

# The Workers' Way to Freedom and Other Council Communist Writings

**Anton Pannekoek • Edited by Robyn K. Winters**

Anton Pannekoek (1873–1960), the Dutch astronomer and Marxist revolutionary, was a key theoretician of council communism—a Marxist alternative to both Leninism and Social Democracy that instead emphasized working-class self-emancipation through workers' councils.

The first half of this book walks the reader through the fundamentals of council communism and the conditions that led to the development of these ideas. The second half of the book demonstrates the rich depth of Pannekoek's thinking, with penetrating essays and insightful letters on revolutionary organization, state capitalism, Marxism, the limitations of trade unions and political parties, the potential of wildcat strikes, public vs. common ownership, the necessity of combining organization and freedom, the deceptiveness of parliamentarism, workers' councils, the vital importance of working-class self-emancipation, and more.

With the recent resurgence in the naïve hope that Democratic Socialism and trade unionism can act as radical methods to meaningfully confront or even overthrow capitalism, Pannekoek's council communist ideas encourage workers to think for themselves rather than submit to the dead-end traditions of the old movement and embrace the collective self-activity that can build a new movement capable of overcoming the struggles we face ahead.

## ABOUT THE CONTRIBUTORS

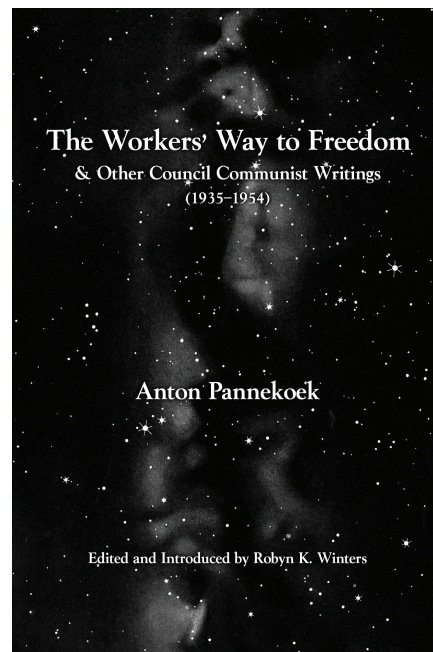
**Anton Pannekoek** (1873–1960) was a Dutch astronomer, Marxist revolutionary, and key theoretician of council communism—a Marxist alternative to both Leninism and Social Democracy that instead emphasized working-class self-emancipation through workers' councils. He developed his theories through witnessing the rise and fall of Social Democracy as well as the rise and fall of the Russian and German Revolutions. He is most well-known by revolutionaries for his magnum opus *Workers' Councils* (AK Press, 2002) and his critical *Lenin as Philosopher* (Merlin Press, 1975), and by astronomers for his research of the Milky Way and astrophysics—for which he received an honorary degree from Harvard University in 1936; the Gold Medal of the Royal Astronomical Society in 1951; and had a crater on the Moon, an asteroid, and the Anton Pannekoek Institute for Astronomy at the University of Amsterdam named after him.

**Robyn K. Winters** is a libertarian communist, amateur historian, and contributor of *Working Class History*. They currently work within the Canadian labour movement and reside on the unceded territories of the Musqueam, Squamish, and Tsleil-Waututh in Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada.

## ACCOLADES

"The most brilliant theoretician of libertarian communism."  
—Mike Davis, author of *City of Quartz*

"Good, solid, working-class literature."  
—Noam Chomsky



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