., pp. 329-356.



JUSOS were least successful in reforming their party--in spite of their impressive organisation and their theoretical sophistication.

The Social Democratic Party of Germany remained a moderate Old Left party throughout the 1970s. It retained a large working-class membership--even if most new members in the 1970s were white collar workers or intellectuals and professionals--as well as a working-class electorate. Unlike its Dutch and French counterparts, the SPD did not lose members or voters in the 1960s and early 1970s; in fact it won both, apart from a brief slump in 1966-1968. Whereas the PvdA and the PS or SFIO spent most of the 1960s and 1970s in the opposition, the SPD took part in coalition governments from 1966 onward.<sup>114</sup>

The East German Left will be ignored in this chapter. Its political and social context seems too different from that of the Dutch Left to allow any meaningful comparison.

### 3.3 Conclusion

From these, necessarily condensed comparisons one can infer that New Left groups in France and Germany generally shared the basic characteristics of the Dutch New Left summed

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<sup>114</sup>The proportion of manual workers among SPD members declined from 45% in 1952 to 28% in 1977, according to Raschke; Arend gives slightly higher figures for new members: 54% of new members in 1965 and 35% of new members in 1972 were manual workers; membership went up from 585,000 in 1954 to more than 1,000,000 in 1977; according to a survey, 57% of the SPD voters in 1972 were manual workers (see Arend, op. cit., pp. 41-55; J. Raschke, ed., Die politischen Parteien im Westeuropa (Reinbek, 1978), p. 75.

up above in Chapter 2.6. All groups strove for a fundamental democratisation of society and most of them for workers' self-management in particular. All of them advocated direct action and most of them developed a dual strategy. All of them called for a cultural revolution.

In fact, the similarities between New Left groups in the three countries go beyond their basic characteristics. They concern also the social base of these groups, which tended to be "new petty bourgeois" in most cases. Intellectuals, artists and professionals controlled the upper echelons and often also made up most of the active membership of these parties, according to most surveys and personal observations. White collar workers often joined the larger New Left parties and voted for them, while manual or blue-collar workers rarely joined but occasionally voted for a New Left party.

Moreover, the New Left movement followed a somewhat similar pattern of development in the three countries. Roughly one could distinguish three stages: (I) "Incubation" of New Left ideas at the margin of the political system, among radical, more or less anarchist groups. These groups tried to continue and renew older revolutionary traditions and disapproved of electoral or parliamentary action; hence they did not fit our definition completely and are regarded as "New Ultra-left" rather than New Left in the strict sense. On the other hand they did take up and develop older ideas about workers' self-management, direct action and cultural change which would be taken over by New Left groups later.

The most important New Ultra-left group was probably the Situationist International. While its French branch was more effective and stable than the German and Dutch branches, the latter also played a significant role. The German branch inspired "Subversive Action," while the Dutch Situationist Constant Nieuwenhuis influenced Provo. Provo began as a New Ultra-left group but turned to electoral action and a "two hands" strategy in 1966.

(II) "Contamination" of small New Left parties with ideas about self-management, direct action and a new, creative and expressionist culture from the New Ultra-left. These parties had been established before 1960 by Leftists of a Revolutionary Socialist tradition who rejected both Communism and Social Democracy: the Pacifist Socialist Party in the Netherlands, the Parti Socialiste Unifié in France and, to a lesser extent, the Socialist Student League (SDS) or its "parent group," the Socialist League, in Germany. In the 1960s these groups adopted more radical, anarchistic ideas and tactics as well as new members, usually young intellectuals, of Ultra-left origin. New Left tendencies often clashed with Old Left Marxist or Marxist-Leninist tendencies within these groups, but the former tended to prevail.

(III) "Diffusion" of New Left ideas within Social Democratic and, to a lesser extent, Christian mass organisations. Formal or informal groups of young party activists, often intellectuals, broken away from or inspired by the more radical New Left groups mentioned above, initiated this

process of diffusion. At the same time they tried to increase their own influence within the party. Not all of them succeeded. The Nieuw Links group within the Dutch Labour Party and the "Cane Sugar" wing of the Political Party of Radicals were quite successful in capturing and changing their party; CERES and the Faire group were fairly successful in radicalising the French Socialist Party but could not capture it; the Young Socialists failed to change or conquer the German Social Democratic Party.<sup>115</sup> By 1975 the process seemed to have slowed down, if not stopped altogether.

Though the pattern was similar in all three countries, there were important differences. Some groups do not fit in very well, specifically the Dutch Political Party of Radicals and the German Socialist Student League. Christian Leftists did not found a separate party in France and Germany but joined one of the existing Socialist, Social Democratic or Anarchist groups. Socialist students in France and the Netherlands did not stay outside the main parties of the Left--but of course they had several parties to choose from, unlike their German colleagues.<sup>116</sup>

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<sup>115</sup> One could add the French trade union confederation C.F.D.T. to this category; a rather conservative Catholic mass organisation before 1960, it was radicalised and captured by a group of young activists around the journal Reconstruction and adopted a New Leftist programme in 1964 and 1970; see Descamps, op. cit.

<sup>116</sup> Why there were no other German parties of the Left apart from the SPD (and the illegal Communist Party), is an interesting question but goes beyond the scope of this thesis; there were many attempts--the Peace Union, the Action for Democratic Progress--but all of them ineffective and short-lived.

There were also more general differences between the Dutch New Left groups on the one hand and the German and French groups on the other. The former tended to lend more emphasis to electoral and legislative action as well as to moral and cultural issues, whereas the latter showed more interest in theoretical questions and in Marxism. Though Christians played an important role in New Left groups in all countries, they were probably more important in the Dutch New Left--thus continuing an older Dutch tradition, it seems. The Dutch Left, both Old and New Left, operated in a more religious environment. Dutch society and politics were pillarised to a much greater degree than German or French society and politics.<sup>117</sup>

One may conclude that the Dutch New Left was peculiar, but not unique. It cannot be explained only in terms of Dutch circumstances, but should be seen as a Dutch variety of a more universal, West European (if not world-wide) phenomenon. This phenomenon was in the first place a movement of ideas, which could be shared or borrowed; in the second place it could be seen as a social movement related to the interests of social classes or factions. The second point will be taken up--in a speculative way--in Chapter Six

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<sup>117</sup> There was some pillarisation in Germany, but it had practically broken down under Hitler's regime; thus the SPD attracted many Catholic voters, compared to the Dutch PvdA--in the Inglehart and Rabier sample, 34% of the SPD supporters and 17% of the PvdA supporters were Catholics, while the Catholics made up 44% of the German and 32% of the Dutch sub-sample; see also D. Martin, A General Theory of Secularization (New York, 1978), Chapter IV.

below. Chapters Four and Five will deal more in depth with the ideas of the New Left, which have so far only been summed up in a few key-words--democratisation, self-management, dual strategy, cultural revolution, self-expression.

## CHAPTER 4

### A THEORETICAL RECONSTRUCTION OF THE NEW LEFT PROJECT

#### Introduction

In the preceding two chapters the ideas of the New Left have been summed up in a few key-words and slogans, culled from different party platforms, manifestos and journals, more or less in chronological order. Here the ideas are reconstructed into more or less coherent theories. They are presented without critical comments and as far as possible without reference to particular historical circumstances or personalities. The theories are seen as parts of a single New Left project, though one which is not necessarily consistent and unambiguous.

A project is defined here as an attempt to understand the world and to change it. The project of the Dutch New Left in particular was an attempt to understand and change Dutch society and politics in the 1960s and 1970s. It dealt specifically with the role of science and technology, the class structure, the state, culture, and the relationship between man and nature. It rejected Old Left interpretations of contemporary society, politics and culture as forms of economism and determinism. Unable or unwilling to produce its own alternative interpretations, the Dutch New Left

frequently borrowed ideas explicitly or implicitly, from French, German or American theorists. Hence this chapter contains several "excursions" into French and German theories that may help to reconstruct the project of the Dutch New Left; the American theories will be mentioned but not discussed here, as they are generally well-known and go beyond the scope of this study.

The chapter is divided into four sections which deal respectively with the Revolutionary Socialist, the Anarchist, the Social Democratic and the Christian new Left projects (or sub-projects). The first section concentrates on the Pacifist Socialist Party but includes sub-sections about important theorists who seem to have inspired it: Serge Mallet, André Gorz, Oskar Negt and Han-Jurgen Krahl. Re-thinking Marx, these theorists showed great concern about the development of capitalism after the Second World War and the defensive or passive reaction to it from the Old Left. They came to advocate a strategy of "revolutionary reformism," aiming at the establishment of counterpowers within capitalist society which might result eventually in a revolutionary break. This strategy should be pursued by the "New Workers," who were not yet integrated into or intimidated by capitalist society, in the sphere of work as well as in the spheres of leisure, culture and politics. Their grass-roots struggle should be supported by legislative and electoral action of the New Left party--the PSP, or in France the PSU, in Germany perhaps the Socialist Student League and its allies or the Socialist Bureau.



The second section concentrates on Provo and its successor, the Kabouters (Elf) Movement, while sub-sections deal with theories of the Situationists in France and Germany and the Socialisme ou Barbarie group in France; the latter by way of contrast, to show the differences between a Dutch and a French Neo-anarchist group, but also because it indirectly inspired other Dutch New Leftists. Though quite different in many respects, these groups all shared a rather gloomy conception of advanced capitalist society as almost totally "integrated" and alienated through bureaucratic and ideological manipulation. Opposition could (and should) occur only in the margin or at the very bottom of society, through cultural "happenings," political provocation or small-scale resistance and sabotage at the work-place. Political parties could not, in general, be trusted. Only Provo and Kabouters took part in elections, while their French and German counterparts denounced elections as treason.

The third section deals with the Social Democratic New Left and in particular with Nieuw Links in the Dutch Labour Party. As this group split fairly soon after its emergence into two conflicting wings, this section is divided also into two parts.<sup>1</sup> The (sub-)project of the radical wing resembled to some extent the Neo-Marxist Revolutionary Reformism of the Revolutionary Socialist New Left; however, it leaned more towards reformism than towards revolution. The moderate

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<sup>1</sup>See above, Chapter 2.4.

wing developed a fairly original "Neo-Fabian" programme of structural reforms aiming at a "democratisation" of Dutch society, culture and politics. While the Neo-Marxists borrowed ideas from many foreign sources, such as CERES in France and the Frankfurt School in Germany, the Neo-Fabians seemed almost self-sufficient; only by the end of the period under study did the French sociologist Touraine have some impact on the thinking of the latter.

The fourth section deals only with the theories of the Political Party of Radicals, a relatively unique and typically Dutch group. Its rather eclectic project included structural reforms similar to the ones advocated by the Social Democratic New Left, but lent more emphasis to cultural and mental change. Perhaps it also betrayed its Christian heritage in its distrust of state action and its ideal of pluralist society. The PPR shared this pluralism to some extent with members of the Dutch Labour Party and the French Socialist Party who often had a Christian background as well.

Though these four projects derived from different traditions, they had many major themes in common. All of them rejected Old Left economism and determinism, while practically all of them attached importance to the role of science and technology, the integration of the working class in late capitalist society, the relative autonomy of the state and of culture vis-à-vis socio-economic forces and the need for a more harmonious relationship between man and nature. These ideas seem to justify the notion of a single New Left project,

of which the Anarchist, Revolutionary Socialist, Social Democratic and Christian or Pluralist New Left can be considered sub-projects.<sup>2</sup>

#### 4.1 The Project of the Revolutionary Socialist New Left: Revolutionary Reformism and Counterpowers

The most important Revolutionary Socialist New Left group in the Netherlands was the Pacifist Socialist Party.<sup>3</sup> The party, or rather the majority of the party, strove for revolutionary change by means of structural or "revolutionary" reforms and the establishment of "counterpowers" in Dutch society. The strategy of Revolutionary Reformism was theoretically developed by French theorists, specifically Serge Mallet and André Gorz; their theories are briefly discussed in subsections 4.1.2 and 4.1.3. Sub-sections 4.1.4 and 4.1.5 deal with the German theorists Han-Jurgen Krahl and Oskar Negt who have had some impact on other aspects of the Pacifist Socialist project.

##### 4.1.1 The Pacifist Socialist Project

The majority of the Pacifist Socialist Party seemed to agree that capitalism had changed but retained its essence since Marx wrote Capital. Private property in the means of production, private enterprise and production for profit continued to structure the economy, which in turn continued to dominate society. New technology contributed to rapid

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<sup>2</sup>However, this depends on one's perspective; when reconstructing the various sub-projects, I refer to them as "projects."

<sup>3</sup>See above, Chapter 2.2.

economic growth and concentration of capital as well as uneven development, with often disastrous consequences for underdeveloped areas and the natural environment. The role of the state vis-à-vis the economy had changed from "night watchman" to active regulator and planner as well as producer. As the state became interlocked with the economy, the class of bourgeois property-owners and managers merged with the political, military and cultural elites into one ruling class or power elite. The power elite transcended national boundaries within the European and even the Atlantic area, through formal organizations like NATO or the European Economic Community and more informal meetings like the Bilderberg conferences presided over by the Prince of the Netherlands. Thus political power, like economic power was more and more concentrated in a few hands, while representative bodies lost effective control over their executives and bureaucracies. Capitalism penetrated more and more spheres of life, "colonizing" our daily life, leisure, entertainment and education. Commercialized mass media contributed to political apathy by deflecting attention from political and social reality towards a dream world of stars and sensation. Political parties of the Right and the (Old) Left reinforced the tendency towards apathy and mass consumption instead of mass action, by concentrating power in their own party bureaucracies and by raising demands for material benefits--wages, pensions, full employment--which could be satisfied without undermining

capitalism and its elitist power structure.<sup>4</sup>

On the other hand capitalism had not eliminated all of its contradictions. It had succeeded in preventing or at least abating economic crises at a very high cost. Firstly, capitalism needed a "military-industrial complex," i.e. mass production of arms which could cause a nuclear disaster; this danger led some people to question the militarist and Cold War ideology that had propped up the capitalist system since the Second World War. Secondly, contradictions intensified between rich and poor countries. Many of the poor countries turned to socialist or at least non-capitalist paths of development and thus reduced the international market which capital needed to reproduce itself. Thirdly, b undless expansion in rich countries like the Netherlands caused pollution of the environment and a general decline in the quality of life, not only for workers but even for the middle classes and consumers in general.

The middle classes or strata, which included the better paid and better educated part of the working class, showed less concern about wages and social security than the old working class, but more concern about the organization of their work and more general social and cultural issues. During the 1960s they began to react against the "colonization" of their lives by capitalism, often through direct action. Students and teachers occupied schools or went on

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<sup>4</sup>Rooddruk voor morgen (Amsterdam, n.d.), pp. 9-87.

strike, feminists took to the streets, conscripted soldiers demonstrated for the right to have their own union, social workers, artists and scientists organized teach-ins and action groups. All these groups seemed to aspire to some form of direct democracy or self-management as well as to a new model of civilization or culture oriented towards other goals than economic growth and private profit.<sup>5</sup>

The Old Left, both Communists and Social Democrats, had neglected or even suppressed these aspirations and actions in favour of electoral gains and economic growth, which would solve all problems according to them. Once the action groups became too strong and noisy to be ignored, the Old Left parties tried to manipulate them to increase their own power and to win a few more seats in parliament.

In contrast with this, the Pacifist Socialist Party took a different line. While respecting the autonomy and spontaneity of the various action groups, it offered them a long-term political perspective as well as representation of their interests in parliament. In parliament the PSP supported any reforms that would help grass roots groups or action groups to build up counterpower, i.e. power independent of and in opposition to the power of the ruling class. The gradual extension of these counter-powers in the economy and polity of the Netherlands and other European countries might usher in a peaceful transition to socialism. Co-operation between

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<sup>5</sup>Analyse en Beleidsplan (Amsterdam, 1976) (1972), pp. 12-14; with references to Gorz, Mallet, Krahl, Harmsen and others.

socialist parties in Europe like the PSU in France, the PSIUP in Italy and the SF in Denmark had been useful though insufficient; a European transition to socialism would require a united front with Communist and Social Democratic parties. However, such a front would work only in times of crisis, when revolutionary initiatives from the grass roots might be able to overcome the bureaucratic and reformist tendencies of those Old Left parties.<sup>6</sup>

In normal, tranquil periods, the PSP was to maintain its independence and to lend at best critical support to Social Democratic or Communist parties. A government led by Social Democrats such as the Den Uyl coalition of 1973-1977 often allowed more counter-power to grow in some sectors, but on the other hand it modernized and strengthened rather than undermined capitalism, by controlling wages and (always to a lesser extent) prices, subsidizing business and taking over unprofitable enterprises. It would improve education and health care but also adapt these to the demands of modern capitalism. It would encourage workers and others to take part in cultural life and to express their ideas, but only in the context of individualist bourgeois culture.

The PSP was not interested in governmental power. It tried to anticipate in its own activities and organization the kind of society it strove for: open and undogmatic,

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<sup>6</sup>Ibid., pp. 16-20; articles in Radikaal by Eirk Meijer in particular; for instance in Radikaal, 2 February 1972, 2 March 1972, 13 April 1972 and 16 October 1974; also Henk Branderhorst, Radikaal, 19 July 1975, and Huib Riethof in Socialisties Perspektief 2 (October 1972); also Interview 6.

decentralized and democratic, co-operative and peaceful. To the dominant bourgeois culture it opposed a "culture of struggle" (strijdkultuur) oriented towards solidarity and collective action in the interests of the wage-earning class rather than towards individual expression and competition.<sup>7</sup> It encouraged self-organization and politicization in the socio-cultural sector as much as in the economic sector, and in particular "project education" (projektonderwijs) in schools, anti-authoritarian day care centres, collectives of hospital inmates, and prison inmates, women's liberation groups and homosexual discussion groups. Artists were encouraged to develop and spread the culture of struggle through action theatre and through the Socialist mass media, notably through the Association of Workers Radio Amateurs (VARA). Eventually art would be integrated into daily life and everyone might become a (part-time) artist.<sup>8</sup>

The culture of struggle was part of the struggle for socialism. Socialism was defined by the Pacifist Socialist Party as a system of common ownership of all means of production managed by the producers themselves. Self-management would start at the shop-floor, in regular meetings of all workers, but it would also require democratic central planning

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<sup>7</sup>The notion of a "culture of struggle" was discussed in Radikaal in 1975 and 1976; before then individualist ideas about a counter-culture were more popular; for instance during 1967, the poet, mystic and LSD-advocate Simon Vinkenoog wrote regular columns in Radikaal.

<sup>8</sup>Thus Wim Gijsen concluded a series of articles in Radikaal (1967).



at the national and, eventually, the global level. On the other hand, economic democracy would flourish more if production was decentralized in small units and if "soft technology," e.g. solar energy, were to replace "hard technology" like nuclear power. This would also reduce pollution and depletion of resources; even if it also reduced economic growth, the PSP preferred this to the capitalist mode of production. It felt that the Old Left had avoided this dilemma and retained a rather arrogant and anthropocentric notion of nature as a mere object for human domination and exploitation; even Marx had to be corrected on this point.<sup>9</sup> Socialist society and culture had to be less aggressive and authoritarian, less achievement- and consumption-oriented, but more feminine, more peaceful, more collectivist, creative and playful than capitalist or bourgeois society and culture. Conflicts would be resolved peacefully, through a system of councils--in workshops, offices, schools and neighbourhoods, to be coordinated by a national parliament under grass roots control through imperative mandates and the right to recall its members. Military defense would be replaced by non-violent civilian or social defense, based on mass action. Violence had to be avoided or at least minimized, even during the transition to socialism, as it contradicted the fundamental goal of socialism, i.e. liberation from domination or

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<sup>9</sup>G. Harmsen, Natuur, geschiedenis, filosofie (Nijmegen, 1974), pp. 13-20. Dr. Ger Harmsen, one of the few theoreticians in the PSP between 1965 and 1974, was probably more of an "orthodox" Marxist than the majority of the party members; cf. Interview 3.

opposition.<sup>10</sup>

#### 4.1.2 The Theory of Serge Mallet: The New Working Class

Serge Mallet, a French sociologist and a leading member of the Parti Socialiste Unifié from 1960 until his death in 1972, formulated a theory that had some impact on the project of the Dutch Pacifist Socialist Party.

According to Mallet, capitalism developed in three stages; or more precisely, each stage was dominated by a different form of capitalism and a different segment of the working class. At the first stage, capitalism was characterized by small-scale production in family firms and by skilled workers who lived, worked and thought like independent artisans. Proud of their trade and distrustful of the state as well as of their employers, these workers tended to join trade unions with anarchist or syndicalist tendencies.

In the second stage, assembly-line production began to prevail. This required semi-skilled or unskilled workers and large factories. Poorly-paid, lacking education or any cultural tradition, these workers were usually bored by their monotonous work and lacked pride in their occupation. If they joined a trade union at all, it would be an industrial union run by Social Democratic or Communist bureaucrats concerned with collective bargaining and state legislation rather than direct action. Though these Old Left union and party leaders used a great deal of anti-capitalist rhetoric, they

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<sup>10</sup> De PSP over het vraagstuk van het geweld (Amsterdam, n.d.).

were in fact integrated into the capitalist state. They did little to arouse their rank-and-file members and voters, the workers, from their apathy.

In the third stage technological change led to automated production, supervised and maintained by highly trained and skilled workers, controlled by the managers of multi-national corporations. Well educated and well paid like the artisanal workers of the first stage, the New Workers of the third stage felt pride in their vocational skill and were less concerned about wages. On the other hand they identified more with the corporation, which often trained them on the job, provided them with pensions and other benefits, and tried to socialise them into a corporatist and particularist way of thinking. This socialisation effort often failed because of the hierarchical power structure of the corporations; frustrated in their high expectations, the New Workers demanded more influence over their work and began to question even the power structure itself. The general strike of 1968 showed the radicalisation of these workers in France: many of them occupied their factories and called for workers' control over working conditions or even complete workers' self-management. Because of their education and their location in the centre of advanced capitalist production, the New Workers felt capable of understanding and eventually managing the production themselves-- and rightly so.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>11</sup>S. Mallet, La nouvelle classe ouvrière, 2nd ed. (Paris, 1969), pp. 49-103.

The Old Left, both the Social Democrats and the Communists, had neglected or even scorned the New Working Class and preferred to defend the interests of the Old Working Class in dying industries and backward areas; the Communists even allied themselves with reactionary small businessmen and farmers against the capitalist monopolies. The Old Left strategy of participation conflictuelle implied conflict at the level of the enterprise and participation in collective bargaining with managers and government agents at the national level. To reconcile this contradiction, the Old Left maintained firm control over the local union branches and limited union demands to economic issues that would not undermine capitalism as such. The struggle against capitalism was left entirely to the political parties (SFIO and PCF), or rather to their electoral campaigns, since they embarked on very few other activities and remained rather powerless in parliament.

The Ultra-left pursued a more revolutionary strategy but directed it only at marginal elements of the Old Working Class. While its goals seemed to be correct--workers' control or self-management--it would never reach them without some support from the "technological vanguard" of the (New) Working Class, the engineers, technicians, and scientists.

The only organizations in France that articulated interests of the New Working Class were the Parti Socialiste Unifié (PSU) and the Confédération Française Démocratique du Travail. (CFDT). The factory cells--groupes d'entreprise--organized by the PSU, particularly after 1968, attracted many New

Workers and articulated demands for workers' control. Members of the PSU and the CFDT often cooperated in direct actions that had economic as well as political goals. In view of the New Workers' striving for independence, and their--often justified--distrust of political parties, the PSU would refrain from any attempt to manipulate or direct them; it was to act only as an "intellectuel collectif," providing the workers with political ideas and alternatives. Even so, direct action was more important to the party than electoral or parliamentary action. Advanced capitalist societies were increasingly dominated by multi-national corporations rather than national governments and parliaments; hence capitalism should be attacked at its core, where workers could take power.

The New Workers could not take power and abolish capitalism all by themselves. They needed the cooperation of Old Workers, intellectuals, peasants and perhaps civil servants, in a Socialist Front against capitalism--but not a Popular Front against capitalist monopolies. A Socialist Front would fight for workers' self-management as well as for transformation of the capitalist state into a workers' state ruled by workers' councils, and eventually abolish the state altogether. Even the division of labour would eventually be eliminated.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>12</sup>S. Mallet, *Le gaullisme et la Gauche* (Paris, 1965); see also S. Mallet, *Le Pouvoir Ouvrier* (Paris, 1971), *passim*. The last work takes a more radical position than the earlier one, but the differences seem small enough to ignore here.

#### 4.1.3 The Theory of André Gorz: Revolutionary Reformism

The French Austrian philosopher André Gorz seems to have influenced many New Left groups in France, Germany, the Netherlands and elsewhere. Though he was not an active member of the PSU, his theory of revolutionary reformism was adopted and applied by that party more than by any other French Party or group. The Dutch PSP and the German Young Socialists as well as the Socialist Bureau used his ideas in a similar way. Hence it seems appropriate to discuss the theory here.

Rather than deal with the totality of Gorz's rich and comprehensive theoretical work, I will focus on his conception of the state and the strategic implications which he derived from it. Rejecting the Old Left notion of the state as a mere instrument in the hands of a ruling class, Gorz insisted on the relative autonomy of the bourgeois state from the bourgeoisie. While the state was determined (in the last instance) by the capitalist mode of production and its division of labour, it followed its own logic. Because of its separation from civil (bourgeois) society the state could reconcile conflicting interests in society, particularly within the ruling class--the bourgeoisie. Since the bourgeoisie could not achieve political hegemony, at least in Western Europe, without some support from other classes or fractions of classes, it needed a relatively autonomous and neutral state to acquire that support. The autonomy and neutrality were relative and to some extent illusory, however; the separation of political interests from economic interests tended to

isolate the individual citizen from his socio-economic environment and thus prevented collective action to change that environment. In other words, the state helped to preserve the status quo in the interest of the ruling class; and more specifically that of the dominant faction within the ruling class, i.e. the monopolist bourgeoisie, in the case of contemporary Western Europe.<sup>13</sup>

Since the Second World War, the ruling classes seem to have hesitated between a conservative alliance with the traditional petty-bourgeoisie and farmers and a "modernist" alliance with the new petty bourgeoisie and a fraction of the working class. In both cases they tried to concentrate political power in the executive branch and its technocratic agencies, but in the latter case they often sought to consult trade unions and to involve workers in Gaullist style "participation" rather than depend on parliament to forge the alliance.

In response to this, the Old Left tried two different strategies with equally poor results. Social Democrats usually accepted the "modernist" alliance with monopoly capital in order to win concessions with respect to the social and economic conditions of the working class. Communists on the other hand refused such an alliance and pursued a more defensive strategy in order to win the traditional petty bourgeoisie, the non-monopolist bourgeoisie, and the

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<sup>13</sup>A. Gorz, Le socialisme difficile (Paris, 1967), pp. 11-45.

farmers for an anti-monopolist alliance against the dominant faction of the ruling class. Neither strategy could change or even undermine capitalism in the affluent countries of Western Europe. Revolutionary Ultra-leftism was equally ineffective, given the relative integration of the working class in bourgeois society.<sup>14</sup>

The only viable alternative for the Left was revolutionary reformism: a strategy of reforms aiming at counter-power for the working class in the short run and revolution in the long run. These reforms would satisfy repressed collective needs for power and solidarity rather than individual needs for security and material benefits. The latter could usually be accommodated by the ruling class--though its economic concessions were often cancelled by inflation or wage restraints--whereas the former tended to endanger its very existence. Hence the ruling class would probably attempt to prevent or frustrate the revolutionary reforms; but in doing so it would raise the class consciousness and unity of the working class. The workers would become aware of the contradictions of capitalism, of the clash between the logic of profit and the logic of their own needs, and perceive the socialist alternative as a real possibility. Eventually they might turn their counter-power into dominant power and complete the revolution.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>14</sup>A. Gorz, "The Way Forward," in A. Lothstein, ed., "All We Are Saying," The Philosophy of the New Left (New York, 1971), pp. 320-342.

<sup>15</sup>Gorz, Le socialisme difficile, pp. 69-111; see also Gorz, Réforme et Révolution (Paris, 1969).



Revolutionary reformism required a revolutionary party capable of carrying out a platform of reforms, but flexible and open enough to transcend these reforms in mass action. Mass action would occur spontaneously, at the grass roots, through workers' councils or strike committees; but a party was needed to give it political direction, based on an analysis of the concrete social formation (society). Furthermore, the party had to synthesize the demands of different sectors and factions of the working class--defined in a broad sense, including the "neo-proletariat" of scientific and technical workers. By allowing free debate and direct democracy at the grass roots, the party would anticipate a proletarian state in its own organization. Hence it had to be able to take power and transform the bourgeois state into a proletarian state during a revolutionary crisis, without concentrating all power in its own hands as Communist parties tried to do. At the same time the party had to create a proletarian culture, a new way of life oriented towards collective needs rather than private profit.

It was the absence of such a party more than anything else which caused the revolution of 1968 in France to fail. While the masses were gradually radicalized, the Communist Party tried to restrain them and to narrow their demands to wage increases, instead of encouraging experiments with workers' control and counter-power. Of course, armed insurrection would have been suicidal at that time--or any other time, in an advanced capitalist society at peace--but mass mobilization

could have led to a revolution without armed resistance from the bourgeoisie. However, mass mobilization had to be prepared and anticipated by patient efforts at mass education and politicization, through revolutionary reforms.<sup>16</sup>

#### 4.1.4 The Theory of Hans-Jurgen Krahl: The Total Worker

Though closer to the New Ultra-left than either Gorz or Mallet, the German student leader and philosopher Hans-Jurgen Krahl also influenced the Dutch PSP, particularly through his theory of the Total Worker.

In his interpretation of Marx's Grundrisse, Krahl conceived of the scientific intelligentsia as part of the Total Worker (Gesamtarbeiter). The increasing application of science and technology to capitalist production tended to integrate intellectual and manual work, and to merge both manual and intellectual workers into one class, the Total or Collective Worker. Both manual and intellectual workers were alienated from their work and from themselves, but the latter were slow to realize it. Rather than accept their proletarianized condition, the intellectual workers cling to petty bourgeois notions of private property, individualism and "high" culture. Like the artisans in the 19th century, they defended their property of tools and products against any expropriation or collectivization. Yet they would have to give up these notions and to overcome their positivist specialization in separate disciplines and sub-disciplines in order to emancipate

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<sup>16</sup>Gorz, Réforme et Révolution, pp. 9-56; Gorz was influenced by Sartre and by Italian trade unionists like Magri and Trentin.

themselves. Emancipation could only take place in alliance with the manual workers. The intellectual workers were to become the collective theoreticians of the Total Worker.<sup>17</sup>

For the time being, Krahl assigned this task to the SDS (Socialist German Student League) in Germany. Even if the student movement, led by the SDS, had started as an anti-authoritarian petty bourgeois protest against the decline of individual freedom, it was now (i.e. 1968-1969) aware of its proletarian condition and in the process of shedding those petty bourgeois ideas. A new notion of proletarian individuality would develop, transcending the separation of production and consumption, work and leisure, that characterized bourgeois and petty bourgeois individuality.

For this purpose the radical students needed some facilities within the university. They had to fight for reforms that allowed them influence over institutes, research and personnel; provided these reforms were seen as steps in a revolutionary strategy. Reformist student groups neglected the latter, whereas many revolutionary students, particularly the Maoists, neglected the former and preferred to withdraw from the university. Neither group had maintained a critical notion of emancipation. The Frankfurt School had developed such a notion but failed to link it to any form of praxis.<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>17</sup>H-J. Krahl, Konstitution and Klassenkampf (Frankfurt, 1971), pp. 330-347.

<sup>18</sup>Krahl, Konstitution and Klassenkampf, pp. 276-277, 313-322, 191-198, etc.; most essays in this collection were written in 1968 and 1969.

#### 4.1.5 The theory of Oskar Negt: The Proletarian Public Sphere

Krahl died shortly after the SDS dissolved itself. His work was published posthumously by a group of colleagues and friends, who had taken similar political positions. Oskar Negt was one of them. After 1970 he became one of the major theorists of the Socialist Bureau and influenced the Dutch PSP as well.

As a junior "third generation" member of the Frankfurt School, Negt devoted considerable attention to cultural questions. Bourgeois culture had always been predatory or parasitic, based on appearances or remnants of pre-capitalist tradition, religious beliefs and the privatism of the family. Monopoly capital tended to erode even these remnants. Culture, including art, science, education, leisure, family life and religion, were subsumed under capital, not only in a formal but also in a real sense, affecting its content.

Capitalism had turned inward, so to speak, directing its imperialist thrust for accumulation into man's inner nature instead of outer nature and foreign countries--though the latter thrust continued, the former became more important. The satisfaction of relevant human needs for solidarity, communicative and sensuous experience, contact with nature and consolation for death or disease, which used to be seen as the function of the family, religion, art or culture in general, was now associated with the consumption of commodities. A new "culture industry" produced commodities that appeared to satisfy these needs through projection of images,

notably on television. People purchased these commodities and appeared satisfied, for a while, because their personalities had been deformed and fragmented in family, school and workplace.

The internal expansion of capitalism created new contradictions, however. Human needs could not be satisfied by appearances and images in the long run, unless human nature changed so drastically as to lose its human and autonomous character altogether and to become robot-like. The breakdown of neo-capitalist pseudo-culture in a cultural revolution seemed a more likely alternative. A cultural revolution could be a short-lived affair like the events of May 1968 in France or the German student revolt of 1968-1969, unless it found a firm base in a "proletarian public sphere" (Proletarische Oeffentlichkeit) resulting from self-organization and cooperation of workers and intellectuals. Except for brief periods--1917-1921 in Russia, for instance--the Old Left had neglected culture and the public sphere, while imitating bourgeois forms of organization in political parties separated from cultural and material production.<sup>19</sup>

The New Left, and in particular the Socialist Bureau in Germany, had tried to compete with the Old Left for numbers of votes or members, but they would fail, anyway, since the masses would remain loyal to reformist parties as long as reforms appeared feasible. Instead of playing the Old Left's

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<sup>19</sup>O. Negt and A. Kluge, Oeffentlichkeit and Erfahrung (Frankfurt, 1972), pp. 267-310 especially.

game, the New Left was to articulate and mobilize the immediate interests of people at work, at home, in school, etc. It had to start with immediate needs and fragmented people, and could only hope to end up with whole human beings and authentic needs. Through civic action, study and experiment it could help workers to develop their imagination and to articulate their needs, independently of political parties or unions.<sup>20</sup>

As an example, Negt described a German public school project in which he played a certain role. The school was to relate education to the real experience and language of the children, particularly working class children, in order to satisfy their social and emotional as well as their cognitive needs. The children were to learn through concrete examples or cases rather than through memorization of general rules and techniques. Teachers were to introduce these examples with a minimal use of authority and a maximal appeal to self-regulation and solidarity among the children. Of course no school could isolate itself from society and turn into a "socialist island"; but it could prepare working class children for the class struggle. Since neo-capitalism needed workers who were able to co-operate and exercise some self-control, it could allow experimental schools such as this, even if it would try to reproduce industrial discipline and division of labour within any school.<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>20</sup>O. Negt, Keine Demokratie ohne Sozialismus (Frankfurt, 1976), pp. 300-312, 446-491.

<sup>21</sup>Ibid., pp. 380-418.

#### 4.1.6 Conclusion

The Revolutionary Reformists formed a relatively homogeneous category within the New Left. They shared a common source of inspiration, marxism, and the intention to revise or renew Marx's theory in order to analyse late or neo-capitalism in France, Germany or the Netherlands.

Three major changes in capitalism were observed by most Revolutionary Reformists. First, production had become more scientific and more abundant; hence a new type of working class had emerged, better educated and better paid than the old one. Second, the state had become more active and often intervened in the economy. Third, capitalism had penetrated daily life and culture, resulting in ideological adaptation as well as new contradictions.

The strategies that Revolutionary Reformists derived from this analysis were also relatively similar. The Old Left had been integrated into the capitalist system because of its economism and electoralism; hence the New Left was to avoid both and concentrate more on political and cultural issues as well as extra-parliamentary action, without neglecting economic issues and elections altogether. By encouraging workers to take control over their working conditions, and encouraging other groups also to organize and articulate collective needs, they hoped to develop socialist counter-power at the centres of capitalist production. By pressing for relatively modest reforms at first, they hoped to mobilize even the reformist majority of the working class, while

trying to radicalize it through these reforms and the inevitable repression of some of them. The development of counter-powers would not be irreversible, but even reverses could raise working class consciousness. Eventually, workers would be able to take power away from the bourgeoisie, and to socialize the means of production under workers' control.

The Revolutionary Reformists also agreed to a great extent about the type of political party required to carry out their strategy. The party had to be open, decentralized and active at the grass roots level as well as in elections and legislatures. No such party existed in Germany, but the Socialist Bureau and even the SDS each came fairly close to it at some point.

#### 4.2 The Project of the Anarchist New Left: Provocation from the Periphery

This section deals primarily with Provo, the most important Dutch Anarchist group in the 1960s, and the Kabouter (Elf) Movement which succeeded it around 1970. The Provo project was influenced significantly by Situationist ideas, which are discussed in sub-section 4.2.3. This influence was mediated by the Dutch artist and theorist Constant Nieuwenhuijs, who had been a member of the Dutch section of the Situationist International before he wrote a few articles for the journal Provo. Provo had had contacts also with the Berlin branch of the German Socialist Student League (SDS), led by Rudi Dutschke and Bernd Rabehl, who had been inspired in turn by German Situationists as well as by the Frankfurt School. The



theories of Dutschke, Rabehl and the German Situationists are discussed briefly in sub-section 4.2.4. By way of contrast, the project of Socialisme ou Barbarie is reconstructed in sub-section 4.2.5; it shared many basic ideas with Provo, but combined Anarchist ideas with Marxist theory.

Most of these groups were very small face-to-face groups. Although they counted usually one or two leading theorists among their members who published their ideas in books, it would be unfair to treat the projects of the groups as products of these theorists alone; no doubt the latter discussed their theories with other group members. Hence the theories are treated here as products of the groups.<sup>22</sup>

#### 4.2.1 The Project of Provo

Provo analysed Dutch society in a rather original way. It attached great importance to new technology, perceiving a big gap between on the one hand the technological and economic potential for freedom and creativity, and on the other hand the repressive reality of that society. The cybernetic revolution in technology would allow complete automation of industry and the abolition of human labour without a reduction in wealth. All wealth could be redistributed to eliminate poverty in the world.

On the other hand the process of automation was slowed down by the authorities, both state bureaucrats and managers

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<sup>22</sup>They were usually presented as such by the theorists of the group, which was often defined as a "collective individual."

of large corporations, who were interested only in raising the production and consumption of commodities. Furthermore they enticed the masses to spend their spare time and money consuming largely superfluous commodities like television and cosmetics, or even harmful ones like cigarettes, cars, candy and french fries, instead of enjoying leisure in a more creative and healthy way. Indoctrinated by mass media and school, the masses accepted this authoritarian capitalist system and its bourgeois ideology of competition, career-orientation, work ethic, monogamy and theism. Even the working class, once the most militant opponent of the system, had "fallen asleep in front of its television set" and appeared content with its slave-like consumer life. In fact, the working class had been integrated with the middle class into an amorphous mass of "suckers" (klootjesvolk: an unfriendly term with sexual connotations in Dutch).<sup>23</sup>

The Old Left, both the Communists and the Social Democrats, still represented the working class by raising demands for higher wages and social security--demands which could be integrated easily within the existing system. The only opposition that the authorities really feared and that could undermine the system was the cultural or rather counter-cultural action of groups like Provo.<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>23</sup>"Ananar" (Van Lindt) in Provo 2 (August 1965); Constant (Nieuwenhuys) in Provo 4 (October 1965); Provo 7 (February 1966).

<sup>24</sup>Van Duijn, "Aan de linkse beweging," Provo 7 (February 1966).

The social base of Provo was not to be found in the proletariat but in the provotariat. This small and heterogeneous class consisted of artists, hippies, students and street youth who lived in the periphery of the system because of their economic condition--part-time or full-time unemployment--and their psychological condition--a subversive or anti-authoritarian state of mind. They were the products of automation and affluence, but they did not take part in either. Because of their peripheral position they seemed relatively immune against addiction to consumer goods, the work ethic or authoritarian submission to authorities. Their morality was permissive, libertarian and creative, their sexuality promiscuous, and their politics playful and provocative. Provo, "the first provotarian movement in the world," articulated their political interests by initiating happenings and other provocative action, but also by proposing "White Plans."

Provocative action, i.e. symbolic defiance of authority, could serve several functions. First, it might help the provotariat to achieve some homogeneity and class-consciousness as well as a sense of identity at the individual level.<sup>25</sup> Secondly, it would create publicity in the mass media, particularly when the police reacted brutally against the provotarians in the street. Given the isolation of the provotariat from mainstream society, and the enormous ideological power of the mass media over the minds of the consumer masses,

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<sup>25</sup>"In resistance I am myself" (In het verzet ben ik mezelf), as Roel Van Duijn put it in Het witte gevaar, p. 76.

publicity alone could mobilize support for Provo and undermine the dominant ideology. Thirdly, provocation could set off a fascist backlash--which would give Provo the chance to come to a heroic end; this was seen as a serious possibility only in the first months of Provo's existence.<sup>26</sup> Fourthly, provocative action was fun.

White plans formed the second leg of the Provo strategy. They suggested serious reforms to solve urgent problems in Dutch society in the short run. If effectively implemented, the plans might contribute to an increasing popularity of Provo; if rejected, they would reveal the incapacity of the authorities to adopt simple and imaginative solutions for urgent problems. In both cases Provo would mobilize some support.

Participation in municipal elections could be justified in a similar way. The municipal council of Amsterdam would serve as a platform for provotarian ideas but possibly also as an instrument of reform and experiment. If provotarian groups won a majority in the council, they could start decentralizing authority to neighbourhood councils and experimenting with workers' self-management in municipal corporations--i.e. management by "the most capable and most educated workers."<sup>27</sup> New departments would be set up to "initiate change" and to

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<sup>26</sup> See footnote 117, p.        above (Chapter 2.3).

<sup>27</sup> Martijn Van Lindt, "New Amsterdam," in Provo 9 (12 May 1966).

"organize communication and fun." Eventually the streets would be re-appropriated for creative public activities and working areas would be re-integrated with living areas.

The next step in Provo strategy would be the transformation of the Netherlands, Belgium and Luxemburg into a federation of self-governing regions and municipalities. The three monarchies would be abolished. Ceremonial activities like the opening of a new bridge could be performed by film stars or models. This transformation could take place within capitalism, i.e. without a revolution.

Revolution could only be seen as a long-term goal in the affluent societies of North America and Europe; in the Third World on the other hand the proletariat was still capable of revolutionary action and deserved provotarian support for that purpose.<sup>28</sup> However, in the long run, capitalism would collapse in the western world as well, whether through revolution or a nuclear holocaust. It could not prevent the full automation of industry indefinitely; thus the working class would eventually disappear, and the provotariat of unemployed subversives would make up the majority of the population.

A provotarian revolution would affect the socio-economic order as well as the political order, but above all the dominant culture. The new world order would be socialist and libertarian, based on collective property, decentralized authority, self-management and disarmament. While automated

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<sup>28</sup>Roel (Van Duijn), in Provo 12 (September-October 1966).

industry and agriculture would produce an abundance of food and other necessary goods, the people would travel around in free public transport, live in collective hotels, and spend most of their time in creative play and communication. Everyone would become an artist, but art would be a collective activity. Creativity would be controlled by love, aggression sublimated in cooperation. Sexual freedom and pleasure would not be restrained by any moral convention but only by feelings of solidarity. Through play man might control his desire for domination and reconcile himself with Nature instead of trying to dominate it.<sup>29</sup>

#### 4.2.2 The Project of the Kabouters

Towards the end of the 1960s, the provotariat had grown from a marginal bunch of heterogeneous street youth into a fairly large group of young people who shared a similar style of life, speech, dress and (long) hair; most of them lived in Central Amsterdam. Provocation was no longer necessary to mobilize them or to make their existence known. Hence their strategy changed from provocation of the authorities to construction of their own "alternative" society, consisting of productive associations, consumer cooperatives, squatters' communes and a People's Meeting to coordinate these counter-institutions. The new society would grow within the old one,

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<sup>29</sup>Van Duijn, Het witte gevaar, pp. 55-76; see also Van Duijn, De boodschap van een wijze kabouter (Amsterdam, 1969) D. Van Weerlee, Wat de Provo's willen (Amsterdam, 1966), pp. 13-22. A more elaborate reconstruction is provided by Lambrecht, op. cit.

"like a toadstool on a rotting trunk," attracting more and more supporters by the force of its example and through the propaganda of its ambassadors.

The revolution would still start in the periphery, i.e. the provotariat and its counter-institutions rather than the proletariat or the central sectors of the economy. However, it would be a non-violent and "sweet" revolution, if not a gradual evolution. Even the authorities could eventually be "turned around" (converted), the Kabouters argued, once they realized that their capitalist society was doomed to destroy itself. Some provocation might help them to see things in a new light. Moreover, confrontation between the authorities and the Kabouters might prevent the latter from isolating themselves from political reality; the Anarchist Old Left had often become sterile and impotent because of its isolation in productive associations and rural settlements. On the other hand, the Socialist Old Left had neglected to construct counter-institutions and to change the mentality of its members. The Kabouters tried to avoid both errors. Mentality and social structure had to be changed at the same time, through the development of counter-institutions and the agitation for reforms in municipal councils and other institutions of the capitalist state.<sup>30</sup>

#### 4.2.3 The Situationist Project

Since one of Provo's main theorists, Constant Nieuwenhuys,

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<sup>30</sup> Van Duijn, Schuldbekentenis van een ambassadeur; see also T. Regtien and K. Boehmer, Van provo naar oranjevrijstaat (Amsterdam, 1970).

had been a member of the Situationist International, Situationist theory may prove relevant to an understanding of the Provos.

In particular, the Situationist notion of the "spectacle" can throw some light on the strategy of provocative action. In contemporary capitalism, the spectacle had become the main commodity as well as the major form of ideology and domination. It gave a certain cohesion to society and meaning to individual lives, its consumption was seen as the goal of production and the main form of leisure. Yet it alienated the individual producers and consumers, preventing them from communicating with each other and from engaging in creative activity. All capitalist societies tended to become "spectacular," even the state capitalist Soviet Union and the under-developed Third World--in the latter the spectacle was more concentrated in the person of the national leader, while other spectacular commodities were anticipated but not yet consumed. In the West, mass production of spectacular commodities allowed the populace to consume spectacles at home.<sup>31</sup>

Television was only one spectacular commodity, though an important one. Politics had also become a spectacle, a phoney struggle between stars who pretended to represent the masses, while obfuscating the class struggle. The proletariat had lost its revolutionary perspective and its autonomy, while more and more bureaucrats represented it in parliaments and

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<sup>31</sup>G. Debord, La société du spectacle (Paris, 1967), Chapters I and II.



governments--whether they called themselves Communists, Maoists, Trotskyites, Socialists or Anarchists made no difference. For most leftists in Europe, the revolution had also become a spectacle, which they watched taking place in the Third World.

Though still growing in number, the proletariat had declined subjectively, as a conscious class. It had become alienated from itself not only at the work-place but now also in its political and cultural life, during leisure at home. The Old left, whether Marxist, Revisionist or Anarchist, failed to prevent this decline because of certain theoretical weaknesses in dealing with problems of organization, the state and ideology. In opposing his "scientific socialism" to utopian socialism, Marx (and even more perhaps Engels) retained a determinist and bourgeois conception of science, ignoring the fact that science would disappear along with art, philosophy, politics and economics when bourgeois society collapsed. Anarchists like Bakunin were right in criticizing Marxism as authoritarian, but their practice tended to be equally authoritarian, perpetuating the division of labour between active propagandists or terrorists on the one hand and more passive, receptive masses on the other hand. Kautsky, Bernstein and Lenin went even further, however, reducing the proletariat from a potential subject to an object of history, which depended on economic forces and professional party politicians for its emancipation.<sup>32</sup>

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<sup>32</sup>Ibid., Chapter IV.

Situationists in Germany and the Netherlands--Constant Nieuwenhuys among them--concluded that because of automation "the proletariat might disappear before it made a revolution."<sup>33</sup> They expected artists and intellectuals to take over the revolutionary role of the proletariat and to develop a new culture oriented towards free time--instead of the linear or pseudo-cyclical time notion of industrial capitalism--and towards creativity instead of consumption. The "happenings" of New York artists and of Dutch Provos marked the beginning of a new revolutionary era; they were attempts to "construct a situation" and to overcome alienation and separation between artist and audience.

The majority of the Situationists disagreed with these conclusions. They welcomed the New York happenings only as self-destruction of the old spectacular forms of art, using the miserable material from the old world instead of starting from scratch. They approved of the Provo critique of capitalist consumption and its attempt to integrate art and politics into daily life, but not of its "technocratic elitism" and its denunciation of the proletariat as "suckers." Furthermore, they warned that even Provo happenings could turn into spectacles.<sup>34</sup>

According to the majority of the Situationists, the

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<sup>33</sup>"Le proletariat risque de disparaître sans avoir fait sa révolution," Internationale Situationniste 3 (1959): 24.

<sup>34</sup>Internationale Situationniste 11 (1967): especially 65-66.

proletariat had lost its revolutionary perspective but not its revolutionary potential. It continued to fight the ruling class, though in a more hidden, often "criminal" way. In particular young workers, and youth in general, rebelled against their alienation by destroying machines and consumer goods. The events of May and June 1968 seemed to confirm the majority position: during the general strike many factories were occupied by the workers and decorated with revolutionary slogans, occasionally of a Situationist nature; more significantly, workers' councils sprang up here and there, marking the beginning of a new revolutionary period. Of course, bureaucrats of all leftist persuasions, from Stalinist union officials to would-be bureaucrats of gauchiste groups like Cohn-Bendit, jumped at once on these spontaneous workers' actions and tried to suppress or manipulate them. They succeeded, at least temporarily; the movement collapsed within two months. However, class consciousness had advanced considerably. The revolution had been put on the agenda again.<sup>35</sup>

A revolution had to be total, i.e. cultural and political as well as economic. Workers' councils would take all power and introduce self-management, both as an end in itself and as a means to change society. The councils would do away with all specialization, hierarchy and separation between

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<sup>35</sup>Viénet, op. cit.; see also Internationale Situationniste 12 (1969): 3-34; and Debord and Sanguinetti, op. cit., pp. 97-117, 119-127.

workers and with representation by political specialists. All power would rest with general assemblies of workers on the shop-floor. Eventually, work and leisure would be integrated, with the abolition of the wage system and the division of labour. Pleasure without constraints--"jouir sans entraves"--would be the main purpose in life.<sup>36</sup>

The Situationist International had assigned itself a rather modest role in this process. Until 1968 it could contribute to the renewal of revolutionary theory and prepare the ground for the events of May and June. After those events, it began to break up and to eliminate itself, since there were enough revolutionary workers now to develop and apply the theory without Situationist support. Moreover, situationism itself was being turned into a spectacle or ideology in the hands of new petty bourgeois "cadres," intellectuals and civil servants, as well as into an object of investigation and contemplation for historians.<sup>37</sup>

#### 4.2.4 The Subversive Action Project

The German section of the Situationist International was expelled in 1962. It continued its theoretical and practical work as an independent group, renamed "Subversive Aktion."

The group studied the writings of the Frankfurt School extensively and accepted the latter's critique of bourgeois culture, but criticized it for its pessimism and lack of

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<sup>36</sup>Internationale Situationniste 12 (1969): 64-79.

<sup>37</sup>Ibid., pp. 112-114; also Debord and Sanguinetti, op. cit., pp. 11-80.

action. Critique remained ineffective without action. Provocative action could reveal the repressive nature of bourgeois institutions like the state, as well as the university and marriage. The direct action of the Dutch Provos was praised and imitated in actions against advertizing agents and the Catholic church. Yet this kind of action was seen as "Vorpraxis," pre-praxis, rather than "Praxis": it could help to test critical theory and to win new members for the revolutionary micro-cells that the Subversive Action group tried to set up in many German cities, but it was not yet revolutionary.<sup>38</sup>

Some disagreement arose within the group about the likelihood of a revolution in Western Europe. The Munich wing around Kunzelmann and Bockelmann leaned towards pessimism, whereas the Berlin wing around Dutschke and Rabehl considered revolution a possibility within the next twenty years or so.<sup>39</sup>

The Munich wing was most impressed by the integration of advanced capitalist society. Workers and capitalists began to share subjective and objective interests in a capitalist economy that provided a minimum of wealth for all. Both classes accepted and internalized the achievement principle (Listungsprinzip) which characterized capitalist as well as Soviet ideology. Both were alienated. Ideology had become an integral part of the late capitalist mode of production,

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<sup>38</sup>Böckelmann and Nagel, eds., op. cit., pp. 157-160.

<sup>39</sup>Kunzelmann changed his mind rather frequently; by 1965 he expected a revolution at very short notice and was expelled from the group; later he joined a Maoist group (Mosler, op. cit., pp. 115-116).

not just a "superstructure" as Marx had asserted. Hence a revolution could only be a cultural or ideological one; socio-economic change, like nationalization of the means of production, would not eliminate internalized repression and alienation. At best, economic change could create the conditions for a cultural revolution. Automation in particular might help to undermine the achievement principle and create a class of unemployed that could be mobilized against the system. The destructive actions of street youth (Halbstarcken) showed a potential as far as they reconquered the street as a public space for communication rather than space for private transport and consumption. On the other hand, their actions lacked a revolutionary goal, and could not really transcend the authoritarian and hierarchical structure of late capitalist society.

Apart from waiting for automation, the Subversive Action group should concentrate its efforts on political education (Aufklarung) and theoretical reflexion. A drastic revision of Marxist theory was deemed necessary, particularly with respect to the role of the proletariat as the subject of history and the relationship between "base" and "superstructure". Though the economy was still predominant in society, it had been integrated with the state and culture to such an extent that it would be more appropriate to speak about the "economization of society" than about the "determination of society by the economy"; in fact, the economy itself had become ideological. Direct action at the level of economic

production, such as the organization of factory cells or workers' councils, would sooner or later be integrated in the system, through forms of co-determination, as long as workers internalized the dominant ideology of achievement, competition, consumption and sexual repression.<sup>40</sup>

The Berlin wing did not want to revise Marx quite as much, though it did question the revolutionary role of the proletariat in Europe and North America. A proletarian revolution could be expected in Latin America, however, and a little later in Africa and South or West Asia. Hopefully, at least marginal groups like students and unemployed workers in Europe as well as racial minorities in North America would show solidarity with those revolutions. Automation and unemployment could possibly create conditions for a revolution even in developed countries. A revolution would not occur automatically after an economic crisis, but only after a long class struggle. The struggle might consist of "a long march through the institutions," provocative actions against authorities and demonstrations as well as informative actions like street discussions and teach-ins.

Given the importance of international solidarity, the Berlin wing of Subversive Action related many actions to Third World countries like Zaire (Congo), Vietnam and Iran. It cooperated with other groups, mostly student organizations like the SDS (Socialist German Student League), and finally

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<sup>40</sup>Böckelmann and Nagel, op. cit., pp. 160-167, 181-186, 195, 247-251, 295, 301-306, 437-454.

merged with the latter in 1965. It looked at the SDS not only as an ally in action but also as a means to establish contacts with revolutionary students in the Third World and to recruit supporters for its own project.<sup>41</sup>

#### 4.2.5 The Project of Socialisme ou Barbarie

Like other Anarchist New leftists the group that published Socialisme ou Barbarie accepted the fact that the working class had been integrated into capitalist society at least in North America and Western Europe, as well as in the state capitalist or bureaucratic societies of Eastern Europe and Asia. It qualified that statement, however, by pointing out the continuing class struggle at a sub-institutional level, i.e. on the shop-floor. At that level workers kept fighting their bosses, not only for higher wages but also for other working conditions of a more humane kind, through "informal organization," restriction of output and occasional sabotage. In other words, they resisted the capitalist organization (and constant re-organization) of production through collective action. On the other hand their collective action or cooperation was necessary, even for the accumulation of capital, since the capitalist organization of production suffered from internal contradictions.

These contradictions could be resolved only if the workers would control and coordinate all production through

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<sup>41</sup>Ibid., pp. 169-178, 190-195, 230-238, 282-285, 307-328, 338-340; see also Bergmann, et al., op. cit., the chapters written by Rabehl and Dutschke, pp. 151-178 and 33-93 respectively.



workers councils and general meetings at the shop-floor. Similar contradictions existed at a higher level between private appropriation and collective needs, which also required workers cooperation through federal councils for their resolution. The workers' victory in the class struggle was possible but far from inevitable. As its name implied, Socialisme ou Barbarie rejected historical determinism. It merely stated that the class struggle would continue as long as production was organized (or dis-organized) by non-producers, whether state bureaucrats, private entrepreneurs or managers in their employment. The struggle would continue even if workers were hardly conscious of it, and if the unions or parties that claimed to represent them tried to suppress it. In fact, in advanced capitalist society it was often the unorganized and poorly educated unskilled workers who led the struggle.

A group like Socialisme ou Barbarie could not represent let alone replace the workers in their struggle. At most it could help to raise their consciousness by publishing theoretical and practical studies and initiating discussions. There was internal disagreement as to the exact role the group had to play, however, some giving priority to the former and others to the latter function.<sup>42</sup>

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<sup>42</sup>This reconstruction is extremely simplified; for a more elaborate effort see Howard, op. cit., pp. 222-301. The primary sources are P. Chaulieu, "Sur le contenu du socialisme," Socialisme ou Barbarie 22 (1957): 1-75; C. Castoriadis, La société bureaucratique (Paris, 1973), especially Part II; Castoriadis, L'institution imaginaire de la société (Paris, 1975).

#### 4.2.6 Conclusion

The five projects discussed above do not exhaust all the logical possibilities of New Left Anarchism. Yet they showed a wide range of theories, from the explicitly anti-Marxist Anarchism of Provo and the more utopian Kabouters to the almost orthodox Marxism of Socialisme ou Barbarie, which resembled the "Dutch Marxism" of Pannekoek in many ways.<sup>43</sup>

The Dutch groups expressed more pessimism about the revolutionary potential of the working class and the likelihood of a revolution in advanced capitalist societies, but showed more confidence in parliamentary action and in technological change (automation) as ways to change society. The German "Subversive Action" group, and especially its Munich wing, agreed to a large extent with the Dutch, except on parliamentary action. The French groups, both Socialisme ou Barbarie and the Situationists, expected revolutionary change even in Western Europe, as a result of direct proletarian action. Thus only Provo and Kabouters qualified as New Left in the strict sense, whereas the other groups belonged to the New Ultra-left.<sup>44</sup>

However, the differences should not be exaggerated. All groups agreed that revolutionary class consciousness had declined among workers in Western Europe, due to bureaucratic manipulation by Old Left union and party leaders, the affluence

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<sup>43</sup>Combin, Les origines du gauchisme, pp. 101-151; hence one could categorise Socialisme ou Barbarie as Revolutionary Socialist rather than Anarchist New Left, but in either category it would be a marginal case.

<sup>44</sup>See above, Chapter 3.1 about this distinction.

and abundance of consumer goods, and the mass media. All rejected existing organisations of the Left and preferred new and less formal types of organisation, like workers' councils or cells on the shopfloor, or informal action groups. They also rejected the historical determinism and economism of the Old Left, and devoted serious attention to cultural and political factors in their analysis of society. Moreover, they agreed to a considerable extent in the way they defined their own function; primarily as production and dissemination of new revolutionary ideas and as education and mobilisation of the masses through direct action, often of a symbolic and playful, but provocative nature. In other words, they tried to provoke the masses--and the authorities--from the periphery of a relatively integrated society.

#### 4.3 The Project of the Social Democratic New Left: Democratisation from Inside

The group Nieuw Links, and its successors in the Social Democratic New Left, hoped to reform the structure of Dutch society in a democratic direction without a revolution. Operating inside the bourgeois state and inside a Social Democratic mass party, they intended to democratise both and to redistribute power, wealth and other values in society.

This was about all they agreed on. Even before 1970, radical and moderate members of Nieuw Links disagreed about ultimate goals and the scope of the reforms they wanted. After 1970 they fell apart into two rather diffuse tendencies, the more or less Neo-Marxist radicals and the "Neo-Fabian"

moderates. They formed roughly the left wing and the centre in the Dutch Labour Party, though the dividing line was not always clear.<sup>45</sup> The (sub-, or even sub-sub-) projects of the two tendencies are reconstructed in sub-sections 4.3.1 and 4.3.2.

The Dutch Neo-Marxists borrowed ideas from the theoretically more advanced French group CERES, which is discussed in sub-section 4.3.3; and from German Neo-Marxists, especially the Frankfurt School, who are discussed briefly in sub-section 4.3.4. The Neo-Fabians were theoretically more independent. Only towards the end of the 1970s did they refer to a theory of Alain Touraine, a French sociologist and member of the Socialist Party, which is the subject of sub-section 4.3.5.

#### 4.3.1 Neo-Marxist Reformism in the Dutch Labour Party

The Neo-Marxists in the Labour Party agreed with the Neo-Marxists in the Pacifist Socialist Party on most issues, but differed in emphasizing reforms and the relative autonomy of the state.

They agreed that the contradiction between capital and

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<sup>45</sup>See above, Chapter 2.4; the distinction between the two tendencies was confirmed in Interview 4 but contradicted in Interview 5; both interviewees were well-informed members of the Dutch Labour Party; however, the latter argued that the theoretical debate within the party was too confused to be analysed in terms of tendencies. Hence the terms are used here with caution; one might say: as ideal-types, rather than labels for existing groups or factions. Other typologies could be used, such as the one developed in a case study of the Amsterdam federation of the Labour Party in the 1970s, which differentiates between "small-scale democrats," "large-scale democrats," and "administrators"; see K. Brants and P. Van Praag, "Groepsvorming in soorten," Socialisme en Democratie (1979): 531-542.

labour remained predominant in neo-capitalist societies. It had been suppressed temporarily by corporatist institutions, and by the belief in class harmony which Dutch trade-unions and parties had accepted in the 1940s and 1950s. After 1960, unions began to organize workers at the plant level and to see the political implications of their interests again. Gradually, demands for higher wages were joined by demands for workers' control and self-management. The Dutch Labour Party could no longer ignore the revival of the class struggle; it had to support the trade-unions in fighting the remnants of corporatism and expanding the rights and powers of workers. Though radicalized during the 1960s, the PvdA continued to play an ambivalent role in the class struggle, siding sometimes with the workers and sometimes with the employers.<sup>46</sup>

On the other hand, the Neo-Marxists felt, the PSP played no role at all. At least through the PvdA they could achieve some reforms, enlarging the powers of Works Councils and abolishing corporatist institutions like the Socio-Economic Council. Furthermore, they could co-operate with trade-unionists through the Working Party for Industrial Democracy (Werkgroep Bedrijfsdemokratisering) in order to link political and socio-economic action. Workers' self-management was seen as the goal. It would be combined with democratic planning and nationalization of key sectors of the economy, investment controls, income redistribution and educational reforms.

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<sup>46</sup> Van de Zandschulp, op. cit.

A Social Democratic government would be able to carry out these reforms under pressure from its Neo-Marxist wing. After all, the government and the state in general enjoyed a relative autonomy vis-à-vis society even if the two were interlocked. Generally the state tended to serve the interests of big capital, but as the "expression of the class relations" it could serve proletarian interests as well. In long periods of struggle the proletariat had captured "bridgeheads" within the bourgeois state such as universal suffrage, free education and social security. Now the time had come to take a further step and establish elements of direct democracy through workers' councils, neighbourhood councils and the like, in order to complement parliamentary democracy and complete the democratization of the state. In other words, the state was to be democratized from inside, rather than smashed from outside as revolutionary Marxists continued to advocate. Democratization would be a gradual process. Capitalism would resist for a while but slowly give way to socialism.<sup>47</sup>

Although the Neo-Marxist Reformists favoured government participation, they were unhappy with the coalition of Social Democrats and Christian Democrats led by their party leader Den Uyl in 1973-1977. The collapse of the coalition in 1977 seemed to prove them right: the Christian Democrats would always sabotage structural reforms that threatened the interests of capital. Therefore the PvdA was to turn to the smaller

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<sup>47</sup>J. Huige and P. Reckman, Doorn in de vuist (Amsterdam, 1978), pp. 12-17, 59, 66 ff.

parties on the Left, the Communist Party, the Pacifist Socialist Party and the Political Party of Radicals (already a coalition partner in 1973-1977). Together the Left won only 59 of the 150 seats in the 1977 parliament, but in the long run it could hope for a majority, given the continuing polarization in the country. The Left should strive for unity, allowing members of the four parties as well as other activists to join New Left Politics Groups to elaborate a common platform and to engage in common actions.

While the PvdA should remain a people's party and represent not only manual workers but also intellectuals, farmers and small businessmen, it should also support the proletarian "culture of struggle" (strijdkultuur). This cultural struggle took place in the press and the other mass media as well as in schools, universities and art centres. Though a revival of the "Red Family" or "Red Pillar" was neither possible nor even desirable, Social Democrats should at least support efforts of students, teachers, artists and journalists to expand democratic rights and to fight bourgeois culture in these areas.<sup>48</sup> Too often the so-called socialist media like the Association of Workers Radio Amateurs were spreading bourgeois culture among the workers instead of trying to emancipate them from it. Emancipation was often defined as

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<sup>48</sup>The terms "Red Family" (Rooie familie) and "Red Pillar" (Rode zuil) refer to the close co-operation between Social Democratic parties, trade unions, newspapers, radio broadcasting association, youth groups and so on before 1940; between 1945 and 1965 most ties between these organizations were cut; see above, Chapter 1.4 and 2.4.

individual self-development instead of collective action even by the Social Democratic Minister of Education Van Kemenade in his grand proposals for comprehensive schools.<sup>49</sup>

The PvdA was to be an anti-capitalist people's party, but not a nationalist one. Though critical of the European Community, the Neo-Marxists hoped to transform it rather than leave it. On the other hand they did want to leave NATO and to cooperate more with the Third World.<sup>50</sup>

#### 4.3.2 Neo-Fabian Reformism in the Dutch Labour Party

'Neo-Fabian' is a label that is attached here to a type of theory without the theorists' consent. The moderate members and successors of Nieuw Links in the Dutch Labour Party were not influenced directly by the Fabian Society of Late Victorian England; but they shared most of its characteristics: gradualism and parliamentarism, empiricism and eclecticism, a moral concern with social equality and a preference for economic efficiency and planning.<sup>51</sup>

Neo-Fabian Reformism could be regarded as the dominant

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<sup>49</sup>P.Reckman, "Hoger onderwijs in de toekomst," Socialisme en Democratie (1976): 294-304; W. Baars and J. Van Iersel, "Een bijdrage aan de onderwijsdiscussie," *ibid.*, pp. 521-529; T. Pauka, "Een middelbaar echtpaar in een versleten bed," *ibid.*, pp. 84-100; Bardoel, *et al.*, "De VARA verder onder het mes," *ibid.*, pp. 360-369.

<sup>50</sup>Huige and Reckman, *op. cit.*, pp. 60-63.

<sup>51</sup>See A. McBriar, Fabian Socialism and English Politics (1884-1918) (Cambridge, 1962), *passim*; also, M. Cole, The Story of Fabian Socialism (London, 1961), especially pp. 26-33; A. Ulam, Philosophical Foundations of English Socialism (Cambridge, Mass., 1951), pp. 72-79. Perhaps the similarity is only superficial, but at least it seems adequate for the modest purpose of categorising theories.



ideology within the Dutch Labour Party throughout the 1970s, and perhaps also in the 1960s, insofar as important party leaders like Den Uyl seemed to adhere to it.<sup>52</sup> On the other hand, it was always contested, compromised and mixed with other ideas from the left wing or right wing of the party. While it can be distinguished relatively easily from the Neo-Marxist Reformism of the left wing, it is often difficult, if not impossible, to distinguish it from the even more eclectic and "pragmatic" ideas of the right wing.

While criticizing Marxism as outdated, simplistic and incorrect, the Neo-Fabians also denounced capitalism as unjust and inefficient. Some of them called for a New Marx, whereas others claimed to have found one already in the person of Jan Tinbergen, a Dutch economist, Nobel Prize winner and member of the Partij van de Arbeid.<sup>53</sup>

Tinbergen had helped to draft the Plan for Labour that was presented by the Social Democratic Workers Party (SDAP) in 1935 in order to reduce unemployment and deflation. In the 1960s he felt that these problems had been solved and that Social Democrats should turn to new problems. He gave priority to the following three: development of the Third World, detente between the First (Capitalist) and the Second

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<sup>52</sup>See Haagse Post, 9 October 1976 and 21 May 1977; however, Den Uyl's adherence was usually qualified, as the main Neo-Fabian theorist Van den Doel complained later (Vrij Nederland 3 November 1979). The term 'ideology' is used here in a critical sense: "the dominant ideology" are the ideas of the dominant group--see below, Chapter 5.3.

<sup>53</sup>Van den Doel, Lastig links, pp. 40-49.

(Socialist) World, and cultural renewal. Welfare economics would help to solve these problems, and particularly to redistribute income according to effort rather than native talents or monopolies at a national and global level. Cultural renewal required the formation of a new cultural elite and censorship of decadent forms of art and entertainment.<sup>54</sup>

Tinbergen's theory was developed further by one of his students, Hans Van den Doel, who became one of the founding members and leading theoreticians of Nieuw Links. The post-war welfare state had solved many problems and brought great benefits, notably full employment, a more egalitarian distribution of income and wealth, social security and mass education. On the other hand it had also created new problems and tensions, like centralization and bureaucratization of power, alienation and relative deprivation--aspirations rising faster than incomes--poverty in the Third World and, in the First World, ecological crises and the neglect of non-material and collective needs in favour of material and individual needs. While the old conflict between capital and labour had lost much of its importance, new conflicts erupted within these classes,

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<sup>54</sup>J. Tinbergen, "Optimale loonpolitiek," Socialisme en Democratie (1962): 352-357; idem, "De toekomst van de internationale socialistische samenwerking," Socialisme en Democratie (1964): 590-594; idem, "De betekenis van de welvaartseconomie voor het socialisme," Socialisme en Democratie (1965): 594-605; idem, "De toekomstige sociale orde en onze beweging," ibid., pp. 728-743; see also his more technical work Income distribution: analysis and policies (Amsterdam, 1975).

between monopolists, between big and small capitalists or between well-paid and poorly-paid wage-earners.

The Old Left tended to ignore the new conflicts and continued to focus on the old ones--the Marxist Old Left in particular; or it denied all conflict and advocated a "harmony model" of social relations. In fact a "coalition model" would be more appropriate to describe the interaction between the various interest groups in a welfare state. Many trade unionists had rejected the "harmony model" of the 1950s for good reasons, but had gone to another extreme by adopting a "conflict model" of old-fashioned class struggle. These Old Leftists also continued to ask for higher wages instead of accepting wage restraints in return for non-material benefits, particularly participation in decision-making and more social and cultural services. They overlooked the fact that wage-earners and employers shared at least a common interest in the prosperity of the Dutch economy, which might be endangered by continuing wage increases.<sup>55</sup>

The only way to solve the new conflicts and to distribute not only wealth but also power more equally was through state intervention. On this point Neo-Fabian Reformism distinguished itself most clearly from Pluralist Reformism and Neo-Marxist Reformism which accepted state intervention only reluctantly. The Neo-Fabians showed little reluctance to argue for expansion

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<sup>55</sup>Van den Doel, Lastig links, pp. 9-49, 82-122; a slightly more radical analysis was presented in B. Peper, "Democratie in dienstverband," in Boef et al., op. cit., pp. 3-28; also Interviews 4 and 9.

of the public sector, state regulation of wages and prices and selective subsidization of cultural projects. Only state intervention in the economy could prevent the ecological disasters predicted by the MIT Report to the Club of Rome--which the Neo-Fabians took very seriously indeed. They did not want to replace the market economy by a completely planned command economy, but they wanted to control at least external effects and monopolies.

On the other hand, the Neo-Fabians did agree with other New Leftists on the need for democratization of the state as well as the economy. Both public and private enterprise should be managed by workers, consumers and experts together, as long as external effects could be controlled by the state. Workers' participation should start at the shop-floor, but workers should also elect representatives to the Board of Directors.<sup>56</sup> According to Van den Doel, even the civil service was to be democratized in a similar way to prevent too much concentration of power in the executive branch, as well as to reduce the size of the service.<sup>57</sup>

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<sup>56</sup>In 1966 Nieuw Links Reformists suggested profit-sharing and co-determination based on the Scanlon Plan, allowing workers and managers equal representation on decision-making committees at various levels in a corporation; later this was dropped in favour of slightly more radical proposals, see Wiardi Beckman Stichting, Op weg naar arbeiderszelfbestuur (Deventer, 1976) as well as Interview 4 and Van den Doel, et al., op. cit., Chapter 2; B. Peper, "Wenselijkheid en mogelijkheid van democratisering van de onderneming," Economisch-Statistische Berichten (1969): 1103-1110.

<sup>57</sup>H. Van den Doel, Demokratie en Welvaartstheorie (Alphen aan de Rijn, 1975), Chapter VI, 3.3. He draws on Vanek and Niskanen.

Democratization of the state should not result in direct democracy, as the New Left radicals wished. On the contrary, representative democracy was to be strengthened. Political polarization and electoral reforms should allow the voter a clear and decisive choice between parties advocating alternative policies. The PvdA ought to force centrist parties like the Christian Democratic Appeal to either accept or reject an alliance before elections, so that voters would know what parties might join a coalition after elections. A strong but democratic state and especially a strong but democratic parliament were needed to check powerful private interests in society--both unions and employers--and to legislate structural reforms.

While direct democracy would lead to anarchy or dictatorship by "passionate minorities," given the limited benefits and high costs of political participation for most people, direct action could complement and even reinforce representative democracy. By informing representatives about the needs of certain groups, direct action could prevent oppression of "passionate minorities" by a lukewarm majority; and result in a compromise, forcing the majority to compensate the minorities for their sacrifices.<sup>58</sup>

The PvdA should therefore support direct action in some cases, provided it could integrate the goals of the action

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<sup>58</sup> Van den Doel, Lastig Links, pp. 135-144; the term 'passionate minorities' and some of the ideas were borrowed from R. Dahl, A Preface to Democratic Theory (Chicago, 1956); cf. Partij, Parlement, Activisme (Deventer, 1978).

groups concerned into a coherent political programme. It ought to resist Populist pressure from the Left to engage in direct action as a party, or to support any action uncritically. The Populist strategy would benefit only the strongest forces in society in the long run, and could destroy the party.<sup>59</sup>

The Neo-Fabians also differed from the Neo-Marxists with respect to the cultural revolution which both of them advocated. The cultural revolution concerned the PvdA only insofar as it required certain cultural policies that a government with PvdA ministers might carry out. In particular urban planning, housing, education and health care deserved the attention of a reformist government to improve efficiency as well as democratic participation of the citizens concerned. The working class had to be encouraged to participate in cultural activities and in education, so that upward mobility would increase and alienation would decrease. As long as manual labour had not been abolished by automation, some alienation might persist; but it could be reduced if the Left devoted more attention to socio-cultural rather than socio-economic problems. Education was to encourage individual expression and self-determination, critical thinking and communication with others. The government had to subsidize more progressive and critical art and amateur sports rather than elitist or traditional art and

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<sup>59</sup> In Neo-Fabian circles the term "Populist" usually referred to Neo-Marxist and Neo-Anarchist ideas or actions of the left wing of the PvdA or the PSP and PPR; see especially B. Tromp, "Socialisme, organisatie en democratie," Socialisme en Democratie (1976): 155-172.

record-hunting commercial sports.<sup>60</sup>

#### 4.3.3 Neo-Marxists in the French Socialist Party: CERES

In many ways the theory of the Centre d'Etudes, de Recherches et d'Education Socialistes (CERES) came very close to Old Left or orthodox Marxism.<sup>61</sup> On the other hand it included sufficiently numerous New Left themes and terms to justify the prefix 'Neo'.

According to CERES, the relationship between the socialization of the productive forces and private property of the means of production still constituted the primary contradiction in advanced capitalist societies like contemporary France. However, it was not the only one. Contradictions also existed between imperialist expansion of international capital and the territorial boundaries of national states, as well as

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<sup>60</sup>H. Leune, "Naar een nieuwe schoolstrijd," in Boef et al., op. cit., pp. 97-116; N. Gregoor, et al., op. cit., specifically the contributions from Ten Cate (pp. 7-16), Gregoor (pp. 17-26), Soutendijk (pp. 39-90) and Van der Louw and Krooshof (pp. 91-106); see also the polemics against Neo-Marxist ideas about cultural issues, especially C. Boef, "Bedden schudden," Socialisme en Democratie (1976): 114-126 and his reply to critics, pp. 370-382; M. Van Hasselt, "overwegingen ten behoeve van een socialistisch cultuurbeleid," Socialisme en Democratie (1974): 398-409, J. Voogd, "Enkele stellingen over socialistische cultuurpolitiek," ibid., pp. 410-414; A. Van der Louw, "Socialisme en opvoeding," ibid., pp. 466-472; even more moderate was M. Anstadt, "Cultuurpolitiek in perspectief," ibid., pp. 545-556. The right wing of the party held more liberal notions about culture and tended to question the need for any active cultural policy apart from general subsidies, cf. A. Laan, "Over het beginsel-program van de PvdA," ibid., pp. 587-589, and H. Schaafsma, "Aanzet tot een polemiek over socialistisch cultuurbeleid," Socialisme en Democratie (1975): 42-45.

<sup>61</sup>CERES inspired the Neo-Marxists in the Dutch Labour Party, at least after 1970; see Huige and Reckman, op. cit., p. 100; CERES in turn had been inspired by (among others) Socialisme ou Barbarie, discussed above (see Charzat, op. cit.,

between idealization and secularization of power. The notion of power also played a major role in the CERES interpretation of the primary contradiction: property was defined as power over the means of production, rather than as formal or legal ownership. Hence socialism implied workers' self-management or workers' power over the means of production. This was the only solution to the primary contradiction.

Socialism had to be distinguished from state capitalism, which could precede it but was often confused with it. In the Soviet Union, for instance, state capitalism was announced as a transitional stage but had now taken on an apparently permanent character. Formally the means of production were owned by the state, in the name of the people, but in fact they were controlled by a new ruling class of technocrats and bureaucrats. Like any other ruling class these techno-bureaucrats appropriated the surplus value produced by the working class and the peasantry. They used--or abused--Marxist theory to legitimate their rule as "dictatorship of the proletariat" or "people's democracy," but their interpretation of Marxism differed little from the technocratic scientism that the ruling classes of advanced capitalist countries used to legitimate their rule. Both ideologies defined maximum economic production as their main goal.

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p. 248). CERES could argue that its interpretation of Marx was in fact more accurate than the so-called orthodox interpretations of the Old Left in the Communist or Socialist Party; this question cannot be decided here but will be left to Marx exegetes, cf. Charzat, op. cit., pp. 246-249; also D. Motchane, Clefs pour le socialisme (Paris, 1973), pp. 81-82.



The emphasis on economic production might reveal a 19th century Rationalist or Positivist bias in Marx's conception of man and nature. Possibly psycho-analytic theory could correct this bias and complement Marx's historical materialism. A certain development of the productive forces seemed a necessary but not a sufficient condition for socialism, given the relative autonomy of political and ideological forces. Any determinism should be rejected; socialism was not a scientific project but a "concrete utopia."

On the other hand, economic analysis should not be neglected by socialists. They could benefit from the present crisis of capitalism, which affected the economy as well as the states and the ideologies of advanced capitalist countries. Even bourgeois scientists admitted economic growth could have reached natural limits in this century.<sup>62</sup> Imperialism and state intervention could alleviate the problems, but not solve them.

More specifically, in France the crisis resulted from the failure of the Gaullist project to modernize and centralize the French economy while preserving a certain independence from American capital. During the early 1960s Gaullism may have achieved some success, but after 1968 its "power bloc" of monopolist and non-monopolist bourgeoisie and traditional petty bourgeoisie began to fall apart. The liberal policy of De Gaulle's successors, in particular Giscard d'Estaing,

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<sup>62</sup>CERES referred here to the MIT Report Limits to growth, cited above; see Motchane, op. cit., pp. 74-81.

alienated the traditional petty bourgeoisie without winning much support from the working class.<sup>63</sup>

The crisis provided the Left with a chance to construct a new power bloc or front de classes around the working class, including elements or fractions of the new petty bourgeoisie and the farmers, on the basis of an anti-capitalist platform. This class alliance might offer some concessions to the national bourgeoisie concerning national independence and defence, but it should attack not only the monopolies, as the Communist Party proposed, but capitalism as such. Once in power, the alliance should nationalize key sectors of the economy under workers' control and restructure them according to a national plan.<sup>64</sup>

Workers' control implied election of workers' councils and worker-directors as well as general assemblies that would take the relevant decisions at the shop-floor. The hierarchy of positions and salaries would be reduced significantly. Eventually the capitalist division of labour would be abolished. In private enterprise, however, workers' control could only mean veto power; forms of co-determination or Gaullist-style participation could only weaken the working class.<sup>65</sup>

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<sup>63</sup>Charzat et al., op. cit., pp. 171-176; also in Répères 38 (1976).

<sup>64</sup>Motchane, op. cit., pp. 216-227; Charzat, op. cit., pp. 162-169; also Répères 41 (1977).

<sup>65</sup>Motchane, op. cit., pp. 240-289; Charzat, op. cit., pp. 177-189.

The demand for workers' control and self-management (its logical conclusion, so to speak) could unite the working class and in particular bridge the gap between intellectual and manual workers. Qualified workers might often lead the way, but to single them out as vanguard or New Working Class would be a strategic mistake; after all, large and militant sections of the working class were being de-qualified in the process of technological change in the advanced industries.<sup>66</sup> The core of the working class still consisted of manual workers and their numbers kept growing, at least in France. Intellectual workers, i.e. scientists, engineers and teachers who depended on wages and contributed to the production or realization of surplus value, were proletarianized rapidly. Even the new petty bourgeoisie, which also depended on wages or salaries but consumed rather than produced part of the surplus value, was increasingly alienated from the system: resenting the centralization of power in the capitalist monopolies and the state, the new petty bourgeoisie might also come to support workers' self-management.

The alliance of manual and intellectual workers, farmers and new petty bourgeois would initially accept only a reformist platform. Like all classes in bourgeois society the workers tended to adhere to bourgeois values, until a revolutionary

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<sup>66</sup>Hence CERES rejected Mallet's theory of the New Working Class in favour of a more orthodox (Marxist) theory of the working class as a (potentially) united agent of social and political action; see Charzat, op. cit., p. 168; and Motchane, op. cit., pp. 228-239.

crisis showed them the discrepancy between bourgeois values and bourgeois reality in a light too glaring to ignore. Hence Lenin was right about the reformist or Social Democratic consciousness of the working class, at least during non-revolutionary periods. Yet he was wrong in his conclusion that revolutionary intellectuals could (and should) introduce socialist class consciousness into the masses from the outside. On the contrary, intellectuals should follow the lead of manual workers, or at least the politically most advanced section of them. The more weight carried by intellectual workers and new petty bourgeois, the greater the chances of Social Democratic or Stalinist deviation, i.e. state capitalism instead of socialism.

For the time being, the reformist class alliance would be articulated by the two major parties of the Left, the Communist Party and the Socialist Party. Unification of the two seemed desirable but impossible in the short run. Differences between them should be discussed seriously but amicably. As far as CERES was concerned there were three main differences. First, the Communist Party favoured an anti-monopolist rather than an anti-capitalist class alliance. Second, it conceived of the bourgeois state as an instrument of capitalist monopolies, whereas CERES agreed with Poulantzas's critique of that "instrumentalist" position.<sup>67</sup> Third, democratic centralism

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<sup>67</sup>Poulantzas was quoted frequently in CERES publications; his analysis of the bourgeois state and socialist strategy seems quite similar to that of CERES, particularly in N. Poulantzas, L'Etat, le Pouvoir, le Socialisme (Paris, 1978), especially pp. 11-57, 135-177, 277-295; cf. Répères 38 (1976).

was interpreted differently by the two groups.

The notion of the state held by CERES differed also from that of Gorz or Mallet, though only marginally. All of them agreed on its relative autonomy, but CERES went further in pointing out the class conflict and contradictions inside the state. Owing to the conflict between bourgeoisie and new petty bourgeoisie, as well as the contradiction between idealization and secularization of power, the state could be transformed rather than smashed in the transition to socialism. More specifically, parliamentary democracy could be reinforced and complemented rather than replaced by a system of workers' councils and neighbourhood councils; some state power would be transferred to these councils. A democratic transformation of the state would require a long and difficult struggle, especially in a country with a centralized and authoritarian state such as France. However, even the French state had entered a crisis; petty bourgeois (professional) factions of the state apparatus like judges and soldiers began to question the dominant bourgeois ideology of the neutral, unbiased and responsible state.<sup>68</sup>

An electoral victory of the Left would only mark the beginning of the transition towards socialism. A Leftist government would need several years to reform the economy and decentralize the state apparatus. The development of popular power, workers' councils and neighbourhood councils,

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<sup>68</sup>Motchane, op. cit., pp. 129-178; Charzat, op. cit., pp. 223-232; also Répères 41 (1977).

might take even more time. The Socialist Party ought to anticipate both, by preparing a programme of reforms in some detail and by organizing factory cells (sections/groupes d'entreprise) and neighbourhood groups. The party should operate as an "intellectuel collectif" and contribute to the development of a socialist culture by undermining the cultural hegemony of the bourgeoisie with respect to family life, education, urban planning and material consumption. The Old Left had neglected the cultural struggle; the New Left on the other hand tended to over-estimate it and to expect a socialist culture to emerge in a capitalist society.

The Socialist Party should adopt a flexible form of democratic centralism. While majority decisions had to be accepted by all members, competing tendencies should be allowed to recall opportunistic party leaders. Hopefully, a revolutionary minority like CERES would be able to lead the way and prevent new petty bourgeois factions from taking over the party and "social-democratizing" it again--thus undoing the progress made since 1971. The class struggle had to be fought within the party as well as elsewhere.<sup>69</sup>

The struggle had to be waged within the Socialist International as well. Since most so-called Socialist parties in Northern Europe tended to lean towards Social Democracy, i.e. reforming instead of fighting capitalism, the French Socialist Party should cooperate rather with Socialists in

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<sup>69</sup>Charzat, op. cit., pp. 196-210; Motchane, op. cit., pp. 186-216; Répères, 40 (1977).

other Mediterranean and Third World countries. Institutions like the European Community and NATO were dominated generally by American and multi-national capital and therefore hostile to any socialist experiments. A socialist France would have to break with these institutions and return to a more self-sufficient economy; or rely on a "geographical compromise" with progressive regimes of the Third World like Algeria.<sup>70</sup>

Economic growth might slow down during the transition to socialism. A new model of growth would be developed, oriented towards different needs. Individuals would overcome the fragmentation and alienation resulting from the capitalist division of labour and fetishism of commodities. They would be free to develop themselves and become whole human beings. New notions of work, time and space would replace our bourgeois notions. Society would become rational and transparent--but far from perfect. Social conflicts might be internalized too much: "flic de lui-même, l'homme prisonnier de sa raison pourrait-il trouver ailleurs que dans la folie le refuge que seuls peuvent donner ces murs que l'on a construits tout seul?"<sup>71</sup>

#### 4.3.4 The Frankfurt School and the Young Socialists in Germany

While the Frankfurt School always avoided any involvement with political parties or groups, it inspired many New Left

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<sup>70</sup>Charzat, op. cit., pp. 216-222; Motchane, op. cit., pp. 178-185; Frontière 15 (1974) advocated "la fusion du sentiment national et de la lutte anticapitaliste."

<sup>71</sup>Motchane, op. cit., p. 254.

groups in Germany as well as elsewhere. Thus Claus Offe, a "third generation" member of the School, was quoted by several Young Socialists within the Social Democratic Party of Germany.<sup>72</sup> But also members of Nieuw Links within the Dutch Labour Party referred to the Frankfurt School, and specifically to Jurgen Habermas.<sup>73</sup>

Jurgen Habermas, "perhaps the most original and distinguished of the present generation of West German philosophers," set out to revise, or rather reconstruct Marxism.<sup>74</sup> One of the (many) important themes that run through his work is the distinction between work (Arbeit) and interaction or communication. This distinction was meant to correct or expand the Marxist distinctions between productive forces and relations of production and between base and superstructure. Habermas defines 'work' as instrumental or purposive-rational (zweck-rationale) action which applies technical rules and is oriented towards explicit or empirical criteria of success; where as 'interaction' is symbolic or communicative action

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<sup>72</sup>For instance in N. Gansel, ed., Ueberwindet den Kapitalismus oder was wollen die Jungsozialisten? (Reinbek, 1971), p. 59; also in M. Greven, B. Guggenberger and J. Strasser, Krise des Staates? (Darmstadt, 1975), pp. 61-104. However, Offe had joined the Social Democratic Party, according to Interview 14; by then, the Frankfurt School had already fallen apart: by 1975 all "first generation" members had died or left Frankfurt (Adorno, Horkheimer, Marcuse) and "second generation" members also (Habermas).

<sup>73</sup>For instance H. Kombrink and G. Van Ruiten, "Maatschappijkritiek: Onkritische kritiek op een maatschappijkritiek," Socialisme en Democratie (1971): 257-267; also Interview 10.

<sup>74</sup>G. Lichtheim, From Marx to Hegel, (New York, 1971), p. 130.



which applies moral or "practical" rules and is oriented towards intersubjective agreement. The two spheres interact but do not determine each other. In other words, the base and superstructure distinguished by Marx in the 19th century no longer existed in the 20th. Science and technology, once part of the superstructure, have become productive forces, while also performing ideological (hence "superstructural") functions. State intervention, also "superstructural" by origin, has redirected the economy and destroyed the autonomy of the base, as well as eroded the ideology of the market--free and equal exchange--which had dominated the superstructure of 19th century capitalism. Hence the Marxist theory of historical materialism had to be supplemented with psychological and anthropological as well as linguistic theories in order to explain the dialectics of the two spheres.<sup>75</sup>

While economic conflicts and crises continued in advanced capitalist societies, more or less as Marx had predicted, they were de-politicised and resolved or rather regulated through state intervention. Thus the class struggle had become latent and un-political. Yet political conflicts could occur in the sphere of interaction, in particular the socio-cultural subsystem which included education, art and (social) science.

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<sup>75</sup>J. Habermas, Technik und Wissenschaft als 'Ideologie' (Frankfurt, 1968); parts of this have been translated by J. Shapiro, with some essays about the German student movement, in J. Habermas, Towards a Rational Society (Boston, 1970); the theoretical ideas are further elaborated in J. Habermas, Zur Rekonstruktion des historischen Materialismus (Frankfurt, 1976).

Though the state and its agencies tried to reduce these conflicts to either personal (private) or technical-administrative i.e., a-political problems, they could not succeed completely as long as people had not yet turned into robots. The student movement of the 1960s and the women's movement of the 1970s did re-politicise supposedly personal or private and technical-administrative problems. To some extent they exploited contradictions in the dominant, partially rational ideology which contained universalist values such as equality but excluded their practical use in certain spheres or subsystems like family life or education. However, both movements showed reactionary and irrational features as well. A rational and gradualist strategy was necessary, preventing fascist reactions and aiming at democratisation, decentralisation and humanisation of society.<sup>76</sup>

This line of thinking was developed further by Claus Offe, one of Habermas's students and collaborators. He argued that capitalism had logically reached its final stage, late capitalism, by state intervention, organization of the market and institutionalization of technological progress. Socialisation of social relations continued without planning or conscious organization--the basic contradiction of capitalism--even in an organized market economy. However, the market itself lost its grip on more and more sectors of the economy

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<sup>76</sup>J. Habermas, Legitimationsprobleme in Spätkapitalismus (Frankfurt, 1973); idem, "Conservatism and capitalist crisis," New Left Review 115 (1979): 73-84, the English translation of an interview with the Italian journal Renascita.

that were taken over by the state and no longer oriented towards profit. These sectors, such as education, health care, and transport, contributed indirectly to the accumulation of capital, but they also served real needs of people. Conflicts and disparities in these sectors took on more importance than class conflicts in the private sector of late capitalist societies.

Whereas conflicts in the private sector could be settled through material concessions--e.g. wage increases, easily offset by price increases--conflicts in the public sector required political solutions. Political power was exercised by technocrats interested in economic growth, stability, international influence and mass loyalty. They did not represent the particular interests of a class but the general interests of all members within the structure of a capitalist class society.<sup>77</sup> In other words, all interests could be accommodated provided they were defined in non-utopian terms and could contribute to capitalist production; also they had to be organized effectively. Other interests were now increasingly mobilized by civic action groups, but their action challenged the legitimacy and stability of the system.

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<sup>77</sup>This is almost a direct translation from the German: "Der Staat verteidigt nicht die besonderen Interessen einer Klasse, sondern die gemeinsamen Interessen aller Mitglieder einer kapitalistischen Klassengesellschaft" (underlined in the text); C. Offe and V. Ronge, "Thesen zur Begründung des Konzepts des 'kapitalistischen Staates' and zur materialistischen Politikforschung," in E. Altvater, et al., Rahmenbedingungen und Schranken staatlichen Handelns, Zehn Thesen (Frankfurt, 1976), p. 55.

Eventually these actions could usher in democratization of the public sector and possibly a gradual transition towards socialism.<sup>78</sup>

While Habermas and Offe might be regarded as Neo-Marxists, some younger members of the Frankfurt School seemed to renounce Marxism altogether and take a Neo-Fabian position. Helge Pross, for instance, advocated a compromise between capitalism and socialism. In West Germany capitalism would not disappear soon and people would probably prefer it to socialism anyway--especially to state socialism on the Soviet or East German model. Radical reformists should proceed cautiously, trying to mobilize public opinion for step-by-step increases of popular participation in decision-making in industry, education, etc. Reforms had to be presented in an imaginative and yet practical, realistic form. Conservative forces would oppose even moderate reforms, but their power should not be over-estimated. Neo-Marxists, including Offe, tended to exaggerate the unity and strength of the various ruling oligarchies as well as the rigidity of capitalist societies. The successes of the student movement and the trade unions in Germany showed that power was distributed fairly equally and not concentrated in the hands of a capitalist ruling class, as the Marxists often asserted.<sup>79</sup>

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<sup>78</sup>C. Offe, Strukturprobleme des kapitalistischen Staates (Frankfurt, 1972), especially pp. 7-63 and 153-168; Offe, "Politische Herrschaft und Klassenstrukturen," in G. Kress and D. Senghaas, eds., Politikwissenschaft (Frankfurt, 1972), pp. 135-164; Offe and Ronge, *op. cit.*, pp. 54-70.

<sup>79</sup>H. Pross, Kapitalismus und Demokratie (Frankfurt, 1972), especially pp. 11-22 and 88-124.

Insofar as the Young Socialists in Germany adopted ideas from the Frankfurt School, they preferred those of Habermas and Offe to those of Pross. Strasser, perhaps the main theorist of the Young Socialists, seemed to agree with Offe's ideas about the capitalist state. Since the state was part of a capitalist social formation, it was ridden with contradictions and class conflict. Hence a reformist government, helped by popular pressure, could democratize the state and the economy. Like CERES, Strasser argued for a dual strategy of reforms from above and action from below (the grass roots). On the other hand his reform programme looked more moderate than that of CERES. Ruling out direct democracy in "complex industrial societies," Strasser conceived of economic democracy as representation of workers (unions), consumers and scientists on boards of directors or managers in large corporations. Only "excessive division of labour" was to be eliminated. Investments would be planned by government but approved or modified through a referendum and through workers' councils.<sup>80</sup> Since uncontrolled economic growth was likely to become the greatest threat to humanity, Socialists should give priority to controlling and limiting economic growth. In agreement with the Frankfurt School, Strasser denounced the achievement principle (Leistungsprinzip) and the competitive, aggressive individualism of capitalist society, and pleaded for a more cooperative and

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<sup>80</sup>J. Strasser, "Die Funktion des Staates und die Möglichkeit Sozialistischer Reformpolitik im spätkapitalistischen System der BRD," in Greven et al., op. cit., pp. 61-104.

communicative way of life, more collective living (Wohngemeinschaften), more creative, artisanal work, less school-centred education.<sup>81</sup>

#### 4.3.5 Neo-Fabianism in the French Socialist Party: Alain Touraine

Alain Touraine, a French sociologist and member of the Socialist Party, began to exercise some influence on theorists of the Dutch Labour Party in the late 1970s. Within the French party he seemed to lean towards the Faire group around Rocard.<sup>82</sup>

Touraine agreed with Habermas that scientific and technological knowledge had become part of the "base." Actually, he thought they had become the most important productive forces in post-industrial or "programmed" societies. He preferred the terms 'post-industrial' and 'programmed' to 'late capitalist', 'socialist' or 'state capitalist', since the latter denoted types of development rather than stages. In other words, post-industrial societies could develop in more or less capitalist or socialist ways, but all would share certain basic characteristics. The transition had begun after the Second World War. New ruling classes emerged, consisting of technocrats and bureaucrats in control of the production and application of knowledge. Access to the ruling

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<sup>81</sup>J. Strasser, Die Zukunft der Demokratie (Reinbek, 1977), passim; also Strasser, "Von der Schwierigkeit, das Uebel an der Wurzel zu packen," in Mauersberger, ed., op. cit., pp. 51-57.

<sup>82</sup>This seems implied by Touraine's contribution to Faire 23 (1977); he was quoted in a publication of the Dutch Labour Party, Partij, Parlement, Activisme (Deventer, 1978), pp. 49-50; cf. Vrij Nederland, 16 December 1978.

class depended on education rather than birth or wealth. Decisions were taken at the level of national or international organizations, financial trusts, industrial corporations or governmental agencies, in the interest of economic growth and production rather than the private interests of the rulers.<sup>83</sup>

Class conflicts were not about to disappear, but to change. While exploitation of the labour force lost importance as a source of conflict, alienation or exclusion from information and decision-making took its place. Conflicts between workers and managers of an enterprise continued to erupt, but they were increasingly institutionalized and depoliticized. The working class had become defensive and reformist, if not conservative, while students, scientists and professionals became more radical. Mallet had observed the same trend, but maintained a narrow Marxist perspective which made him believe in the revolutionary potential of the New Working Class--which in reality appeared at least as moderate and reformist as the Old Working Class.<sup>84</sup>

New forms of class conflict were to be expected, similar to the events of May 1968 in France. Though workers took an important part in the events, intellectuals and students had initiated and politicized the struggle, directing it against the technocrats in power. Since 1968 several social movements

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<sup>83</sup>A. Touraine, La société post-industrielle (Paris, 1969), pp. 7-118.

<sup>84</sup>Touraine reviewed Mallet's work in his review article "La nouvelle classe ouvrière," Sociologie du Travail 6 (1964): 80-84.

had sprung up in reaction to technocratic state interference with society. Their struggle for self-determination and cultural freedom deserved full support from the Left, in spite of certain petty bourgeois and reactionary aspects. A post-industrial society without these creative and anti-authoritarian social movements would easily fall aprey to totalitarianism.<sup>85</sup>

The Old Left, and in particular the French Communist Party, tried to ignore, manipulate or even repress the new social movements, relying only on the state as an agent of progress--following the Jacobin tradition as well as the meta-social, naturalist and historicist fallacies of Marxism. The New Left, on the other hand, and in particular its gauchist and Anarchist wing, tended to overestimate the role of the new movements and to misunderstand the state.<sup>86</sup>

A complex industrial society, and a fortiori a post-industrial one, needed a strong state to give it some cohesion and direction. A post-industrial society produced and changed itself in response to environmental challenges--for instance the ecological disasters predicted by the MIT Report to the Club of Rome--but only through the activity of the state. Even Poulantzas's definition of the state as the "condensation of class relations," though more adequate than the Communist conception, underestimated the autonomy of the state with respect to the class struggle. The school system in France

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<sup>85</sup>Touraine, La société post-industrielle, pp. 119-188.

<sup>86</sup>A. Touraine, La société invisible. Regards 1974-1976 (Paris, 1977), pp. 119-121, 155-156, 181-183, etc.



seemed a case in point: though an essential part of the state apparatus, it was run by leftist intellectuals (petty bourgeois) and produced leftist, at times even revolutionary students during most of the 20th century. On the other hand, the state did show a certain bias in favour of the ruling classes, the more so in countries where the latter were unified and strong but the former were weak. An ultra-leftist (gauchiste) strategy aimed at smashing the state would be counterproductive; a political movement could only smash a state if it contained within itself the nucleus of a new state and a new ruling class, as the Bolshevik Party did. Invariably the new state would be stronger and more authoritarian than the old one.

The French Socialist Party seemed to pursue a more sensible strategy. While calling for grass roots democracy (democratie à la base) and self-management (autogestion), it hoped to win elections and to govern rather than smash the state. Though essentially correct, the strategy relied perhaps too much on a neo-liberal interpretation of self-management. Touraine redefined the term:

l'autogestion n'est pas la forme 'moderne' de l'organisation du travail; elle ne peut être que la modalité nouvelle d'une lutte populaire de classe contre la domination économique et sociale.<sup>87</sup>

Generally speaking, social movements could never replace a ruling class, but they could check and restrain it. New forms of representation and democratic participation should be tried out in industry, universities, and local government.

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<sup>87</sup>Touraine, La société invisible, p. 250.

However, too much decentralization of power could result in the rise of corporatist or localist "micro-dictatorships." At any rate, the Socialist Party ought to support these social movements without trying to manipulate or regulate them. The Party's first priority was to win elections and to govern the country, in order to start planning social and economic change and solve the present crisis.

A government of the Left should also create more collective social and cultural services and facilities. But it should not try to create a new culture. The cultural revolution, which many New Leftists advocated, had already started. Culture had been separated from morality and class, and turned into individual consumption of mass produced art, information and entertainment. Though conformist, passive and unequally distributed, this new mass culture allowed individual participants more freedom and equality than the folk and class cultures that had preceded it. The new social movements could play a creative part in this cultural revolution, provided they avoided narcissist particularism and reactionary naturalism--the "return to nature" or "eternal essence" of some regionalist and ecologist movements, for instance.<sup>88</sup>

Cultural freedom, economic planning and a strong but democratic state could produce a relatively pleasant post-industrial society of a "contractual" rather than totalitarian

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<sup>88</sup>Touraine, La société post-industrielle, pp. 261-306; idem, La société invisible, pp. 178-181, etc.

nature. Conflicts would continue, hopefully; the impossible dream of a unified, consensual society free from class conflict could only lead to totalitarian repression and violence.<sup>89</sup>

#### 4.3.6 Conclusion

Obviously, Social Democratic New Leftists did not share a common theory or even common goals. Whereas the Neo-Marxists among them claimed to fight for socialization of the means of production under workers' control, forms of direct democracy and a proletarian "culture of struggle," Neo-Fabians aimed at more limited nationalization and democratization of the economy, direct action but no direct democracy and a more individualist cultural renewal.

The different goals relate to different theoretical frameworks. Neo-Fabians rejected the Neo-Marxist (and a fortiori any orthodox Marxist) theory of class conflict, and of ideology and politics as determined by the economic base of productive forces and relations of production. And yet, in spite of these profound differences, the two theoretical positions coexisted in the same political party--which was not about to split at the end of the period under study. Necessarily the two agreed at least on some issues of strategic importance.

They seemed to share the notion of the state as relatively independent of any ruling class or capitalist interest, open to reformist pressure and capable of realizing structural

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<sup>89</sup>Touraine, La société invisible, pp. 84-85, 91-94.

reforms. In other words, the state might have shown bias and oligarchic tendencies but it could be democratized from inside, by a democratic reformist party (like the PvdA, the PS, or the SPD). Moreover, there was some agreement about the kind of reforms needed: democratic planning, workers' self-management, (though interpreted differently by different theorists), decentralization of power, more cultural and social services, freedom to experiment and communicate, controlled economic growth and ecological equilibrium.

#### 4.4 The Project of the Christian New Left: Radical Pluralism

The project of the Political Party of Radicals is difficult to reconstruct. It changed considerably from 1968, when the party was founded, to 1977; or rather, different theories and strategies gained majorities within the party at different times. Christian ideas and references to the Bible became rare in party publications, whereas Marxist and Anarchist ideas became more common, though never dominant.<sup>90</sup> Thus theoretical pluralism and eclecticism prevailed in the late 1970s. But the label "Pluralism" seems appropriate to describe the PPR project also for other, more substantial reasons. It suggests a conception of society as a plurality of conflicting and cross-cutting interests and groups, rather than as a totality determined by economic forces or polarised by a conflict between two classes. Moreover, it implies a positive evaluation of this conception and a condemnation of efforts

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<sup>90</sup> See above, Chapter 2.5.

to organise economic, political or cultural monopolies. This type of Pluralism had also been popular among older Christian theorists, especially Personalists and Solidarists in the 1930s and 1940s, and could be traced back to medieval, Thomist philosophies.<sup>91</sup> However, it was radicalised and further secularised by the New Left members of the Political Party of Radicals--as well as by some New Leftists in the PSP and PvdA, who also often came from Christian backgrounds.

Like the earlier Pluralists, the Radical Pluralists of the PPR tried to reconcile individualism and collectivism, Liberalism and Socialism. They tended to reject Marxism as dogmatic, one-sided and incorrect, or at least outdated, but they would agree that capital had played a dominant and negative, oppressive and immoral role in modern society. Capital accumulation had resulted in oppression and exploitation of poor peasants in the Third World and workers in the First World. It had made people more aggressive, competitive, acquisitive and alienated. It polluted the natural environment and ruined the ecological balance in the world. Therefore, capitalism was to be replaced--but not necessarily by socialism. Power had to be taken away from capital, through conversion of corporate shares into bonds and by transferring the powers

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<sup>91</sup>See B. Zylstra, From Pluralism to Collectivism (Assen, 1968), pp. 206-220; Personalism, Solidarism and Pluralism are discussed briefly in M. Fogarty, Christian Democracy in Western Europe (Notre Dame, 1957), pp. 17, 29, 59, etc.; for a good example of Pluralist ideas in a (Neo-)Thomist context see J. Maritain, Scholasticism and Politics (London, 1940) (Translated by M. Adler), especially Chapters I and IV.

of the shareholders to the workers--in particular the right to elect directors and to approve or disapprove the annual accounts. Thus class conflict would be eliminated: capital would be subordinated to labour and used to satisfy human needs rather than to make profits. Private property could survive as long as it did not entail power over people.<sup>92</sup>

The end of the class struggle did not mean the end of all social conflict. Corporations would continue to compete for markets, even if they were controlled by the workers; some coordination through national and regional investment banks would be necessary. The struggle for solidarity with Third World nations and for a clean and balanced environment would continue, cutting through old class cleavages. Feminists would continue to fight for the emancipation of women. Citizen groups would continue to fight state bureaucracies.

Generalized self-management would allow all these groups to solve, or at least to regulate their conflicts. The state was to allow these groups their own sphere of action instead of trying to regulate and organize everything itself. State bureaucrats and technocrats were often seen as the main enemies by Radical Pluralists, who considered them allies but not servants of the capitalists. Hence they agreed with Old Left reformists that working class parties or unions could use the state to reform society. On the other hand, they often

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<sup>92</sup>B. De Gaay Fortman and H. Thomas, De winst van een democratische economie (Utrecht, 1976), especially pp. 93-118; see also PPRAK 65 (August 1975) and PPRAK 73 (19 December 1975).

disapproved of the Old Left's reliance on the state and preferred direct action and participation at the grass roots to legislative action in many cases.<sup>93</sup>

A party like the PPR was to cooperate with action groups, without trying to control them; in particular it was to represent the action groups in parliament and support them through legislative action. Parliament had to retain supremacy: direct democracy was to complement but not replace parliamentary democracy. To carry out reforms the party would have to take part in coalition governments, even if these included right-wing parties.

Participation in government might pose a dilemma for Pluralist New Leftists. On the one hand they wanted to reduce and decentralize the power of the government to the benefit of civic action groups, self-managed corporations, neighbourhood councils and so forth. On the other hand they were tempted to use and even expand government power to restrain private corporations from exploiting people and polluting the environment. More specifically, they wanted to expand the public sector, particularly social and cultural services in order to create jobs and to compensate people for a lack of economic growth and material consumer goods. They

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<sup>93</sup>In a critique of Marxist notions of the state, Benthem van den Bergh, a member of the PvdA, summed up the Pluralist position very well: "In the welfare state the organized employers and the organized working class became the ruling classes of the state in antagonistic cooperation with each other," G. Benthem van den Bergh, "The Interconnection between Processes of State and Class Formation," Acta Politica XI (1976): 289-311; cf. PPRAK 91 (5 November 1976).

accepted and indeed defended the reduction of economic growth--some of them even argued for "zero growth"--by referring to the "limits to growth" advocated by the MIT Report to the Club of Rome.<sup>94</sup> They also referred to the need of Third World nations to receive part of the surplus produced in the First World.

The dilemma could be resolved if the government democratized itself. Government agencies, and in particular social and cultural services should involve their clients--students, patients, prisoners, welfare recipients and so on--in their planning and decision-making process. Several ministers and state secretaries of the Den Uyl government had successfully initiated experiments in this direction.

It was not only the government that needed democratization. Trade unions and political parties suffered from similar technocratic and bureaucratic tendencies. Pluralist parties like the PPR should give an example and start democratizing themselves, thus anticipating the kind of society they hoped to build. They should encourage tolerance, solidarity, activism and horizontal communication. The PPR in particular was to act as a vanguard for the new society and culture, providing activists with a long-term view and ideals that transcended material interests. Private problems were to be politicized through collective action; happiness, love and even lust were

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<sup>94</sup>The report was published in Dutch as Grenzen aan de groei (Utrecht, 1971); it became a bestseller and was quoted in many PPR publications; e.g. De Gaay Fortman and Thomas, op. cit., p. 41; cf. Interviews 2 and 8.



considered political issues.<sup>95</sup>

The transition to the new pluralist society would be slow and peaceful. Violent revolution seemed both unlikely and undesirable, at least in Western Europe; it could be necessary in the Third World. On the other hand, the change in the First World might be speeded up by a few ecological or economic disasters. Disasters could persuade people to renounce their demands for economic growth and consumption in favour of more long-term spiritual goals. In that sense the PPR considered itself a revolutionary party; but the revolution it anticipated would be a cultural rather than a political or socio-economic one.<sup>96</sup>

Neither the PPR nor any other party were able to create a new culture all by themselves, but it could support the cultural revolution that had already started in many spheres of life. The secular European culture, based on rationalism, domination of nature and the belief in scientific, technological and economic progress seemed to be going through a crisis, while traditional religion failed to solve its own crisis. A new culture might emerge, oriented towards self-development, solidarity, creativity and communication rather than domination, exploitation and accumulation. Feminine values might replace masculine values, expression of feelings becoming as

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<sup>95</sup>De Gaay Fortman, Politiek op termijn, especially Chapter 1; see also PPRAK 64 (July 1975) and PPRAK 54 (September 1974), 47 (January 1974).

<sup>96</sup>De Gaay Fortman, Politiek op termijn, Chapter 4; Ter Bort, op. cit.; Interview 8.

important as cognitive efforts. A variety of life styles would be tolerated, both "proletarian" and "elitist," homosexual and heterosexual, mystical and worldly. A pluralist culture would suit a pluralist society.<sup>97</sup>

The Radical Pluralist project seemed relatively unique and peculiarly Dutch. Some members of the French Socialist Party and of the German Social Democratic Party as well as many members of ecological groups or "Green Lists" shared the basic ideas, but did not inspire the PPR theorists.<sup>98</sup> One of the main theorists of the party mentioned only Anglo-Saxon sources: Galbraith, Mishan, Tawney, Schumacher, another referred to Illich, Roszak and Castaneda.<sup>99</sup>

#### 4.5 Conclusions

In view of the bewildering variety of theories presented in this chapter it may appear misleading to maintain the title of the chapter in the singular form. The Ultra-leftist or Anarchist project of Provo or Socialisme ou Barbarie appears totally incompatible with the Neo-Fabian Reformism of Nieuw Links moderates like Van den Doel. Without denying or explaining

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<sup>98</sup>According to Interview 8; the group around Michel Rocard and the journal Faire within the French Socialist Party resembled the PPR in many ways, cf. M. Rocard, Questions à l'Etat socialiste (Paris, 1972); idem, "Changer les enjeux," La Nef 52 (1973): 57-78; so did theorists of the Democratic Confederation of Labour (CFDT) in France, e.g. P. Rosanvallon, L'age de l'autogestion (Paris, 1976); within the German SPD Pluralists appeared rather rare, but cf. I. Fetscher, "Oekodiktatur oder Alternativ-Zivilisation," Neue Rundschau 87:4 (1976): 527-541 and Interview 14.

<sup>99</sup>Interview 8; Ter Borg, op. cit.

away the differences between the extremes, I will argue nevertheless that they shared sufficient important elements to refer to them as--however heterogeneous--parts of one New Left project. One can only argue this at a rather high level of abstraction; at any concrete point in time or space one would have to distinguish between several more or less independent New Left projects.

Perhaps six common ideas can be found in all the New Left theories discussed above: the impact of science on production, the integration of the working class in late capitalist society, the critique of economism and determinism, the relative autonomy of the state and of culture, and the new conception of nature. These will be elaborated on below.

(1) The impact of science through new technology, caused mechanization and rationalization of production. Expanded mass production resulted in a certain affluence for all members of advanced capitalist societies, but also in certain political and ideological changes. Moreover, the role of scientists and technicians changed. Even if New Leftists disagreed about the political implications of this change, they all agreed on its importance. Automation seems to have fascinated most, though not all of them, as a possible way to overcome alienation and exploitation of human labour. The orthodox Marxism of the Old Left underestimated the role of science and its producers, the intellectuals or New Workers; hence it had to be re-interpreted, revised or even rejected completely--here the New Leftists disagreed again. /t

(2) The integration of the working class in late (or neo-)capitalist society was seen as one of the consequences of affluence and mass consumption, though it was also related to the electoralist and reformist strategy of Old Left working class parties as well as the economism of the Old Left in general. While successful in winning seats in legislatures and corporatist bodies--like the Socio-Economic Council in the Netherlands--and in winning economic concessions, the Old Left had failed to transform capitalism in any fundamental sense. Since its critique of capitalism had emphasized economic failures, its reaction to the economic success of late capitalism could only be resignation or attentisme, i.e. waiting for an economic downturn; Social Democrats tended to the former, while Communists usually preferred the latter. As a result, most workers had given up fighting capitalism or left it to their elected representatives to fight it.

The exact interpretation of the term 'integration' differed between New Left groups. Neo-Marxists stressed the relative superficiality of integration or saw it as limited to the institutional level, pointing out the continuation of the class struggle against capitalism at the level of the shop-floor. Neo-Anarchists and Pluralist or Neo-Fabian Reformists on the other hand conceived of integration as a permanent and profound change which falsified the Marxist predictions of a proletarian revolution, at least in Western Europe. New Left strategies reflected these differences. Neo-Marxists hoped to mobilize at least important sections

of the working class (the New Working Class in Mallet's project) for the revolution or revolutionary or at least structural reforms; whereas Neo-Anarchists looked for another revolutionary agent elsewhere--the provotariat or the Third World--and Pluralists expected various action groups or coalitions to realize structural reforms; Neo-Fabian reformists relied on the state.

(3) Economism and determinism were denounced by all New Left theorists as serious flaws of the Old Left--and especially, but not exclusively, of orthodox Marxism. 'Economism' could be interpreted either in a broad sense, as giving too much attention to economic issues and demands; or in a more specific sense, as explaining political and cultural phenomena in economic terms. The latter interpretation was often linked to determinism, with reference to the Marxist statement that the political and ideological (cultural) superstructure of a social formation is determined in the last instance by its economic base. Neo-Marxists tended to qualify or re-interpret this statement, while other New Leftists rejected it out of hand. Some would point out the growing importance of science, a product of the superstructure, to economic production; others would refer to the increased intervention of the state in the economy. Another line of attack would go through an analysis of Soviet-Union-type socialism--considered "state capitalism" by many New Leftists. The Soviet economy had been nationalized and planned more or less according to Old Left principles, but obviously the expected political and

cultural changes had failed to occur: political power remained in the hands of a small ruling class, workers enjoyed even less freedom than in capitalist society and culture had remained bourgeois, oriented towards production, work, achievement and competition.

The proposed alternatives to economism and determinism varied a great deal. Neo-Marxists might argue for a relative or conditional form of determinism while Pluralists and Neo-Fabians rejected all determinism; Neo-Anarchists did the same, though they might lean towards technological determinism.<sup>100</sup> However, all New Leftists appreciated spontaneity and autonomous action in politics. Self-determination and self-management were their goals, but to a great extent also their means. Even relatively orthodox Neo-Marxists in CERES and Socialisme ou Barbarie admitted they were pursuing a "concrete utopia" rather than realizing a determined and scientific project. All seemed to approve of direct action of groups trying to change their social, economic or political conditions--even if they did not agree about the strategic importance of such action, compared to electoral and legislative action.<sup>101</sup> If

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<sup>100</sup> Both Provo and Subversive Aktion seemed to expect socio-economic as well as political changes from automation which suggests a possibly unintended determinist argument; this point will be argued at more length in Chapter 5.2.

<sup>101</sup> Approval of direct action as such may be consistent with economic determinism, as in the case of Rosa Luxemburg perhaps, if one accepts the interpretation of George Lukacs, in G. Lukacs, Geschichte und Klassenbewusstsein (Neuwied, 1968), pp. 135-143; however, it seems to me that the New Left did not follow Luxemburg in this respect.

a revolution was considered possible at all, its time, place and outcome could not be predicted.

(4) The theories about the relative autonomy of the state follow from the critique of economism in the Marxist sense. If the state was ever controlled directly by economic interests during the earlier stages of capitalism, this was no longer the case in late capitalist societies. Neo-Marxists disagreed with other New Leftists about the degree of autonomy, but all of them criticized the "instrumentalist" notion of the state held by Old Left Communists and in a different sense by Social Democrats. On the other hand hardly any New Leftist asserted the complete neutrality of the state vis-à-vis social forces or economic interests. Hence, all favoured democratization of the state, either through reforms from inside or through a revolution that would replace the bourgeois state by a more democratic proletarian state, or even abolish the state as such. In other words all New Left theorists criticized the authoritarian or oligarchic nature of the existing (bourgeois or welfare) state; but Neo-Marxists and Neo-Anarchists saw the state oligarchy or bureaucracy as part of a more or less unified ruling class, Establishment or power elite, while Pluralists and Neo-Fabians insisted on the independence of the state oligarchy in relation to other oligarchies or elites in society.

The critical attitude of the New Left with respect to the state distinguished it from most of the Old Left. Indeed the Old Left was often accused of "statism" (étatisme), i.e.

reliance on the state as the major or only agent of social and political change; once the Old Left had conquered the state, whether through electoral victory or bloody civil war, it could supposedly legislate socialism into being. Therefore the workers would go home after the election or war and return to a passive and basically a-political private life. Meanwhile, their parliamentary or revolutionary representatives would concentrate power in their own hands and continue to exploit and oppress the workers. To prevent this, New Left groups were to encourage rank and file members as well as citizens at large to take direct action and look after their own interests. If not advocating direct democracy, they would favour some form of workers' councils, neighbourhood councils, referenda or other measures to enhance popular participation in politics.

As a consequence, the role of political parties was perceived differently by Old and New Leftists. The latter rejected the authoritarian and hierarchic, even militarist organization of Old Left parties, both Communist and (to a slightly lesser extent) Social Democratic parties. Though they could not agree on one specific form of organization, all New Left theorists emphasized aspects like flexibility, openness, freedom for different theoretical opinions or even tendencies, grass roots democracy and some contacts (if not close relations or even identity) with action groups; some would add the right to recall delegates or party leaders, rotation of functions, no division of labour between leaders



and followers or between intellectuals and workers. More than an instrument in the class struggle, the New Left party or group would anticipate the kind of society it strove for within its own organization.<sup>102</sup>

(5) Relative autonomy of culture or ideology follows also from the rejection of economic determinism. Because the Old Left, particularly the orthodox Marxist Left, regarded culture as a by-product of economic factors, it tended to neglect it as a field or object of political action. Insofar as it devoted any attention to culture at all, it would reproduce bourgeois culture or try to revive reactionary folk culture, instead of creating a new proletarian or critical culture. Again there was some disagreement among New Left theorists as to the degree of autonomy culture had. Most Neo-Marxists saw it as part of bourgeois society and therefore another arena for the class struggle. Other New Leftists did not link the cultural revolution or renewal that they fought for to particular economic interests; Neo-Anarchists might link it to the economic system but give priority to the cultural struggle: once the achievement principle or the consumer ethos had been destroyed, capitalism would collapse automatically.

However, even Pluralists and Neo-Fabians criticized

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<sup>102</sup>This anticipation could be partial and rather marginal to the mainstream of history, as in the case of Socialisme ou Barbarie, the Socialist Bureau or the Situationist International; or comprehensive and crucial as in the case of the Kabouters who claimed to build a complete "counter-society" (Oranjevrijstaat) which would replace the existing one.

bourgeois aspects of the prevailing culture, though they did not explain them in terms of bourgeois class interests. Their critique differed from that of other New Leftists only in degree. The main criticism concerned the "productivist" or "materialist" obsession of bourgeois culture with economic growth and values related to it, like the work ethic, the achievement principle (Leistungsprinzip) or the need for material consumer goods. Neo-Marxists and Neo-Anarchists might go further and attack the competitive and aggressive individualism, the puritanical sexual ethic and positivist science of bourgeois society as well; they would also relate it to the division of labour and the expansion of capital into new sectors of society--"colonizing daily life," as the Pacifist Socialists put it.

There was some agreement about the kind of culture New Left groups should strive for, though there were considerable differences in emphasis. There was no doubt about the need for solidarity and cooperation as well as for creativity, innovation and spontaneity. A certain degree of hedonism seemed acceptable to all, but it was higher in the case of the Ultra-leftists--boundless pleasure, "jouir sans entraves," was the slogan of the Situationists--than in that of the Neo-Fabians, for instance. Racism, sexism and imperialism would disappear, of course. Women would enjoy equal rights, but equally important would be the acceptance of feminine values like emotionality, tolerance and tenderness as equal if not superior to masculine, intellectual and aggressive values.

New forms of interaction and communication might develop. Work would become more creative and less alienating, or it would disappear due to automation, as many Ultra-leftists expected.

(6) The conception of nature, both human or inner nature and the outer nature of plants, animals and minerals, seemed different in the Old and the New Lefts, though the difference might not be very clear or explicit. Many New Left theorists did make it explicit, criticizing Marx for instance, for having retained a 19th century bourgeois positivist or rationalist view of nature. While most Old Leftists would want to control, conquer, dominate and exploit nature for the benefit of man, Reason, Progress, Equality or Socialism, New Leftists preferred to leave it alone, to enjoy it quietly, to communicate or identify with it; or at least maintain some balance between human needs and ecological requirements. Human nature was not as rational and moral as Marx had thought, perhaps; Freud could improve or complement him in that respect. Free development of all, the Old Left Marxist ideal, required emancipation from external as well as internal repression of human nature. Hence even man's (and woman's) inner nature was politicized by the New Left. Sexual repression was considered a major obstacle on the road to socialism by most Ultra-leftists, but even Pluralist or Neo-Fabian reformists conceived of happiness, love and lust as relevant political issues.

These six main ideas may justify the continued use of the singular, when discussing the New Left project. On the

other hand, it was not a very coherent or unambiguous project, as the next chapter will show.

## CHAPTER 5

### A CRITICAL EVALUATION

#### Introduction

In the preceding chapter the project of the Dutch New Left was reconstructed as coherently and clearly as possible. This chapter will focus on the incoherence and the ambiguities of the project. The ideas presented in Chapter Four will be evaluated in terms of consistency, clarity and plausibility within their social, political and historical context as described in Chapter Two. Occasionally they will be contrasted with alternatives from the past or from other countries, as discussed in Chapter One and Chapter Three respectively.

The first section of this chapter deals with the Revolutionary Reformist project of the Pacifist Socialist Party. The main weakness of the project lay in its abstract and utopian character, resulting from its neglect of economic analysis and its incomplete self-understanding. Its Dutch predecessors and, to a lesser extent, its French and German counterparts, did better in this respect. On the other hand, the PSP proved fairly effective and successful in introducing new political issues and resurrecting older ones, as well as in articulating needs of new social groups. It might come to play an even more important role in a revolutionary crisis (perhaps in the 1980s?).

The second section contains an evaluation of the provocative project of the Anarchist New Left and specifically Provo. This project seemed even more abstract and utopian than that of the PSP; moreover, its impatient idealism contradicted its technological determinism, its revolutionary elitism clashed with its reformist populism and its ideas about culture were rather vague and subjectivist. In spite of all these serious flaws--which were less common among most contemporary French or German groups and among older Dutch Anarchist groups--Provo exercised considerable influence on Dutch society and politics.

The third section is divided into two sub-sections which deal with the two sub-projects of the Social Democratic New Left, Neo-Marxist and Neo-Fabian Reformism. Both (sub)projects included relatively sophisticated economic and political analyses but incomplete sociological self-analysis and little or poor analysis of culture and ideology. Both represented significant political forces in the 1970s--and quite possibly also in the 1980s--and inspired some of the policies of the Den Uyl government between 1973 and 1977. These policies also revealed weaknesses of the projects, specifically the tension between elitism and populism.

The fourth section is devoted to the Radical Pluralist project of the Political Party of Radicals. Its ideas about self-management, the state, economic growth, classes and culture seemed incoherent in many ways, but its practice might be more coherent than its theory.

The concluding section presents a brief summary of the main ambiguities of the New Left project: the abstract and utopian idealism of its social and economic analysis, the elitist and populist tendencies, and the subjectivist focus on culture. These ambiguities, however, can be seen not only as liabilities but also as assets of the project. They might explain the support for New Left ideas among large sections of the new petty bourgeoisie in the Netherlands.

### 5.1 Revolutionary Reformism: A Contradiction in Terms?

Though its advocates considered Revolutionary Reformism to be a successful synthesis of conflicting but both equally unsuccessful tendencies, it failed to result in significant reforms let alone in a revolution in the period under study. However, the goals of Revolutionary reformist parties like the Dutch PSP or the French PSU were sufficiently vague and long-range to escape a final evaluation.

Like Provo, the Pacifist Socialist Party could be criticized for idealism and abstract utopianism as well as for incomplete self-understanding. While adopting Marxist categories and ideas, it badly neglected economic analysis. Like many other Neo-Marxist groups, it substituted political sociology for political economy; but even its sociology remained schematic and superficial. In the 1960s, economic growth was taken for granted--though often criticized on moral or ecological grounds--and economic crises were no longer expected, because of state intervention, imperialism and so forth. The economic recessions of the 1970s found the PSP

unprepared and unable to capitalize on them; not surprisingly, its electorate crumbled and its membership stagnated. Worse, its 1977 platform described but failed to analyse the crisis of capitalism. It called for shorter working hours, strict price controls and more collective services, but also for socialization of all means of production under workers' control, incomes according to needs, and withdrawal from both NATO and EEC. Whereas the first three demands could be seen as realistic but not necessarily revolutionary reform proposals, the last three smacked of utopianism, if not surrealism, in view of the overwhelming dependence of the Dutch economy on foreign trade--most of it within the European Community--and multinational capital. Perhaps these revolutionary demands were meant as propaganda only, to raise working class consciousness; in that case they may have backfired, since the PSP lost more than one third of its 1972 voters in the 1977 election.<sup>1</sup>

The political sociology of the PSP combined ideas from C. Wright Mills, and other elite theorists, with Marxist or Neo-Marxist ideas from Mallet and Gorz as well as Krahl, Mandel, Baran and Sweezy.<sup>2</sup> Apart from listing names of participants in Bilderberg Meetings and contacts between

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<sup>1</sup>See above, Chapter 2.2; of course, other factors may have contributed to the electoral defeat, such as the internal conflicts within the party between 1972 and 1977, and the "charisma" of Joop den Uyl, the Prime Minister who headed the list of the Labour Party which attracted many PSP voters (NRC, 3 June 1977, 11 June 1977).

<sup>2</sup>Unfortunately, the economic works of Mandel and of Baran and Sweezy were referred to but rarely discussed (or used) in a concrete analysis of the Dutch economy.



university administrations and big business, PSP publications did not offer a concrete analysis of the Dutch ruling class, the state, social structure or political parties.

Given their rather vague and schematic class analysis it is not surprising that Pacifist Socialists seemed confused about their own class base. Many of them realized that they represented "proletarianised new middle classes" or "intermediate groups" or perhaps a "new working class," rather than the proletariat in the traditional sense.<sup>3</sup> But even if they justified this while referring to the theories of Mallet or Krahl, they tended to admit the need for support from the "old working class." Contacts were made with rather marginal groups of militant workers and trade unionists but these could only reinforce the isolation of the PSP from the mainstream of the organised working class.<sup>4</sup>

Unlike its French counterpart, the Parti Socialiste Unifié, the Pacifist Socialist Party never tried to organise its members at the work-place. It tended to lend moral and (occasionally) financial support to strikes and other working class actions, but from a distance. As far as its members were affiliated with a trade union, they belonged mostly to civil servants' or teachers' unions.<sup>5</sup> The party organisation and its activities--

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<sup>3</sup>For instance Bovenkerk, Bevrijding, 13 July 1962; Branderhorst, Radikaal, 4 January 1968; Burggraaf and Hoogerwerf, Radikaal, 10 June 1971; and Meijer, Radikaal, 15 September 1972; cf. Analyse en Beleidsplan, op. cit., pp. 12-13.

<sup>4</sup>See Leijser, op. cit., pp. 27-28.

<sup>5</sup>According to an internal discussion paper, On(s) Genoegen 39 (10 August 1979).

its long discussions and confused debates about theory and strategy, its cultural experiments, demonstrations against American intervention in Vietnam or the construction of nuclear power stations in Germany--may have attracted young intellectuals and other members of the new petty bourgeoisie but probably bored, shocked or puzzled manual workers. At best, the PSP could have become a reliable new petty bourgeois ally of the working class; however, this modest role--at times advocated by Erik Meijer--did not fit in with its ideas about counter-powers and a culture of struggle.<sup>6</sup>

The PSP was to build and consolidate counter-powers in the Dutch economy and polity, through grass roots action as well as action in parliament. The notion "counter-power" was not defined in any precise way, but suggested a somewhat mechanical opposition to the power of the ruling class or power elite; the latter notions remained equally vague in PSP publications. Sometimes the power elite seemed to include authoritarian teachers and professors, military men, managers, municipal aldermen and Social Democratic politicians. Consequently, bitter internal conflicts arose about the operational definition of these terms. Participation in municipal or national coalitions and governments was advocated by some as creating counter-powers but attacked by others as "selling out to the system" or joining the power elite. In Amsterdam the conflict resulted in the expulsion from the party of

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<sup>6</sup>See Meijer's articles in Radikaal, 17 February 1972, 2 March 1972, 13 April 1972, also quoted above in Chapter 4.1.

Huib Riethof, the Pacifist Socialist alderman; ironically, he was one of the authors of the Analyse en Beleidsplan which had introduced the notion of counter-powers.<sup>7</sup>

Perhaps the parliamentary leader of the party between 1972 and 1977, Dr. Bram van der Lek, was more consistent when he defined the goal of the PSP modestly as "to show where power lies" rather than to exercise it.<sup>8</sup> In other words, the party was to act as a "collective intellectual." Even so, Van der Lek assumed it was able to transcend its new petty bourgeois class base and articulate the interests of the powerless masses. As an active and conscientious Member of Parliament, Van der Lek represented interests of relatively powerless groups in many individual cases--workers who were laid off or fired, foreigners and other minorities who were discriminated against, and so forth. However, the long-term interests of these groups did not necessarily correspond with the Pacifist Socialist ideas of Van der Lek. Moreover even in the short run the PSP cooperated mostly with action groups where new petty bourgeois tended to be over-represented and manual workers, foreign immigrants, etc., under-represented.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>7</sup>Socialisties Perspektief 1 and 2 (July 1972, October 1972) and an oral communication from Professor Ger Harmsen on May 27, 1976.

<sup>8</sup>Radikaal, 1 March 1974; also quoted above, Chapter 2.2.

<sup>9</sup>This seemed to be the case in most action groups, insofar as they have been the subject of empirical research (surveys especially), see H. Molleman, "Wie voeren actie," Acta Politica 7 (1972): 99-111; H. Jolles, De poreuze democratie (Alphen aan de Rijn, 1974), Chapter 5; C. Van der Maesen, Participatie en Democratie (Amsterdam, 1974), Chapter 3; for a more cautious conclusion from similar research see G. Braam, et al., Collectieve acties (Meppel, 1976).

Old Left Marxists within the PSP criticised the enthusiasm and support for action groups among New Leftists as "populism." Lacking a concrete class analysis, the PSP tended to support all kinds of "anti-authoritarian" actions against the "power elite" or "capitalism" rather indiscriminately, but failed to consolidate the successes that were occasionally achieved. Furthermore, many actions were directed against the consequences rather than the roots of capitalism.<sup>10</sup>

Thus the PSP had attacked air pollution, industrialisation, nuclear energy and Dutch support for American intervention in Vietnam with some success--in terms of press coverage, public opinion changes and concessions from local or even national authorities. Nonetheless, these actions did not result in the establishment of counter-powers. Perhaps they contributed to a cultural change--though a "cultural reform" rather than a "cultural revolution."

Many PSP actions seemed to serve expressive as well as instrumental purposes.<sup>11</sup> Even if the activists suffered a defeat, they satisfied needs for communication, solidarity, group identity and a certain creativity among themselves. In so far as these needs were often repressed in late capitalist society, their satisfaction could indeed be celebrated as an act of liberation or emancipation, consistent with the final

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<sup>10</sup>For instance Aalders in Radikaal, 4 August 1972; De Jong in Radikaal, 6 April 1973; Interview 1.

<sup>11</sup>See above, Chapter 2.6, about the distinction between expressive and instrumental action.

goals of the New Left. However, to see them as first steps towards a "culture of struggle" or elements of a counter-culture seemed rather exaggerated. The factionalism, verbosity, stubborn indiscipline, and personal squabbles that accompanied these actions within the party seemed typical of the sub-culture of the new petty bourgeoisie in a capitalist society, rather than of a future classless, socialist society.<sup>12</sup>

One could conclude the evaluation of the PSP by calling it a fairly successful initiator of social, political and cultural reforms as well as a "socialist watchdog" for the Labour Party rather than a revolutionary force. Most of those whose theoretical work inspired it would have been dissatisfied with these results; on the other hand, there may not have been any real alternative.

André Gorz, who introduced the conception of "revolutionary reformism," specified four functions that a revolutionary reformist party had to fulfill: theoretical analysis, ideological synthesis, political leadership and education, seizing power and transforming the state. In twenty years (1957-1977) the PSP did rather poorly in all four, except perhaps in political leadership and education. It failed to provide a "continually updated analysis of the evolution and contradictions of capitalist society at all its levels" or a

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<sup>12</sup>The sub-culture and ideology of the new petty bourgeoisie have not yet been investigated empirically; however, the speculations of Poulantzas and others sound rather plausible, see Poulantzas, Les classes sociales; and Baudelot, Estabiet and Malemort, op. cit.

"higher conception of rationality, of civilisation, of culture"; nor did it situate local and immediate demands within a general strategy of transition to socialism.<sup>13</sup>

On the other hand, Gorz's criteria may be too strict. His conception of a revolutionary reformist party seems rather abstract and a-historical. He did not explain how the party was to be organised and by whom, where and when. He assumed that the party leadership had achieved "socialist consciousness" and could educate the masses through actions for revolutionary reforms--but where would the leadership come from, and how did it acquire socialist consciousness?

The party that came closest to Gorz's ideal was probably the Parti Socialiste Unifié. Under the leadership of Michel Rocard and Serge Mallet the party produced a fairly coherent theoretical analysis of French society and developed a strategy of transition to socialism. During the "abortive revolution" of 1968 it took various initiatives to radicalise the movement and to build counter-powers in universities and factories. However, the party remained too small and disunited to consolidate and expand these counterpowers so as to be able to "seize power and transform the state." Rocard drew his conclusions and joined the rejuvenated Socialist Party in 1974.<sup>14</sup>

Though slightly more successful than the PSP in its attempt to strike roots in the working class, the PSU recruited

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<sup>13</sup>Gorz, Réforme et Révolution, pp. 43-56; also in Lothstein, *op. cit.*, pp. 320-342.

<sup>14</sup>See above, Chapter 3.1.

more new petty bourgeois teachers, students, civil servants and engineers than manual workers or even clerical workers.<sup>15</sup> Mallet's hope that the party would receive the support of the New Working Class proved ill-founded. Only a small fraction of the New Workers became sufficiently interested in self-management and new life-styles to join or vote for the party that emphasized these issues. A much larger fraction expressed some concern about the same issues but continued to vote for the Socialist Party or even the Gaullist party. These New Workers presumably desired certain reforms but not a revolution that might deprive them of their privileges. Moreover, many of them worked in industries dependent on the manipulation of consumer needs for the sale of things that New Leftists generally disapproved of: automobiles, electronic appliances, chemicals, nuclear power.<sup>16</sup>

The PSU seemed more explicit and more effective than the PSP as a "collective intellectual" for the working class, particularly through its contacts with the Democratic Confederation of Labour (CFDT), its own factory cells and, after 1971,

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<sup>15</sup>The former category made up about 47% of the membership in 1968 (R. Cayrol, "Histoire et sociologie d'un parti," in Rocard, Le PSU, p. 39; only 13% were manual workers (ouvriers), 14% Clerical workers (employés).

<sup>16</sup>See G. Adam, "Introduction à un débat sur la nouvelle classe ouvrière," Revue française de science politique 22 (1972): 509-528; H. Lange, Wissenschaftlich-technische Intelligenz (Cologne, 1972); F. Deppe, ed., Die neue Arbeiterklasse (Frankfurt, 1970); these authors criticize Mallet also on theoretical grounds, pointing to his imprecise if not incoherent definitions and his technological determinism; see also P. Rolle, "De la nouvelle classe ouvrière à l'autogestion," Politique aujourd'hui 3:4 (1974): 117-123.

its influence on the new Socialist Party. Nonetheless, its theory showed similar flaws to those of the PSP, and was criticized effectively as a vague and eclectic ideology of technical and managerial workers.<sup>17</sup> The conception of the PSU as the collective intellectual for the working class could apparently justify its intellectual rather than proletarian base. However, it could also justify (or rather cover up) a "socio-technocratic" manipulation of the working class by intellectuals, as one of the founders of the PSU wrote after his departure from the party.<sup>18</sup>

While the Dutch PSP may have been less productive as a collective intellectual than the French PSU, it was more effective than the German SDS or the Socialist Bureau.<sup>19</sup> The Socialist German Student League (SDS) consisted not predominantly but exclusively of (young) intellectuals, and initiated a great number of theoretical discussions and seminars of high quality. Thus it may have exercised considerable influence among German intellectuals but hardly any among German workers.<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>17</sup>See Ansart, op. cit., pp. 145-199.

<sup>18</sup>Poperen uses the term "socio-technocrate" in a loose sense; he points out the ambiguity of elitism and populism, struggle for self-management but no clear class analysis, and neglect of the state, in the PSU project (Poperen, L'unité de la gauche, pp. 407 ff, 430-446.

<sup>19</sup>See Chapter 3.2 about the Socialist German Student League (SDS) and the Socialist Bureau.

<sup>20</sup>This is argued by K. Sontheimer, "Die Veränderungen des politischen Bewusstseins durch die studentischen Protestbewegung," Merkur 30:3 (1976): 267-279; for a more sympathetic but no less critical view see K. Haetung, "Versuch, die Krise der anti-autoritären Bewegung wieder zur Sprache zu bringen," Kursbuch 48 (1977): 14-44, as well as Mosler, op. cit., pp. 233-248 especially.



Yet it was a leading member of the SDS, Hans-Jurgen Krahl, who developed the most elaborate theory of the collective intellectual as the "head" of the Total Worker (Gesamtarbeiter). Though plausible in parts, his theory seems too abstract and too one-sided. While admitting the petty-bourgeois nature of scientific or intellectual work, Krahl assumed that the polarization between bourgeoisie and proletariat would soon eliminate the petty-bourgeois tendencies and ideas among the scientific intelligentsia. Though not uncritical of his organization, by 1968 he felt it had shed its petty-bourgeois tendencies and could act as a collective intellectual. On the other hand he disapproved of the "unmediated" way SDS members in Berlin had mobilized proletarian street youth (Rocker) in violent action against the court and the police in that city.<sup>21</sup> That particular action and its interpretation seemed to trigger off the disintegration (explosion) of the SDS in 1969. Transcending its class limits and taking on functions of a revolutionary party in addition to its original functions of an intellectual debating club, as well as a (reformist) interest group representing students in university councils, it strained its small and fragile organization too much to survive. It also exacerbated ideological and personal tensions, while failing to reconcile the need for discipline and sacrifice with the need for self-development, communication or "Lustgewinn."<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>21</sup>See Wolff and Windaus, op. cit., pp. 174-192.

<sup>22</sup>Ibid., especially p. 189: "Ich diskutiere gern in der Justizdebatte mit, wenn diese Debatte mit Lustgewinn verbunden

The Socialist Bureau, the most loyal successor of the SDS, set itself more modest goals. It may have been successful in achieving some of them, but given its small size and low profile, it could hardly serve as an example for the Dutch PSP.<sup>23</sup> Oskar Negt, the main theoretician of the Socialist Bureau, suggested a modest and realistic strategy of functional interest articulation and cultural reforms. However, even the school reform project in which he participated suffered from ambiguities. Negt failed to show that it contradicted capitalism and had to admit that it might have served the interests of monopoly capital, which also needed better educated and more all-round workers with the ability to control themselves and to cooperate with others. Furthermore, by concentrating on articulation and satisfaction of immediate needs outside political parties and trade unions, as Negt advocated, the Socialist Bureau would also run the risk of serving new petty bourgeois rather than proletarian interests; especially since it was to help workers to transform their immediate and partial or functional but "false" needs and interests into "authentic" needs and "complete" interests. Again the question should be asked: who educates the educators;

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ist ..." ("I like to take part in the debate about the judiciary, if this debate is associated with the achievement of pleasure (lust)"); no doubt a similar attitude could be found among Dutch Provos and Kabouters, groups that also ended in a somewhat similar way; see above, Chapter 2.3.

<sup>23</sup>The Socialist Bureau was not investigated sufficiently when this was written to justify a more elaborate evaluation here.

who knows what kind of interests are "authentic"?<sup>24</sup>

While the Pacifist Socialist Party did not satisfy all the criteria defined by its Dutch, French and German theorists, it did not do much worse than its French or German counterparts. To complete the evaluation, one should compare it to similar groups in the Netherlands. The group that resembled it most in the post-war period was the Political Party of Radicals, which will be evaluated below. Before 1940 there were several parties within the Revolutionary Socialist tradition that invite comparison with the PSP: the Revolutionary Socialist (Workers) Party, the Social Democratic Party and even the Social Democratic League of the 1880s. These parties showed more consistency in their class analysis--which tended to be derived directly from Marxist theory--and recruitment, as well as in their focus on revolution. Only the early Social Democratic League (SDB) resembled the PSP insofar as it combined Marxist and Anarchist ideas, revolutionary and reformist members, workers and intellectuals. Yet even the SDB became more homogeneous after the split of 1894. Homogeneity and consistency may be theoretical assets, but they can be practical liabilities in politics. The homogeneous and consistent SDB (or Socialist League, since 1894), Social Democratic Party (SDP) and Independent Socialist Party (OSP) or Revolutionary Socialist Workers Party (RSAP) remained relatively isolated, sectarian and ineffective compared to

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<sup>24</sup>See above, Chapter 4.1.5 about Negt and his school project.

the PSP. Only during the turbulent years between 1916 and 1919 could the Social Democratic Party exert some influence by mobilizing masses of workers exasperated by price increases, food shortages, unemployment and the inactive "loyal" position of the Social Democratic Workers Party (SDAP).<sup>25</sup> The Communist Party, the successor to the Social Democratic Party, achieved similar successes between 1945 and 1950.

It is difficult to predict what a PSP or a PSU would do in a revolutionary crisis. The decentralized and open structure, the internal disagreement and indiscipline, and the weak roots in the working class would probably prevent them from playing a leading role--except possibly in the early mobilization stage. Quite likely they would be manipulated if not liquidated by better prepared and better organized Old Left allies. Even so their insistence on workers control and direct democracy might encourage revolutionary workers to resist bureaucratic manipulation by Old Left party or union leaders--or socio-technocratic manipulation by New Left activists or theorists, for that matter.

Neither the 1960s nor the 1970s could be considered revolutionary periods--with the possible exception of May-June 1968 in France. It is doubtful if even much larger and more consistent revolutionary reformist parties than the PSP or PSU could have changed that. Nevertheless, a larger party

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<sup>25</sup> See Chapter 1.7; the SDAP was loyal towards the government and did little to alleviate these problems for the workers.

might have applied the dual strategy more effectively. Under the given conditions, neither PSP nor PSU was able to realize any significant reforms, let alone integrate them in a long-term strategy of transition to socialism. On the other hand, both parties initiated reforms and introduced new issues--or resurrected older issues, like workers' self-management and direct democracy--which were later taken up by larger Social Democratic parties or unions. Performing a vanguard role--in the above-mentioned sense--during the 1960s, both parties seemed to lose significance during the 1970s; yet even then they remained useful as "watchdogs" lying just outside the left gate of la vieille maison.<sup>26</sup> Moreover, they continued to satisfy the expressive needs of new petty bourgeois youth, while politicizing and educating it.

## 5.2 The Impatient Idealism of the Anarchist New Left

If the Pacifist Socialist project of Revolutionary Reformism appeared abstract, utopian and inconsistent to critics, it looked like a classic example of realism and moderation compared to the Anarchist project of Provo. From the very start Provo tried to provoke critics, and it succeeded very well in that respect. It was accused of nihilism, terrorism, moral decadence, laziness, abstract utopianism, a-political subjectivism, elitism, and impatient idealism by critics from all political directions; Liberals, Social Democrats, Christian Democrats,

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<sup>26</sup>"The Old House" was the nickname for the French SFIO and is still used occasionally with reference to the new PS.

Revolutionary Socialists, Communists and Anarchists. It will be argued here that most of these criticisms referred to real weaknesses in the project, specifically the impatient idealism, the implicit elitism and the utopian and subjectivist tendencies; but also that the same weaknesses also had positive aspects. Both the positive and the negative aspects sprang from a fundamental ambiguity in the Provo project.<sup>27</sup>

On the one hand, Provo tried to mobilize and politicize a rather small and marginal section of the Dutch populace for revolutionary goals, while condemning the overwhelming majority of the people to historical irrelevance and passivity. This revolutionary but elitist strategy was based on a somewhat simplistic materialist, if not technological-determinist analysis. Technological innovation, and more specifically automation, was seen as the main source of social change. It had created mass affluence and mass consumption, which corrupted the once revolutionary working class and turned it into klootjesvolk, a "mindless mass of cockroaches, beetles and ladybugs," "fallen asleep in front of their television sets."<sup>28</sup> Yet the same process had created a small class of unemployed revolutionaries, the provotariat; it was a revolutionary class because it did not take part in production or consumption--apart from consumption of certain necessities,

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<sup>27</sup> Since this evaluation relies on immanent criteria, 'positive' and 'negative' refer to the values and goals of the New Left rather than to my personal preferences--though they often coincide.

<sup>28</sup> See Chapter 2.3 above; footnote 118.

presumably. In the long run all production would be automated, whether the klootjesvolk liked it or not, and thus the provotariat would grow into a majority of the populace. The ruling groups were regarded as powerless to stop technological change-- a rather doubtful assumption perhaps, but consistent with the preceding assumptions.<sup>29</sup>

On the other hand, however, Provo pursued a reformist strategy based on an equally simplistic, idealist and subjectivist analysis. It addressed a wide audience through the publicity around its happenings and the White Plans it presented in pamphlets and Provo articles. The White Plans offered imaginative solutions to urgent but not very basic problems; in other words they would not lead to structural changes in Dutch society if they were ever implemented. Improvements in public transport, urban planning and sex education might make capitalist society more pleasant but not less capitalist. However, these issues played a central part in the municipal election of 1966 in which Provo won 2.6% of the popular vote in Amsterdam. According to a survey its voters were predominantly new petty bourgeois rather than provotarian; professionals, senior civil servants and managers made up one third of the Provo electorate.<sup>30</sup> Provo failed to

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<sup>29</sup>No evidence was presented to make the assumption plausible; even if competition forces capitalists to invest in automated machinery as labour costs rise, war or natural disasters might prevent full automation; moreover, labour costs may fall due to the repression of unions, for example.

<sup>30</sup>The term "new petty bourgeois" is used here in a loose sense; of the 25 Provo voters in the sample (of 1513 adults)

analyse these results but appeared rather satisfied with them. Perhaps Provo theorists felt they indicated the cultural revolution had affected the upper echelons of the klootjesvolk in spite of the latter's socio-economic position. In fact some Provos hoped to "turn around" even the authorities, at least at the municipal level--thus acting as a pressure group appealing to the subjective ideals and sentiments of individual rulers.<sup>31</sup>

To some extent these Provos were right; but only because their highly ambiguous project appealed to two different groups for very different reasons. Both the provotarians and the new petty bourgeois may have resented the authoritarian and bureaucratic behaviour of the Dutch ruling class and its agents. Yet the provotarians were its direct victims, chased and beaten by the Amsterdam police on several occasions, whereas the young managers and senior civil servants could hope to replace or join the ruling class some day. The former would like to be left alone to do their own thing--a revolution, maybe, a happening, certainly--whereas the latter wanted to be more involved in decision making and planning. They might have

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8 (32%) were senior civil servants, professionals or managers  
 15 (60%) were junior civil servants, shopkeepers or manual workers, compared to 7% and 76% respectively of the 403 PvdA voters in the sample; the categories 'professionals, senior civil servants' and 'managerial personnel' made up 9% of the sample; the category 'middle class shopkeepers and civil servants' made up 13% of the sample, 8% of the Provo electorate and the category of 'small shopkeepers, employees and skilled workers' 49% of the sample, 44% of the Provo electorate; see Van der Maesen, "Kiezers op drift," pp. 169-200.

<sup>31</sup>Van Weerlee, op. cit., pp. 31, 37; also in Provo 8 (1968).



smiled at the "unrealistic" White Plans, but appreciated the playful style with which they raised issues that concerned them. At least the Provos drew attention to collective needs and cultural questions that other political parties, both on the Left and on the Right, tended to neglect.

The new petty bourgeois civil servants and managers might disapprove of the more extreme anarchist elements in Provo, but they may have recognized other elements that were less alien to their own way of thinking. There were elitist and technocratic ideas in Provo theory, even in the utopia of New Babylon or New Amsterdam. Provo theorist Roel van Duijn wrote that an automated and liberated society like New Babylon would still need managers and specialists in cybernetics.<sup>32</sup> Another theorist, Martijn van Lindt, advocated workers' self-management, but expected that workers' councils would be filled with "the most capable and most educated workers" rather than with trade unionists.<sup>33</sup> Bernard de Vries, leader of the municipal Provo party, praised his group as a "reservoir of capable people."<sup>34</sup> An even more explicit argument for technocracy was made in a pamphlet addressing the 1966 congress of the Association of Scientific Researchers (VWO), in which Provo urged scientists to save future generations from the stupidity of the present generation of klootjesvolk since the

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<sup>32</sup>Van Duijn, Het witte gevaar, Chapter 3.

<sup>33</sup>Van Lindt, op. cit.

<sup>34</sup>B. De Vries, interviewed in Volkskrant, 2 May 1966.

latter "cannot govern itself."<sup>35</sup> Thus the impatient idealism of Provo turned into technocratic despotism, in total contradiction with its anti-authoritarian anarchist goals and its materialist analysis.

These ambiguities and inconsistencies did not prevent Provo from mobilizing a sizable following in its first year of existence. But they may have caused it to disintegrate in its second year. The municipal elections and the workers' revolt of June 1966 marked the beginning of the end. Both events exacerbated the internal divisions within Provo and paralysed its activism. Participation in elections irritated the more extreme (and consistent) anarchists in Provo. The revolt of the construction workers seemed to falsify Provo theory about the integration of the working class into the peaceful and authoritarian klootjesvolk. Though the workers did not talk about revolution and anarchy when they stormed the buildings of the "official" unions and the right-wing Telegraaf newspaper, their actions provoked the authorities more effectively than any Provo happening had done. Provos had been beaten up occasionally, but never shot at.

On the other hand, the workers' revolt could also be seen as at least in part a successful outcome of Provo strategy. Provo actions may have inspired the workers, especially since they shared common enemies: union bureaucrats, right-wing mass media and the police. Both workers

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<sup>35</sup> Provokatie of 22 October 1966, "Provotariese suggesties voor het VWO congres te Delft".

and Provos rebelled against the state apparatus--in its broadest sense--rather than against capitalism.<sup>36</sup>

Provo ideas and actions may have inspired many other groups in the Netherlands as well as in Germany, Belgium and France. Many happenings were shown on television, which was becoming a real mass medium in the early 1960s. The mid-sixties were years of political and social change in the Netherlands, which was expressed by Provo in a distorted, ambiguous but effective symbolic form. A small but significant fraction of the Dutch new petty bourgeoisie--marginal in terms of age, occupation and power, but influential through the mass media--had been mobilized and politicized against the ruling class.<sup>37</sup>

Could Provo have overcome its ambiguities and theoretical weaknesses? A glance at similar Anarchist groups active at other places or times might throw some light on this question. In the Netherlands, anarchist groups tended to be more consistently revolutionary in theory and practice before 1940. In particular the Moker group and the terrorists around Kooyman in the 1920s and 1930s could not be accused of

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<sup>36</sup>The impact of Provo actions on the construction workers' revolt was asserted by the Amsterdam burgomaster as well as by some Provos, but has not been demonstrated very clearly; see P. Jorion, Quelques considérations relatives au phénomène Provo (Louvain, n.d.).

<sup>37</sup>See Chapter 2.1 and 2.3; Anarchist critics of Provo have often brought out these positive effects; in particular R. De Jong, "Provos and Rabouters," in D. Apter and J. Joll, eds., Anarchism Today (New York, 1972), pp. 191-209; Jan Servoets, in Vox Carolina, 1 May 1970; also Lambrecht, op. cit.; and Kunzel and Rotgers, op. cit.; much more negative are Boehmer and Reijten, op. cit.

technocratic elitism, reformism or electoralism. However, they could be criticized for impatient idealism and a-political subjectivism; and, as a result perhaps, for historical irrelevance. Even the theoretically more sophisticated League of Anarchist Socialists combined idealism and subjectivism in a rather eclectic way with psycho-analytic and Marxist theory, while "synthesizing" collectivism and individualism, the "leadership principle" and individual independence. None of these groups reached an audience of 20,000 as Provo did in 1968. Anarchist trade unionists reached a larger audience through the National Labour Secretariat (NAS) but only by combining revolutionary propaganda with reformist action; once the Social Democratic NVV had proven more successful in the latter area the NAS began to decline. Its more consistently anarchist offshoot the Netherlands Syndicalist Trade Union Confederation never counted more than 7000 members.<sup>38</sup>

Less revolutionary Anarchists often joined productive associations and agrarian colonies, some of which were set up by the Association for Collective Landownership (GGB) in the early 1900s. Their impatience with reformist politics and their often a-political and subjectivist experiments with clean living, communism, and return to nature remind one of the Provos but even more of their successors, the Kabouters.<sup>39</sup>

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<sup>38</sup> See Chapter 1.2 and 1.3 above; Harmsen and Reinalda, op. cit., p. 156.

<sup>39</sup> See Chapter 1.3 about the GGB and 2.3 about the Kabouters.

Dropping all revolutionary rhetoric and relying on their own work rather than on automation in the future, the Kabouters may appear more consistent in their impatient idealism and subjectivism than the Provos. In fact they only replaced one inconsistency with another.

On the one hand the Kabouters tried to create a counter-society, Oranjevrijstaat, from scratch. Anyone could join, no selection or schooling of new members was considered necessary. Though the members of the counter-society were still regarded as provotarians, at least by Roel van Duijn, they were not necessarily unemployed street youth. Yet no matter how bourgeois, petty bourgeois or proletarian their background, once they had entered the beautiful Elf World of the Kabouters they were expected to start a new life free from greed, envy, competition and so on. When many of them failed to do so and reproduced bourgeois or petty bourgeois ideas and practices, including a "military" coup (by the Elf Colonel), the founders of Oranjevrijstaat seemed surprised and paralysed. As in so many other voluntary associations, apathy soon reigned among the rank and file while a few activists carried on endless debates about procedures, tactics and goals.

On the other hand, Kabouters tried to pursue a "two hands" strategy, combining the building of a counter-society with provocation and propaganda in institutions of the dominant society. Thus they hoped to avoid the slow atrophy of the older productive associations which had been relatively

insulated from the dominant society. The Kabouters succeeded only insofar as their utopia atrophied at a high speed rather than slowly. Electoral politics lured some leading activists away from work within Oranjevrijstaat. They proved rather successful at the municipal elections of 1970, particularly in Amsterdam but also in several provincial towns. However, the electoral gains were not translated into active support for Oranjevrijstaat. Like the vote for Provo in 1966, the Kabouter vote in 1970 probably expressed discontent among the new petty bourgeoisie with bourgeois culture and certain capitalist "excesses" (e.g. housing shortages) rather than a serious intention to establish a new society. Neither Provo nor Kabouters achieved a great deal in municipal politics, but they contributed to cultural change and politicization of a fraction of the Dutch new petty bourgeoisie.

The German counterpart of Provo, Subversive Aktion, surpassed it in theoretical sophistication but also in historical irrelevance. It showed similar theoretical weaknesses, technological determinism with respect to automation combined with a rather superficial and idealist analysis of the integration of the German working class in "organised capitalism," as well as a somewhat messianic hope for liberation by Third World revolutionary movements. Like Provo, Subversive Aktion tried to provoke the ideological and repressive state apparatus in order to raise the political consciousness of at least a fraction of the populace. Unlike Provo, the German group refrained from electoral or reformist action and showed no

interest in municipal politics. This (theoretically well justified) abstentionism may have saved it from integration into the "System" but it did not prevent it from disintegrating rapidly. Isolated from both the German working class and the new petty bourgeoisie, Subversive Aktion was ignored by the mass media and precluded from exerting any ideological influence--except indirectly, through the Socialist German Student League.<sup>40</sup>

The French New Left Anarchists differed considerably from the Dutch or the Germans. Both the Situationists and the Socialisme ou Barbarie group developed a coherent theory, closer to Old Left Marxism in many ways, and managed to survive as a group for much longer periods.<sup>41</sup> Insofar as they were concerned with theoretical innovation, they seem to have been quite successful. Their practice, on the other hand, was rather limited. Though both of them maintained some ties with the working class, their base seems to have been mostly new petty bourgeois and specifically intellectual

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<sup>40</sup> See Chapter 3.1 about Subversive Aktion and the Socialist German Student League; of course any comparison between Provo and Subversive Aktion remains incomplete without taking into account the different social and political circumstances, e.g. the more liberal political culture and the more open and decentranized political system in the Netherlands which allowed new political groups easy access to representation and even power, particularly at the level of the--relatively autonomous--municipalities.

<sup>41</sup> Socialisme ou Barbarie was published from 1948 to 1965, its offshoot Informations (et) Correspondence Ouvrières continued into the 1970s; the Situationist International was founded in 1957 and disappeared in 1970 (see Chapter 3.1 above).

Since their theory insisted on the revolutionary role of the proletariat without any "leninist" interference from professional revolutionaries or intellectuals, it limited their own practice to theoretical clarification and the analysis of the actions of others. The Situationists also initiated cultural experiments and provocation of cultural authorities, but remained rather skeptical about their own accomplishments in that area--and with good reason.<sup>42</sup> When they gained a substantial following among the French new petty bourgeoisie during and after the events of May and June 1968, they grew uneasy and began to dissolve their--always somewhat unstable--organization; they refused to become another spectacle in a spectacular society.

This decision showed a certain moral courage and consistency, but also a weakness in Situationist theory: it failed to explain its own origin, its social base in (a rather small fraction of) the new petty bourgeoisie.<sup>43</sup> Why would any intellectual or artist in a spectacular society try to destroy his own privileged position--creating spectacles and making money--for some long-term ideal, a proletarian revolution? The Situationist ethic of "enjoy life without restrictions" could not entail a revolutionary discipline of self-sacrifice.

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<sup>42</sup>Their initial concern with experimental art, "situations" and urban planning seemed difficult to reconcile with demands for a total revolution and the recognition that a new culture can not emerge in a capitalist and spectacular society.

<sup>43</sup>Situationists occasionally referred to their proletarian or "déclassé" background to counter criticism of their petty bourgeois character; the latter seemed undeniable, however, given their intellectual or artistic occupations and education.



The contradiction can be solved, however, if one could expect these artists and intellectuals to benefit significantly from the revolution they advocated. Their total revolution would do away with the wage system, the division of labour, the state, and hence also with bureaucratic or technocratic power: but it might preserve and indeed expand "logocratic" power. In other words, it might enhance the position of artists and intellectuals who would help people to "create situations," to express themselves, to educate themselves and to control their own life. Liberated from exploitation by capitalists and oppression by bureaucrats, people would be free to do what they wanted--but most of them, lacking talent and experience to express themselves, might not know what they wanted. Logocrats, i.e. manipulators of verbal and intellectual skills, could easily acquire power over the less talented or less experienced masses.<sup>44</sup>

The Socialisme ou Barbarie group devoted less attention to cultural questions and experiments and, possibly as a result, seems to have exercised less influence among the French

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<sup>44</sup>I apologize to the reader for introducing this neologism, 'logocrat' (from Greek logos = word, reason, principle, and kratos = power) but it seems to convey better the political potential of intellectuals engaged in sociology, psychology and other humanities and arts, journalism, social work or teaching than Gouldner's 'New Class' of humanist intellectuals or Schelsky's 'Sinnproduzenten' or the un-translatable Dutch term 'nieuwe vrijgestelden' introduced by Daalder; these three authors refer more or less to the same group but give different connotations to their terms; cf. A. Gouldner, "The New Class Project," Theory and Society 6:2 and 6:3 (1976): 153-204, 343-389; H. Schelsky, Die Arbeit tun die Anderen (Opladen, 1975), passim; H. Daalder, op. cit., pp. 62-63.

new petty bourgeoisie. Its influence was probably more indirect, through a few--but important--theorists of CERES in particular, and of the PSU.

A comparison between Dutch, German and French New Ultra-left and anarchist groups must remain speculative, given the different social, political and cultural conditions in the three countries. Even Provo might have been forced to take a more consistently revolutionary stand had the May movement of 1968 occurred in the Netherlands instead of in France. However, in view of the non-revolutionary though changing situation in the Netherlands of the mid-sixties, it seems likely that Provo used the opportunities that were available quite successfully. It contributed to cultural and political change, the liberalization and depillarization of Dutch society and the politicization and radicalization of a small fraction of the Dutch new petty bourgeoisie--future logocrats, perhaps. Like its counterparts elsewhere, it failed to usher in a revolution or to build a revolutionary party or counter-society. Its theory proved incomplete and inconsistent, but its practice inspired many others.

### 5.3 The Social Democratic New Left: Taking Small Steps Without Knowing Where You Are Going

New Left Social Democrats agreed on a strategy of small steps, if on nothing else. Thus they avoided the ambiguity

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<sup>45</sup> See above, Chapter 3.1; Socialisme ou Barbarie cannot be evaluated here in any depth because of the lack of empirical or even speculative studies about this group; cf. Howard, The Marxist Legacy, pp. 262-301, and his interview with Castoriadis.

of Revolutionary Reformism; on the other hand, their final goals were even more ambiguous and vague than those of the Revolutionary Reformists. In view of the differences between the Neo-Marxist and the Neo-Fabian Social Democrats, the two sub-projects will be evaluated separately.

### 5.3.1 Neo-Marxist Reformism: Small Steps on the Road to Santiago?

Neo-Marxist Reformism was advocated by left wing members of Social Democratic parties in the Netherlands, France and Germany around 1970. It derived theoretical inspiration from Old Left Marxism as well as New Left Anarchism and Revolutionary Socialism, but turned also to the practical reformist project initiated in Chile by the Marxist government of Salvador Allende. Hence it received a severe shock in 1973, when the Chilean experiment with Marxist Reformism was cut short by a bloody coup.<sup>46</sup>

The Chilean coup had been preceded by an economic crisis. Therefore, some Marxists and Neo-Marxists wondered if a programme of economic reforms might have solved the crisis and possibly prevented the coup. The question remained open-- it could not be answered in economic terms but required also a sociological and political analysis of class relations and power structures.<sup>47</sup>

The economic analysis developed by the Neo-Marxist Reformists

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<sup>46</sup>For instance in Frontière 15 (1974), and in J. Van Minnen, "Chili," Socialisme en democratie (1974): 536-543.

<sup>47</sup>See S. Kolm, La transition socialiste (Paris, 1977), *passim*.

seemed fairly realistic, though perhaps incomplete. Thus the Dutch Neo-Marxists Huige and Reckman pointed to the dependence of the Dutch economy on multi-national capital, the increasing export of capital and the concentration of capital.<sup>48</sup> However, the solutions they suggested seemed less realistic, as they failed to analyse the possible economic consequences as well as the sociological conditions that their strategy entailed. Even if the Labour Party and the trade unions were willing to introduce the suggested measures--nationalisation of banks and key industries, planning of investments and production through contracts, workers' self-management--they might be unable to carry them out successfully, if faced with a trade boycott by Germany and the USA as well as a hasty retreat of the "Dutch" multinationals.<sup>49</sup>

Of course the Neo-Marxist Reformists did not fail to notice the need for political power and class struggle. They hoped for a broad alliance of workers, intellectuals, farmers and small businessmen; or, at the level of party politics, a Left Front of the Labour Party, the Communist Party, the Pacifist Socialist Party, the Political Party of Radicals, and possibly also Democrats'66. However, the Neo-Marxists failed to analyse the differences in class base and ideology between these parties. They assumed too easily that the rank and file of these parties would like to cooperate even if

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<sup>48</sup>Huige and Reckman, op. cit., pp. 37-36; see also above, Chapter 4.3.1.

<sup>49</sup>See above, Chapter 1.1 and 2.1; 33% of Dutch imports came from Germany or the USA in 1977, 35% of Dutch exports went to those countries (Statistisch Zakboek, 1978 (The Hague, 1978), p. 178).

the leadership cherished doubts. In the long run, such a Left Front seems quite feasible in the Netherlands, if the polarisation between Left and Right continues.<sup>50</sup> The class base of all five parties may become more similar, at least in terms of membership; even the Communist Party could be taken over by new petty bourgeois elements and turn to "Eurocommunism." While the Left Front might enjoy the electoral support from the (majority of the) working class, its reformist policies might serve new petty bourgeois and specifically "logocratic" interests.<sup>51</sup>

The Neo-Marxists were not unaware of the fact that fewer and fewer manual workers participated in activities and meetings of the Labour Party after 1960. Yet they did not offer any concrete solutions to this problem. Somehow they seemed to expect improvement to result from a "cultural struggle" or a "re-emerging culture of workers and of struggle."<sup>52</sup> This notion was elaborated by the (pre-dominantly Neo-Marxist) Working Party for a Socialist Broadcasting System. Some of its members or sympathizers produced concrete examples of the "culture of workers and of struggle," usually documentaries

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<sup>50</sup>According to a public opinion poll the five parties could have won 50.2% of the popular vote and 76 out of 150 seats in parliament in 1979 (NRC, 19 February 1979); however, the polarisation between Left and Right is (was) a complex phenomenon that need not lead to greater unity among the left parties (see also C. Middendorp, Ontzuiling, politisering en restauratie in Nederland (Meppel, 1979), and Lijphart, op. cit., pp. 206 ff).

<sup>51</sup>This possibility will be further discussed below.

<sup>52</sup>Huige and Reckman, op. cit., p. 96 (In Dutch: "de opnieuw opkomende arbeiders-, en strijdkultuur").

or dramatised descriptions of working class families, migrant workers and Third World people, their everyday life and their troubles. This information seemed to interest new petty bourgeois youth ignorant of these troubles, but it tended to bore the workers; the latter generally preferred the escapist entertainment produced by the bourgeois mass media.<sup>53</sup>

The Neo-Marxist attempt to resurrect or rejuvenate a working class culture that died decades ago seemed naive and idealistic, if not reactionary--even if one agrees with the Neo-Marxists about the relative autonomy of culture and ideology with respect to the economic base of society. A more realistic and more consistently reformist strategy would probably start with the escapist fantasies that appeal to workers--and many others--and gradually deflect or transform them. Through a critical analysis of the dominant culture, one could find and exploit contradictions within the latter, for instance between hedonism and the work ethic, between competitive individualism and the growing need for cooperation, between nationalism and "corporate" internationalism.<sup>54</sup>

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<sup>53</sup> According to a survey, 26% of Labour voters watched mostly the Socialist programmes, whereas 41% preferred the popular shows and American series of the "TROS" and 9% the Liberal "AVRO" (A. Kloos, "Op zoek naar verleden tijd," in W. Gortzak, ed., De Rooie Familie (Amsterdam, 1976), pp. 59-67.

<sup>54</sup> These contradictions are analysed in some detail in D. Bell, The Cultural Contradictions of Capitalism (New York, 1976); R. Barnett and R. Müller, Global Reach (New York, 1974), especially Chapters 3-5; J. Habermas, Legitimationsprobleme im Spätkapitalismus, pp. 106-128; K. Melos, "Developments in Advanced Capitalist Ideology," Canadian Journal of Political Science X:4 (1978): 329-361; see also Negt's work, quoted above (Chapter 4.1.5).

Cultural reforms can be co-opted by the ruling class, like economic or political reforms. If one can use and transform economic and political institutions gradually, step-by-step, one should be able to use and transform culture in a similar way. Oddly enough the Neo-Marxist reformists failed to do so, at least in the 1970s, in spite of their interest and expertise in cultural matters. Even the German Young Socialists, who had appropriated the sophisticated cultural critique of the Frankfurt School, failed to go beyond modest cultural innovations like day-care centres for foreign workers, or parks and pedestrian streets to replace parking lots and urban freeways.<sup>55</sup> Again one could explain this lack of cultural innovativeness in terms of the Neo-Marxist class base--lacking a cultural tradition of its own, the new petty-bourgeoisie had to borrow from older proletarian traditions or from new bourgeois culture. Though plausible in part, this explanation seems too simple and reductionist; it neglects the relative autonomy of culture, particularly of "popular-democratic" traditions and of the counter-culture of the 1960s. Another explanation will be suggested below.<sup>56</sup>

The Dutch Neo-Marxists followed to some extent the example of the French group CERES (Centre d'Etudes, de Recherches et d'Education Socialistes) which operated within the French

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<sup>55</sup> See Chapter 3.2 above; Interview 14.

<sup>56</sup> In Chapter 6; Laclau introduced the notion of "popular-democratic interpellation" in a critique of Poulantzas's reduction of ideology to classes, in E. Laclau, Politics and Ideology in Marxist Theory (London, 1977), pp. 81 ff.

Socialist Party.<sup>57</sup> The project of CERES seemed theoretically more elaborate and sophisticated and practically slightly more effective than that of the Dutch Neo-Marxists within the Partij van de Arbeid.

Unlike most other New Left groups CERES produced a rather elaborate analysis of the French economy and class structure. Concerned about the growing dependence of the French economy on multinational or foreign capital, it proposed an industrial policy that would make France more self-sufficient. Key industries should be nationalized and coordinated by the state, but managed by their workers. Though CERES seemed aware of the conflict that might arise between the need for central planning and the demand for workers' self-management, its solution remained rather vague. In the first place, self-managing corporations were to negotiate contracts with central government agencies to meet certain production targets. In the second place, workers would not elect a majority of directors until after a transition period--presumably an education and training period, needed to stamp out "corporate egoism" in the minds of workers. While this solution might prevent some of the inequalities resulting from the Yugoslavian model of a self-managing market economy, one suspects that it could lead to considerable manipulation of workers by bureaucrats and logocrats who would draw up the plans or contracts and educate the workers.<sup>58</sup>

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<sup>57</sup> About CERES see above, Chapter 3.1 and 4.3.3.

<sup>58</sup> According to some critics, the Yugoslavian workers'



This suspicion is reinforced by the class analysis presented by CERES. Admittedly its analysis seemed more precise and accurate than that of most other New Left groups, especially with respect to the working class. Unfortunately it treated the "intermediate categories" or "new and old petty bourgeoisie" in a rather cavalier fashion. Like Poulantzas, CERES's theorists insisted on the primary importance of the division of labour, but they also referred to power over the means of production and the source of income. No doubt these criteria were interrelated; but they did not quite coincide, as critics have shown.<sup>59</sup> People may perform manual labour while deriving their income from surplus value produced by others, or they may engage in intellectual labour but contribute to the production of surplus value, and so on. Depending on the criteria one chooses, the new petty bourgeoisie may form a small minority or almost a majority of the French

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councils were also manipulated by an emerging ruling class of technocrats and bureaucrats: see A. Meister, Où va l'autogestion yougoslave? (Paris, 1970, especially pp. 214-224, 341 ff; slightly less critical is G. Hunnius, "Workers' Self-Management in Yugoslavia," in G. Hunnius, G. Garson and J. Case, eds., Workers' Control (New York, 1973), pp. 268-321.

<sup>59</sup>See A. Hunt, ed., op. cit., especially the contributions from Hall, Hunt and Hirst; also Laclau, op. cit., pp. 11-115; G. Ross, "Marxism and the New Middle Classes: French Critiques," Theory and Society 5:2 (1978): 163-190; E.O. Wright, "Class Boundaries in Advanced Capitalist Societies," New Left Review 98 (1976): 3-41; Baudelot, et al., op. cit. and Lindsey, op. cit. provide more "orthodox" arguments to focus on the extraction of surplus value as the crucial criterion--see also below, Chapter 6.

people.<sup>60</sup>

Granted the question of class boundaries in late capitalist societies is complicated and difficult; it is also very important, the more so because these boundaries may cut through the Socialist Party in France and its Dutch and German counterparts. CERES appeared to be aware of this when it warned that the new petty bourgeoisie was trying to take over the Socialist Party.<sup>61</sup> It failed to point out, however, that of all factions and tendencies in the party, CERES had the greatest proportion of new petty bourgeois members by almost any definition.<sup>62</sup> Hence the group could have justified its assumed vanguard role within the party only with Leninist arguments about the need for revolutionary intellectuals introducing socialist consciousness into the working class from the outside. Since CERES had rejected this type of argument--with good reason--it was caught in a serious contra-

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<sup>60</sup> According to Baudelot *et al.*, the petty bourgeoisie made up 17% of the French population around 1970, while the new petty bourgeoisie, roughly corresponding to the fractions II and III in their study, comprised two thirds of this, i.e. 12% or so; on the other hand, Wright classified about 70% of the American population as "new petty bourgeois," using Poulantzas's criteria, which would correspond to roughly 45% in the case of France; cf. Ysmal, *op. cit.*

<sup>61</sup> In Répères 43 (1977) for instance; also Interview 11.

<sup>62</sup> According to a survey held in 1973, 44.2% of the CERES delegates at a party congress were engineers or "cadres," i.e. senior employees and civil servants, 18.7% were teachers or academics, 12% students and 0.9% manual workers (Cayrol, "Les militants du Parti Socialiste,"); when CERES held a survey among its own members in 1974, the results were similar: 23% engineers and "cadres," 24% teachers and academics, 17% students, 6% professionals and 21% workers, technicians and employees (Charzat, *op. cit.*, p. 264).

diction. Its own theory allowed for class alliances between the proletariat and the new petty bourgeoisie--and for proletarianisation and radicalisation of the latter--but not for new petty bourgeois vanguards on the road to socialism. With CERES leading the way, the French Socialist Party would probably be walking another road, leading towards "socio-technocracy" or "logocracy" rather than socialist democracy.<sup>63</sup>

CERES's political sociology, its theory of the state and the power structure, seems more abstract and less elaborate than its economic analysis. The conception of the state as the expression of class relations and a "battlefield of the class struggle" could be considered a good starting point for a concrete, historical or sociological analysis of the French state apparatus, political parties, government agencies and so forth. Unfortunately, CERES theorists did not undertake this analysis in the period under study, beyond a few schematic comments on the bourgeois and petty bourgeois class base of the Gaullist party.<sup>64</sup> They failed to show the possibilities

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<sup>63</sup>On the "socio-technocratic" leanings of CERES, see Poperen, *L'unité de la gauche*, pp. 430-446; to me the term "socio-technocratic" seems somewhat misleading because of its connotations of social engineering and "human relations" management in capitalist societies, whereas CERES leaders were probably not interested in profits as much as in power and their manipulation of people would probably be much more subtle than that of the Harvard School of Business Administration.

<sup>64</sup>In *Répères* 38 (1976); cf. Motchane, *op. cit.*, pp. 166 ff; Poulantzas, *L'Etat, le Pouvoir, le Socialisme*, expressed similar ideas in a more elaborate and sophisticated but no less abstract way--however, a critique of Poulantzas's work would go beyond the scope of this thesis.

and structural constraints of the class struggle within the state, the limits of the concessions it could make to popular or proletarian demands without losing its bourgeois base. Yet this would be indispensable information for any structural reformist who hopes to transform and democratise the state from inside, without revolution.

Again, such an analysis would be difficult and complicated. Nonetheless, it could be expected from members of CERES, who were generally well-educated and talented intellectuals with considerable experience in the French civil service. If these graduates of the Ecole Nationale d'Administration (the elite school of public administration in France) could not analyse the French state apparatus, who could? Of course, a malicious critic might suggest that they were too close to the state to see through it and analyse it with a critical eye. Perhaps the democratisation of the state would actually reinforce the position of these young civil servants and able logocrats; formal authority might be replaced by informal or elected authority, for which logocrats are better prepared than old-fashioned bureaucrats. The rhetorical talents of many CERES leaders would no doubt help them to get elected to those new positions of authority. Decentralisation of authority would also result in more elected authorities in the provinces and open up more career possibilities for young intellectuals there.<sup>65</sup>

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<sup>65</sup>Cf. Charzat, *op. cit.*, pp. 41-42.

The sphere of culture and ideology was not neglected by CERES, but treated in a rather ambiguous and eclectic fashion. It borrowed Ultra-leftist and anarchist ideas from Socialisme ou Barbarie and Wilhelm Reich, but tried also to use or manipulate nationalist ideas of a quite different origin.<sup>66</sup> This appeal to petty bourgeois or bourgeois nationalism could be justified strategically--to avoid another "Chilean" bloodbath, CERES hoped to win support among petty bourgeois and even bourgeois elements in case of a conflict between a more or less socialist France and a capitalist European Community or United States of America.<sup>67</sup> However, it is difficult to see how such a realistic strategy might lead to somewhat utopian goals like a new culture, a new kind of family life, a new conception of time and space.<sup>68</sup> These utopian ideas might be gradually discarded by CERES if the group were to acquire political power; they probably helped to mobilise and recruit many students and other new petty bourgeois elements--possibly also a few workers--after the "cultural revolution" of 1968.

The combination of realism and utopianism could be considered a weakness in the project of CERES; but it may also explain its attractiveness in the eyes of young intellec-

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<sup>66</sup> Charzat, op. cit., pp. 245, 248.

<sup>67</sup> See Frontière 15 (1974); Répères 41 (1977); Le Monde, 22 March 1978; before 1973 these nationalist tendencies seemed weaker within CERES, cf. Motchane, op. cit., pp. 174-185.

<sup>68</sup> Charzat, op. cit., pp. 233-238.

tuals. Like its Dutch and German counterparts, CERES began to gain influence after 1970, when many other New Left groups stagnated or declined. Old Left Socialist or Communist groups could not offer a viable alternative to people who rejected economism, productivism, "statism," bourgeois culture and Cold War. Hence these people had no choice but to enter Social Democratic organisations which tolerated groups like CERES and offered a real chance of winning power. The Revolutionary Socialist groups of the Old or New Left did not offer this chance, whereas the French Communist Party would not tolerate "New Leftism" within its own ranks.

In Germany the number of New Left options was even smaller. After 1970, the Extra-Parliamentary Opposition and the Socialist German Student League (SDS) disappeared, the Communist Party absorbed some of their members but none of their ideas and failed to grow into an alternative to the Social Democratic Party (SPD); hence the latter retained a monopoly over the organised Left and attracted many New Leftish youth. The Neo-Marxists within the SPD never exercised as much influence as CERES within the Parti Socialiste, but their project showed similar weaknesses and strong points. Its theory of the state seemed more specific and concrete than that of CERES; but its theorists lacked the experience of the latter within the state apparatus. Even within the Social Democratic Party, the German Neo-Marxists remained an isolated group, caught between an aggressive and dominant right wing around the Chancellor Helmut Schmiot, and a growing Marxist Old Left,

both of which continued the Cold War with a vigour unknown either in France or the Netherlands by 1970.<sup>69</sup>

Nonetheless, even the Neo-Marxist Young Socialists within the SPD surpassed their Marxist or Neo-Marxist predecessors of the 1920s and 1930s in influence and effectiveness.<sup>70</sup> The same can be said about the Dutch and French Neo-Marxist Social Democrats. Thus CERES seemed to feel some sympathy for the Gauche Revolutionnaire which operated within the French Social Democratic party SFIO between 1935 and 1938, but recognized the fatal mistakes of this group and tried to avoid its fate--a break with the Social Democratic party, followed by rapid decline.<sup>71</sup> Similarly, the Dutch Neo-Marxists might have learned from the history of the Social Democratic Centre within the Labour Party and the Independent Socialists within the Social Democratic Workers Party of the 1930s.<sup>72</sup>

Yet some of these older left wing groups had enjoyed substantial support within their Social Democratic party but lost it when they left the party to found a new one. Therefore, party leaders could afford to ignore the Marxist left

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<sup>69</sup>See above, Chapter 3.2 and 4.3.4; Interview 14.

<sup>70</sup>The latter, also based mainly on Young Socialists, were expelled in 1931 and founded then the Socialist Workers' Party which won only 0.2% of the vote in 1932; see R.N. Hunt, German Social Democracy 1918-1933 (Chicago, 1970), pp. 230-240; see also H. Drechsler, Die Sozialistische Arbeiterpartei Deutschlands (SAPD) (Meisenheim an der Glan, 1965).

<sup>71</sup>See "L'erreur du pivertisme," Répères 43 (1977).

<sup>72</sup>See above Chapter 1.4 and 2.4.

wing in their parties, knowing that the masses would remain loyal to their reformist parties. This was probably no longer certain after 1960. At least, large numbers of new petty bourgeois and even some proletarian voters showed some willingness to switch support from Social Democracy to new left wing parties--like the PSP and PPR in the Netherlands, the PSU and even the Trotskyite parties in France, possibly the "Green Lists" in Germany.<sup>73</sup> Hence a Neo-Marxist left wing of a Social Democratic party might hold a stronger bargaining position than a Marxist Old Left group within the same party, as the former tends to appeal more to new petty bourgeois elements and the latter more to the proletarian masses which tend to remain loyal to one party.<sup>74</sup>

The relative success of the Neo-Marxist Reformist project could be attributed not only to its class base but also to its ideological or theoretical framework. The latter did not depart as radically from the dominant ideology within Social Democratic parties after 1960 as did the "orthodox" Marxism of the Old Left groups. Neo-Marxist Social Democrats agreed with right wing Social Democrats at least on reformism, parliamentary democracy, and anti-communism to some extent. However, the agreement should not be exaggerated. External

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<sup>73</sup>"Green Lists" (Ecologists) emerged in the late 1970s and won 5% of the vote in the Landtag (Provincial Parliament) of Bremen in 1979; they attracted support from left wing members of the SPD and former leaders of the Socialist German Student League (SDS) like Dutschke, as well as from conservatives (Der Spiegel, 23 October 1979).

<sup>74</sup>As Negt argued, see above, Chapter 4.1.5.



factors played an important role, especially the relatively peaceful co-existence between the great powers of the world, the economic prosperity, the new mass media perhaps--which might devote some attention to internal party conflicts and thus harm a party image--and so on.

Hence the strategy of CERES and its Dutch and (to a lesser extent) German counterparts proved successful, at least in terms of the group's survival. None of these groups had yet captured their party by 1977, but CERES had exercised considerable influence on the new Socialist Party's platform and the Dutch group around Reckman practically vetoed another coalition of Social Democrats and Christian Democrats.<sup>75</sup> Their new petty-bourgeois base and the resulting ambiguities of theory and practice may have helped rather than hindered them in acquiring and maintaining positions of influence.

However, the opposite may happen once the Neo-Marxists win power in their parties as well as in their countries. If they are successful in carrying out structural reforms, they may be ousted from power by more proletarian leaders, workers' council members for instance; on the other hand, if they maintain their positions, it means they may have manipulated the working class and established a "logocracy" instead of a socialist society (as they defined it themselves).<sup>76</sup> Alter-

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<sup>75</sup> See above, Chapter 2.4 and 3.1.

<sup>76</sup> See Chapter 4.3.3 above, for instance; socialism was defined as workers' power over the means of production and self-management of society.

natively, they may fail to do either and end up in Santiago-de Chile 1973 after all.

### 5.3.2 Neo-Fabian Reformism: Small Steps to Save Rome?

Quintus Fabius Maximus Verrucosus, dictator and consul in the Second Punic War (219-201 B.C.), is said to have saved Rome by avoiding major battles and exhausting his enemy, Hannibal.<sup>77</sup> Fabians and Neo-Fabians pursued a similar strategy in their "war" against capitalism; but it is less clear what they were trying to save.

Unlike the more radical and utopian New Leftists to the Left of them, Neo-Fabians had their feet planted firmly on the ground of economic analysis. Tinbergen, regarded as the New Marx by some Neo-Fabians, hoped to return to a scientific socialism by using welfare economics. However, the scientific status of welfare economics has been questioned, even by other Socialists.<sup>78</sup> Furthermore, welfare economics tended to separate distribution from allocation and production, while suggesting reforms in the former rather than in the latter. It aimed for an optimal distribution of commodities or incomes, with respect to individual needs. It took these needs for granted, assuming individuals to be rational, independent and self-conscious enough to express their needs in the demand for commodities; or in case of collective needs, in political

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<sup>77</sup> See T. Dorey and D. Dudley, Rome Against Carthage (London, 1971), pp. 54-38.

<sup>78</sup> A. Heertje, "Tinbergen en de betekenis van de welvaarts-economie voor het socialisme," Socialisme en Democratie (1965): 359-361.

demands. These assumptions were questioned not only by Marxist but also by liberal economists.<sup>79</sup>

Accepting the assumptions, one can still disagree with the conclusions of the Neo-Fabian analysis. The Neo-Fabians' main quarrels with capitalism concerned its neglect of external effects and collective needs, the rise of monopolies and the unequal distribution of income based on talent and power rather than effort. Whether it is possible to settle these quarrels without destroying capitalism remains to be seen.

By insisting on the importance of collective needs, Neo-Fabians distinguished themselves from older and more individualist welfare economists.<sup>80</sup> Yet their notion of collective needs remained individualistic, psychological rather than sociological; in other words, they were seen as needs of abstract categories of individuals rather than needs of real social groups or collectives. As far as they used the term 'classes' at all, they defined them also in abstract terms as categories with certain income or status or power.<sup>81</sup> The only real

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<sup>79</sup>J. Roebroek, "De armoede van de welvaartstheorie," Paradigma VI:4 (1975): 3-46; cf. H. Albert, "Social Science and Moral Philosophy," in M. Bunge, ed., The Critical Approach to Science and Philosophy (Glencoe, Ill., 1964), pp. 385-409.

<sup>80</sup>Van den Doel, Demokratie en welvaartstheorie, especially Chapters II and III; see also above, Chapter 4.3.2.

<sup>81</sup>For a more elaborate critique of this approach, which enjoys also some popularity among sociologists, see F. Parkin, Class Inequality and Political Order (St. Albans, 1972), pp. 17 ff.

collectives they referred to were the nation and the local community, which had needs, presumably, for collective goods like defence. They did not consider the possibility that collective needs might be manipulated or defined by a ruling class or elite--their assumptions ruled this out. Yet they could not explain very well why collective needs had been neglected so often by democratic governments representing rational individuals.<sup>82</sup>

For similar reasons the continuing inequality of wealth and income distribution required an explanation. Neo-Fabians rejected the conservative argument that a complex and harmonious society needed differential rewards to maintain a certain equilibrium; or more concretely, that capitalism could not survive without an unequal income distribution.<sup>83</sup> The only inequality they would allow would depend on effort; a hard working janitor or waitress should earn as much as a hard working Shell executive or professor. Tinbergen proposed a "talent tax" on the latter, which would not disturb the labour market as much as direct income redistribution--like a maximum-

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<sup>82</sup>Van den Doel mentioned a "lack of communication" as a possible explanation but failed to elaborate on this; could it result from the social structure? Other Neo-Fabians like Ten Cate turned to education as the root of most evil--if irrational and ideological, conservative or Christian--and the gateway to a better society--if enlightened, rational and critical (see Ten Cate, "Inleiding," in Gregoor *et al.*, op. cit., pp. 7-16); this form of idealism has been criticized effectively by others, e.g. Marx and Engels, op. cit.

<sup>83</sup>This functionalist argument is summed up and criticized quite well by M. Tumin, Social Stratification (Englewood Cliffs, N.J., 1967).

income law--might do.

In spite of its scientific underpinning this proposal has a utopian ring. If a Dutch government were to implement it, most talented professionals and scientists would probably flee to other European countries or North America while others, particularly engineers and managers in the private sector, might triple their expense accounts and find other loopholes to avoid the higher taxes. After all, talent is a social value, defined by society (or its ruling class). By punishing it with higher taxes a society would contradict its own values. Furthermore, talent tends to correlate with power. As long as the talented elite did not share Tinbergen's egalitarian ideals, it could probably prevent them from being implemented.<sup>84</sup>

Neo-Fabians recognized that power was also distributed unequally in Dutch society. In the economic sphere monopolies had acquired too much power; they should be nationalized or at least regulated by the government. In the past the Dutch government had often failed to intervene on behalf of the less powerful and less wealthy sections of the population; presumably because of irrational "pillarized" voting patterns, lack of information and Old Left dogma. This explanation sounds rather parochial, ignoring the fact that similar (if not greater) inequalities existed in countries without

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<sup>84</sup> More technical problems such as the measurement of effort and talent could probably be solved more easily; see Tinbergen, Income distribution, pp. 121-123, 148.

pillarized voting patterns and with even fewer Old Left dogmas, like Great Britain, Canada or the U.S.A.<sup>85</sup> Voters in these countries were offered a clear choice between two major parties--the Neo-Fabian ideal.

The Den Uyl government of 1973-1977 heeded the advice of the Neo-Fabians and announced a more equal distribution of income, power and knowledge as its main goal.<sup>86</sup> It seems to have been moderately successful with respect to income, but much less so with respect to power and knowledge.<sup>87</sup> It managed to control prices, profits and wages to some extent until 1976. Rising unemployment and rising costs of social security caused some discontent among trade unionists and employers--thus perhaps reinforcing the Neo-Fabian belief in the neutrality of the government vis a vis both. The Neo-Fabian solution to the economic problems--expansion of the public service and strict wage controls--was unpopular with both.

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<sup>85</sup> See Parkin, op. cit., pp. 103-128; cf. Tinbergen, Income Distribution, pp. 11-27.

<sup>86</sup> The Prime Minister, Den Uyl, showed sympathy for Neo-Fabian ideas, e.g. in Socialisme en Democratie (1970): 555-563, and more recently in Haagse Post, 21 May 1977; Van den Doel exaggerated, however, when he called Den Uyl "the only real (Neo-Fabian) New Leftist" among the PvdA leaders (Haagse Post, 9 October 1976); even outside the PvdA, Neo-Fabian ideas found some support among Democrats '66 and Christian Democrats.

<sup>87</sup> See R. Kagie, et al., Rood beleid in krisistijd (Groningen, 1976). More positive, but still (self-)critical, E. Van Thijn, "Het kabinet Den Uyl: oordelen over oordelen," Civis Mundi 2 (1977): 43-47, and B. De Gaay Fortman, "We hebben veel bereikt al is het weinig," ibid., pp. 56-61; also Gortzak, ed., De kleine stappen van het kabinet Den Uyl.

The hostility of the trade unions appeared, to the Neo-Fabians, short-sighted if not irrational. Perhaps they underestimated the alienation from, and distrust of the state felt by many workers. After all, manual workers seemed to benefit less from many social and cultural public services than other (bourgeois or petty-bourgeois) classes.<sup>88</sup> Why should they accept the Neo-Fabian strategy? It would probably benefit the new petty-bourgeoisie more than any other class. The expansion of the public service would create more jobs for new petty-bourgeois bureaucrats or logocrats. Democratization of the service would allow the lower and middle echelons more power; democratization of private corporations would have a similar effect. Even the cultural policies of the Neo-Fabians tended to favour upward mobility of working class children and participation of workers in bourgeois or petty-bourgeois culture rather than emancipation of the working class as a whole. It could not do much else, given the individualist assumptions of the Neo-Fabians and their implicit or explicit intention to maintain the social division of labour.

The class interest of the Neo-Fabians is not as obvious as that of most other New Left groups, partly because they seemed to criticize everyone else, and in particular the

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<sup>88</sup> According to a study of the Social and Cultural Planning Office, 28% of all government expenditures on housing and 23% of those on education benefitted the 10% of the population with the highest income, whereas 25% and 21% respectively benefitted the 50% with the low incomes (Profijt van de overheid (The Hague, 1977), pp. 100-101).

logocratic tendencies of "populists" and "activists" (Pluralists and Neo-Marxists or Neo-Anarchists, in our terminology). Though very influential within the PvdA, they did not constitute a formal or informal faction.<sup>89</sup> Their influence may have sprung from the function they fulfilled in bridging the gap between Nieuw Links radicals--Pluralists and Neo-Marxists--and older moderate members of the party. Their ideology did not differ much from the only slightly more technocratic and bureaucratic reformism of the latter.<sup>90</sup>

In the 1960s, Neo-Fabianism, mixed with Neo-Marxism, had contributed to the renewal and radicalization of the PvdA. In the 1970s, the two types of reformism gradually grew apart, while Neo-Fabians took more powerful but also more conservative positions within the party. While they had encouraged militant trade unions and action groups in the 1960s, they started to caution and criticize them in the 1970s. Caught between the liberal right-wing and the Pluralist and Neo-Marxist left-wing(s) of the party, their position became somewhat uncomfortable.

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<sup>89</sup> Apparently, older Neo-Fabian members of Nieuw Links held a few meetings over a dinner table at Steenwijk; yet this "Steenwijk Group" seemed too small and heterogeneous to exercise much influence, according to Interviews 4 and 5; Interviewee 4 estimated that 20% of Labour Party members supported Neo-Fabian ideas, but may have been too modest here; cf. Brants and Van Praag, op. cit.

<sup>90</sup> Thus one of the moderates, Vondeling, could criticise the early (mostly Neo-Fabian) Nieuw Links for its lack of new ideas (Vondeling, op. cit., pp. 187 ff); an innocent illustration of the technocratic tendency of Nieuw Links was provided by Dr. Ger Klein, one of its founding members and between 1973 and 1977 staatssecretaris (junior minister) of Education:



The fluctuating position of Neo-Fabians in the PvdA makes a comparison with other groups hazardous. One is reminded of Stenhuis, who hoped to renew and radicalize the SDAP in the 1920s but ended up, after a quick excursion into various radical parties, as a member of the fascist National Front in 1940; the comparison would be very unfair, of course. A more appropriate comparison might be made between Neo-Fabians in the 1970s and "Plan Socialists" in the 1930s, inspired by De Man. Unfortunately, De Man also became a Fascist; however, most of his followers in the SDAP remained Social Democrats and fought Fascism. Tinbergen was one of them. In the 1930s he helped to draft the Plan for Labour, but only after 1945 were some of his proposals realized. The real test for Neo-Fabianism may come in the 1980s, if the PvdA can again form a government, but without depending on Christian Democratic support.<sup>91</sup>

Comparisons with French or German groups would cause even more problems. The Dutch Neo-Fabians rarely referred to foreign examples and seemed to draw more on Anglo-Saxon theories than on French or German ones. Insofar as they followed the inspiration of Touraine, they did so consistently and effectively. Perhaps they were more critical of social

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"I wanted to work in the same way as I worked in the lab ... solving technical problems collectively, in a practical way" (Gortzak, De kleine stappen van het kabinet Den Uyl, p. 62).

<sup>91</sup>See Cohen, op. cit., pp. 83-158 about Stenhuis; P. Dodge, Beyond Marxism: The Faith and Works of Hendrik de Man (The Hague, 1966), Chapter 7; as far as I know, no Neo-Fabian joined a (neo-)fascist group in the 1970s.

movements and action groups than the French sociologist; while Touraine worried about manipulation of these groups by political parties, the Dutch Neo-Fabians were more concerned about the converse.<sup>92</sup> However, both approved of a strong--but democratic--state and disapproved of "populism" or anarchism. Neither of them analysed the social base of these action groups and movements more than superficially. Touraine admitted rather casually that many of them showed petty-bourgeois or reactionary tendencies, but remained hopeful that these would not prevail over more progressive tendencies. At any rate, he did not overestimate the importance of the groups: at best, they would contribute to cultural freedom and to flexibility on the side of the inevitable new ruling class of technocrats and bureaucrats. Dutch Neo-Fabians did not discuss the emergence of a new ruling class; at least not as frankly (or cynically) as Touraine did.

Touraine's comments on the "cultural revolution" of the 1960s seemed also more realistic or cynical than the rather idealist and subjectivist notions of the Dutch Neo-Fabians. He pointed out the ambivalent character of this revolution that replaced traditional class-based culture by a new, amoral mass culture of individual freedom and passive consumption; even so, he basically approved of it. He did not link it to the new ruling class, which might conceivably manipulate the new culture for its own purposes--perhaps through the

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<sup>92</sup>See above, Chapter 4.3.5 and 4.3.2.

agency of "logocrats," the new socio-cultural specialists. Dutch Neo-Fabians showed some ambivalence about these specialists, often guilty of "populism," demagogy and Marxist agitation in their eyes, and yet indispensable. Like other New Leftists they advocated individual self-expression, creativity, communication, etc., the values taught and practiced by logocrats. Even more than Neo-Marxists, they hoped to change society through education, "relevant" art and cultural experiments. Culture was seen as a product of free subjects rather than as an intersubjective social process conditioned by--though relatively autonomous with respect to--socio-economic forces.<sup>93</sup>

One is tempted to conclude that Neo-Fabian reforms may alter but not abolish capitalism in the Netherlands. Income, knowledge and power may be redistributed but only within narrow limits--as long as the bourgeoisie and new petty bourgeoisie can maintain most of their privileges. The reforms may help to alleviate the consequences of an economic or ecological crisis in the 1980s; but alternatively, they may usher in a period of intensified class struggle and repression if the organized working class offers strong resistance. In the latter case the Neo-Fabians in power would have to face a difficult choice: resign and/or side with the workers, or recur to more authoritarian and repressive measures. Thus their government may lead the way to revolution or new forms

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<sup>93</sup> However, by 1979 even Neo-Fabians expressed doubts about the "cultural revolution" they had supported in the 1960s, e.g. B. Tromp, "Revolutie en restauratie," Sociologische Gids XXVI:6 (1979): 452-469.

of fascist repression--rather repulsive alternatives for Neo-Fabians. But even Fabius seems to have saved Rome for the benefit of others, who eventually destroyed the aristocratic republic which he fought for.<sup>94</sup>

### 5.3.3 Conclusion

Both Social Democratic New Left projects suffered from weaknesses, specifically a certain tension between populist demands for democratisation and more implicit elitist tendencies. Though different in many respects, both Neo-Marxists and Neo-Fabians seemed to share a new petty bourgeois background, which could explain their relatively peaceful co-existence within one Social Democratic party.

They differed in their approach to other classes. Both approaches implied some form of manipulation of the working class, but the Neo-Marxist "logocratic" approach seemed more tolerant and flexible than the techno-bureaucratic one of the Neo-Fabians which could lead to a form of fascism. Hence from a democratic and New Left point of view the Neo-Marxist approach would be preferable, even if it might also result in repression--from a different side: as in Chile, 1973. The Social Democratic reformist strategy can never be "coup-proof," given its insistence on non-violent and legal means and its refusal to "smash the state." However, this liability can also be seen as an asset, especially in relatively peaceful and legalistic societies as the Dutch one where revolutionary projects could never mobilise much support.

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<sup>94</sup>See Dorey and Dudley, op. cit., pp. 54 ff.

#### 5.4 Radical Pluralism: Small Steps In All Different Directions

Radical Pluralism emerged as the dominant project within the Political Party of Radicals after 1970. In view of its eclectic origin, it could not be expected to show much coherence or consistency. However, Pluralist practice may have achieved more coherence than Pluralist theory.

The main weakness of Radical Pluralism lay in the tension between professed populism and implicit elitism. Both terms are used here in a loose sense. Populism refers to the Pluralist critique of authoritarian bureaucrats and technocrats and to the ideal of self-management and direct democracy, without the socialist insistence on expropriation of the bourgeoisie and abolition of classes.<sup>95</sup> It implies opposition to all sorts of elites--not only the ruling class in the Marxist sense, but also oligarchies in trade unions, leftist parties authoritarian teachers in schools, chauvinist men at home and so on: everyone who holds power in some form but who does not seem to be accountable for it (the latter clause is crucial, as it distinguishes populism and specifically Radical Pluralism from anarchism).

Insofar as Radical Pluralists showed any interest in classes and class conflicts, their analysis remained descriptive and superficial. They observed conflicts everywhere, but no fundamental contradictions. The relation between workers

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<sup>95</sup> Populism is defined rather loosely by most authors; see G. Ionescu and G. Gellner, eds., Populism (London, 1970); and Laclau, op. cit., Chapter 4 (the definition used here would probably fall under his "third definition").

and capitalists was seen as one of "antagonistic cooperation" rather than as a fundamental conflict that affects other areas of society, such as moral values or child-rearing practices.<sup>96</sup>

From a superficial analysis of society Pluralists derived a rather superficial strategy of "democratisation." By converting shares into bonds, they hoped to abolish the domination and exploitation of workers by capitalists and to lay the foundation for self-management. Thus they assumed that capitalists would relinquish power without serious struggle; and, even more unlikely, that they would not be replaced by a new elite of equally powerful managers who might turn self-management into a hollow sham.

Power was to be redistributed equally, but not by any particular agent. Preferably, powerless groups were to acquire control over their situation through direct action with support from the state. On the other hand, the state itself had already too much power; if it were to lend support to powerless groups, it might acquire even more power in the process. Pluralist Reformists tried to solve the dilemma by calling for democratization of the state, as well as for its expansion. If taken seriously, this strategy might easily result in anarchy.

A radical democratization of the state in a pluralist society would allow any interest group or class to pursue its

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<sup>96</sup> As shown by M. Kohn, Class and Conformity (Homewood, Ill., 1969); see also W. Gottschalch, et al., Sozialisationsforschung (Frankfurt, 1971), pp. 71-192.

own interest without regard for others. The state, which assured a certain unity and respect for basic rules in bourgeois society--or any other class-dominated society--would be too weak and fragmented to perform that function in a pluralist society. All sorts of action would be taken by dissatisfied groups against other groups that appeared more powerful or more privileged. Eventually, the strongest groups might enforce their will.<sup>97</sup>

Pluralist Reformists would disapprove of this outcome. They would insist on some consensus and solidarity based on common ideals. Insofar as these did not yet exist, they intended to create and spread them. In particular, the PPR defined itself as a vanguard party with a long term vision, which would transcend and integrate the short term interests of particular groups or classes. It would imbue other groups with new ideals and a sense of community, through a "soft" or cultural revolution. Since egoism, materialism and competitiveness were widespread in the "acquisitive society" of the 1960s or 1970s, the cultural revolution would have to be drastic and profound--perhaps even changing human nature itself, certainly involving "total man." Culture was not conceived as an epiphenomenon of economic or political forces, but as an autonomous and probably dominant force in society. Hence the groups that created and distributed a new culture

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<sup>97</sup>This critique follows that of B. Tromp, "Socialisme, organisatie en democratie"; he refers to "interest-group liberalism" and "neo-populism" rather than 'pluralist reformism'.

might come to dominate society, in a subtle and non-violent but no less totalitarian way.<sup>98</sup>

Pluralist reforms could thus result in the emergence of a new elite--a logocratic one. In fact, Pluralist Reformism could be seen as the logocratic ideology in its purest form, no longer mixed with proletarian (Marxist) or materialist elements. It developed in a party that did not maintain any proletarian or Old Left tradition, but appealed more or less explicitly to "the people" and specifically to the "new middle classes." The PPR probably found its roots in the new petty-bourgeoisie and more particularly among college-educated employees in social and cultural sectors of the state or private enterprise. Pluralist Reformism could be perceived as a threat by technocratic or bureaucratic factions of the new petty bourgeoisie which preferred perhaps to exercise power without being accountable to constituencies of workers, consumers, neighbours, etc.; whereas logocrats were used to giving accounts in "dialogues" with constituents who asked them questions.

However, even members of the bureaucratic or technocratic new petty-bourgeoisie would not lose much power in a transition to pluralism. Pluralist Reformists did not intend to abolish

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<sup>98</sup>The term 'totalitarian' may seem exaggerated here, but has been used frequently to criticize the New Left in general, e.g. by B. Guggenberger, Wohin treibt die Protestbewegung? (Freiburg im Breisgau, 1975), pp. 24-27, 59-62, 67, 96; his argument differs from the one above; however, it seems inappropriate to apply this criticism also to the Neo-Marxist or Neo-Anarchist New Left, as it attached more importance to workers' councils and economic power; of course the criticism



the state or the division of labour--whether social or technical. The conversion of shares into bonds would deprive the shareholders and rentiers, but not the managers of their power. To maintain power, managers and technocratic experts would have to develop some logocratic skills. They might feel some irritation over the Pluralist critique of productivism and the transfer of surplus value from "their" corporations to the public service--and specifically to the social and cultural sector, the logocratic stronghold of the Pluralist Reformists. On the other hand, these reforms might contribute to industrial peace between management and workers, if the workers were to become persuaded that the management was now responsible to them.

In spite of its incoherence, the Pluralist strategy has a certain plausibility. If the Pluralist expectations of ecological disasters come true, and if the Neo-Marxist or Marxist projects to mobilize the working class fail, Pluralist reforms alone may save Dutch society from collapse--or from a much more brutal totalitarianism or "eco-fascism." The (class) struggle over material resources would probably turn bitter and violent unless a "cultural revolution" deflected attention to less material concerns.

In 1976, PPR theorist Ter Borg asserted that the cultural

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loses meaning if one regards culture as an epiphenomenon of economic forces. This criticism was also voiced by angry artists when the PPR minister of Culture and Recreation suggested art had to be "socially relevant" in order to qualify for subsidies (Chapter 2.5 above).

revolution had already started.<sup>99</sup> Many action groups showed more interest in solidarity, self-development and creativity than in the dominant values of material consumption, achievement and power. The values mentioned by Ter Borg, seemed typical of all New Left projects; hence they deserve more attention here.

Solidarity could be considered a universal value, shared by most religions and philosophies of the world. Without a religious or political context or reference group, however, it tends to become empty rhetoric. Within one church, nation or class, solidarity seems meaningful because it is associated with other common values. Thus Christians can practice solidarity--or "love their neighbours"--because they are all "brothers under the fatherhood of God"; and proletarians practice solidarity because they are all exploited by capitalists. But Pluralists rejected all these restrictions and preached solidarity with all human beings; if asked why, they would say: "because we are all human beings." Even within a nation, church or class, solidarity is difficult to maintain, but without such reference groups it seems a completely utopian and empty ideal.<sup>100</sup>

Self-development ("zelfontplooiing" in Dutch) or self-realisation seems an equally vague and even more meaningless

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<sup>99</sup> Ter Borg, op. cit.

<sup>100</sup> See R.C. Baum, The System of Solidarities (n.p., n.d.); L. Mayhew, Society: Institutions and Activity (Glenview, Ill., 1971), pp. 67-92; more extreme is S. De Grazia, The Political Community (Chicago, 1966).

ideal. New Left theorists never defined the "self" that was to be developed, but assumed implicitly or explicitly that it would be sociable, harmonious and constructive rather than anti-social, aggressive or sado-masochistic. These assumptions do not seem particularly plausible. Even if most anti-social and sadistic behaviour could be attributed to alienating and repressive social structures rather than to human nature, it does not follow that different social structures would automatically produce different behaviour; unless one assumes that "human nature is basically good." This assumption was not made by Pluralists and (most) other New Leftists who rarely used the notion of a fixed and constant human nature. On the other hand, they rejected social determinism and did assume that man (and especially woman) could change and transcend his (her) environment and emancipate him (her) self from repressive societies. Both external and internalised repression would be eliminated in the process of self-development. How this was to happen, Pluralists failed to spell out. Their supporters tended to "develop themselves" through group discussions, psycho-analysis, meditation, yoga, sex, drugs, art and other more or less aesthetic and hedonistic activities which appealed more to members of the new petty bourgeoisie than to manual workers. Perhaps the latter had been repressed and alienated to such an extent that they could not develop but only reproduce themselves, through sports, alcohol, sex,

television and occasional fights?<sup>101</sup>

The third value, creativity, could be seen as an aspect of self-development or a form of self-expression. Pluralists and other New Leftists seemed to assume that everyone could become creative, given the time and some training in expressive skills. Only social constraints had prevented the majority of people from developing their creative potential--another questionable assumption. Furthermore, creativity was assumed to be social and constructive, and creative crooks, torturers and terrorists were not appreciated; but this assumption was rarely made explicit, let alone made plausible.<sup>102</sup>

All three values that Radical Pluralists cherished seemed rather vague and empty. They were based on optimistic and unproven assumptions about human nature and culture. It seems unlikely that a pluralist culture of this kind could ever unify a pluralist society. This would be difficult enough under normal circumstances, but practically impossible if the Pluralist expectations of ecological or military disasters come true. During or after such disasters people might practice solidarity, self-development and creativity in a more destructive and aggressive way than Pluralists would

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<sup>101</sup>See H. Michielse, Kultuur als instrument van de heersende macht (Groningen, 1973), pp. 58 ff; from a different, psychological rather than political perspective, H. Duijker, "De ideologie van de zelfontplooiing," Pedagogische Studien 53 (1976): 358-373, and in NRC, 2 April, 1977.

<sup>102</sup>See S. Rozemond, "Politiek expressionisme," Socialisme en Democratie (1970): 110-117, and "Linkse signatuur," Socialisme en Democratie (1971): 370-379.

appreciate: the solidarity of gangs and war bands, the self-development of hunters and warriors, the creativity of robbers, murderers, rapists and necrophiliacs.

Nonetheless Radical Pluralism might play a unifying role, within the new petty bourgeoisie. Under the hegemony of the logocratic faction, the new petty bourgeoisie might pursue solidarity, self-development and creativity--which can be regarded as professional goals for logocrats who teach, analyse, create, meditate, discuss and develop their faculties all the time. The unity of the new petty bourgeoisie and specifically of the logocratic faction might be based not only on common values, but also on common experience--the many years in school and college, conferences, clubs, parties--and common interests related to its role in the social division of labour, and specifically the process of (re-)production of ideology. It is probably a loose kind of unity, compared to the more formalized and organized unity of the bourgeoisie or the proletariat. Perhaps not (yet) able to form stable class organizations, the new petty bourgeoisie tended to organize more or less spontaneous ad-hoc groups, engaging often in direct action or pressure around themes relevant to its interests: ecology, feminism, urban planning, foreign policy. Having generally satisfied most of their immediate material needs, new petty bourgeois people often sought symbolic issues to express themselves, to experience solidarity

and to improve the quality of life in general.<sup>103</sup>

Pluralist culture and society, if ever realized, would please the new petty-bourgeoisie more than any other class. It could only have universal appeal if everyone joined that class--possibly once all manual labour was automated. Nevertheless, other classes might benefit from Pluralist reforms to some extent. The measures taken by Pluralist Reformists in the Den Uyl government and in local governments tended to improve popular participation in urban planning and welfare work, to increase foreign aid for poor and progressive Third World countries, and to introduce comprehensive (all-ability) schools. Yet their most significant feat was probably the politicization and radicalization of a large fraction of the new petty-bourgeoisie, which had rejected the Neo-Marxist or Neo-Anarchist appeal of the Ultra-left and Revolutionary Reformism as well as the more proletarian appeal of the Old Left. Often of Christian background, these new petty-bourgeois people were concerned about the moral and socio-cultural issues raised by Pluralist Reformism but neglected by both Old Left and Right. Hence they switched their support from Christian Democratic parties, particularly the Catholic Party to the PPR and (a little later) the PvdA.

In France and Germany, Pluralist Reformism seems to have

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<sup>103</sup> Most of these issues were 'real' as well as symbolic, e.g. some activists were acting against direct frustrations caused by air pollution or sex discrimination while others joined them out of sympathy (solidarity), moral indignation, loneliness, boredom, and so on.

been less successful. No parties comparable to the Dutch PPR came into being there. However, the "Rocardiens" in the PSU, who followed Rocard into the PS in 1974, came close in many respects. Though using more Marxist language, they expressed concern about similar issues, such as ecology, cultural change, reducing the power of the state but enhancing that of workers' councils, neighbourhood committees, etc.; like the Dutch Pluralists, they tended to distrust Communists.<sup>104</sup> In Germany, Pluralist Reformism found some individual supporters but no organisation of a formal or even informal nature until after 1977.<sup>105</sup>

Even in the Netherlands, the PPR was probably unique. The League of Christian Socialists of the 1910s and the Christian Democratic Union of the 1930s, or the Blijde Wereld group, resembled them in some ways--concerned with culture, solidarity, foreign policy--but they remained explicitly Christian, as well as very small.<sup>106</sup>

## 5.5 Conclusion

All New Left projects discussed here shared certain fundamental ambiguities, though in different degrees. In the first place, they lacked a serious and concrete analysis of late capitalism in the Netherlands (or France or West

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<sup>104</sup> See above, Chapter 3.1.

<sup>105</sup> See above, Chapter 3.2; after 1977 the "Green Lists" began to organise Radical Pluralists, as well as others.

<sup>106</sup> See above, Chapter 1.5.

Germany) of the 1960s and 1970s. Insofar as New Left theorists paid any attention to socio-economic questions, they tended to fall back on Old Left or liberal economics and to suggest rather utopian solutions. Though they offered useful insights into changes in the class structure, their class analysis remained incomplete and idealistic--especially with respect to their own social base.

In the second place, the project contained at best an incomplete and schematic theory of the state. Its political strategy consisted of popular--if not populist--mobilisation for direct actions as well as for elections, but included various forms of subtle (or less subtle) elitist manipulation. While attacking technocratic and bureaucratic elites, New Left groups often seemed to stimulate the emergence of new "logocratic" elites--sociologists, teachers, journalists, social workers and other intellectuals who could manipulate the mobilised masses. Evidence about the social base of New Left groups was rather scarce during the period of this investigation, but it suggests that they tended to be dominated by members of the new petty bourgeoisie, while their leaders were often logocrats. Perhaps the informal or semi-formal, anarchistic and decentralised structure of most New Left groups suited new petty bourgeois members better than proletarians, who were used to formal hierarchy and collective discipline. Thus a certain tension existed between the democratic and populist aspirations and the elitist tendencies of most New Left groups.



In the third place, the New Left lent considerable emphasis to culture but failed to produce more than vague, subjectivist ideas and interesting but ephemeral and elitist experiments ("happenings" for instance). Solidarity, self-development and creativity were often presented as core values for a new culture, but rarely specified. These values seemed to appeal more to new petty bourgeois elites than to proletarian masses. Attempts were made to revive fossils of proletarian or popular culture, but the proletariat seemed to prefer escapist mass entertainment to those experiments. Insofar as a new culture or counter-culture did emerge during the 1960s and 1970s, it reflected to a great extent changes in technology and society which could be seen as adaptation rather than subversion of capitalism. New Leftists generally neglected or over-simplified these problems and over-estimated their own potential in the sphere of culture.

These ambiguities can be seen as liabilities, but also as assets of the New Left project. Perhaps the former have received more emphasis than the latter in this chapter. Yet the poor economic analysis of the New Left was often linked to a plausible critique of the economism and materialism of the Old Left. The New Left's emphasis on the relative autonomy of the state compensated to some extent for the Old Left's neglect and dogmatic "instrumentalist" conception of the state. The New Left's critique of the state, however ambivalent, touched on a real weakness of Old Left Communism--especially Stalinism--and Old Left Social Democracy. The

dual strategy helped to mobilise large groups who felt alienated and neglected by the Old Left. The New Left ideas and experiments in the sphere of culture filled a large gap left by the Old Left mainstream. All these elements of the New Left project may have contributed to what could be considered its main achievement: the politisation and radicalisation of a substantial fraction of the new petty bourgeoisie.

Without the ambiguities mentioned above, the New Left project might have failed to attract any support from this class that used to adhere to liberal or conservative (confessional) ideologies before 1960. It would have remained a marginal and ephemeral project, similar to Anarchism or Revolutionary Socialism after 1920. Why the New Left attracted a new petty bourgeois following is another question; a tentative answer will be given in the next chapter.

## CHAPTER 6

### CONCLUSION: TOWARDS A TENTATIVE EXPLANATION

It would be tempting to sum up the conclusion of this study in one sentence: the New Left project can be explained as the first attempt of the new petty bourgeoisie to organize itself politically and to develop its own ideology. However, this statement would say too much and too little at the same time; hence most of the remaining pages of this chapter are filled with qualifications.

In the first place, the term "New Left" requires some qualification. At first sight its meaning seemed unambiguous, at least in the Netherlands where both outsiders and insiders agreed on the whole that it referred to groups like Provo, Nieuw Links ("New Left") in the Labour Party, the Political Party of Radicals and (less unambiguously) the Pacifist Socialist Party. These groups shared a few basic ideas, which were used to define the New Left ideology: Dutch society needed a fundamental democratisation, culminating in self-management in all sectors of society; this change was to be effected from below and from above, i.e. through direct action at the grass roots as well as through elections and legislation; but structural change would be insufficient without a cultural revolution, in which values like individual

competition, the work ethic and the concern with economic growth would be replaced by self-realisation, creativity, solidarity and similar values.

These ideas could be seen as characteristics of the Dutch New Left, but they were not really new, as Chapter One showed. Many groups that belonged to the Old Left in the chronological sense--having been established long before 1960, our arbitrary cut-off point--adhered to similar ideas. Especially the older Revolutionary Socialist and Anarchist groups strove also for workers' self-management and fundamental democratisation through direct action and electoral action, even if they gave priority to direct action and conceived of electoral action usually only as a form of agitation. Social Democrats and Christian Leftists attached more importance to elections and often neglected direct action. Both the Christian Leftists and the Anarchists, but to a lesser extent also the Social Democrats and the Revolutionary Socialists aimed at cultural change. The first two came closer to the New Left conception of a new culture than the last two who lent more emphasis to class consciousness, sacrifice and discipline than to individual development and creativity.

Thus most New Left ideas could be traced back to Old Left groups, especially the marginal and radical ones like the Social Democratic League, the Communist Workers Party, the League of Christian Socialists and its offshoots, the League of Religious Anarchist Communists and the League of Anarchist Socialists. By 1960 these Old Left groups had

ceased to exist, however, while their ideas had lost their appeal to the working class altogether. The ideas survived to some extent among a few intellectuals who came together in 1957 to found the Pacifist Socialist Party.

The Pacifist Socialist Party could be seen as a bridge between the Old and the New Left--or as a battlefield. Throughout the 1960s and 1970s, Old and New Left tendencies and factions fought with each other--and often also among themselves--but by 1977 it looked as if the Old Left had been wiped out; disagreements remained, however, between New Left tendencies. The majority of the party seemed to pursue a revolutionary reformist strategy of developing "counter-powers" in the economic and political sphere, and a "culture of struggle" in the sphere of culture. On the whole this strategy failed, at least in the period under study, which was not a revolutionary period. Yet the party proved successful in another way, insofar as it mobilised and politicised a significant fraction of the new petty bourgeoisie--teachers, social workers, students and others--around issues neglected by other parties: protest against nuclear armament, foreign wars and air pollution, as well as demands for democratisation of corporations, universities and communities.

To some extent the Pacifist Socialist New Left had been inspired by Provo, the young Neo-Anarchists who tried to provoke the authorities in Amsterdam between 1965 and 1967. This small and marginal group had addressed itself to similar issues and a similar audience--probably even more petty

bourgeois than that of the PSP, which still included some proletarian elements. Its playful and symbolic or expressive actions marked, in a sense, the end of the consociational era in Dutch politics. The religious pillars started to crumble, the party system began to break up in two camps, Left and Right; coalitions became more and more difficult to make and to maintain. Cultural traditions disintegrated, a more liberal and individualistic mass culture seemed to replace the traditional sub-cultures based on religion and class. Of course, Provo did not cause these changes, but it articulated them at least for a section of the new petty bourgeoisie, specifically the logocrats.

Logocrats have been defined here as members of the new petty bourgeoisie who engaged in social and cultural work, in education, mass media, research centres, neighbourhood centres, etc., while exercising influence or power through the use of reason and words (logos). In Marxist terms, their function is to produce and reproduce ideology. Thus they tend to serve the interests of the bourgeoisie, but in a rather indirect and ambivalent way, maintaining a relative independence from the bourgeoisie and even from the state which usually supports them financially. Like other sections of the new petty bourgeoisie, the logocrats had generally remained loyal to the bourgeoisie and the state until the 1960s; in Poulantzian (or Gramscian) terms, they were integrated in the power bloc dominated by the monopolist and multinational bourgeoisie. They played a minor role, however, until their

numbers increased significantly due to the expansion of the mass media and higher education as well as the establishment of new social work agencies and cultural centres in the 1960s. Their greater numbers and importance may have made them aware of their own interests, which did not coincide completely with those of the bourgeoisie. While economically satisfied, they probably felt deprived of political power and cultural freedom and identity.

Through Provo, its successor Oranje Vrijstaat--the Kabouter Movement--and other groups, logocrats acquired some political power (or at least: influence) and cultural freedom, as well as a certain identity. However, these Neo-Anarchist groups suffered from serious weaknesses and could not last. Hence the logocrats moved on to more stable and stronger organisations, the PSP but also the Political Party of Radicals and the Labour Party (PvdA). By 1970, they had captured important positions within all three.

Between 1960 and 1970, the Dutch Labour Party changed from a relatively solid and united Old Left mass party into a fragile and divided collection of informal Old and New Left groups, factions and tendencies; towards the end of the 1970s, it became again more homogeneous, though still divided. It seemed to retain a mostly working-class electorate but to lose most of its proletarian membership and cadre, whereas new petty bourgeois members began to dominate party meetings and congresses. The group Nieuw Links (New Left) enjoyed considerable support among these new petty bourgeois members;

many leaders of the group were logocrats. After 1970 the group fell apart into two tendencies, which were called "Neo-Marxists" and "Neo-Fabians" here. The former strove for an alliance with the organised working class, whereas the latter seemed to seek an intermediate position between capital and labour. In fact, both projects showed elitist as well as populist tendencies, but the Neo-Marxists may have articulated more purely logocratic interests, whereas the Neo-Fabians displayed more sympathy for the state and its technocratic or bureaucratic elite. Together the two tendencies controlled the Labour Party in the late 1970s, which represented at that time active new petty bourgeois elements as well as passive proletarians. The economic crisis, social and political polarisation, and depillarisation may have brought the two classes together.

No such class alliance existed within the Political Party of Radicals, founded in 1968 by new petty bourgeois members of the Catholic Party and the Anti-Revolutionary Party, but boycotted by most Catholic and Protestant trade unionists. In the 1970s the party developed a purely New Left project, which was described as "Radical Pluralism" in Chapter 4.4 above. The project suffered from many ambiguities and seemed to lose its appeal to (probably new petty bourgeois) voters towards the end of the 1970s. The tension between elitism and populism, the idealistic approach to economic and social change, and the vague, subjectivist conception of culture which characterised most New Left projects, were



particularly striking in this case.

The ambiguities of the New Left project become intelligible in the light of the new petty bourgeois class base of most New Left groups. The "new petty bourgeoisie" has been defined in different ways by different Marxist "schools," but the term has been used here rather loosely. It refers to employees, civil servants and intellectuals who provide services of different kinds--advice, scientific information, entertainment, etc.--in "exchange" for a salary or subsidy from the state or a private corporation. They do not own their means of production, generally, nor do they produce value in the Marxist sense--their salary is somehow paid out of the surplus produced by the working class. They resemble the "old" or traditional petty bourgeoisie of artisans and shopkeepers only in so far as they enjoy some autonomy in their work sphere and some independence vis-à-vis the bourgeoisie; but they do not produce or realise value, nor do they compete on a market like the traditional petty bourgeoisie. They also differ with respect to political behaviour and ideology: the New Left enjoyed very little support among shopkeepers and artisans, as far as we know. Marxists who regard the old and the new petty bourgeoisie as factions or strata of one class seem to underestimate these differences.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Both Poulantzas and the more "orthodox" Baudelot, Establet and Malemort seem to conceive of the petty bourgeoisie as a single class (see Poulantzas, Les classes sociales and "The New Petty Bourgeoisie," in Hunt, op. cit., pp. 113-124;

If this definition of the new petty bourgeoisie sounds vague, it may reflect the real situation of this class, which seemed far from clear-cut in the period under study. It had grown considerably, due to the expansion of mass education and mass media, of the state apparatus in general and--perhaps more basically--the increasing application of science and technology to production and the concentration and centralisation of capital.<sup>2</sup> As it grew, it lost some of the privileges and contacts with the bourgeoisie that it had enjoyed before, and came to resemble the working class in some ways--hence it was occasionally conceived as a "New Working Class," or as the "head" of the Collective Worker (Gesamtarbeiter). Nonetheless its position remained ambivalent, economically as well as politically and ideologically. When class struggles intensified in the 1960s over wages and working conditions, only small sections of the new petty bourgeoisie may have supported the workers in their struggle against

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Baudelot, et al., op. cit.); cf. the critiques by Wright, op. cit.) and Lindsey, op. cit.; however, the critics tend to define away the new petty bourgeoisie altogether by reducing it to "contradictory locations" with respect to capital and labour or to an "ideological class" respectively. Though Lindsey's term refers to almost the same group as the one used here, his conception seems too narrow and functionalistic for me; if the function of the "ideological class" is only "to represent and protect these interests of the capitalist class" and "to ensure that this exploitative relationship (between capital and labour) is maintained and reproduced" (op. cit., pp. 21, 22 respectively) it could never rebel against the bourgeoisie and the state.

<sup>2</sup>These processes are described and analysed in depth by Poulantzas, Les classes sociales, and--in a more "orthodox" and thorough way--in E. Mandel, Der Spätkapitalismus (Frankfurt, 1972).

employers and the state. On the other hand, the new petty bourgeoisie did not show much enthusiasm for employers' demands for cuts in the public sector and lower taxes either, as it depended mostly on the public sector.

The ambivalent class position of the new petty bourgeoisie could explain many of the ambiguities of the New Left project, as was suggested in Chapter Five above. Because of its relative distance from the production process and its relative independence from the market economy, the new petty bourgeoisie showed little interest in economic analysis and denounced Old Left theories as too "economistic" or too "materialistic." It did not suffer much from economic exploitation nor from political oppression--even if it perhaps felt deprived of political power--hence it could also reject the determinism of the Old Left and expect to change society through the forces of will and reason rather than social or economic forces (of production). It tended to question Old Left Marxist ideas about classes, without fully accepting the bourgeois or traditional petty bourgeois ideology of a classless affluent and free society; but it conceived of classes in terms of power and privilege, rather than ownership or control over the means of production. Thus members of the new petty bourgeoisie often regarded their immediate superiors, college professors, senior civil servants, senior officers and the like, as "the ruling class" (or "the power elite," "the Establishment" etc.). On the other hand, they usually overlooked the differences between their own class position

and that of the working class, while trying to identify themselves with the "New Working Class," the "Collective Worker," the "people."

Vague populist ideas also characterised New Left theories of the state and strategies to democratise the state and bourgeois society. Like Old Left Anarchists and--to a lesser extent--Revolutionary Socialists, most New Leftists considered the state an authoritarian monster; perhaps because both witnessed a significant expansion of state power and growing state intervention in society, the modernisation reforms of the Liberal governments towards the end of the 19th century and the consolidation of the "welfare state" by coalitions of Social Democrats and Christian Democrats after World War Two. In both cases the state intervened on behalf of capital rather than labour, even if it tried to reconcile both and improve the conditions of the working class to some extent. Around 1900, the working class faced a relatively weak state which it could still hope to smash--forgetting for the moment its own weakness as a class--but by 1960 the state appeared too strong and big, even in the eyes of the Neo-Anarchists who tried to provoke it without much revolutionary hope. By that time, the working class seemed to have been integrated in society and to have accepted the state, at least grudgingly. The new petty bourgeoisie, however, had not gone through the proletarian experience of struggles and compromises with the bourgeois state. When faced with authoritarian state intervention, for instance in the sphere of higher education, the

new petty bourgeoisie could revert to older Anarchist or Revolutionary Socialist examples of direct action against the state and hopes or plans for self-management. At the same time, it would not dream of smashing the state on which it depended for its livelihood. Hence a dual strategy of direct action combined with electoral or legislative action within the state corresponded more to the interests of the new petty bourgeoisie than either a revolutionary or a reformist and parliamentarist strategy.

While the new petty bourgeoisie tended to confront the bourgeoisie and the state with populist ideas and direct action, it showed somewhat elitist tendencies with respect to the working class. Most of its plans for workers' self-management and workers' culture assumed or implied an important role for new petty bourgeois managers, technocrats, artists, teachers, sociologists and other logocrats, as was shown above in Chapter Five. Furthermore, the direct actions for which workers were mobilised were not only often led by new petty bourgeois logocrats, they also satisfied the needs for solidarity, creativity and self-expression which the latter seemed to feel more urgently than the former.

Solidarity, self-development, and creativity were the core values of the new culture or counter-culture which the New Left presented as an alternative to the dominant culture of individual achievement, competition, economic growth and work. To some extent the new culture could be considered a new petty bourgeois sub-culture, and more specifically a

logocratic sub-culture. Logocrats had a professional interest in self-development and creativity; they also needed solidarity in their relations with clients, audiences or students. Unlike the workers in factories or offices, the new petty bourgeois intellectuals and civil servants were expected to develop their faculties freely rather than discipline them. They were socialised differently, as Kohn and others have shown: workers emphasized external discipline and conformity, whereas intellectuals gave priority to internal discipline and self-expression.<sup>3</sup> Possibly also due to its distance from the production process, the new petty bourgeoisie could afford to "communicate" with nature rather than dominate it. For the same reason it tended to ignore or underestimate the objective and material conditions of cultural activities, and to overestimate the subjective aspects of culture.

At this point, a second qualification is called for. The New Left project should not be reduced to a new petty bourgeois ideology; nor should one assume that the new petty bourgeoisie as a whole approved of the New Left. Empirical evidence is scarce and not always reliable in this area, but it suggests that only a minority, though a substantial one, of the Dutch new petty bourgeoisie lent active or passive support to New Left groups in the period under study. For instance, only 26.8% of the intellectual workers in a sample of the 1971 National Election Study expressed preference

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<sup>3</sup>See Kohn, op. cit.; Gottschalch, op. cit., pp. 71-192.

for a New Leftish party--PSP, PPR or PvdA, whereas 26.8% preferred a Christian Democratic party and 16.7% the Dutch Liberal Party.<sup>4</sup>

Though there is little evidence on this point, it seems likely that support for the New Left was higher among logocratic members of the new petty bourgeoisie than among technocrats and bureaucrats. The technocrats were closer to the production process and to the bourgeoisie, hence probably less idealistic and less anti-capitalistic than the logocrats and more inclined to support right wing parties; while bureaucrats identified probably more with the state which they may have seen as a neutral arbitrator in the class struggle. However, one's political preference does not depend only on one's socio-economic position, but also on the relation to other classes and on political as well as religious or cultural factors.

A few comparative comments on the New Left in France and Germany, made in Chapter Three, help to understand the Dutch New Left in its social, political and cultural context. In all three countries new petty bourgeois elements--and especially logocrats--seem to have initiated and led most New Left groups, pursuing basically similar goals. Yet there were important differences. The French new petty bourgeoisie

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<sup>4</sup>National Election Study (Nationaal Verkiezingsonderzoek) 1971; the information has been provided by the Steinmetz Archives in Amsterdam; in 1971 the New Left did not yet control the Labour Party completely, hence the latter can be considered "New Leftish" rather than "New Leftist."

seemed to lean more towards the working class, which maintained more militant and Marxist ideas and habits than the Dutch working class--as indicated by Communist votes, strike days, perhaps church attendance.<sup>5</sup> Hence an alliance between the working class and the new petty bourgeoisie--or at least an important fraction of it--seemed feasible in France, provided the latter accepted at least some of the aims and habits of the former. Thus the French New Left used more Marxist terms and appeared more secular or materialistic than the Dutch New Left. On the political level, the Old and the New Left forged an uneasy and fragile alliance in France which resulted in a Common Platform of the Socialist Party and the Communist Party, but not in an electoral majority. Both parties remained in the opposition and failed to exercise any significant influence on the powerful executive branch of the French political system. In this context, the anti-electoralism and even anti-parliamentarism of some New Left groups--the New Ultra-left--becomes comprehensible. The events of May and June 1968 showed the possibilities--but also the limits--of direct, extra-parliamentary action in France.

The German new petty bourgeoisie, on the other hand, seemed to lean more towards the bourgeoisie, which may have

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<sup>5</sup> See Kendall, op. cit., for figures on Communist votes and strike days; church attendance among Catholics was weekly among 17% of the French (adult) population in 1975, 21% in 1971; but among 41% of the Dutch in 1971 and 33% in 1975, according to Maetin, op. cit., p. 153, and J. Thurlings, "De Ontzuiling in Nederland," Sociologische Gids 26:6 (1979): 470-492.



been stronger in the Federal Republic than in France or the Netherlands. As the German working class also seemed to accept bourgeois ideas about the Cold War, capitalism and economic growth, the New Left remained a relatively marginal and isolated movement in Germany. It could fall back on a rich tradition of Marxist thought but may have alienated rather than attracted workers with Marxist or Neo-Marxist terms and symbols which were identified with the Enemy during the Nazi era and the Cold War--which could be regarded as a civil war between East and West Germany. Moreover, the polarised party system and the 5% electoral threshold made it difficult for New Left groups to compete with the Social Democratic Party for seats in parliament.

Compared to France and Germany, the Netherlands had a fairly open political system. Political parties allowed interest groups a relatively easy access and if they did not, new parties would enter the system and win a few seats, perhaps even participate in a coalition government. When new interest groups--belonging to the new petty bourgeoisie but also to other classes--tried to articulate new issues in the 1960s and 1970s, they gave rise at first to new parties like the PSP, Provo, PPR, Democrats '66 and the Farmers' Party. In a later stage, they won access to older and larger parties like the Labour Party or the Liberal Party perhaps; most of the new parties declined subsequently. Some of the interest groups were new, for instance the student movement, the conscripted soldiers union, the ecological groups and to some extent the

feminist groups; some were ad-hoc groups organised around a single issue such as the war in Vietnam or in Angola; others were older groups which found new issues, like the trade unions and farmers which turned to more political issues after 1960. Many of these issues could be seen as consequences of growing intervention of the state in society, as well as of economic growth and concentration or centralisation of capital.

The causes and consequences of state intervention in late capitalist societies have been analysed sufficiently by New Left theoreticians like Claus Offe, whose ideas were discussed briefly above in Chapter four. Of course the reaction to state intervention could take different forms, ranging from a right wing conservative defense of free enterprise, to anarchist or revolutionary socialist attempts to organise "counter-powers" or workers' councils; moderate New Leftists and left wing liberals adopted an intermediate position, accepting state intervention but trying to reconcile it with grass roots democracy. One could expect the right wing conservative reaction to come from the traditional petty bourgeoisie--including the farmers--and the other two from the logocratic and techno-bureaucratic factions of the new petty bourgeoisie respectively. However, this interpretation would be too schematic. The resistance against state intervention might also rally members of different classes, traditional and petty bourgeoisie as well as workers, perhaps even factions of the bourgeoisie, in "popular democratic" or populist

actions.<sup>6</sup>

Furthermore the political process was complicated by the decline of the Confessional parties in the Netherlands--and by a similar decline of the Christian Democratic party and other parties of the Centre in France. Again, one could try to reduce this to a change in class relations; to be precise, the relative decline of the traditional petty bourgeoisie which constituted the backbone of these parties, and the subsequent erosion of the power bloc which united this class with the bourgeoisie. No doubt this played an important role. Yet one should not neglect other factors, cultural rather than political. Membership of and participation in religious organisations declined generally during the 1960s and 1970s in the Netherlands, across class lines. This process of de-pillarisation could be seen as part of a wider and longer process of secularisation and rationalisation of Dutch and more generally of Western culture.

The New Left project itself could be interpreted as a result of this secularisation process; perhaps the penultimate step. The first step could be traced back to pre-historic times, but in a more conventional sense probably to the late Middle Ages and the Reformation. At that time the religious unity of the kingdoms of Europe, the arts, sciences and the estates of feudal society under the cultural hegemony of the

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<sup>6</sup>The term "popular democratic" has been borrowed from Laclau, op. cit., Chapters 3 and 4; similar arguments were made by Habermas and Touraine (see Chapter 4.3.4 and 4.3.5 above respectively).

Catholic Church, began to crack. Some people began to question the God-given nature of the world and the state and dared to search for laws, both in nature and in the state, that could be manipulated by man. They did not abandon the idea of God, but secularised and rationalised Him into a mere Creator or a Maintainer of Laws. The final goals in life and the social order remained sacred and unquestioned, but within the limits of the law, individuals enjoyed freedom to pursue their ends in different ways. The interpretation of the laws could be discussed in public. The public consisted of scientists, lawyers and other men (rarely women) who had received a solid education; in principle, all men were considered capable of rational discussion.<sup>7</sup>

A second step was taken during the Enlightenment, or its aftermath, the first part of the 19th century. People began to question the existence of God and the timelessness of both the cosmic and the natural order. Nature and society had evolved over time, they discovered; hence they could be changed by man, within or without laws. Different ends could be pursued by different people, nations and classes. Rational discussion became difficult, the public broke up in hostile camps or parties. Yet within these parties, everyone agreed on basic principles. Certain basic principles were not questioned, some order was still assumed. Religion became a

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<sup>7</sup>The term "secularisation" is used here in a loose, philosophical sense; cf. B. Wilson, Religion in Secular Society (London, 1966), especially Chapter III; R. Bellah, "Religious Evolution," American Sociological Review 29:3 (1964): 358-374.

private affair, while a form of humanism was generally accepted: man should develop his faculties, work and produce to increase his wealth; man was still a sacred unity.

The third step was (or is) taken in the 20th century. The boundaries between sacred and secular, public and private, social and natural, began to fade. Man was no longer considered a unity, but an unstable collection of drives, forces, habits. Basic values of personal development, work and production, and reason, were no longer taken for granted. Man might be alienated from himself, even his "self" might be or should be changed. Action became an end in itself. The end result, perhaps the final step, would dissolve all unity and stability into a dynamic chaos of pure movement without end or goal; nihilism or nothingness.

The New Left could be seen as a consequence of the third step. At every step, politics tended to follow science. Science shows possibilities, whereas politics involves a choice. The third step was initiated, one might argue, by psychology, particularly psycho-analysis, while sociology and political economy--but also biology--had contributed to the second step. New Left politics mixed psycho-analytic ideas with sociological and political ideas, aiming for a psychological as well as a social and political change. Many theorists referred to Marx and Freud. Since man (and even more so woman) had internalised political repression, he could only attain freedom by changing himself, liberating repressed drives or desires and expressing himself freely. Personal

problems were defined as political issues; "happiness is now a political issue," as a New Leftish psychiatrist exclaimed.<sup>8</sup> Even direct political action could help people to satisfy repressed needs and desires on the spot, as it were. Roel van Duijn, a prominent member of several New Left groups, summed up very eloquently the philosophy of his movement as "the socialism of the erect penis ... rather than of the clenched fist."<sup>9</sup>

The hedonism or narcissism of the New Left could not be expressed more succinctly. Hedonism, the search for immediate pleasure, was not typical of the New Left alone, however. It seems a characteristic of the individualistic mass culture that emerged in advanced capitalist societies after 1960, which sociologists like Touraine described.<sup>10</sup> Liberated from religious or socio-political traditions and conventions, the mass of (mostly young) relatively well-paid workers, businessmen and intellectuals began to devote more time and money to the pleasures of life--food, alcohol, sex, sports, drugs, entertainment, travel. Though leisure time increased, participation in religious and political activities seemed to decline.

Whether this mass culture was really as liberal and

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<sup>8</sup>J. Weijel, "De derde revolutie," Socialisme en Democratie (1968): 1-21.

<sup>9</sup>R. Van Duijn, Schuldbekentenis van een ambassadeur (Amsterdam, 1970), p. 26.

<sup>10</sup>See above, Chapter 4.3.5; cf. Bell, op. cit., C. Lasch, The Culture of Narcissism (New York, 1978).

individualistic as its producers proclaimed is another question. As the private sphere was gradually penetrated by publicity, politicised by action groups, regulated by the state and reformed by psychologists, psychiatrists, social workers and other logocrats, individual freedom and individualism lost much meaning. Perhaps "dividualism" would characterise the new culture more accurately than "individualism": the individual was only trying to develop himself or to realise himself but did not exist as such; he existed in a fragmented, alienated form.<sup>11</sup>

Insofar as the new mass culture was produced by logocrats, it is not surprising that it reflected some of their ideological tendencies. On the other hand, logocrats did not only follow their own inspiration but also the--relatively autonomous--logic of cultural development. They acted as vanguard, one might say, of the secularisation process which they could not control. In fact, many of them may have come from religious backgrounds but liberated themselves from it--often more radically than most "secular" intellectuals who had taken the second but not the third step. Thus the New Left ideas transcended the class boundaries of the new petty bourgeoisie and permeated the mass culture of the 1960s and 1970s. To some extent, the mass culture became the dominant culture of

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<sup>11</sup>Cf. J. Habermas, Zur Rekonstruktion, Chapter 4 especially; in some way the analysis above follows Adorno and Horkheimer rather than Habermas, who criticised the latter; see also T.W. Adorno, Minima moralia (Frankfurt, 1964).

advanced capitalist societies; in a superficial sense: it did not replace bourgeois culture, but was superimposed upon it, as it were. It lacked the coherence and strength of a dominant culture imposed by a dominant class, however.

The preceding speculations have qualified the opening statement of this chapter in three different ways. The New Left project could be interpreted as the first attempt of the new petty bourgeoisie to organise itself politically and to develop its own ideology--provided one adds that (1) the New Left was not really new; (2) the new petty bourgeoisie was not a clearly defined class in the 1960s and 1970s, nor did a majority of it adopt New Left ideas, but probably only a significant minority; (3) New Left ideas may have articulated interests of other classes also, especially at the political level (popular-democratic struggle for self-managemnet, against the state) and the cultural level, where they merged into a wider mass culture.

The New Left is not quite dead, one might conclude, even in 1980. It may live for quite a while in different forms, the ideology of (a fraction of) the new petty bourgeoisie, as popular-democratic resistance against state intervention or as elements of the new mass culture.



APPENDIX I

LIST OF DUTCH ABBREVIATIONS

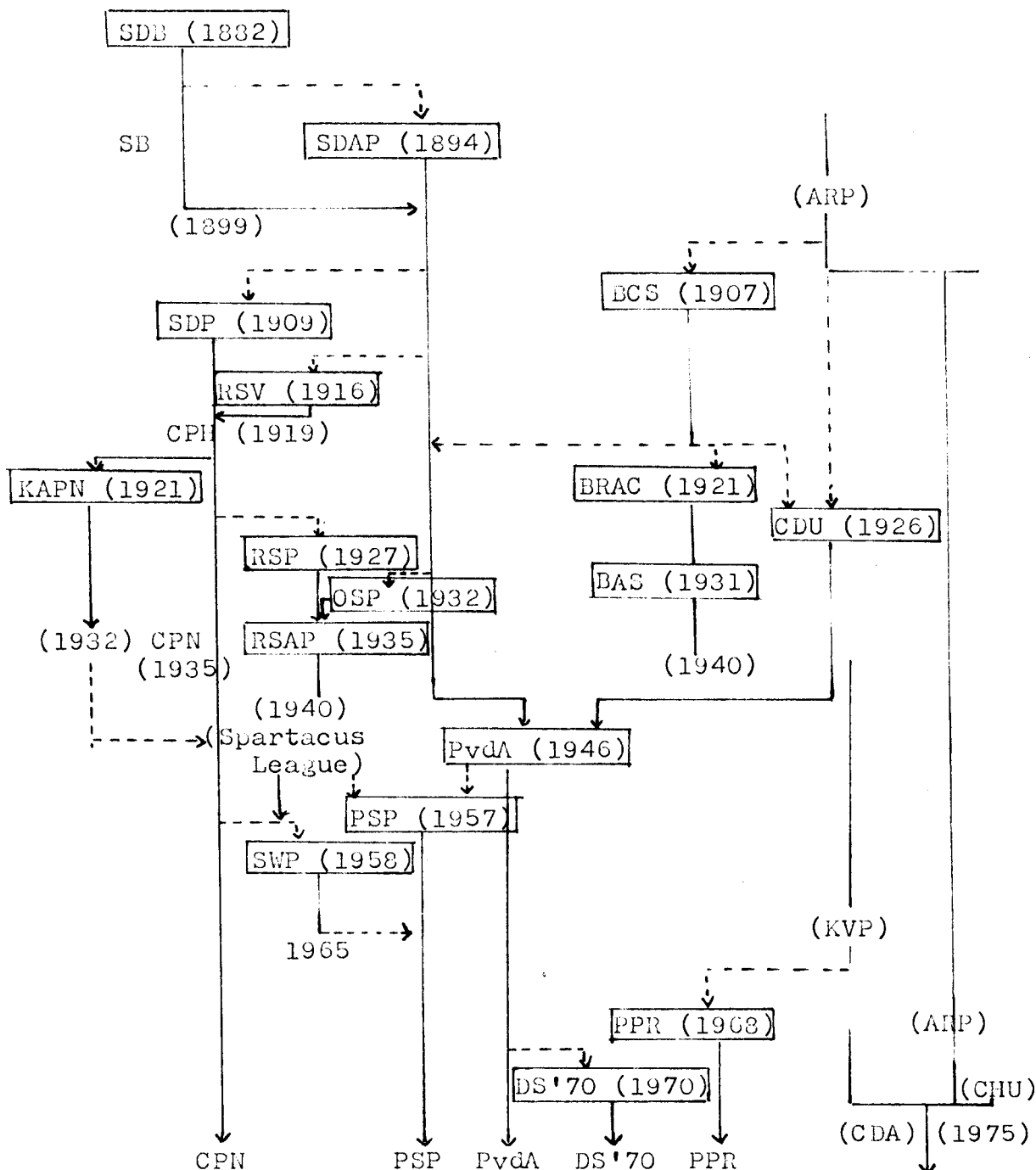
- AJC Arbeiders Jeugd Centrale: Workers Youth Centre, youth organization of the SDAP from 1918-to 1958.
- ARP Anti-Revolutionaire Partij: Anti-Revolutionary Party, founded in 1879 by Abraham Kuiper, to counter the secular spirit of the French Revolution and to mobilize the Calvinist "small people" (kleine luyden); merged in 1975-1976 with KVP and CHU in the Christian Democratic Appeal.
- BAS Bond van Anarcho-Socialisten: League of Anarchist-Socialists, before 1931 called Bond van Religieuze Anarcho-Communisten (League of Religious Anarchist Communists); broke away in 1920 from the BCS, dissolved in 1940.
- BCS Bond van Christen Socialisten: League of Christian Socialists, founded in 1907 by leftist Anti-Revolutionaries; disintegrated in 1921.
- CDA Christen-Democratisch Appel: Christian Democratic Appeal, federation of ARP, CHU and KVP established in 1975-1976.
- CDU Christen-Democratische Unie: Christian Democratic Union, leftist Protestant party founded in 1926, merged with SDAP into PvdA in 1946.
- CHU Christelijk Historische Unie: Christian Historical Union, founded in 1908, moderate Protestant party, merged with ARP and KVP into CDA (1975-1976).
- CNV Christelijk Nationaal Vakverbond: Christian National Trade Union Confederation (Centre), Protestant organization close to ARP; after 1976 accepting conservative Catholic unions.
- CPN Communistische Partij Nederland: Communist Party of the Netherlands, name adopted by the SDP in 1919.
- D'66 Democraten'66: Democrats'66, founded in 1966 by progressive Liberals.

- DS'70 Democratische Socialisten'70: Democratic Socialists 1970, rightist offshoot of PvdA, founded in 1970.
- EVC Eenheidsvakcentrale: Unity Trade Union Centre, founded by Communists and other leftists in 1945, split in 1948 and 1958, dissolved in 1964.
- FNV Federatie Nederlandse Vakbeweging: Federation (of the) Dutch Trade Union Movement, formed in 1975 by NVV and NKV.
- GGB Gemeenschappelijk Grondbezit: Common Landownership federation of agrarian productive associations--later including industrial cooperatives as well--founded by Van Eeden and other Anarchists in 1901, dissolved in 1940.
- KAPN Kommunistische Arbeiders Partij Nederland: Communist Workers Party of the Netherlands, broke away from CPH in 1921, led by Gorter; close to German KAPD; dissolved in 1932.
- KVP Katholieke Volkspartij: Catholic People's Party--called Catholic State Party before 1940, usually referred to as 'Catholic Party' in the text; merged with ARP and CHU into CDA in 1975-1976.
- NAS Nationaal Arbeids Secretariaat: National Labour Secretariat, founded in 1893 by members of the SDB, particularly Cornelissen, with syndicalist orientation; split in 1923, dissolved in 1940.
- NKV Nederlands Katholiek Vakverbond: Confederation of Dutch Catholic Trade Unions, 1964-75; called Katholieke Arbeidersbeweging (Catholic Workers Movement) 1946-64 and Roomskatholiekwerklieden Verbond (Roman Catholic Workingman's Confederation) before 1940; merged with NVV into FNV in 1975.
- NSV Nederlands Syndicalistisch Vakverbond: Dutch Syndicalist Trade Union Confederation, split from NAS in 1923 when the latter decided to adhere to the Red Trade Union International; dissolved in 1940.
- NVV Nederlands Verbond van Vakverenigingen: Dutch (Con)-federation of Trade Unions, founded in 1905 by Social Democrats, merged with NKV into FNV in 1975.
- OSP Onafhankelijke Socialistische Partij: Independent Socialist Party, broke away from the SDAP in 1932, merged with RSP into RSAP in 1935.

- OVV Onafhankelijk Verbond van Bedrijfsorganisaties: Independent (Con)federation of Industrial Organizations, trade union centre that split from EVC in 1948, in opposition to Communist control; more or less syndicalist orientation.
- PL Proletarisch Links: Proletarian Left, faction in PSP, since its expulsion in 1971 a party, affiliated with the Fourth International (Trotskyite), later named International Communist League (Internationale Kommunisten Bond).
- PPR Politieke Partij Radikalen: Political Party of Radicals, founded by radical members of KVP and ARP in 1968.
- PSP Pacifistisch Socialistische Partij: Pacifist Socialist Party, founded in 1957 by former members of the PvdA and others.
- PvdA Partij van de Arbeid: Labour Party, resulting from a merger of SDAP, CDU, VDB and a small Catholic group in 1946; Social Democratic orientation.
- RSAP Revolutionair Socialistische Arbeiders Partij: Revolutionary Socialist Workers Party, resulting from a merger between OSP and RSP in 1935; dissolved in 1940, but partly resurrected as Spartacist League in the resistance--the league still existed in 1977, though most members might have joined the PvdA, PSP or other parties after 1945.
- RSP Revolutionair Socialistische Partij: Revolutionary Socialist Party, split from CPH in 1927 led by Sneevliet, merged with OSP in 1935 into RSAP.
- RSV Revolutionair Socialistisch Verbond: Revolutionary Socialist Association (Confederation), broke away from SDAP during World War I, led by Henriette Roland Holst, joined the SDP in 1916--not to be confused with the Religious Socialist Association (Religieus Socialistisch Verbond) existing in the same period.
- SDAP Sociaal-Democratische Arbeiders Partij: Social Democratic Workers Party, founded in 1894 by moderate SDB members, merged with CDU, VDB and others into PvdA in 1946.
- SDB Sociaal-Democratische Bond: Social Democratic League, founded as a national organization in 1882; split in 1894 and changed name into SB, Socialistenbond (Socialist League) which merged into SDAP in 1899 after most Anarchists had left it.

- SDC Sociaal-Democratisch Centrum: Social Democratic Centre, study group and faction of Marxists in the PvdA, set up in 1946 and revived in 1955, dissolved in 1959.
- SDP Sociaal-Democratische Partij: Social Democratic Party, broke away from the SDAP in 1909, renamed CPN in 1919.
- SWP Socialistische Werkers Partij: Socialist Workers Party, broke away from the CPN in 1958-59; dissolved in 1965.
- TROS Televisie en Radio Omroep Stichting: Television and Radio Broadcasting Foundation, first major broadcasting system not affiliated with one of the Dutch pillars or parties, proclaimed political neutrality but tended to be conservative.
- VARA Vereniging van Arbeiders Radio Amateurs: Association of Workers Radio Amateurs, Socialist broadcasting system affiliated with SDAP and later (more loosely) PvdA.
- VDE Vrijzinnige Democratische Bond: Liberal Democratic League leftist Liberal party that merged with SDAP and others into PvdA in 1946; many members joined the VVD later, or D'66.
- VVD Volkspartij voor Vrijheid en Democratie: People's Party for Freedom and Democracy, often referred to as the Liberals, founded in 1948; many leftist Liberals went to D'66 in 1966.

APPENDIX II: FAMILY TREE OF THE DUTCH LEFT



NB: Straight lines indicate organizational continuity, dotted lines indicate movements of substantial groups from one party to another.

### APPENDIX III

#### LIST OF INTERVIEWS

1. Mr. T.J. Zanen, member of the Executive Committee of the PSP (1970-1973), sociologist.
2. Dr. D. Van Kleef, Member of Parliament for the PPR (1974-78), physicist (University of Amsterdam).
3. Professor J. De Graaf, Chairman of the PSP (1959-60), theologian (University of Utrecht).
4. Professor H. Van den Doel, founding member of Nieuw Links, Member of Parliament for the PvdA (1967-1971), economist (University of Amsterdam).
5. Mr. W. Gortzak, Director of the Research Bureau of the PvdA (Wiardi Beckman Stichting), social scientist and journalist.
6. Mr. A.G. Van der Spek, Member of Parliament for the PSP (1967-1977), physicist.
7. Mr. M.J. Van der Berg, alderman of Groningen (1970-1978), elected chairman of the PvdA in 1979, sociologist.
8. Professor B. De Gaay Fortman, parliamentary party leader of the PPR (1972-1977), economist (Institute of Social Studies).
9. Professor B. Peper, vice-chairman of the PvdA, sociologist (Erasmus University of Rotterdam).
10. Mr. B.A.G.M. Tromp, active member of the PvdA, sociologist (Technical University of Eindhoven).
11. Mr. J. Capdevielle, Member of the PS and the CFDT, social scientist (Institut d'Etudes Politiques, Paris).
12. Professor C. Lavau, Member of the PS, political scientist (Institut d'Etudes Politiques, Paris).
13. Mr. F. Gilbert, active member of the PSU, economist (University of Paris).
14. Professor Iring Fetscher, member of the SPD, political scientist (University of Frankfurt).

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VITA

Name: Anthonie Paul Marius Lucardie

Place and year of birth: Tilburg (The Netherlands), 1946

Education: Gymnasium Erasmianum (Rotterdam),  
1958-1964  
University of Groningen (The  
Netherlands), 1965-1968, B.A.  
(Sociology) 1968  
University of Frankfurt (Germany),  
1968-1969  
University of Groningen, 1969-1972  
M.A. (Sociology) 1972

Experience: Tutor, Department of Political  
Studies, Queen's University,  
1975-1976  
Instructor, Department of Political  
Studies, Queen's University,  
1976-1979  
Research Associate, Centre for  
Research and Documentation on  
Dutch Political Parties,  
University of Groningen, 1979-

