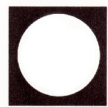


# SOCIALISM & DEMOCRACY



Harmen de Hoop

PvdA poster  
'Socialism!'  
1946



**SOCIALISME!**

**PARTIJ** VAN DE  
**ARBEID** LIJST

In the Netherlands, after the Second World War, social democrats (SDAP), liberals (VDB) and Christian democrats (CDU) did not want to return to the compartmentalised political structures from before the war. Together they founded the PvdA (Labour Party), not based on social class or religion, but on a sense of community and togetherness. From 1946 to 1958 the PvdA governed with the KVP (Catholic People's Party), and together they laid the foundation for the social provisions of the welfare state.

SDAP poster  
'Labour and welfare - a blessing for all'  
1935





When founded in 1897 the SDAP (Social Democratic Workers Party) strove for a socialist revolution. The party wanted to nationalise the means of production, which meant that important industries and the extraction of minerals would be in the hands of the state. The SDAP also advocated the right of women to vote, a state pension and social security laws against illness, disability and unemployment. After the First World War, some members of the SDAP felt that the party was not Marxist enough and founded the Communist Party of the Netherlands. In 1932, another faction of the left wing broke away from the SDAP to form the Independent Socialist Party (OSP).

VVD poster  
'Against socialism'  
1959





Many former members of the VDB (liberals) felt that the newly formed PvdA was too left-wing. In 1948, they broke away and founded the VVD (People's Party for Freedom and Democracy), a conservative-liberal party and the most enthusiastic advocate of 'free markets' among all Dutch political parties. In the 1959 general election, the VVD won 19 seats and formed a coalition with three Christian parties (ARP, CHU, and KVP), replacing the socialist PvdA.

OSP poster  
'Socialism now. Fight with us in the OSP'  
1932



Some members of the SDAP felt that the party was not socialist enough, so they founded the Independent Socialist Party (OSP). Its main goal was the proletarian world revolution, that would result in a communist society where inequality, exploitation, and class would be eliminated. The OSP merged a year later with the Revolutionary Socialist Party (RSP) to form the Revolutionary Socialist Workers Party (RSAP), and some of the former OSP members separated again from the RSAP to form the Union of Revolutionary Socialists (BRS).

KVP poster  
'Against state-socialism'  
1946





The Catholic People's Party (KVP) was a Christian Democratic party, which, although open to all, had a following almost exclusively among Catholics. Founded in 1945 as a continuation of the Roman Catholic State Party (RKSP) the KVP won a third of the vote in the 1946 general election and formed a government coalition with the newly founded Labour Party (PvdA), its greatest opponent. Throughout its existence, the KVP was in government.

SPD poster  
'Vote for the Majority-Social-Democrats'  
1919





After the break up of the SPD and the formation of the Independent Social Democratic Party of Germany (USPD) in 1917, the “old” SPD was referred to as the majority SPD (MSPD) in order to distinguish it. Governments led by the MSPD steered Germany through the German Revolution of 1918-1919 and the first years of the Weimar Republic. They followed a moderate course towards a democratic parliamentary system and often used military force against the radical left groups that wanted a soviet style government. The MSPD initiated important social reforms such as the eight-hour workday and early forms of unemployment and health insurance.

SPD poster  
'Socialism & Democracy'  
1946





At the beginning of the 20th century, the SPD was Europe's largest Marxist party, and the most popular political party in Germany. After the Second World War, the SPD was re-established in West Germany after having been banned by the Nazi regime. The party evolved from a socialist working-class party to a modern social-democratic party working within democratic capitalism, dropping its commitment to Marxism and seeking to appeal to middle-class voters, essentially becoming a catch-all party of the centre-left. In the Soviet occupation zone, the SPD was forcibly merged with the Communist Party of Germany (KPD) to form the Socialist Unity Party of Germany (SED).

KPD poster  
'Betrayed by the SPD - Vote Communists!'  
1928



OTW  
"FARROT"



att / priat



The Communist Party of Germany (KPD), founded in December 1918, challenged the SPD's sole right to represent the working class. Although the SPD remained the strongest party in parliament until 1932, the last coalition government led by it was overthrown in 1930. The KPD capitalised on this, seeing the SPD as "social fascists" and its main enemy. It rose to 17% of the vote in the 1932 elections - largely at the expense of the Social Democrats. In 1933, however, the KPD was the first political party to be banned and persecuted by the Nazis.

*Whatever happened to socialism? Do the social democratic parties (PvdA, SPD) still represent the interests of the working class? Or is it primarily the educated middle class that supports a socially just society, where there is a collective responsibility towards the economically weak, the elderly, the less educated and those who have fewer opportunities in the labour market because of their religion or skin colour? Has the working class stopped voting for social democratic parties because their cultural-conservative views clash with the emphasis these parties now place on environmental protection, climate justice, and LGBTQ+ rights? Do we still need socialism to ensure socioeconomic equality, uphold the welfare state, and temper capitalism's excesses? Or will all social democratic parties soon be a thing of the past?*