

INTERNAL POLITICS AND RATES OF CHANGE IN THE *PARTIJ VAN DE ARBEID*, 1957-1994

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1. Introduction

The literature on political parties is full of paradoxes. Although preoccupied with questions of when and how much party systems may have changed, we have little sense of how much, under what circumstances, or how fast political parties change. There are a number of reasons for this. One is that despite awareness that party positions and sometime ideologies change, we tend to think parties do not change very much. A second is that until recently, there has been scant emphasis on parties as organization.

This article examines rates and processes of change in the Dutch Labour Party (PvdA).¹ The PvdA's ideological moderation in the 1950s, its mutations in the late 1960s and early 1970s, and attempts to redefine itself in the 1980s and 1990s, provide an opportunity to examine the impact of party structure and leadership control on rates and types of changes. Following Panebianco, we will argue that the presence of a strong dominant coalition inhibits far-reaching or rapid changes unless mandated by leaders themselves.² In contrast, more open situations lend themselves to less predictable forms of change.

2. The late 1950s: the PvdA's *Bad Godesberg*

Three periods of change can be identified in the PvdA's fifty year history. The first is in the late 1950s, when the PvdA revised its statement of principles and removed those few references to class struggle or class conflict which had been included in its 1947 programme. The second began in 1966-67 and took place against a backdrop of change and dissidence in the Dutch party system. In the first, the principal initiators were the party leadership; in the second, changes resulted from the interplay of a dissident faction, the ways in which leaders responded to it, and changes in party rules and practices which ensued. The third period, from 1986 to 1994, is best understood as an attempt to restore structures and postures similar to those which had been modified in the second period.

The first period is easiest to characterise. Changes - redrafting the PvdA's statement of principles - were internally generated and leadership-sponsored and,

reflecting the distance already travelled in the 1930s and 1940s, relatively modest in scope. The few references to class struggle and conflict which had remained in the PvdA's 1947 statement of principles were deleted from the 1959 version. Had Dutch Social Democrats not already undergone considerable change in the 1930s, when SDAP and NVV leaders began searching for practical solutions for the problems of the depression and found them in their own variant of Belgian plan socialism, changes in the 1950s might have been more monumental. Similarly, any broadening from a class-based party of mass integration to a *volkspartij* or people's party is muted by the fact that neither the PvdA nor the SDAP had been exclusively working class parties and by the explicit attempts to attract Catholics and Protestants and achieve a 'break through' when the PvdA was founded in 1946.

Revisions to the PvdA statement of principles completed earlier changes. Although there was broad support for the merger in 1946 of the Social Democratic Workers Party (SDAP) in the Labour Party (together with a small left-liberal and progressive christian party), there had not been total agreement. Some, on the left of the party were opposed, and even Willem Drees was sceptical about the reorganisation.³ Nor were the political or ideological direction of the PvdA entirely certain. Proponents of plan socialism hoped that the dirigiste and corporatist designs from *The Plan of Labour* (Plan van de Arbeid) could be implemented. In the early 1950s, both the PvdA and the Netherlands Federation of Trade Unions (NVV) issued reports reiterating older demands for the planning and changes in the ownership of the means of production.⁴ However, such documents had little connection with either government industrial policies or the stringent incomes policies which emerged from the Foundation of Labour and the Social and Economic Council (SER). Although small groups, such as the left-wing Social Democratic Centre (SDC), opposed the PvdA's ideological direction, dissent was minimal. Revisions to the PvdA statement of principles and the short statement explaining them were drafted by a programme commission appointed by the 1957 party congress. These were then discussed in local sections, regional gatherings and socialist media, revised, and adopted by the 1959 party congress. The programme commission was made up of leading PvdA figures, including Willem Banning and many individuals with ties to the Socialist pillar.⁵ Banning had not only been associated with SDAP and PvdA leadership since the 1930s, but had assumed a major role in drafting the 1947 programme.

How should we view the 1959 revision of the PvdA's statement of principles? Although I have used the *Bad Godesberg* metaphor, this is a better description of the endpoint than the extent of change. The 1959 revision was an elaboration of the PvdA's 1947 statement of principles, which in turn drew on the SDAP's 1937 declaration. Confirming existing practice, the SDAP had backed off from orthodox Marxism. As table 1 indicates, changes in 1959 concerned ideology and programme and entailed minimal changes in leadership or internal party life.⁶ The rate of change was gradual, the degree of change, minimal. The

Table 1. Rates and types of change in the PvdA, 1946-1994

	Period 1 1957-1959	Period 2 1967-1972	Period 3 1986-1994
Character	'Bad Godesberg'	New Left penetration	Reconstruction
Dimensions	Ideology	Strategy and posture; programme; style; internal politics; rules; personnel	Strategy and posture; programme; style; internal politics; rules; personnel
Rate of change	gradual	rapid	halting; mixed
Degree of change	modest	extensive	modest: less than proposed or advanced
Temporal dimension:			
periods	short	short	medium to long
sequence	simple	complex	complex
Source/cause	culmination of earlier ideological development	pressures of dissident faction	discontent and frustration with outcomes of previous strategies
Mode	leadership-guided	faction-driven	reactive
Outcome:			
effect on party	de-radicalisation	more radical style and posture	moderating; restorative
impact on party system	none	polarisation	de-polarising
Type of change	Adaptation	Transformation	Restoration

temporal unit was compressed, but changes in 1957-59 were the culmination of processes which began twenty-five years earlier. The temporal sequence was a simple, uni-dimensional process far less complex than those which would follow in later periods. Changes flowed from the leadership and took place in an era of unprecedented economic growth. Processes of change were leadership-directed and leadership-controlled. The principal consequence for the party was the completion of a de-radicalisation process which was well underway. Finally, the impact on the broader political environment was minimal: Changes reinforced the position of party leaders and the politics of accommodation.

3. New Left and the transformation of the PvdA

Processes of change in the second period, 1967-72, contrast sharply with change in the first. Changes in the first period took place in a stable external environment and were leadership-directed and leadership-controlled, modest in scope, and confined to a single dimension, ideology. Changes after 1967 took place when far more extensive changes were underway in the Dutch party system. Changes in the PvdA were faction-initiated and faction-driven. Short and medium term outcomes reflected the pressures of New Left, the uncertain environment in which actors found themselves, and the ways in which party leaders responded. This facilitated rapid changes in personnel, party rules and practices, internal ethos, external posture, and more ambiguously, programmes and doctrines. These changes opened the way for further turnover of personnel. New Left was a loosely organised grouping whose ambitions and objections to prevailing political styles were more apparent than its programmatic or ideological goals.⁷ Galvanised by the fall of the Cals cabinet, New Left launched a public attack on the PvdA leadership. New Left argued that the PvdA was losing support because party leaders had been too willing to compromise and join cabinets with the confessional parties. Needed were a return to and renewal of socialist ideology, more emphasis on cultural policy, and a more critical posture *vis à vis* NATO and east-west relationships. Needed as well were the 'democratisation' of the PvdA (seen as elite-dominated by New Left) and a changing of the guard which would bring younger people (New Left supporters) to the fore.⁸

Imbued with a sense of elan and mission, New Left took advantage of adherents' skills - many were involved in public relations, the media or 'socio-cultural' professional occupations - to attack party leaders and gain power within the PvdA organisation. 'Circuses' or events were organised across the Netherlands. New Left adherents gained power at the local level by attending meetings and being more active and available than other party members. Influence in sections translated into votes at congresses which could be used to win places on the executive. At the 1967 congress, New Left elected seven of twenty-one members. In 1969, nine of twenty-four members elected to the party executive - including the vice-president - had New Left connections.⁹

PvdA leaders were angered by New Left's public attacks, which violated party rules of solidarity. However, the PvdA was losing votes and members - PvdA support had declined to 23.7% of the vote - and New Left represented younger elements who might exit and join other parties. Rather than chance their departure, PvdA leaders accepted the fiction that New Left was not an organised group, confined their complaints to admonishments, and allowed New Left to operate within the party. Facilitated both by the conciliatory posture of the party leadership and by the 1970 exit of some right-wing opponents, New Left penetration continued.

The 37 member parliamentary caucus, elected in 1967, had only one New Left adherent. The 39 member caucus elected in 1971 contained five, the 43 member caucus elected in 1972, ten. In 1971, a deal was struck: New Left disbanded and PvdA vice-chairman and New Left adherent, André van der Louw, became chairman.¹⁰

Power and presence in the party organisation enabled New Left to push for changes in party rules, practices, and external posture. By 1969, New Left had secured changes in nominating procedures for parliamentary elections. Previously, regionally devised lists had been combined by party leaders into a single national list. After 1969, regional organisations had the final say on how the national list would be ordered.¹¹

At the same time, internal procedures were 'democratised.' The party council, previously a housekeeping organ, emerged as an interim congress in which leaders were expected to render account for their actions. Speaking time at party gatherings was shortened to allow increased participation. Finally, 'organised mistrust' of party leaders became a durable feature of the PvdA's internal culture. This was reflected not only in demands that leaders explain their actions but also separation of the extra-parliamentary organisation and the parliamentary caucus. Overlapping memberships were eliminated, leaving the parliamentary leader (an *ex officio* member of the executive) as the only link.¹²

Changes also occurred in PvdA style and posture. At New Left's insistence, the PvdA adopted the polarisation strategy as a device to force confessional voters to support the PvdA, divide the confessional parties, and increase leverage in cabinet formations. This had several manifestations, including the 1969 anti-KVP resolution (effectively excluding the PvdA from the cabinet); insistence in 1971 and 1972 that parties indicate with whom and on what basis they intended to form coalitions; alliances with smaller parties; demands for disproportionate influence in cabinet formations, insistence on priority for PvdA or joint programmes such as *Turning Point* (Keerpunt) and numerous strategies designed to ensure that the Den Uyl cabinet adhered to its commitments.¹³

Fewer changes occurred in programme or principle than in the ways in which they were expressed and packaged. New Left placed relatively little emphasis

Table 2. Dimensions of change in the PvdA, 1946-1994

	Period 1 1957-1959	Period 2 1967-1972	Period 3 1986-1994
Dimensions:			
Ideology	moderation	shifts in emphasis	incomplete
Programme	minimal	reiteration of earlier positions; more detailed	in process: reduced emphasis on programme
Organisation	no change	changes in rules	changes in rules and organisation
Internal life:			
relation between leaders and followers	no change	drastically changed	changing
bases of participation	no change	open to new groups (socio-cultural professional)	attempted: minimal change thus far
Strategy	no change	polarisation	accommodative
Personnel:			
leaders	no change	high turnover	some turnover
followers	no change	high turnover	moderate to high: loss of members

on redistributive issues. The positions taken in *Turning Point* and the policies implemented by the Den Uyl cabinet reflected not the demands of the New Left, but rather the programmes advanced in the 1963 series of reports, *On the quality of existence* (Om de kwaliteit van het bestaan), issued by Wiardi Beckman Foundation (WBS) under the directorship of Joop den Uyl. Paralleling John Kenneth Galbraith, Den Uyl had argued that the state should ensure that all citizens could share the benefits of affluence.¹⁴ Although the PvdA did assume a somewhat more reserved posture vis-a-vis NATO, domestic policies reiterated earlier positions. What changed was the way in which these were put forward: Election programmes became much more detailed - even to the point of fetish - and the PvdA assumed a more aggressive and stylistically radical posture, emphasising rather than de-emphasising socialist symbols.¹⁵ Reflecting the ethos of organised mistrust, internal governance changed. Before 1967 dissent was contained within established party structures. After 1967, open dissent was more common and the party executive, parliamentary caucus and

(in the event that the party was in government) PvdA ministers were frequently at odds. Moreover, instead of settling differences *in camera*, the PvdA argued with itself in public, communicating through the media.

As table 2 shows, change in the 1967-72 period (and beyond) was much more extensive than in the late 1950s. Changes occurred not so much in ideology and programme, but rather in the ways in which these were expressed and used. Internal practices changed and the PvdA assumed a more aggressive posture. Rather than campaigning on the basis of its programmes and entering into compromises to implement them, the PvdA insisted on priority for its programmes and policies in subsequent negotiations.

One of New Left's demands had been to open the party to new groups and influences. New Left pressures resulted in considerable turnover. An older generation, unwilling or unable to adapt, stepped aside. Whether this made the PvdA a more open party is questionable. In party sections, New Left activists and others who joined in their wake replaced trade unionists and others with roots in the organised working class. Although this did not necessarily change the middle-class character of the PvdA leadership, workers and trade unionists became less prominent, and younger socio-cultural professionals, more dominant.¹⁶ However, successful penetration did not ensure New Left dominance. Others joined the more open party which they had created. In 1978, Max van den Berg, who had been an adherent of New Left since 1966, captured the PvdA chairmanship from Wim Meijer. The latter was also an original New Left adherent but, Van den Berg charged, Meijer was now the exponent of The Hague establishment. Van den Berg's victory intensified the divisions between the party headquarters in Amsterdam, and the parliamentary caucus in The Hague.

The PvdA's strategy and tactics had considerable impact on the party system. Both because of the PvdA's efforts to emphasise differences and divide the confessional bloc, and those of the Liberals, the party system became more openly divided than it had been in the earlier postwar period. Although differences on issues were not necessarily greater than before, willingness to compromise was less evident. The 1972-73 and 1977 cabinet formations lasted 163 and 208 days. In the former, the PvdA and its allies managed to divide the confessionals and secure the formation of the Den Uyl cabinet. However, these tactics encouraged the formation of the Christian Democratic Appeal (CDA). Moreover, the 1977 cabinet formation ended not with the formation of a second Den Uyl cabinet, but rather a centre-right cabinet under Andries van Agt. The PvdA remained in opposition for all but nine months from 1977 through 1989. Relatively far-reaching changes took place in a short period. Rapid transformation made the PvdA a different party - not a catch-all party in the sense that Kirchheimer implied - but one in which middle class activists skilled in a participatory rhetoric manipulated symbols and used detailed election programmes to control leaders and make demands on prospective coalition

partners. The transformed PvdA became an object of change in the 1980s when it became apparent that successive variants of the polarisation strategy confined the PvdA to the opposition. Frustration forced re-evaluation. However, the democratised structures of the PvdA proved to be an obstacle to further change.

4. Limited renewal and organisational reform: 1986-1994

The third period of change began in 1986 and was still underway in 1994. Here, the PvdA was forced to come to terms with a) the consequences of the changes which we have just described, b) broader questions about the place and direction of Social Democracy in a changing society, and c) by the early 1990s, the limited success of revised strategies and efforts to bring about programmatic and organisational renewal. In contrast to both the first and second periods, change in this period was neither leadership-directed nor faction-driven. Impetus for change came from elements dismayed at the political direction of the PvdA and its persistent exclusion from power. Critics were well located - among other places in the Wiardi Beckman Foundation (WBS) - but before 1986 not able to do more than frame questions and try to influence future agendas.

Official attempts to reorient the party began after the 1986 elections. Centre-right cabinets had been in power since 1982. The PvdA had been bitterly opposed to their austerity measures and the 1985 decision to deploy the cruise missile. Campaigning on its continued opposition to deployment, the PvdA won 33.3% of the vote and an additional five seats but was unable to dislodge the CDA-VVD coalition. 'Defeat in victory' prompted the retirement of Joop den Uyl, the resignation of party chairman, Max van den Berg, and the appointment of special commissions to examine programmes, strategy, and organisation. However, these had not had much impact when a break in the CDA-VVD government forced early elections in 1989. In the ensuing campaign, the PvdA emphasised moderation and fiscal responsibility. Although it slipped to 31.9%, the PvdA entered a centre-left coalition under Ruud Lubbers. Governing, it was hoped, would reverse party fortunes.

Return to government did not produce the desired results. The PvdA lost support in the 1990 municipal and 1991 provincial elections and divided in 1991 over proposed cutbacks to long-term disability programmes. A sense of alarm spurred the appointment of a new commission on party organisation prior to the 1990 municipal elections. Its recommendations were adopted in 1992, but the PvdA continued to lose members and support.

This protracted and uncertain period of change reflects multiple causes. Like its counterparts elsewhere, the PvdA discovered that earlier programmes and policies were less and less applicable to a changing society and economy. Deficits and the costs of the welfare state made the PvdA uncomfortably aware of limits to government expenditure. Growing individualisation called into question policies designed for collectivities, and internationalisation made planning or management of the economy problematic. However, the PvdA's

efforts to grapple with these problems were complicated by earlier changes and the character of leadership before and after 1986. According to its own diagnoses, the 'democratised' PvdA had become closed and cut off from Dutch society. In the absence of firm leadership, it was difficult to change direction: doing so required not only decisions at the top, but also support down below. Leadership was problematic both before and after 1986. Joop den Uyl became parliamentary leader in 1967. Rapid turnover left Den Uyl the principal survivor of his generation. Den Uyl led not by relying on colleagues who were his peers and confidants but by using his personal authority to resolve conflicts, sway followers, or persuade party organs to reverse positions which he deemed unwise. This became more pronounced when Max van den Berg assumed the party chairmanship. Den Uyl relied on a 'one-on-one' style to maintain a *modus vivendi* with Van den Berg but had little direct control over recruitment or the extra-parliamentary organisation. One consequence was that changes which Den Uyl might have endorsed were all but impossible. Another was that the PvdA continued the polarisation strategy - now organised around opposition to the cruise missile - after it had been officially abandoned in 1982.¹⁷

Den Uyl's retirement provided an opportunity for change. However, the PvdA had no formal method for selecting its leader. Earlier, Den Uyl had gone through a series of 'crown princes' who either peaked too soon or otherwise fell out of favour. In 1986, the choice fell upon Wim Kok, chairman of the Federation of Dutch Trade Unions (FNV) from 1972 to 1985. Kok campaigned alongside Den Uyl and assumed the leadership when Den Uyl stepped down. Kok brought to the PvdA the same leadership style that he had used to steer the FNV. There, Kok's conciliatory style - allowing divergent views to be expressed and waiting for consensus to emerge - held a divided federation together. Transferred to the PvdA this produced a vacuum: colleagues waited for signals which never came.

Hesitant leadership affected the rate and extent of change in both the 1986-89 and 1989-94 periods. Following 'defeat in victory' in the 1986 elections, the PvdA established commissions on party programmes, organisation, and strategy. The first, under the chairmanship of former Minister of Development Aid, Jan Pronk, investigated the programmatic dilemmas facing the PvdA and, with the assistance of the WBS, produced a book *Sliding panels* (Schuivende panelen), focusing choices and alternatives.¹⁸ These were discussed in party sections in 1987-88, but a report from the party executive summarising the conclusions was delayed. Although the PvdA planned to generate a less detailed election programme for the next parliamentary election, few changes in the content of PvdA programmes had been made when early elections were called in 1989. The second commission dealt with party organisation. Its report argued that the PvdA had become closed and isolated and that changes in organisation and 'culture' were needed, but few changes flowed from this.¹⁹ The third commission, chaired by Kok himself, reviewed PvdA strategies and heralded the abandonment of the polarisation strategy.²⁰ The PvdA went into the 1989

elections as a more moderate and conciliatory party, prepared to make compromises in order to govern, but without the benefits of programmatic or organisational renewal.

4.1 Re-organisation and free fall: 1989-1994

Critics of the polarisation strategy had argued that opposition was damaging the party. The PvdA, it was argued, did better electorally when it was in government. Prolonged periods in opposition not only deprived the PvdA of influence, but also hindered the recruitment and retention of capable representatives. Governing was not seen as a panacea for all problems, but it was expected that doing so would help to alleviate them. However, the PvdA returned to government at a time in which there were extremely narrow margins for new programmes and a growing consensus that further cutbacks were needed. Joining the Lubbers-Kok cabinet did not prove to be as beneficial as many had hoped.

The first tests were the 1990 municipal and 1991 provincial elections: the PvdA did badly in both. However, the party's Achilles' heel proved to be the long-term disability programme (WAO) put in place in the 1970s. By the 1980s, costs for WAO and other entitlements were mounting. In July, 1991 the Lubbers-Kok cabinet announced a decision to reduce sickness benefits and long-term disability payments for recipients under fifty. Both the decision and the ensuing controversy proved to be disastrous. Some PvdA members supported it while others felt that the PvdA had betrayed followers and abandoned its defense of the welfare state. Although the cabinet position was endorsed by a party congress, the dispute triggered resignations from the party, not only from opponents of the decision but also others who no longer found themselves at home. PvdA support in opinion polls declined precipitously: For a time, the PvdA was fourth, trailing the Liberals and Democrats '66 (D66).

The prospect of decline provided further impetus for change. Even before the 1990 municipal elections another commission on party organisation, under former minister of education, Jos van Kemenade, had been appointed. In July, 1991, the Van Kemenade Commission recommended sweeping changes in PvdA organisation, rules, and practices, including the ways in which nominations for party lists were decided. Its report was particularly critical of the introverted 'party culture' characteristic of the PvdA since the 1970s and the ways in which detailed programmes had been used to exercise control over leaders. Changes in the mode of operation and the ethos or culture of the PvdA were needed. Van Kemenade recommended reorganising municipal and regional structures; reducing the power of regional party officials; abolition of the party council; less frequent party congresses; more open forms of party membership and participation; central rather than regional control over the composition of the list of candidates for parliament; and ongoing thematic and programmatic

discussion.²¹ Sagging support, membership decline, and general tiredness ensured acceptance at the March, 1992 congress.

Adoption of the Van Kemenade report has produced changes, though not all those demanded or anticipated. The conflict over sickness and WAO benefits resulted in the resignation of party chairman, Marian Sint. In 1992, a new chair and vice-chair, Felix Rottenberg and Ruud Vreeman were elected with a mandate to implement sweeping changes. Since then, Rottenberg and Vreeman have assumed control of the party organisation, supplanting the executive. Initially neither this, nor Wim Kok's aloof style - Kok paid more attention to his roles as minister of Finance and vice-premier than party leader - were sufficient to reverse the PvdA's decline. Cadres characterized the PvdA as a party in 'free fall'. Only in 1994 did the PvdA recover. Ironically, the 24.0% which it won in the 1994 elections - its second lowest postwar result - made it the largest party. However, this had more to do with CDA losses than PvdA successes.

4.2 Facets of change: 1986-1994

However hesitantly, PvdA ideology and programme, organisation, internal life, strategy, and personnel changed after 1986 (tables 1 and 2). Ideological changes concerned not so much the content of party ideology but rather the way in which it was expressed. However, the party's statement of principles - reworked and radicalised in 1977 but largely ignored since then - was not revised. Doing so was a distant goal, intended to be the culmination of processes of programmatic renewal still underway.

Programmatic changes were similarly muted. By the late 1980s, the PvdA had reined in more radical impulses and acknowledged the need for budgetary restraint, and on many issues was veering toward the right. Nevertheless, many of the dilemmas focused in the 1987 report, *Sliding panels*, remained unresolved, as the 1991 conflict over cutbacks in long-term disability and sickness benefits demonstrated. Whether the processes of ongoing thematic discussion and programmatic renewal recommended by the Van Kemenade report will become regular practice remains to be seen.

The adoption of the Van Kemenade report did result in organisational changes. Municipal and regional structures were reorganised, the party council was abolished, and the size of the party congress and the frequency of its meetings were reduced. The party secretariat has also been overhauled, and changes have been made in nomination and recruitment processes.

The internal life of the PvdA also changed. By 1986, the power of radical factions had dissipated, permitting changes to be approved without substantial opposition. Moreover, participatory impulses had waned, giving leaders greater control. At the same time, a different type of leader emerged. Socio-cultural professionals remain dominant, but those with greater managerial skills have advanced.

The polarisation strategy has been abandoned, and the PvdA has assumed a more conciliatory posture, stressing its readiness to compromise. Emphasising moderation and its ability to govern, the PvdA of the early 1990s bore a closer resemblance to the PvdA of the 1950s and 1960s than the PvdA of the 1970s or early 1980s.

Although the degree of change is in some respects extensive, rates of change in this third period have been relatively slow. Processes of change were drawn out over seven years and remain incomplete. This reflects the magnitude of the task and the absence of either a firm leader insisting on change, or a well-organised faction demanding it. The process has had a passive or non-directive character. Change has occurred, but in slow degrees, brought about both by circumstances and uncertain leadership.

5. Conclusion

The Dutch Labour Party has displayed distinct patterns of change in the three periods which we have considered. The first, in the late 1950s, was leadership-directed, relatively short, and contained within a short period (although in some ways it was the culmination of a much longer process). The second, from 1967-72, was faction-driven (but accommodated by the leadership) and resulted in more extensive changes over several dimensions. The third was more hesitant, reflecting the absence of firm leadership or a well-organised faction directing the process. Changes occurred because party members became aware that they were needed, but proceeded slowly because of the leader's posture and because the PvdA organisation was not easy to change. Though still incomplete, changes have been far-reaching.

Differences both in rates and extent of change in each period reflect the degree to which a dominant coalition was in control and anxious either to promote or obstruct change. In the first period, the PvdA's *Bad Godesberg*, a dominant coalition was clearly in control. The changes made - really the culmination of earlier developments - reflect its wishes. In the second period, 1967-72, a previously dominant coalition yielded control to conflicting forces. Outcomes and rates of change reflected not only New Left pressures and designs, but also the conciliatory strategy which the previous leadership settled upon. Rapid changes reflected the predilections of the incoming - but never fully dominant - faction. More significant was the opening of the party structure to disparate forces, such as new social movements. Although turnover later ceased, the PvdA became an arena in which disparate forces - feminists, the peace movement, etc. - could find a hearing.

The third period, 1986 to 1994, has been characterised by the absence of either a well-organised faction urging or opposing changes or a determined dominant coalition willing to call the shots. Only after the appointment of the Rottenberg-Vreeman duo was control asserted. Even so, their ability to redirect the party was hampered by the aloof posture of party leader, Wim Kok. Through 1994,

the most extensive changes had been the purging of the party's list of candidates to make room for new candidates, a move backed by Kok.

The 1994 elections did not end programmatic change in the PvdA, but rather steered processes in a different direction. By early 1994, the PvdA had emerged from the 'free fall' and begun to recover somewhat in the polls. In the May, 1994 elections, the PvdA polled only 24% and lost 12 seats but were able to declare victory because the rival CDA had plummeted from 35.3% to 22.2%, losing 20 of their 54 seats in the process. Within four months, a secular cabinet, of PvdA, D66, and the VVD was formed, with Wim Kok as premier. This effectively consolidated the changes which had been underway. Solidly committed to sound fiscal management, the PvdA had returned from the adventures on which it had embarked in the late 1960s and 1970s. Changes were not as deep-rooted as some had desired, but in other respects (the powers assumed by the party chairman, Felix Rottenberg) were different than had originally been envisaged. Nevertheless, the PvdA had replanted itself solidly in the centre of the political spectrum.

The experience of the PvdA in these three periods suggests that rates and degrees of change were clearly related to a) the presence or absence of a dominant coalition, firmly in control of the party and b) the attitudes of the dominant coalition toward change. Whether the same is true of other political parties remains to be seen.

notes

1. This article was originally prepared for the ECPR Workshop on Different Rates and Types of Change in Political Parties, Madrid, April, 1994. The research is based both on published sources and interviews conducted with PvdA officials and informed observers at different intervals from 1968 through the present.

2. See A. Panebianco, *Political Parties. Organisation and power*, Cambridge, 1988 (Italian edition published in 1982), 33-45.

3. J. Bank, *Opkomst en ondergang van de Nederlandse Volks Beweging (NVB)*, Deventer, 1978, 110-113.

4. Th.J.A.M. van Lier, 'De weg naar vrijheid', in: A. Peper, *et al.*, *Wetenschappelijk socialisme. Over de plannen van SDAP en PvdA*, Amsterdam, 48-56. See also Th.J.A.M. van Lier, 'Op weg naar de verzorgingsstaat', in: J. Bank and S. Temming, eds., *Van brede visie tot smalle marge. Acht prominente socialisten over de SDAP en PvdA*, Alphen aan den Rijn, 1981.

5. W. Banning, *Kompas. Een toelichting op het Beginselprogramma van de Partij van de Arbeid*, Amsterdam, 1959, 4.

6. The categories used derive from Martin J. Bull, 'Different Rates and Types of Change in Political Parties: A Theoretical Introduction'. Paper presented at the ECPR Joint Sessions, Madrid, April 1994.

7. See J.Th.J. van den Berg and H. Molleman, *Crisis in de Nederlandse politiek*, Alphen aan den Rijn, 1974, 110-115; Steven B. Wolinetz, 'New Left and the Transformation of the Dutch Socialist Party'. Paper prepared for delivery at the 1975 Annual Meeting of the American Political Science Association, San Francisco, 1975, 24-27; and Steven B. 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.
8. See Wolinetz, 'New Left and the Transformation of the Dutch Socialist Party', 12-14; see also Hans van den Doel, *et al.*, *Tien over rood. Uitdaging van Nieuw Links aan de PvdA*, Amsterdam, 1966.
9. Van den Berg and Molleman, *op.cit.*; B. Middel, *De nieuwe elite van de PvdA*, Groningen, 1976; B. Boivin, *et al.*, *Een verjongingskuur voor de Partij van de Arbeid*, Deventer, 1978, 70-72, 76-83.
10. Van den Berg and Molleman, *op.cit.*, 120-122; Boivin, *op.cit.*, 71-76.
11. A. Peper, 'De verbeelding aan de macht', in: Bank and Temming, *op.cit.*
12. Van den Berg and Molleman, *op.cit.*, 120-122; see also Peper, 'Verbeelding', 219-222.
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