



CANON OF DUTCH
CHRISTIAN DEMOCRACY

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The Canon of Dutch Christian Democracy

'Political activity with no knowledge of history nor self-reflection is like the life of a mayfly, that leaves no past and has no future.' G. Puchinger (1981), *Ontmoetingen met antirevolutionairen (Meetings with anti-revolutionaries)*. Zutphen: Terra, p. 6.

Christian Democracy in the Netherlands has a rich history that seems to be a source of inspiration to many. After completing the Canon of Dutch Christian Democracy, this was an indisputable fact. It is remarkable how combing through archives and faded documents can inspire and produce colourful reflections. We are convinced that this Canon will be an important beacon and source of inspiration for future generations.

When Ruth Peetoom was elected CDA party chairman, she drew up a ten-point plan. One of the points was a Canon on Christian Democracy. Shortly after her inauguration as party chairman, this project was taken up by the Research Institute for the CDA and the CDA party headquarters. By the summer of 2011 a group of editors had been put together including Raymond Gradus (Director of the Research Institute of the

CDA), George Harinck (Professor of History at the VU University Amsterdam), Hans-Martien ten Napel (Lecturer in Constitutional and Administrative law at Leiden University), Alexander van Kessel (researcher at the Centre for Parliamentary History) and Karin Hoentjen (Head of Policy at the CDA Party headquarters). These editors received excellent support from Remy Luyten (trainee at the Research Institute of the CDA) and Maaikje Kamps (office manager at the Research Institute of the CDA). The objective of this editorial office was to present our heritage in forty lemmata, opening up the CDA to a wide group of interested people, both inside and outside the party.

The history of Christian Democracy

In order to understand how Christian Democracy in the Netherlands came into existence, we have taken the mid-nineteenth century as a starting point. An important date is the publication in 1847 of the book *Ongeloof en Revolutie (Unbelief and Revolution)* by Guillaume Groen van Prinsterer in which he let his religious beliefs permeate politics. To many, the legacy of Christian Democracy in the Netherlands can be traced back to Groen. In the lemmata that follow this political movement is outlined in more detail. Important milestones include the founding of the CDA (1980) and that of its predecessors ARP (1879), CHU (1908) and KVP (1945). More colour has been added to

the Canon by the inclusion of other significant events such as the establishment of the Dutch 'equipe' in Europe, and cabinets with a confessional character and confessional members. Attention is also devoted to policy issues such as ethical colonial politics, development cooperation and the new health care system in which Christian Democracy played a significant role. We also pause to look at reports that were a determining factor for Christian Democracy, such as *Grondslag en karakter (1966)*, (Principles and Character) and *Nieuwe wegen, vaste waarden (1995)* (New roads, firm values). The Canon concludes with the formation conference of October 2010. When selecting the forty lemmata, the editors have had to make choices that are certainly open to discussion. But they believe that they have succeeded in setting out a varied and historically correct account of Christian Democracy in the Netherlands.

We are grateful to the authors who all produced their own lemma with great enthusiasm while working to strict deadlines. That so many contributors, both inside and outside Christian Democratic circles, volunteered their services indicates that in every respect it has been a worthwhile undertaking to put our Christian Democratic heritage down in writing. We would also like to thank the members of the reading committee, Carla van Baalen (Professor of Parliamentary

History at Radboud University Nijmegen), Arie Oostlander (former director of the Research Institute of the CDA) and Gerrit Voerman (Professor in Development and Functioning of the Dutch and European political party systems at Groningen University), who read through the draft and provided expert commentary on its content.

Each lemma is illustrated and contains suggestions for further reading. The illustrations not only complement the text but often also tell their own story. Our thanks too, go to all the people and organisations who were prepared to search through near-forgotten archives to provide us with visual material. In particular, we would like to thank the Historical Documentation Centre for Dutch Protestantism (HDC), the Catholic Documentation Centre (KDC) and the Documentation Centre for Dutch Political Parties (DNPP) for permission to use illustrations. Remy Luyten and Maaïke Kamps added the illustrations to the lemmata, assisted by Hanneke van Os, who also took responsibility for the layout. Marcel Migo was prepared to go through the manuscript meticulously, providing commentary on its language content. The Canon is a collaboration between the Centre for European Studies and the European People's Party political foundation. A contribution was also received from the Stichting dr. Abraham Kuypersfonds. These organisations accept no responsibility for the content of the Canon. We would like to thank them all for their support,

without which this project would not have been possible.

Not the end, just the beginning

Before you lies an achievement which we, the editors, are justly proud of. We hope that the Canon of Dutch Christian Democracy will not be the end point, but more a starting point for a discussion of the importance of our Christian Democratic heritage. Together with the Steenkampinstituut, the CDA's training institute, we will look at how the Canon can be used for training purposes in the party. The Historical Documentation Centre of the VU University Amsterdam will also include the Canon in its teaching syllabus. This can lead to new insights and historical interpretations, possibly even new lemmata. We invite you to pass on your suggestions via www.cda.nl/wi or via our e-mail address: canon.wi@cda.nl. Because this is exactly what we want: history to encourage reflection and thus bring it to life.

The Canon was translated into English in summer 2012. Our thanks go to the translators Susan Hunt and Wendy Rodger. We would also like to thank Maaïke Kamps and Hanneke van Os for their editorial work and the layout.

Editorial Board, April 2012.

1847 Unbelief and Revolution

'Your majesty! In the work I humbly present to you' Groen van Prinsterer wrote on 16 Augustus 1847 to King Willem II, 'I have tried to demonstrate that fear of God, equally in constitutional and international law, is the rudiment of learning and the prerequisite of law, freedom and happiness.'

This positive description accompanied the best known book by Guillaume Groen van Prinsterer (1801-1876), the title of which however chiefly illustrated the reverse: Unbelief and Revolution. This book was the result of a series of historical lectures given in 1846 over a number of Saturday evenings in the library of Groen's house on the Korte Vijverberg in The Hague. This was not the first time he had made a causal connection between unbelief and the French Revolution, but in the winter of 1845/46 he took a closer look in order to explain the connection from a historical perspective. After his lectures proved to be a success, they were published by the Leiden publishing company Luchtmans in 1847. Since then Groen's opinion has found its way from his library to today's digital world and from his stately aristocratic language to editions in modern English and contemporary Dutch.

Unbelief and Revolution marks the beginning of the Christian Democratic tradition in the

Netherlands. The major influence of this book lies in the two beliefs that have become a distinguishing feature of this tradition. Firstly, the connection between religion and politics. To Groen, this connection was not a personal interest of his, but he believed that the very nature of religion meant that it had to be part of the political structures in society. Believing this, Groen opposed the prevailing belief at the time that although religion was morally formative for citizenship, the state administration as such lay outside the scope of religion; or more specifically: politics was the domain of reason and religion was a disruptive force that was to be barred. But by making a direct link between unbelief and revolution, Groen argued that the state could only provide law and order if the roots of its administration lay in religion. Taking this line, Christian Democracy has always claimed that religion should not be excluded from the public domain, but should play a formative role within it.

Unbelief and Revolution marks the beginning of Christian Democracy in the Netherlands

The significance of Unbelief and Revolution lies secondly in the belief that a religious background influences political actions. Ideological choices have consequences, not just when someone wants to firmly impose these,

but by the mere fact that an ideology has its own dynamic. Unbelief in the context of a revolt against God and against order in reality must, according to Groen's reasoning, lead to revolution. His book therefore also offers an insight into the nature and effects of a political ideology. From this perspective, Christian Democracy has always paid close attention to ideological motives in politics, not just its own, but also those of its political opponents. It is no surprise that Groen's work came into its own again during the Second World War: looking at the ideological motives of the occupying force, it was clear that its resulting aims could only lead to injustice and cruelty. When the Anti Revolutionary Party was forced underground in 1941, Colijn's advice was 'Regular meetings and thorough study of Unbelief and Revolution'.

Groen's Unbelief and Revolution persisted as a concept in Anti Revolutionary and Christian Historical circles until well into the twentieth century and both parties honoured him as their father. Though the Catholic political leader Schaepman in 1876 criticised the denial in Groen's adage: 'Not a statesman, but a confessor of the Gospel!' referring to it as a 'Genevan streak', today Groen is considered the progenitor of the entire Dutch Christian Democratic tradition.

George Harinck

1868 Education mandate

The Pastoral letter of 22 July 1868 on Catholic education was not only a decisive step by church leaders in the 'school struggle', but it also ushered in the beginning of political collaboration between Catholics and Protestants

Since 1806, national education had been the task of government and served to 'educate all in Christian and social virtues'. Protestants supported this ideal, because it reflected the enlightened orthodoxy that characterized the Dutch Reformed Church until the mid century; Catholics supported it because in the Catholic regions education was, in fact, Catholic. In addition, it was very important for the Catholics to participate in the development of the young nation state. Both Protestants and Catholics would be confronted with an increasingly orthodox movement from within which, in the worst case, led to divisions in the church during the Secession (1834) and the 'Doleantie' (secession of the Dutch Reformed Church) (1886), which in the second case reinforced the orientation towards 'Rome' (Ultramontanism).

After 1848, the Dutch Catholics were initially sympathetic towards the liberals, upon whose initiative freedom of religion had been anchored in the constitution. Bishops were appointed as a result of this in 1853. They sorted things out internally first - the Catholic

Netherlands had been managed from Rome for centuries as a 'mission region'. Meanwhile, Catholic sympathy for the liberals diminished. Their national participation was placed under too many liberal conditions; education based on Catholic principles, in particular, was obstructed. When threatened with losing the Papal State, Pope Pius IX became extremely anti-liberal which only reinforced their objections. His position resulted in the encyclical *Quanta Cura* (8 December 1864) with an appended list of errors (*Syllabus Errorum*). In relation to education, one error was 'that Catholics could approve of a children's education separated from the Catholic religion and the power of the Church, and where knowledge of unadorned natural things and the objectives of temporal earthly life are exclusively, or at least principally the intended aim'.

'So that children do not... miss the essential religious education'

Ultramontanism became the guiding principle of the Catholics. The ecclesiastical reorganisation was concluded in 1865 with the establishment of a Provincial (i.e. Dutch) Council which, among other things, ordained that Catholics were to send their children to Catholic schools, 'so that children do not grow up in ignorance, nor miss the essential religious education'. The orthodox Protestant *Vereniging ter Bevordering van het Christelijk Nationaal*

Schoolonderwijs (1861) and the *Union Een School met den Bijbel* (1879) preferred separate Protestant education to state education. The bishops did the same in 1868 with their education mandate. 'It is necessary that a Catholic child receives a Catholic education. One simple way to achieve this is in a Catholic school'. But they were realistic enough to admit that this was not practical everywhere: 'if need be, a non-Catholic school may be attended provided that nothing is taught in that school which is contrary to the Roman Catholic religion and morals.' This Pastoral letter also heralded the beginning of the end of the Liberal-Catholic movement in politics. Instead, Catholics and orthodox Protestants found each other in their fight for freedom of education, culminating in the People's Petition of 1878. They presented 465,000 signatures to King Willem III to block a liberally-slanted law on education that restricted free Christian education even further. The petition failed, but collaboration between Catholics and Protestants had been born.

Lodewijk Winkeler

1879 Founding of the ARP

On 3 April 1879 some thirty representatives from anti-revolutionary electoral associations, journals and greater regional associations gathered in the Kunsten en Wetenschappen building in Utrecht. Those present adopted a manifesto written by Abraham Kuyper. The first national party organisation had been born.

The founding of this first modern political party in 1879 is generally seen as a milestone in the history of the Dutch political party system, with its ideological politicizing and party political organisations. From the 1850s onwards electoral associations became established throughout the country that were linked to Groen van Prinsterer, who fought for the adoption of the antirevolutionary principle: 'The Gospel against the revolution'. Political parties did not yet exist. At the very most, there were political schools of thought that came into being because members of parliament took a stance on political issues. There were three main movements: liberal, conservative and anti-revolutionary. Catholics mainly supported the conservative or liberal schools of thought.

Members of parliament acted independently, separate to parliamentary parties or party organisations. From 1850 onwards, there were electoral associations that strived to get their preferred members of parliament elected. The

Netherlands had a district system which meant that elections were a local affair. After a while, the name of an electoral association or its slogan indicated its political flavour. For instance, an electoral association called 'Constitution' was liberal, an association called 'Fatherland and King' was conservative and one called 'Defending freedom, supported by the Bible' was anti-revolutionary. Collaboration between antirevolutionary electoral associations within an electoral district was limited to discussions on the joint nomination of a candidate. The bond that did exist was the mutual link with Groen van Prinsterer and the gradual clarification of opinions. The catalyst in this process was the struggle for positive Christian education. The anti-revolutionaries turned their backs on the notion of an ideologically neutral school and aimed for schools with a clear religious character. Initially they pursued this aim through the neutral public schools and later through private schools. Everyone should have the right to raise their children according to their own beliefs. Which explains the anti-revolutionary electoral associations with names like 'Freedom and Justice' and 'Justice for all'. In 1869 a national committee led by Baron De Geer van Jutphaas from Utrecht made an inventory of all linked electoral associations and the first nationally coordinated campaign began. Two years later, Groen van Prinsterer broke with the conservative members of parliament and argued that only three parliamentary

candidates could bear the predicate 'anti-revolutionary', one of those being Kuyper. In the meantime, Kuyper devoted himself to the formal merging of all anti-revolutionary electoral associations, firstly via the 'Anti-School Law League' (an organisation that wanted to change the constitution so that private education would be the norm, rather than non-denominational public education) and later via an interim central committee of anti-revolutionary electoral associations.

At the time the ARP was founded a manifesto was adopted containing the anti-revolutionary constitutional principles, as well as draft regulations for the central committee of anti-revolutionary electoral associations. From then on prospective members of parliament had to endorse the manifesto. These developments provided an impetus for both the idealization and democratization of politics. The anti-revolutionaries brought the political debate out of the upper echelons of society and made it accessible to all who were sympathetic to the principles of the party organisation and who wanted to be part of it. Political participation no longer depended on background and social status; agreeing with the party manifesto was what counted.

Rienk Janssens

1883 Proeve van een program

'Like the first steps of a newly-hatched chick out in the field', is how in 1883 H.J.A.M. Schaepman - priest, politician, poet and professor of church history - described in well-chosen yet modest words, his attempt with his Proeve van een program to outline a programme for a new Catholic party.

'This "Trial Programme" is indeed no more than just that. Life, with all its struggles and changes, is reflected here in full', Schaepman said almost diffidently. And indeed, the actual Trial contains only seventeen articles covering six pages; the rest of the book - just less than a hundred pages long - is taken up with explanatory notes. The Trial itself is also rather searching in tone; at times not even consistent. It sets out the contours of a rudimentary party – both its principles and programme. No other document has had more influence on the development of the Catholic party political system in the Netherlands, even though it was not until one year after the death of Schaepman in 1903 that a national organisation of Catholic electoral associations was set up, and it took until 1926 before the desired party organisation was in place.

This development was a slow process. For a long time, Schaepman had been a progressive loner in a conservative group that was hindered by the conservatism of the episcopate and by

Schaepman's own awkward character. The bishops and many conservative Catholics did not believe in collaborating with Protestants. Inspired by the German Zentrum (and fearful of anti-Catholic reactions) Schaepman, however, did not strive for a Catholic 'religious party' but rather a broad Christian middle party, in principle. Even though he must have realized that such cooperation with the Protestant 'traditional enemy' would by no means be possible at that time and that the German example, which was interdenominational in theory, was actually a Catholic party in practice. But this was the only opportunity he saw to give Catholic 'outsiders' a place in the Dutch political arena. This was how Schaepman introduced the notion of a Christian coalition: 'This is why they (the Catholics) want a political programme, a programme that does not place them in opposition to the Protestants, but in opposition to the Liberals and Conservatives who in vague terms espouse liberal principles and practise them half-heartedly; a programme that is anti-revolutionary through and through, but which acknowledges its own roots, shows its true colour, and is true to its character.' And he spoke to the anti-revolutionaries with the words: 'In the struggle against the revolutionary State we wish to see you fighting on our side. We can forgive your discourtesies... Because this means everything to us.' In other words: the Catholic programme had to be attractive to orthodox Protestants as well.

The Trial was a fine example of compromise and power politics

The well-known Catholic historian L.J. Rogier described the Proeve as 'ingenious, almost perversely ingenious'. Schaepman offered Abraham Kuyper ten thousand Catholic votes that in the district system would otherwise be worthless, and further speculated that he could persuade his religious companions to vote antirevolutionary as long as it was needed and as often as he asked. In that sense, the Proeve was a fine example of compromise and power politics. With it Schaepman knew how to tempt the anti-revolutionaries, and Kuyper in particular, into a coalition which would eventually give Dutch Catholics the powerful political position they desired.

Jan Ramakers

1888 Mackay cabinet takes office

In 1888 the first Christian coalition cabinet took office: the Mackay cabinet. After years of strife between them the Catholics and anti-revolutionaries had formed a 'monster union' and won the election, leading to an unprecedented situation in Dutch politics. This cabinet's most significant achievements were the 1889 Labour Act and the Mackay Act providing subsidies for private education.

The election of 1888 was held following the constitutional amendment of 1887. As a result of this amendment, the number of voters rose from 12 to 24 per cent of the adult male population. The Catholics and anti-revolutionaries formed a union: in the districts they would vote for each other's candidates to prevent their political opponents, the Liberals, from winning.

'Private education, introduced and developed as a result of private initiatives, should be supported by the State'

The Mackay cabinet comprised four anti-revolutionaries, two Catholics and two Conservatives. The most important results of

this cabinet were in the fields of education and social legislation. Since 1848, at the initiative of the Liberals, freedom of education had been included in the Constitution: everyone had the right to set up a school. But private schools were not entitled to government funding: the Liberals thought this was contrary to the Constitution. And so Christian or Catholic schools were in an unfavourable competitive position compared to the non-denominational public schools which were financed by the government. For many decades attempts had been made to rectify this situation.

The Mackay Act of 1889 ensured that an equal amount of treasury funding was provided for private schools as was already being spent on public schools. However there was no equality in the amount of funding from local governments. In practice this meant that only a third of the costs were covered. Pupils at private schools accounted for 27 per cent of the total. In the explanatory memorandum the government considered this to be good news: 'the large increase in private schools demonstrates how much parents appreciate this type of education for their children. Private education, that was introduced and developed as a result of private initiatives, should be supported by the state, instead of being opposed. The state has a significant interest in the education of the public and is only able to ensure that there is a public school available everywhere and at all times. But it is certainly

not its mission to obstruct private education nor to hinder it to the disadvantage of the nation's progress.'

In the area of social legislation, the cabinet established the 1889 Labour Act. The Roman Catholic Minister of Justice G.L.M.H. Ruijs van Beerenbroek was responsible for this. Until then there had only been one social Act: the Van Houten Child Labour Act (1874). It was generally acknowledged that there were social abuses everywhere. The pressing question for the confessional parties was whether it was up to the government to combat this. The Labour Act of 1889 answered this question unequivocally: the Act contained provisions to stop excessive and dangerous use of child and female labour.

The significance of the Mackay cabinet was not just its achievements in education and social legislation. New political relationships developed in which Catholics and anti-revolutionaries worked together for the first time in a cabinet with the Liberals in opposition: right-wing against left-wing.

Andries Postma

1891 Christian Social Congress and Rerum Novarum

'Thou shalt not kill, nor kill the worker socially.' More than a thousand congress attendees listened with bated breath to Kuyper's opening address at the Christian Social Congress. Both this conference, organised in November 1891 by Dutch Protestants, and the encyclical Rerum Novarum published in the same year, form a reference point and a rich source of inspiration in the Christian-Social tradition.

A deep economic recession and the lack of social and political reform caused great social unrest in the last decade of the nineteenth century. There was a series of strikes, protesting unemployed workers marched through the streets, and the police and military police were forced to take a tough stance throughout the country. Protestant leaders were worried because they appeared to be losing their grip on the nation. Many workers appeared to be susceptible to the revolutionary propaganda coming from what was often fiercely atheistic socialism. Although there seemed to be less 'fermentation' among Dutch Catholic workers, fellow believers with a social conscience realized the seriousness of the social issue and Rerum Novarum formed an important inspiration in this matter.

The Dutch Workers Union Patrimonium founded in 1876 – orthodox Protestant in character and the largest labour union in those days – recognized the appeal of the left. As a result it wanted to see the process of finally giving the working class a political voice and improving their living conditions through social legislation speeded up. The anti-revolutionary leader Abraham Kuyper realized that he had to choose: either for the Conservative gentlemen with the doublebarrelled names or for the Protestant ordinary folk. By organising a social congress, Kuyper opted for the people and in this way hoped to keep the Protestant workers on board. The congress took place from 9-12 November 1891 in the Frascati Theatre in Amsterdam. Although the Social Congress adopted important resolutions – it recognized, for example, the long disputed right to strike – Kuyper's opening address, 'The social issue and the Protestant religion', remains the most well known. The Social Congress was an important source of inspiration to Protestant Christian Social leaders such as Rev. A.S. Talma and CNV chairman M. Ruppert.

Finally the process of giving the working class a political voice was hastened

Kuyper's speech, often applauded as a masterpiece, became a classic in Christian Social thinking because of its 'structural criticism' of society. He particularly condemned

the consequences of the French Revolution which had undermined the Christian cultural foundations and traditional social alliances such as the guilds. Pope Leo XIII had already in that year in the encyclical Rerum Novarum put forward an organic model of society as opposed to the liberal laissez faire and individualism. This Catholic social teaching influenced Catholics such as A.M.A.J. Ariëns, P.J.M. Aalberse and H.A. Poels.

Despite their differences in religious background, terminology and language, Kuyper and Pope Leo XIII basically wanted the same: to block liberalism that left the worker in the cold, and socialism that drove the worker into the harness of the class system. Kuyper and Leo XIII wanted to give both Protestant and Catholic workers, as orthodox believers and respected citizens, a place in the modern, plural societies that were emerging in Europe. Kuyper's speech and the Rerum Novarum have remained celebrated because they did not deal with concrete situations and solutions in any great detail. As a result they became timeless documents that have inspired generations of Christian Social thinkers and practitioners, and to which they could turn.

Rolf van der Woude '

1894 Rift within the ARP

The battle surrounding extending the right to vote during the April 1894 election led to a rift within the ARP. After the election, eight of the fifteen elected anti-revolutionaries united under the leadership of A.F. de Savornin Lohman in a separate parliamentary party. This led to the founding of the Christelijk-Historische Unie (Christian Historical Union) in 1908.

There were various causes for the rift within the ARP. Firstly, the immediate cause: extending the right to vote. Kuyper stated that he was in favour of this to the extent permitted by the Constitution. His opponents were against it and moreover stood by the anti-revolutionary position on the right to vote for heads of families. There was also a personal dimension to the conflict. For some time there had been friction between Kuyper, party leader and ideologist who put principle first, and Lohman who, as a member of parliament, was more open to political feasibility. The differences between the two men grew after Lohman joined the Mackay cabinet in 1890 against Kuyper's wishes.

Fundamental differences in political views played a role in the background to the conflict. Lohman and his allies were part of the tradition surrounding dignitaries in the nineteenth century. The political party was subordinate to

the parliamentary party and the representatives were not in the House primarily to represent the interests of the party, but the general interest. This view clashed with that of Kuyper, who saw the parliamentary party as subordinate to the political party and wanted to lead both from outside the House. This difference between the conservative '*droite*' and the more democratic '*gauche*' ran parallel with social differences. Most of the highbred members of parliament within the ARP, the 'gentlemen' with the double-barrelled names, belonged to the '*droite*'.

Kuyper saw the parliamentary party as subordinate to the political party

Although Lohman had left the Dutch Reformed Church together with Kuyper at the time of the 'Doleantie' in 1886 and had become Christian Reformed, the differences between Dutch Reformed and Christian Reformed did play a part in their rift. Dutch Reformed anti-revolutionaries mostly followed Lohman, and the Christian Reformed remained with Kuyper and the ARP. Kuyper's democratic vision appealed to the Dutch Reformed and they remained true to the leader of the 'Doleantie'. The political battle became caught up in the religious battle, so that alongside the mainly Christian Reformed ARP, an almost entirely Dutch Reformed Christian Historical Union (CHU) was formed. The CHU stood for the unity

of the Dutch nation. The party was opposed to the antithesis of Kuyper who contrasted Christian ideology with non-Christian, modern ideology. In Christian historical thinking, the two essential characteristics of the Dutch nation were Protestantism as evolved in the Dutch Reformed Church and the House of Orange; both fruits of God's leadership throughout history. The CHU rejected majority rule. The Netherlands was not Protestant because the majority of the population were Protestant, but because of its history and because the Protestant notion of freedom was embedded in the Constitution. This view was concisely expressed by the slogan 'Not the majority, but the authority'.

The importance that the CHU attached to the unity of the nation meant that the government had to represent the interests of all parties. A single party vision did not fit with the views of the CHU. As no constitutional policy could be derived from the Bible, Christians were free to take differing views. The notion of party discipline had no place here, so CHU members of parliament were free to vote differently. In addition, the CHU was pro-government because the government was God's servant and an attitude of distrust was not befitting.

Ron de Jong

1901 The Kuyper cabinet

'The case is clear to us: shut out the Roman Catholics from present-day Christianity, then Protestant Christianity will be bound hand and foot, and forever at the mercy of the unbelieving majority, and all resistance to the revolutionary principle will be purposeless', Kuyper said in his address to delegates on 17 April 1901.

After the fall of the Mackay cabinet in 1891, it would be another ten years before a new coalition cabinet, the Kuyper cabinet, was formed. The reason was partly the divisions in anti-revolutionary and Catholic circles. The cabinet was formed after the election in which the confessional parties (right wing) had won no less than 58 of the total of 100 seats. Kuyper, who had gradually cast aside his initial reservations with regard to working with the Catholics, defended the new coalition by referring to the notion 'Antithesis'. He believed that when entering into a political union, the leading question ought to be whether a certain group wished to acknowledge the sovereignty of God as the leading principle in the constitution. Considered in this light, Protestants and Catholics, though acting as separate organisations, were politically more dependent on each other than one might initially expect on the grounds of their religious beliefs and history.

The Kuyper cabinet, that took office on 1 August 1901, developed important legislation in the field of education. Its Higher Education Act, giving graduates from the VU University Amsterdam, founded by Kuyper in 1880, the same rights as students who graduated from a state university, was initially rejected as a bill by the Upper House of the Dutch parliament. But when the Upper House was dissolved by Kuyper, the Liberals lost their majority. However when the cabinet submitted the rejected bill once more, it was adopted by both Houses.

In contrast, there was significantly less progress in the field of social legislation, possibly because during the cabinet formation the Department of Employment was placed under Kuyper's Ministry of Home Affairs which also included Education. It is also likely that the tension between Kuyper's vision of an organic society on the one hand, and the social reality on the other, was an aggravating factor. The vision of an organic society required a restrained approach by government. Civil society had also not fully matured and was to some extent even intractable.

The manner in which the cabinet reacted to the rail strikes in 1903 also did little to contribute to its social standing. The cabinet did not submit bills to the Lower House to forbid civil servants and rail workers from striking in writing, as was customary, but in person on behalf of the Queen. After a failed new rail strike these

'coercive acts' were adopted in quick succession.

As a result the disparity between the confessionals and the socialists grew. In more general terms too, the cabinet went on to become one of the most controversial cabinets in the political history of the Netherlands. The election contest in 1905 was completely dominated by support for Kuyper or not. When the left wing joined forces during the re-count, the right wing came no further than 48 seats. On 3 July 1905 the Kuyper cabinet handed in its resignation. Following a short intermezzo, the Heemskerk cabinet (1908-1913) became the third and last coalition cabinet before World War One broke out. As with the previous Kuyper cabinet, in addition to support from the anti-revolutionaries and Catholics, this cabinet enjoyed the loyal support of the Christian Historical members of parliament.

Hans-Martien ten Napel

1902 Ethical politics

In 1902 A.W.F. Idenburg became Minister for the Colonies in the Kuyper cabinet. Idenburg, an anti-revolutionary, based his policy on the principles of ethical politics, as previously formulated by Kuyper. The development of the Dutch East Indies and the 'uplifting' of its population became the guiding principle of Dutch colonial policy.

In 1879 Abraham Kuyper had already called for a radical change in the policy on the colonies. Until then, the Dutch East Indies had primarily been viewed as a colony that provided for a 'surplus' on the Dutch budget and delivered huge profits to the Dutch cultuurmaatschappijen (estate management companies). Kuyper believed that the exploitation of the Dutch East Indies for the benefit of the Dutch public treasury had to come to an end. He wrote in Ons program - the young Anti-revolutionary Party's manifesto - that the Netherlands had a 'moral duty' to educate the people of the Dutch East Indies as a selfless guardian. Throughout this process, the guardian was to manage the property of the pupil. The ultimate objective remained: independence of the pupil. (Thereby implicitly acknowledging the finite nature of the colonial relationship!)

Besides Kuyper, others like Multatuli in his book Max Havelaar and liberal politicians like Van

Deventer had strongly criticized the exploitation of the Dutch East Indies. In a controversial article 'Een eereschuld' (A Debt of Honour), Van Deventer had called for repayment of the money that had been siphoned-off from the Dutch East Indies to the Netherlands. In the Queen's speech of 1901 which marked the beginning of the Kuyper cabinet's term of office, Kuyper's views were officially declared to be a part of government policy. The Netherlands had a 'moral obligation' towards the Dutch East Indies. Idenburg, who had become a member of parliament in 1901 following a military career in Indonesia, expressed this in his own words as the 'uplifting of the native population'. To him this also meant the conversion of the Dutch East Indies to Christianity.

Four terms are often used to summarize ethical politics: pacification, irrigation, emigration and education. Education and medical assistance were organized and extended. There was an investigation into the causes of poverty. A resolute welfare policy was set up with special attention devoted to the construction of roads, railway tracks and harbours. Irrigation works enlarged the acreage for the cultivation of rice and native agriculture and industry was stimulated through providing loans, information, as well as technical and agricultural education. A labour inspectorate was introduced to offer labourers ('coolies') some form of protection. The Javanese were to be encouraged to leave their over-populated

island and live elsewhere. The Netherlands took over 40 million Dutch guilders of debt from the Dutch East Indies. Where in the outlying regions Dutch authority did not yet prevail, this would systematically be implemented. This was the context for the first term referred to above: 'pacification'. In practice, this entailed a series of expeditions, which in some cases - in Aceh for example - led to a massacre. This made the ethical policy duplicitous. To the 'ethicists' of the day, the colonial expeditions were a logical step: the 'uplifting' of the population could only be achieved provided that the 'pax neerlandica' had first been established. A second duplicity concerned education. Western education for the native elite would become a breeding ground for nationalists who had only one ideal: independence. In other words, ethical politics supplied the weapons with which the Dutch would later be opposed. Many, particularly in business circles, would hear nothing of independence for Indonesia and became increasingly fierce in their opposition to the ethical policy. This would irrevocably lead to the dissolution of Dutch authority.

It is certain that Idenburg also bore this possibility in mind. Nevertheless, he genuinely looked forward to the 'awakening' of the native society.

Herman Smit

1917 Pacification

'Our nation's history tells us, that discord exists where heterogeneous elements are squeezed into one and the same straitjacket; but when everyone, within the limits of order, of course, is given freedom and allowed to do as they please, then we can all live together in tolerance', according to Minister Baron Æ. Mackay in 1889 in the Upper House.

When the Mackay Act was passed in 1889, an important problem was removed from the school funding issue. The Act accepted the principle that private education could be subsidized by the government. It would still take until 1917, however, during the so-called Pacification, before there would be total equality between public and private education. The direct background to the Pacification goes back to 1913, when during the election of that year 55 non-confessional (left-wing) members were elected and the right wing came no further than 45 seats. A cabinet under the leadership of the Liberal Prime Minister, P.W.A. Cort van der Linden came into office. To achieve a permanent solution to the issue of school funding, an education committee was established on which all groups represented in parliament had a seat, with De Savornin Lohman as vice-chairman. The committee succeeded in 1916 in almost unanimously arriving at the recommendation in its report

that private schools should henceforth be put on the same footing as public schools. Honouring this traditional right-wing wish cleared the way to introduce the left-wing desire for universal suffrage for men and passive suffrage for women. In addition, the constitutional obstruction to women's suffrage would be removed.

The combined proposals were considered to be so important that the parties agreed among themselves that at the next election the composition of the Lower House would, as far as possible, remain unchanged. And this made it possible, after certain sections had been amended during the first reading, for the bill to be passed with no problems in the autumn of 1917 at the second reading. Partly influenced by the principle of pluralism that had been established for education by the constitutional revision of 1917, in the following years the Netherlands went on to acquire the characteristics of what could be called a pluriform democracy in other areas. The state developed respect for the various religious and secular ideologies in society and their affiliated organisations in a steadily increasing number of areas, such as broadcasting, while at the same time maintaining a distance.

In this way, either consciously or unconsciously, the lesson had been learned from the nation's history that Mackay had pointed out in 1889. Until then, the problem had been that the state

did not offer the four minorities that had come to the fore in the course of the nineteenth century – Protestants, Catholics, Liberals and Socialists – an equal right to shape their identity, also in the public domain. After the Pacification in 1917, Protestants and Catholics, and others, were given ample opportunity to do so, thereby marking a pivotal moment in the political history of the Netherlands. Meanwhile, the constitutional revision in 1917 had also changed the electoral system making it easier for smaller factions to successfully take part in elections. The 'first past the post' system with districts was replaced by a system of proportional representation in which the entire country was a constituency. One of the consequences of this was the founding of the Staatkundig-Gereformeerde Partij (Political Reformed Party) (SGP). After the general election of 1918, partly due to the stronger representation of Catholics, the coalition controlled exactly half the seats in the Lower House.

Hans-Martien ten Napel

1922 The last resort

At the General Meeting of the Association of RC National Electoral District Organisations in May 1922, W.H. Nolens, party chairman in the Lower House, declared that only in the last resort would the Catholic parliamentary party collaborate with the Sociaal-Democratische Arbeiderspartij (SDAP) (Social Democratic Workers' Party) in government. This 'doctrine of the last resort' was applied negatively during the cabinet formations of 1925 and 1935 and positively in 1939 when for, the first time, two social democrats joined the cabinet.

Nolens' statement was in reaction to the proposal of the Association Board to forbid collaboration with the SDAP. The bishops had already done this the previous year. The reason was the failed 'coup d'état' by SDAP leader P.J. Troelstra in November 1918. The SDAP was therefore prepared to revolt; it was also against the monarchy, in favour of disarmament and – worst of all – irreligious. Sharing power with such a party in government had to be ruled out. The Catholic parliamentary party in the Lower House, however, did not want its hands tied by the Association Board and the episcopate. At the Association meeting of May 1922, parliamentary party member D.A.P.N. Koolen managed to have the Association's proposal amended: collaboration between only Catholics and social democrats was out of the question.

Nolens then took the opportunity to add that the necessity to collaborate should not be provoked, that one or more other parties had to participate and that the parliamentary party should be unanimous. And in this way the door to collaboration was left ajar.

The background to the intervention of the parliamentary party was the concern that by excluding the SDAP, they would become totally dependent on the ARP, the CHU and the Liberals, while in the areas of social security and industrial organisation, for example, better results could perhaps be achieved with the SDAP. Besides this, there were some in the parliamentary party and in the Association too, who would prefer to work with the SDAP, which would make secession not unthinkable if the door were to be shut completely. Nothing less than Catholic political unity was at stake and at a time when the Association was in the middle of a difficult transformation to turn it into a united, centrally run party, which would only be complete with the founding of the Roman Catholic State Party (RKSP) in 1926.

**The parliamentary party
in the Lower House did not
want its hands tied by
the episcopate**

In 1925 the Christian coalition fell as a result of the closure of the Dutch embassy to the Holy See (the Vatican crisis). The left wing had

cooperated for strategic reasons – to break the Christian coalition. The Catholic parliamentary party took this as a classic example of provocation and therefore blocked a cabinet with the social democrats. In 1935 the Catholic parliamentary party forced a cabinet crisis itself due to dissatisfaction with the measures to reduce unemployment, but were unable to find a third party to form a cabinet with the social democrats. They succeeded four years later in 1939, because in the meantime the SDAP, partly under the influence of the fascist threat and the global economic crisis, had declared that it felt that it definitely had some responsibility for the state of current society and had removed certain ideological obstacles.

During the formation of coalitions in the period since the war, with or without the social democrats, the doctrine of the last resort has sometimes been used as an explanation or justification both inside and outside Christian democratic circles. However, this fails to recognize the original intention of the last resort: leaving the door open for collaboration with the social democrats, not shutting it.

Jac Bosmans

1925 Vatican crisis

On the night of 10 November 1925, SGP member Kersten, supported by the CHU, tabled an amendment opposing the budget of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, in order to have the Dutch embassy to the Holy See closed. The next morning, the proposed amendment to the budget was adopted by 52 votes to 42.

For the Catholic ministers, this was a reason to resign which led to the fall of the first Colijn cabinet. The controversy about the embassy – that in 1920 had been converted from a temporary to a permanent diplomatic mission – was one of the ‘Roman Catholic’ issues which completely divided the Christian coalition partners in the period 1918-1925. While the leaders of the antirevolutionaries were constantly trying to temper the unrest surrounding advancing Catholicism, it seemed that the CHU leaders – partly for electoral reasons – wanted to stir it up.

Many Protestants were very worried about the prevailing Catholic triumphalism prompted by the advance of Catholics at this time. Catholic propaganda and missionary activities, the founding of a Catholic university and the appointment of Roman Catholics to important administrative and legal positions, among other things, all led to a mounting call for a Protestant response. Before the general

election of 1925 the CHU had declared that it would again strive for the removal of the Dutch diplomatic mission in the Vatican.

Nevertheless, the CHU took its seat once again in a confessional coalition cabinet in August 1925, now chaired by the anti-revolutionary Colijn. As in previous years, during the debate on the budget of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs an amendment was tabled opposing the embassy. The proposer, Kersten, substantiated the proposed amendment with the familiar orthodox Protestant objections. The diplomatic mission was an ‘affront to the Calvinist character of the Dutch nation’, because it implied a recognition of the ecclesiastical power of the Pope. If there was support for the amendment from one of the two coalition partners, the Catholic participation in the cabinet would be endangered. The amendment was adopted with support from the CHU parliamentary party.

This time the support from the left wing was more important than the division between the overwhelmingly ‘reformed’ ARP and the mainly orthodox-reformed CHU. Liberals, liberal democrats, social democrats and communists all sided with Kersten’s proposed amendment. Not that they agreed with the reasons given by the devout Reformed minister – most members of parliament did not find his objections to be very convincing and actually saw the value of the diplomatic post at the Vatican. This was a

deliberate attempt to bring down the coalition cabinet.

A few months later CHU member De Geer succeeded in putting together a cabinet without a parliamentary majority. In March 1926, the item in question on the Ministry of Foreign Affairs’ budget was again submitted to the House for approval. Once again it was rejected, this time by 48 votes to 41 and so the embassy to the Holy See came to an end.

This event is referred to in the history books as ‘Kersten’s Night’, but the crisis should really be named after the Christian Historical (CHU) parliamentary party in the Lower House because it had not been willing to put aside its anti-Catholic objections and by supporting the amendment had brought down the cabinet. The Vatican crisis did nothing to improve relations. Despite the parliamentary majority that the three confessional parties enjoyed up until the 1960s, there has never been a fully confessional coalition cabinet since 1925.

Jonn van Zuthem

1936 Colijn and the Gold Standard

In 1936, after a protracted struggle, Prime Minister H. Colijn had to let go of what he had proudly reinstated 11 years before: the Gold Standard. There was a great deal of discussion surrounding the wisdom of whether or not to maintain the link between the Dutch guilder and the Gold Standard.

The Gold Standard is a system whereby the value of a currency is represented by a fixed weight of gold. This fixes the currency rates between the participating countries. The central banks are required to hold sufficient reserves of the precious metal or another currency covered by gold to act as a guarantee. Like many countries in western Europe, in the 1870s the Netherlands introduced the Gold Standard. During World War One however, along with other nations, it too had suspended the link. In 1925 the Netherlands reinstated it, shortly after Germany and at the same time as Great Britain. ARP leader Hendrik Colijn was Finance Minister in the Ruijs de Beerenbrouck cabinet II at the time, and he prided himself that this reinstatement was largely due to his stringent austerity policy.

In response to the global crisis which broke out in 1929, Great Britain and the Scandinavian countries left the Gold Standard again in September 1931 and in some cases their

currency lost a quarter of its value. Other countries throughout the world followed suit. The cabinets Ruijs de Beerenbrouck III (1929-1933) and Colijn II and III (1933-1937) decided not to leave the Standard, with their main argument being that devaluation was currency forgery. Eventually, only France, Switzerland and the Netherlands were still in the 'gold block'.

The result was an expensive guilder that undermined the Netherlands' competitive position. To offset this, the Colijn cabinets opted for 'corrections' i.e. lowering pay and benefits in order to hold down prices. Civil servants, teachers and those on benefits particularly suffered as a result, while it was economically counterproductive because it reduced the purchasing power of these groups. This was also the effect of other cuts that the government considered necessary. A balanced national budget continued to be the requirement. Colijn remained deaf to the many liberal and social democratic economists, business leaders and politicians who began to argue the case for devaluation, often in a personal capacity because their parties were divided. In Catholic circles too, resistance to the government policy was growing. This put a strain on the relationship between the Catholics and Protestants but did not go so far as to cause a rift between the RKSP and ARP/CHU, which would have led to a coalition with SDAP. RKSP Finance Minister M.P.L. Steenberghe was

therefore forced to step down in 1935, after calling in vain for the Netherlands to follow the devaluation of the Belgian franc.

The government only relented after France proceeded to devalue its currency on Friday 25 September 1936 and the Dutch government was informed confidentially a day later that Switzerland would be following the French example. On the morning of Sunday 27 September the world was notified that the Netherlands would be the last country to leave the Gold Standard. In the days that followed, the guilder lost around 20 per cent of its value and the Netherlands could try to catch up with the upward trend in the world economy.

Contemporaries and historians have discussed at length whether it was wise to be so resolute in holding on to the Gold Standard. The accepted view now is that the economic and social consequences were serious and that compared with countries that were economically similar and had left the Standard in 1931, the Netherlands did far worse in terms of the intensity and duration of the crisis. Conversely, Colijn with his image of the strong man defending the 'safe guilder', i.e. savings and pension funds, appears to have taken the wind out of the sails of the extreme right wing in the Netherlands.

Paul Werkman

1943 Founding of Trouw

On 30 January 1943, the underground ARP was given a voice in the form of the newspaper Trouw. The illegal newspaper shaped the Christian resistance and also witnessed several dramatic developments. Towards the end of the war Trouw sought closer cooperation between the ARP and CHU.

The ARP had gone 'underground' on 30 June 1941 when the political parties were banned by the German occupying force. Under the leadership of its uncompromising chairman in the Lower House, Jan Schouten, it was turned into an extensive illegal network. From this position there was a mounting call in 1942 for an 'own' resistance newspaper that would urge the orthodox Protestant Netherlands to put up a fight 'on principle'. A stand had to be taken against both the nazification of the Netherlands and the point of view held in other illegal circles that after the liberation everything would be different and better. Because what grounds were there for this optimism given the large numbers of people that toed the German line?

There was a mounting call for a resistance newspaper that would urge the orthodox Protestant Netherlands to put up a fight

The date on which Trouw was established is the day that the anti-revolutionary founders,

including Schouten and the post-war editor-in-chief Sieuwert Bruins Slot, gave the underground newspaper its final name. The first edition had already appeared under the provisional name of Oranjebode and was distributed by a group in the resistance organised around Wim Speelman, the son of a minister, who had previously been involved in the distribution of Vrij Nederland. By the end of 1942, differences of opinion concerning the content of the paper and the organisation ended in a rift with editor-in-chief Henk van Randwijk.

Following Schouten's arrest in April 1943, Bruins Slot became the editor-in-chief of Trouw. The newspaper expanded to become one of the largest illegal papers, not least due to the widespread distribution system of Speelman and his network. Though people of other denominations also worked on Trouw and even gave their lives for it, the newspaper was seen as the voice of the underground ARP. The allied CHU had no illegal organisation. Even before its dissolution at the end of 1941, the CHU – traditionally more loosely organised – was already ailing, not least due to the arrest of its party chairman Hendrik Tilanus in October 1940. A number of prominent CHU members who before the war had gathered around the Christian-Historic newspaper De Nederlander, became caught up in the spirit of reform that Trouw was fighting for and started to urge for a

'breakthrough' in the old political, social and religious affiliations.

In August 1944 Trouw witnessed the most dramatic hour of its existence. Twenty-three distributors were arrested and executed by firing squad, after the newspaper's management had rejected a German ultimatum to cease publication of Trouw. An investigation later, however, showed that the fate of those arrested had already been sealed even before rejection of the ultimatum. With the liberation in view, Trouw took the lead in its columns in advocating for the founding of a Christian People's Party which would bring together the ARP and CHU. In a number of articles, Bruins Slot gave the merged party a distinctly progressive profile, condemning the social and economic policy that had been introduced in the 1930s under Colijn. The amalgamated party would work towards a society based on the Bible with more concern for the socially disadvantaged, a fairer distribution of incomes and 'work for all'. The progressive merger message was received enthusiastically by supporters in the distribution network, but was vetoed by Schouten after the liberation. 'I haven't changed', said the anti-revolutionary leader after his return from the concentration camp.

Peter Bak

1945 Founding of the KVP

The Katholieke Volkspartij (Catholic People's Party) was founded on Saturday 22 December 1945 in the freezing cold parish hall of the St. Antoniuskerk in Utrecht. To distinguish it from the RKSP, the KVP would be a party not just with principles but also a manifesto, and it would also be open to non-Catholics. But in practice, it continued in the tradition of the RKSP as a united party for Catholics.

Though the ARP and CHU became active again soon after the liberation, the leaders of the RKSP realized that the Catholic party would not be able to return to what it was. More than among Protestants, the discussion that had been started by the Nederlandse Volksbeweging (NVB) (Dutch People's Movement) had gained momentum among Catholics. The NVB, set up in the internment camp at St. Michielsgestel and founded in May 1945, wanted to replace the pre-war sectarian society with one in which people would no longer organise themselves socially, culturally and politically on religious and ideological grounds, but more on the basis of a set of principles.

This ambitious new direction encountered resistance in all segments of society. Among the old elite there was little willingness to change the status quo. In the Catholic

Netherlands daily life was firmly focused on recovery. On the instruction of the bishops in the liberated South, the social and cultural structure returned and after May 1945 the rest of the country followed. Developments were similar in other socio-political groups too. The scope for a new direction was therefore limited to the political arena which the bishops had not commented on. The discussion in the NVB was thus focused on a new party system with parties with a clear party programme and with Christianity and Humanism as sources of inspiration. This struck a chord mainly with young Catholics, who during the occupation had grouped around the illegal journals *Je Maintiendrai* and *Christofoor*. Their leader J.E. de Quay, one of the three men from the Nederlandse Unie (Netherlands Union), was one of the co-signatories to the NVB manifesto. It was clear to the leaders of the RKSP that a Catholic political organisation remained essential, but they recognized the risk that by simply re-establishing the pre-war party they would deter many young people. To channel the discussion on the nature of the new party, in the summer of 1945 the Centrum voor Staatkundige Vorming (Centre for Political Education) was set up. This Centre appeared to act as a safety net for Catholic NVB supporters who felt snubbed by the NVB because their idol De Quay was refused membership of the central board because of his prominent role in the Nederlandse Unie. De Quay himself was persuaded to become chairman of a committee

at the Centre that would advise on how Catholics should act in politics. When at the end of September 1945 this committee came out in favour of acting independently in politics, the argument was decided.

In the following months, passionate debates were held in the RKSP on the direction and name for the new party, which resulted in the founding of the KVP. On 22 December, in the icy cold 'delivery room', the RKSP leaders achieved their goal: a new party of their own for Catholics. But not everyone was equally enthusiastic. Some Catholics still preferred the outcome of the discussions within the NVB: the Partij van de Arbeid (Labour Party) dominated by socialdemocrats.

At the first post-war elections, in May 1946, it became clear that a similar breakthrough was not feasible in the political arena. The results showed that the balance of power between the political movements was unchanged. Another example of the power of the recovery, was that the ARP and CHU had even rejected collaboration in the form of a federation.

Jac Bosmans

1950 Industrial Organisation Act

After decades of political and ideological discussion between confessionals, liberals and socialists, in 1950 the Netherlands finally had a Statutory Industrial Organisation (PBO), established by the Industrial Organisation Act. However, this intensely fought political compromise between the KVP and PvdA would be short lived. The dream faltered because of the changed social and economic reality.

In reaction to social abuses in the latter half of the nineteenth century, Catholic philosophers throughout the world developed the first corporative ideas for the reform of the social and economic order. The early versions of this Catholic social theory, explained in the encyclical *Rerum Novarum* (1891), advocated harmonious collaboration between labour and capital in organic structures. According to this theory, society is shaped by naturally evolving communities, such as families and religious, political and professional organisations. Not ownership, but the place and function in society determined in which community or 'corporation' a person belonged. In harmoniously functioning consultative and working structures, employers and workers could withstand the excrescences of competition and the class struggle.

Alternatives gradually arose from these foundations for the liberal free market philosophy and the socialist philosophy of the state. From the end of the nineteenth century onwards, Dutch Catholic leaders, including P.J.M. Aalberse and J.A. Veraart, turned these ideas into proposals for a Statutory Industrial Organisation. Supervised by the government, representatives from the unions and employers' associations would be granted regulatory powers. During the economic crisis in the 1930s the encyclical *Quadragesimo Anno* (1931), which set out the philosophy of subsidiarity, added a new momentum. The principle of subsidiarity states that a higher authority, such as the state, should only be assigned tasks when a lower authority, such as an industrial board, is unable to carry out these tasks.

During the interbellum period, Dutch social democrats also developed thoughts on a Statutory Industrial Organisation in which the state was no longer as dominant but played a leading role in the social and economic order. Although Catholics and social democrats started to grow closer during this period on this subject, their differences were still too great to be able to reach a compromise. But in the post-war reconstruction period, a breakthrough became possible. Both in the *Stichting van de Arbeid* (the consultative body for employers and employees) and in parliament, where the parties KVP and PvdA dominated, a majority could be found in favour of a Statutory Industrial Organisation. In 1950 the State

Secretary for Economic Affairs, W.C.L. van der Grinten (KVP), guided the bill through the Lower House. The KVP and PvdA were able to recognise their ideological contribution to this compromise, although it was the KVP led by Romme that had achieved most of its demands. In 1952 a separate Minister for the Statutory Industrial Organisation was appointed: A.C. de Bruijn of the KVP party.

The Social and Economic Council (SER) became the highest authority of the Statutory Industrial Organisation. The organising committee of the SER set up around 20 industry boards and 15 product boards in the first few years. In the beginning, interest in the Statutory Industrial Organisation was still reasonably high in the agriculture sector, which pleased KVP cabinet members concerned with PBO affairs. But once the economy started to flourish and the industrial sector no longer wished to be involved, developments came to a halt in the mid fifties. Employers, in particular, who saw no point in external regulation, pulled out. After that, the employee organisations gradually lost interest too. The economy had changed in the meantime, social relationships had become more equal and prosperity had increased. Years later it became clear that the Statutory Industrial Organisation did not fulfil the role that its supporters had envisaged and gradually its objectives and structure were adapted to the new reality.

Willem Camphuis

1953 Founding of the Dutch 'equipe'

'Essentially, this is an invitation to join in the papal power struggle', was the reaction of CHU committee member Van Niftrik in November 1953 to the invitation to his party and the ARP from the KVP to join the Nouvelles Equipes Internationales (NEI), the European alliance of Christian Democratic parties. Both parties nevertheless decided to accept the invitation.

In 1947, the KVP was one of the co-founders of the NEI; the ARP and CHU kept their distance to begin with. The initial reserve of the Protestant Christian parties could be explained by a number of factors. Firstly, on the basis of their guiding principle 'God, the Netherlands and Orange' they had a problem with relinquishing sovereignty to a supranational European authority, strongly advocated by the NEI. In addition, the NEI was mainly Catholic, like most of the other West European politicians involved at the inception of European integration: the German Federal Chancellor Adenauer, the French Minister of Foreign Affairs Schuman and the Italian Prime Minister De Gasperi. All the more reason for Drees in 1952 to urge that a non-Catholic (the independent Beyen) be appointed as Minister of Foreign Affairs to provide a counterweight to 'Papal Europe'

given the predominance of Roman Catholic politicians on the European stage.

Attempts made by the ARP immediately after the war to set up their own Protestant Christian alliance with Swiss and West German kindred spirits came to nothing. The Dutch political system was an exception within Europe, with three (actually four: the SGP was not even included) separate Christian parties in parliament. In other West European countries, inter-confessional Christian Democratic parties had existed since the end of the war. In 1953 the Protestant Christian parties became part of this European reality: the ARP and CHU joined the NEI and, together with the KVP, formed a joint 'equipe' (or team).

It was clear that European collaboration between the KVP, ARP and CHU was inevitable and could even have added value

In addition, in September 1952 all three parties had joined the Christian Democratic group in the Assembly of the European Coal and Steel Community. The first chairman of this group was Sassen – one of the leading 'Europeans' in the KVP. Even more than party leader Romme, a number of his protégés, including Klompé and Schmelzer, put a lot of effort into European cooperation. Another important figure was the tireless Karl Hahn, a naturalized cosmopolitan who had fled after the Kristallnacht (1938) from

Czechoslovakia to the Netherlands. Between 1955 and 1960 Hahn was Foreign Secretary for the KVP and as Director of the International Christian Democratic Centre until 1980, he acted as an intermediary between Christian Democrats throughout the world. In the late 1950s he was already calling for a Christian Democratic party to be formed in the Netherlands. Within the ARP and CHU there were fewer members who were enthusiastic about Europe: pioneers like Bruins Slot and Schmal had to set about convincing their party.

Early in 1954 the sceptic Van Niftrik actually joined the board of the Dutch 'equipe'. One year later he was one of the most fervent advocates of extending CHU membership of the NEI that initially had been arranged for one year. It was clear that collaboration between the KVP, ARP and CHU in Europe was inevitable and could even have added value for the three parties. So the European 'equipe' unintentionally also served as an initial experiment in forming a Christian Democratic party in the Netherlands.

Alexander van Kessel

1954 Episcopal mandate

On Sunday 30 May 1954, a pamphlet entitled *The Roman Catholic in public life* was sold for 25 cents at church doors throughout the country. In it, the bishops urged Catholics to remain united. Those who disregarded the message would be punished by the withholding of the sacraments. The 48-page pamphlet was greeted more often with indignation than approval.

The bishops had been concerned for some time. The 1947 Welter list of parliamentary candidates that went on to become the conservative Katholiek Nationale Partij (KNP), weakened the political unity of Catholics. Within the KVP there was a right wing stirring things up, which led to the Catholic Workers Movement (KAB) threatening to start its own workers' party. In the Lower House elections in 1952, the KNP gained two seats, and the KVP lost its position as the largest parliamentary group to the PvdA.

To the church authorities in Limburg, this election gave cause for the bishops to call for clear guidelines for the organisation of Roman Catholic public life, which resulted in the Mandate. The bishops were harsh in their judgment of 'unchristian movements': liberalism, humanism, communism and socialism. It was feared that these movements would lead to 'a decrease in religiousness

resulting in a weakening and decline in moral standards'. Their own Catholic organisations offered the best guarantee of a society with a Christian character. So membership and support of 'non Christian' organisations like VARA (public broadcasting association) and the Nederlands Verbond van Vakverenigingen (NVV) (Dutch Association of Trade Unions) were forbidden. But the episcopate did not dare to go so far when it came to the PvdA and the message was limited to advising against.

This fanatical and rigid approach to the issue of Catholic unity caused great agitation. The KVP was certainly not expecting Episcopal intervention. People were more surprised than pleased about it. The Mandate was not considered to be conducive to the 'unity discussion' between the KNP and the Katholieke Werkgemeenschap (KWG) (Catholic Workers Community) in the PvdA that had been started in 1952 at their own initiative. People also feared that this would damage the Catholic-Labour ('RC-red') cooperation in the government.

The PvdA was especially offended to have been labelled as an unchristian movement, even though many confessional members of Christian denominations had found a political haven within the party. The Mandate was seen as a deliberate attempt to influence political freedom of choice in favour of the KVP. Although the NVV broke off cooperation with

the KAB in the Council of Trade Union Confederations, the PvdA leadership did not allow the situation to escalate into a split with the KVP. They restricted themselves to organising meetings where members could air their injured feelings. The parliamentary debate in the Lower House on the speech from the throne in 1954 and again in 1955 was dominated by the Mandate, and this was the price the KVP had to pay. A further price was the failure of the unification talks. The KWG members defied the moral dilemma posed by the Mandate and remained with the PvdA. The KNP returned to its roots.

The feelings evoked by the Mandate damaged the relationship between the KVP and PvdA. When the 'RC-red' collaboration collapsed at the end of 1958, the effect of the Mandate had actually worn off. Earlier that year the bishops acknowledged that certain statements had been given a different emphasis. The withdrawal of the prohibitory clause followed in the mid 1960s. Looking back, the Mandate can be seen as a last ditch attempt by the bishops, in opposition to the trends of the time, to directly influence the political choices of Roman Catholics.

Jac Bosmans

1956 Marga Klompé, the first female Minister

'Gentlemen, I'm Marga', was how Minister of Social Work, Marga Klompé, introduced herself in October 1956 to her colleagues in the Drees IV cabinet. Until then cabinet members had called each other by their surnames. There were also other practical consequences to the entry of the first female minister. The table legs in the meeting room of the Trêveszaal, for instance, were sanded down so that the minister would not ladder her nylon stockings.

An ambitious shopkeeper's daughter from Arnhem, Marga Klompé studied chemistry in Utrecht, taught at Mater Dei secondary school in Nijmegen, a girls' grammar school, and during the war was active in the Union of Women Volunteers and the resistance. In 1945 she joined the KVP, where she felt at home on the left wing. Although women had been eligible to stand for election since 1917, before 1940 there had been only two female Catholic members of parliament. The CHU already had its first female member of parliament in 1922, Frida Katz, and quite some time later Jacqueline Rutgers followed for the ARP in 1963.

The appointment of Klompé as Minister was the crowning glory for emancipation

In 1946 Klompé helped to start the Catholic Women's Debating Society (KVD), a pressure group to increase the number of Catholic women in the public and political arenas. The KVD lobby proved successful: in 1946 Netty de Vink was sworn in as a member of parliament, while Marga Klompé and Agnes Nolte followed in 1948. Wally van Lanschot became a member of the party executive and in 1953 KVD member Anna de Waal became the first female Secretary for State for Education, Culture and Science. De Waal would later leave the KVP because of its position on New Guinea. The appointment of Klompé as minister was the crowning glory for emancipation. She remained a faithful member of the KVP.

Thereafter the number of women politicians steadily rose, in other parties as well, which was the prelude to what would much later, in 1981, lead to regular meetings between female members of parliament, the All-party Women's Caucus. For a long time all female politicians were unmarried – married women belonged at home with their family. Klompé also supported this view and for that reason advised a number of women not to choose a career in politics. It is ironic that the more successful she became as a politician, the further she distanced herself from the (Catholic) feminist movement. As a full time politician, she did not want to be identified with the women's lib crusade, certainly not when it became more radically feminist. Klompé was known for her broad interests, including foreign

affairs. As a representative at the UN Assembly and in positions at the Council of Europe and the ECSC, she argued for far-reaching European integration, based on Christian principles, of course. The verbal power of 'Miss Europe' was legendary: it was said that once in conversation with her, you were in danger of falling under the spell of her persuasive powers.

Her concern for the weaker groups in society was genuine, as demonstrated by the numerous talks she gave all over the country and the many visits she paid to old people's homes, travellers' camps and other places. The cynical nickname 'Our Lady of Ever-lasting Welfare', given to her after the adoption of the Social Assistance Act in 1963, did not do justice to her intentions. Welfare belonged in a humane society and should be generous enough to pay for extras like flowers on the table. During her second ministerial term (this time for Culture, Leisure and Social Work), from 1966 to 1971, her progressive stance on subsidies made her stand out. For a confessional politician in a conservative cabinet in the turbulent second half of the 1960s, this was remarkable. Shortly before her death she said that she would like to be remembered as someone who offered comfort in troubled and chaotic times.

Marjet Derks

1959 Introduction of the Zijlstra rule

In the course of 1959, Minister of Finance Jelle Zijlstra devised a method to ensure that the state budget, which was getting increasingly out of hand, remained under control, including in the long term. This led to what became known as the 'Zijlstra rule', in which a balanced budget and financial flexibility went hand in hand.

When, after seven years as Minister of Economic Affairs, Jelle Zijlstra (1918-2001) joined the De Quay cabinet in 1959 as Minister of Finance, he anticipated one problem. He would undoubtedly be bombarded with costly demands from fellow cabinet members on behalf of their own party without regard for the state of the country's finances. Zijlstra was not a man to give in easily, but he did not want to be viewed as a perpetually tight-fisted killjoy either. So he opted for a watertight budget policy based on trends, a policy recorded in the history books as the 'Zijlstra rule'. By doing so, he aligned his own beliefs on the need for sound financial policy with the Christian Democratic principle of steadfast government.

Zijlstra had a lightening career behind him. He spent a happy childhood in Oosterbierum, Friesland, growing up in a Dutch Reformed family. He always remained true to his religion

and anti-revolutionary roots, although he does not seem to have been a great admirer of Colijn's crisis politics of the 1930s. He went on to become a promising economist and before the age of thirty had been made Professor at the VU University Amsterdam. In 1952 he made the switch to politics. With his extensive knowledge of business and his self-assured, though not arrogant, demeanour he soon felt at home in The Hague where he made an impression with his clear line of reasoning.

The budget was to be established on the basis of the long-term growth in national income

His professional skill was exemplified by the 'Zijlstra rule'. It essentially entailed that budgets would no longer be based on the fluctuating economic climate, but on a long-term analysis of the growth in national income. If national income rose, revenue from tax would rise too so there would be more money to spend, but if national income dropped then there would be less scope for spending. By establishing in advance what the trend was and then determining the total amount available for spending before fixing the annual budget, Zijlstra gained three advantages: department ministers with the largest expenditure were forced to divide the money among themselves, the Minister of Finance was spared the constant begging of his colleagues, while short-term

economic fluctuations could be more easily cushioned and expensive, long-term projects better planned.

Zijlstra had enough command to ensure his policy worked reasonably well, but his successors were soon struggling. He was quick to notice this. When he became President of the Central Bank of the Netherlands (DNB) in 1967, he saw with increasing frustration how budgetary discipline began slackening, deficits increasing and inflation rising. When he was young, politicians had appeared incapable of dealing with the economic crisis and now it seemed that many politicians were equally powerless to deal with inflation. Zijlstra challenged them with comments like 'Rampant inflation is a revolution without loss of blood', confirming his roots in the antirevolutionary tradition in which the irrefutable principles of sound financial management and good stewardship are the hallmarks of steadfast government.

Rolf van der Woude

1962 The 'Mammoetwet'

In 1962, after twelve years in preparation, the Secondary Education Act, that would become known as the 'Mammoetwet', came into effect. It ended the fragmented legislation on education by regulating education in all areas, from primary education to university education, in one Act. However it led to differences of opinion between Protestants and Catholics.

The Peters-Van Sleen motion (KVP, PvdA) tabled in 1949 unintentionally set off a large-scale overhaul of the Dutch education system. Both members of parliament wanted a 'cohesive education system' with a view to slightly extending compulsory education. The Minister for Education, F.J.Th. Rutten (KVP) responded with a Policy Document on Education which later became known as the First Policy Document on Education, or the Rutten Education Plan. In this Policy Document Rutten, whose own background was in education, set out plans to reorganise the entire education system from primary to university education. The existing system was not based on a pupil's capacity and had too many 'dead ends' when it came to further education. Rutten introduced the foundation year in secondary education which was the same for all types of education. After this year pupils could choose further education

appropriate to their level and where necessary switch directly to a different type of school.

In 1952 Rutten was succeeded by fellow party member Jo Cals, who would make the reorganisation of the Dutch education system his life's work. While Rutten had wanted to reform the system gradually in separate Acts for each type of education, Cals put the entire secondary school system into one framework law, the Secondary Education Act. The decision to do this in one single law was for ARP member of parliament A.B. Roosjen reason enough to label it the 'Mammoetwet' (literally, the mammoth act). Although he did not mean this in a positive sense; as far as he was concerned, this law should have remained in Wonderland.

After the submission of the Rutten Education Plan in 1951, it would take another eleven years before the Mammoetwet would make it to the statute books. This was mainly due to changes in thinking on education which occurred when Rutten took office at the Ministry of Education, Art and Science (OK&W). Until the administration of his predecessor, education policy had been distributive in nature (mostly limited to the allocation of funds to eligible schools). Rutten however launched a constructive policy in which the Ministry of Education became closely involved in education matters. The Protestant Christian sector of society, in particular, education organisations and the political parties, had great difficulty with this. They felt that freedom of education

was under threat, especially now that the founding and funding of private schools would require ministerial approval. As a result, a large section of the ARP party in the Lower House and all the CHU parliamentary party voted against the Mammoetwet. As the VVD also had serious objections, the opposition party PvdA, a fervent supporter of reform in education, was therefore needed to ensure a majority vote for Cals' life's work.

The Secondary Education Act introduced new types of secondary schools, such as mavo and havo (lower general secondary education and higher general secondary education, respectively) and atheneum, an extension of hbs which granted direct access to university education. Cals also started the development of secondary schools which offered various levels of education under one roof, known as scholengemeenschappen (combined schools).

The general features of the Mammoetwet can still be found in today's education system. Although major changes were introduced with the Basic Secondary Education Act and the studiehuis (independent learning), the levels of education Cals introduced (with the exception of mavo and lbo which merged to form vmbo) are still recognizable, as well as the educational thinking upon which the system is based.

Peter van der Heiden

1963 Christian Democracy and development aid

When the Marijnen cabinet took office in 1963, for the first time in Dutch politics a member of government was appointed to be responsible for development aid. The first State Secretary was I.N.Th. Diepenhorst (CHU). Later too, the post was often filled by Christian Democrats, usually as Minister without portfolio.

A number of developments early in the 1960s contributed to the creation of a cabinet post for development cooperation. Many of the former colonies had become independent. In the 1950s these countries had been supported by the West to prevent them turning communist. However, this suggested that money was paid to dubious regimes and that the native population did not always benefit. In September 1961 the American President John F. Kennedy gave a speech at the UN General Meeting where he called for a 'decade of development'. The best way to combat poverty was through coordinated action.

At home, various groups supported development aid and many citizens were also strongly in favour. Much of this support was based on religious and humanitarian motives. A lobby also came from the business sector, in particular from large export companies. They

feared a rise in international competition because other countries gave 'tied' development aid, where the aid had to be spent on products from the donor country. As a result, the business sector called for tied development aid. They were successful in this in the 1960s and the proportion of this type of aid increased.

So there were various motives behind development aid. The Christian Democratic vision focused on the responsibility of the individual. Development aid was renamed development cooperation because the term 'aid' had a paternalistic connotation. To the Christian Democrats this meant that the starting point for development lay with the people in the countries concerned. Other organisations, including the Ministry of Development Cooperation, were there to provide encouragement. But the objective remained self-sufficiency. Mindful of the principle of subsidiarity, as many civic organisations as possible were involved to achieve this.

The Cofinancing policy is a good example of how the principle of subsidiarity is applied. If private organisations are more capable of achieving the intended objectives, then this is preferable to government intervention. In line with this, Minister Theo Bot (KVP) introduced the Cofinancing policy in 1965. A similar policy had been requested in 1963 by mission organisations. The initial intention had been

that the organisations had to cover 25 percent of the expenditure themselves, but this was soon abandoned because it was unclear what costs came under the 25 percent. This criterion was introduced once again by Minister Agnes van Ardenne (CDA) in 2007.

Compared to abroad, Dutch organisations received a great deal of funding. Increasingly, they were acting as implementing bodies for government policy. As a result, their position as representatives of an engaged civil society seemed to be eroding. Making aid more effective was therefore one reason for the Cofinancing policy. Another means to achieve this was the 'focus countries', introduced by Minister B.J. Udink (CHU) in 1968. These are countries that can count on long-term and structural support. In the recent Rutte cabinet, State Secretary Ben Knapen (CDA) tried to increase the effectiveness of aid by reducing the number of focus countries.

Eelke de Jong

1966 Publication of the report *Grondslag en karakter van de KVP*

On 13 January 1966 the Catholic People's Party (KVP) presented the report *Grondslag en karakter van de KVP (Principles and Character of the KVP)* at the Nieuwspoort press centre. It was the result of a study of the party's fundamental *raison d'être*. Its main conclusion was that the KVP could continue for the time being, but it should be investigated whether a party could be formed on the basis of broad Christian principles.

In the early 1960s, sweeping changes were taking place within the Roman Catholic church. Pope John XXIII called all the bishops to Rome for the second Vatican Council (1962-1965) to discuss how to bring the church into the present day.

Simultaneous discussions were taking place within the KVP about the confessional principles of the party that had made it so important to the Catholic segment of Dutch society. Supporters of a general Christian (i.e. Christian Democratic) party, advocates of a party based on Christian and humanitarian principles and defenders of a non-confessional centre party, all voiced their opinions. In 1962 the party leaders decided to create a special

committee to advise on the principles which such a party should espouse. Party chairman P.J.M. Aalberse headed this 'Profiling Committee' that also included former party chairman H.W. van Doorn, the Director General of the Research Institute of the party J.M. Aarden, M. Klompé, N. Schmelzer and party ideologist Father Stokman.

The Committee came to the conclusion that the formation of a party on the basis of the Roman Catholic religion was no longer a matter of principle. The Catholic emancipation was a fact. The statutory provision that the party 'accepted the word of the ecclesiastical doctrinal authority' should be deleted; the party had to become independent of ecclesiastical authorities.

In the report *Grondslag en karakter van de KVP* the committee wrote that the Christian vision of people and society should provide inspiration and direction to political thinking and action. The actual worth of people is key, as is the understanding that people have to be able to live in freedom and be responsible for themselves. This differed from the vision of liberalism with its emphasis on the individual, and that of social democracy with its emphasis on the role of the government.

And so the Committee concluded that while maintaining the Catholic character of the party, the long-term pursuit should be the formation

of a general Christian party together with the ARP and CHU. But until this new situation arose, the KVP should remain active in the political arena. Finally, the KVP should make it possible for non-Catholics who endorse the party manifesto to represent the party in public bodies.

KVP discussions on the report's conclusions were complicated by political developments. After the fall of the Cals cabinet in October 1966, a cabinet was formed in April 1967 in which the KVP, ARP and CHU worked with the VVD. This centre-right coalition displeased radical KVP members. The discussion was therefore not just about the principles, but also the direction of the party.

The plunge was taken at the end of 1967. On 8 December, the KVP party council decided that 'at the present time forming a party based on Christian principles is desirable provided that the character of such a party is consistently progressive', and that 'together with the ARP and CHU, the objective should be to form a general Christian people's party with a consistently progressive character, which is open to all who endorse the manifesto'. For the time being, peace was thus achieved within the KVP.

Theo Brinkel

1966 Schmelzer's night

'Well Norbert, that's the end', was the reaction of Prime Minister Cals when he saw KVP party chairman Schmelzer's motion during the suspension of the parliamentary debate on the night of 13 October 1966. 'I'm afraid it is, Jo', Schmelzer replied. At ten past five in the morning, the motion was adopted and the Cals cabinet fell.

The Schmelzer motion, submitted at the end of the parliamentary debate on the budget in 1967, called for the cabinet to provide a more cautious financial policy and better security for government spending. The adoption of the motion meant the end of the Cals cabinet.

But the main intention of Schmelzer's motion was to maintain unity in the KVP parliamentary party. The performance and policy of the cabinet, in which the KVP and ARP worked together with the PvdA, had from the very outset led to division within the Catholic parliamentary party. Following the successful general election of 1963, there was a party majority in favour of continuing collaboration with the VVD. The fall of this coalition in 1965 as a result of the crisis surrounding the Broadcasting Act, did not affect this preference. The Cals cabinet that was formed without holding snap elections, was never very popular partly due to the adverse economic situation. Both the KVP and the PvdA lost seats at the

Provincial Council elections in March 1966 which led to further tensions. A confrontation was inevitable.

Dissatisfaction about the costly plans of the Cals cabinet led the right wing of the KVP parliamentary party to threaten to support a motion of the opposition party VVD during the parliamentary debate on the speech from the throne in October 1966. To maintain unity in the party, Schmelzer submitted his own motion. He was largely successful: only four 'radical' KVP members voted against it. In the months following the fall of the Cals cabinet unity was maintained. It took until February 1968 before the radicals left the KVP parliamentary party; a few weeks later they set up the Politieke Partij Radicaal (Radical Party) together with political sympathizers from the ARP.

But Schmelzer's attempt to get the ARP to back his motion and demonstrate Christian Democratic unity (the CHU also supported Schmelzer's motion) failed however. Party chairman Roolvink supported it, but the rest of his party refused to abandon their own government members. So 'Schmelzer's Night' was a setback in the cooperation between the three Christian Democratic parties.

After this the PvdA – equally dissatisfied with the Cals cabinet – no longer wanted to govern with this unreliable and conservative KVP, a view reiterated at the PvdA Party Conference in 1969 in the 'anti-KVP motion'. This polarization of the two parties would hamper the formation

of a coalition between confessionals and social democrats for a long time.

The media also played a role in the aftermath of 'Schmelzer's Night'. Many Dutch television viewers witnessed history in the making within the KVP. Schmelzer was unable to shake off his image as a sly schemer, that would be reaffirmed a few months later by cabaret artist Wim Kan's portrayal of him in his New Year's Eve Show (a slick sausage dog with a juicy bone in its mouth). The images of the cabinet crisis concealed the fact that important political and social developments had already been set in motion. The general election of 1963 turned out to be even worse for the KVP compared with the Provincial Council elections in 1962, when they hit an all-time low. The relationship with the PvdA had deteriorated since the end of the Drees cabinets in 1958. And even before 'Schmelzer's Night', the Catholic trade unions, press and broadcasting company had already distanced themselves from the KVP. For some time cracks had been starting to appear in the Catholic segment of society. All these developments eventually culminated in Schmelzer's Night.

Alexander van Kessel

1967 Group of Eighteen

On 24 April 1967 official talks began between the KVP, ARP and CHU. A committee with six members from each party, the Group of Eighteen, discussed the principles and substance of Christian politics. Although the Group only existed for a short period, for the first time the possibility of a merger of the three Christian Democratic parties was explored.

Before the election of 1967, ARP chairman W. Berghuis had proposed talks about the fundamentals of Christian politics. He said that he wanted one Christian Democratic party positioned between socialism and liberalism with its own direction, 'not in the centre', but 'radical'. The ARP had first felt the need for change when it lost a quarter of its electorate between 1948 and 1963. With Berghuis as chairman, a 'radical evangelical' path was chosen. Berghuis – a Calvinist intellectual – was a firm believer in biblical principles. He believed that Christian politics was 'radical, in the sense that it was constantly preoccupied with reducing politics to its essence and judging it'. Moreover, he believed that its evangelical foundations made the ARP left wing.

Just like in the KVP, there was now a prevailing desire in the CHU to form a Christian Democratic party

Berghuis distrusted the KVP on both these points. He thought that Catholics played down the Christian principles too much and leaned too far towards the right. Schmelzer's Night reinforced that feeling and was a reason to invite the KVP and CHU for talks on principles.

The election result of 1967, when the ARP was again victorious at last, confirmed to Berghuis that the course he had chosen was correct. The KVP leadership wanted to speed up the formation of a Christian Democratic party; a large minority of members wanted a left wing, radical Christian direction. Although the CHU had lost only one seat, the result was still a shock. There was a growing sense that the Union had lost touch with the modern age. Just like in the KVP, there was now a prevailing desire to form a Christian Democratic party.

It became immediately obvious that the visions of the leading figures in the Group of Eighteen were poles apart. At the first meeting Aalberse said that the KVP wanted to make haste, and Berghuis stated that he only wanted closer cooperation on the basis of radical Christian politics. After ten months, the Group published the memorandum *Principiële uitgangspunten* (Basic Principles) written by anti-revolutionary J. H. Prins. The document's tone was highly reformational and it emphasized that Christian politicians had to be guided by the Gospel. The KVP members could not identify with much of this, but still agreed to it which only reinforced

the distrust felt in the ARP that they were opportunists without principles.

After twenty meetings, the Group of Eighteen disbanded in September 1969. They made some noncommittal recommendations about working together during elections but the formation of a

new party was no closer. The visions of the leading figures were poles apart

These years, however, did lay the foundations for the formation of the CDA. A group of 'radical Christians' in both the KVP and the ARP left the party and opted to govern with the PvdA on principle. When the KVP radicals dropped out, Berghuis lost the little faith he had in Christian cooperation and resigned as ARP chairman. His political sympathizers persisted in trying to enforce a radical evangelical ideology.

Dik Verkuil

1973 Confessionals in the Den Uyl cabinet

During the cabinet formation of 1972-1973 the PvdA, D66 and PPR refused to negotiate on their joint election manifesto Keerpunt '72 (Watershed '72). The confessional parties, who were deeply divided, were astounded by the 'audacity' of Jaap Burger (PvdA), charged with forming the new government, who managed to talk Jaap Boersma and later also W.F. de Gaay Fortman (ARP) into accepting cabinet positions without consulting ARP leader Barend Biesheuvel.

It was a 'red' cabinet with a 'white fringe' in stark contrast to the balance of power. In the Lower House, the left only had six seats more than the KVP, ARP and CHU, but had successfully claimed ten ministers' posts, whereas the confessionals had only six. This was an important reason for the CHU to drop out so that the Christian Democratic parties ended up in opposition to one another, instead of cooperating. The KVP and ARP tolerated the cabinet, while CHU parliamentary party leader Roelof Krusinga was fervent in opposition. A 'political rain check' was taken on the desired unity.

Initially, the four Catholic and two anti-revolutionary ministers worked with the

progressive cabinet members in reasonable harmony. Despite adverse economic conditions and difficult political issues, the cabinet always managed to reach agreement after long nights of discussion. But gradually irritations surfaced among the confessionals, particularly because the Prime Minister seemed to act more like a party politician than the head of the government when searching for solutions. Added to which he felt no need to hide his contempt for the attempts to form the CDA. Right from the start there was little goodwill between the Prime Minister and his Deputy, Minister of Justice, Dries van Agt. These two very different characters would never agree on a personal or a political level. In parliament, ARP parliamentary party chairman Aantjes emerged as the cornerstone of the cabinet, while his KVP colleague Andriessen became increasingly sceptical. The cabinet regularly teetered on the edge of the abyss.

In this politically divided climate, it was remarkable that in the run up to a merger the three Christian Democratic parliamentary parties held joint meetings from May 1976 onwards with opposition party CHU. There was still a clear desire to continue with the coalition after the election though this 'devotion' was hardly reciprocated. The PvdA actually made demands of the confessionals, such as a minority position in a subsequent cabinet (again) and agreement to four socialist proposals for reform.

After serious clashes between the PvdA and Van Agt on issues such as the Bloemenhove abortion clinic and war criminal Menten, tensions increased even further. Something also felt by Ruud Lubbers, the young Minister of Economic Affairs. When Lubbers felt that Den Uyl had not stuck to the agreement concerning the bill on capital gains distribution, he too lost faith in the Prime Minister and the cabinet. The antirevolutionary ministers De Gaay Fortman and Boersma, in particular, kept faith the longest in 'the most left-wing cabinet ever'. Boersma was actually exasperated by Van Agt, who increasingly started to become an 'irritant', an accusation he did not deny.

This all had to do with the surprising appointment of Van Agt as the first party leader of the Christen Democratisch Appèl (Christian Democratic Appeal), the name of the merged party. In March 1977, the bickering surrounding the complex issue of land use policy led to the fall of the cabinet, but the worsened relationships were at the source. At the general election in 1977, Van Agt managed to secure 49 seats – a modest gain of one seat, but a gigantic step forward for Christian Democracy given the losses suffered by the Christian Democratic parties since 1963. However fragile this union was, this single party had emerged in spite of – though others would say, because of – the events of the Den Uyl cabinet

Wilfred Scholten

1975 Aantjes' Sermon on the Mount

While enthusiasm for the CDA at grassroots level grew, in the mid 1970s the leaders of the KVP, ARP and CHU argued about the 'principles' of the new party. The most conspicuous contributor to this discussion made his point memorably at the CDA party conference in 1975.

On the eve of the first CDA party conference on Saturday 23 August 1975, the chairman of the ARP parliamentary party, Willem Aantjes, was feeling very depressed. The reason was that a few days earlier the leaders of the political and parliamentary parties of the KVP, ARP and CHU, together with CDA chairman Piet Steenkamp, had drawn up a draft resolution that he totally disagreed with. It was about the Gospel being a 'guideline' for the political actions of the CDA. Should party members, and therefore CDA delegates too, 'accept' the evangelical guideline or should they 'endorse' it? During a long session that went on until deep into the night, party members argued about this point and eventually a majority of those present voted in favour of the term 'accept'.

Disastrous, Aantjes thought, because if the Gospel only had to be passively recognized within the CDA instead of actively endorsed, it would be far too noncommittal. Aantjes wanted

a CDA in which the Gospel would be applied 'in actual policies' as 'the first and last criterion'. The reason behind this apparent harping on about principles was that Aantjes believed that the only way to prevent the CDA becoming a centre party was to be guided as far as possible by the Gospel. The course of the new party was Aantjes' real worry; he wanted a 'progressive' CDA.

The only way to prevent the CDA becoming a centre party was to be guided as far as possible by the Gospel

On the eve of the conference, Aantjes put the final touches to what would become a legendary speech. Trouw journalist Pierre van Enk later wrote, 'the point at issue thundered among the crowd, like Moses with the Tablets of Stone'. 'The Gospel contains no direct guidelines for political action', Aantjes told his audience. 'But it does give guidelines for direct political action, sometimes even very specific ones. Turn to Matthew 25 again: feed the hungry, quench the thirst of the thirsty, shelter the stranger, clothe the naked, visit the sick and imprisoned. We still have to do that today. Two thousand years have passed, and look around you! Little has changed, Aantjes concluded and so the world 'yearned' for Christian politics. 'Politics to speak for those with no voice, to act for those who are helpless, to clear a path for

those who cannot walk, to help those who have no helper.'

The reporter Frits van der Poel of *Het Vrije Volk* saw Aantjes' lips trembling and realised – as others did – that he was witnessing something very special: an outpouring of a political profession of faith. KRO reporter Ad Langebent even made the comparison with the Sermon on the Mount given by Jesus Christ, and that evening he filled the entire Brandpunt current affairs TV programme with Aantjes' speech.

The CDA never became the party that Aantjes envisaged. 'But', he said later, 'I was not anxious about whether I would be met with agreement or aversion, but whether I would be able to get across my vision on the principles of the party. I did manage to do that, and it felt good.'

Roelof Bouwman

1976 Draft manifesto *Niet bij brood alleen*

It was generally believed that the CDA was set up mainly to hold on to the old Christian Democratic positions of power. Some doubted whether it was possible to combine evangelical beliefs with a unique political manifesto. Evidence to the contrary came in the 1970s when the CDA wrote an election manifesto for a single Christian Democratic party.

By the end of the 1960s there was scepticism on all sides about whether it was possible to create an identifiable Christian Democratic movement. The merging of the Christian parties raised questions even within their own ranks: was biblical inspiration a sufficient basis to be able to keep making joint and distinctive political decisions? There was also widespread cynicism among the public who believed that the discussion about the principles of the new movement concealed the real motive – retaining the power of the merged parties and halting the (ultimately inevitable) decline in their influence. At the KVP autumn conference in 1972 Piet Steenkamp emphasized the urgency of Christian Democratic cooperation: ‘the bell has rung for the final round’.

A unique manifesto was drawn up by Piet Steenkamp and Bob Goudzwaard and others

that was partly inspired by church sermons at the time on public concerns such as growing inequality in the world and the pollution of the environment. In the report *Op weg naar een verantwoordelijke maatschappij* (Towards a responsible society) (1972) and the election manifesto *Niet bij brood alleen* (Not by bread alone) (1977) the basic principles and the contours of policy were formulated upon which Christian Democracy would be based.

What are the needs and the injustices?

In the first place, attention was focused on recognizing the signs of the times and acting on them. What are the changes, the needs, the great injustices and threats in our own surroundings and worldwide? Against the background of the Club of Rome, there was also a discussion within the CDA about how to prevent the destruction of the earth. The election manifesto *Niet bij brood alleen* took solidarity with the poor elsewhere in the world and observance of the rule of international law as its starting point. In what direction did the solutions lie, not just to achieve the end results, but also to identify the necessary instruments and the relevant responsibilities, particularly those of the individual, their relationships and society as a whole? These solutions and placing responsibility in the right place had to echo the call of the Gospel to foster justice, peace and humanity here and throughout the world.

Documents dating from this period demonstrate that distinctive political and social choices could indeed be based on biblical inspiration and at the same time be attractive to a large section of the electorate, as shown by the position of the CDA in the 1960s. The report *Van verzorgingsstaat naar verzorgingsmaatschappij* (From welfare state to welfare society) (1983), written by Dick Kuiper, presented a vision of society in which not just government, but society too played an important role. The title of the report suggests that the answer lies in ‘accepted’ responsibility. Clear references were made to traditional principles such as sovereignty and subsidiarity which – given the changed context and the findings of research institutes – could be seen as consistent with the concept of shared responsibility.

Jos van Gennip

1976 Founding of the European People's Party

When the European People's Party (EPP) was inaugurated on 8 July 1976 the Dutch Christian Democrats were present. They had played a leading role for years, particularly concerning the manifesto. When the Christian Democratic character of the EPP came under threat following the inclusion of conservatives and liberals, the CDA adopted a more critical stance.

Long before the formal founding of the CDA in 1980, the ARP, CHU and KVP had discovered common ground in Europe. In the run up to the first direct European elections in 1979, together with other Christian Democratic parties from Belgium, Germany, France, Ireland, Italy and Luxemburg, they set up the EPP. This was done completely in line with the Manifesto Principles: 'A democratic Europe can only survive if there is broad support for it among the citizens. The formation of a European party as well as civil society organisations is important in this context. This is how we can focus on mutual processes of integration and removing borders.' Piet Bukman of the CDA was one of the first chairmen of the EPP (1985-1986).

Agreement was fairly easily reached on the manifesto for the new party – that was classical in the Christian Democratic sense but with the

added ideal of a European federation. KVP member Karl Hahn played an important role. But it was more difficult to reach a consensus when it came to the new name: should the term 'Christian Democracy' be used or not? Eventually, a compromise was reached: the 'European People's Party of Christian Democratic Parties'. The subtitle, a goodwill gesture to the Dutch, would soon become obsolete. By opting for the first half of the name, the door was left open to non-Christian Democratic centre parties – which were disliked by the Dutch. The membership issue upset the Dutch Christian Democrats in particular. Was it conceivable that the British Conservatives could join the EPP? To the German CDU, it was unthinkable that only Christian Democratic parties could become members of the EPP. Following intense debate, the matter was decided in favour of those who supported a restriction on membership. They believed that this was the best way to safeguard the Christian Democratic character of the party.

Gradually, the CDA accepted the inclusion of conservative and liberal parties in the EPP

But this would prove to be a Pyrrhic victory. The revival of the European integration process, in which the role of the European Parliament grew, and with it the power of its parties, the EPP was once again faced with issues from its early days. Should it remain a separate political

movement with the risk of marginalisation in an ever-expanding European Union, or should it form an alliance with other like-minded parties with the risk of losing the Christian Democratic identity? The prospect of new member states joining, often without affiliated Christian Democratic parties, also played a part in the discussion. Federal Chancellor Helmut Kohl resolutely steered the EPP towards the second option. Gradually the CDA accepted the inclusion of conservative and liberal parties in the EPP. The diminishing share in power of the 'traditional' Christian Democrats had a lot to do with this, of course. The CDA nevertheless remains an important ideological source for the EPP. This was already the case in 1992 with the 'Basic Programme of Athens', and would appear still to be true with the new ideological manifesto that the EPP will endorse in autumn 2012.

Steven Van Hecke

1977 Van Agt and Wiegel at Le Bistroquet

On 17 November 1977 a remarkable photo appeared in the newspaper Het Vrije Volk: Dries van Agt and Hans Wiegel having dinner together at restaurant Le Bistroquet in The Hague. After seven months of failed talks with the PvdA, the CDA was looking to cooperate with the VVD. In Le Bistroquet the foundation was laid for an unexpected cabinet that did not go down well with all Christian Democrats.

The first Van Agt cabinet was controversial in more ways than one. Firstly, it signalled the end of the pursuit of the distribution of knowledge, power and wealth, the policy of the progressive Den Uyl cabinet (1973-1977) that fell due to a conflict on land use policy. The relationships between the progressive parties (PvdA, D66 and PPR) and the confessional parties (ARP and KVP) had already been put to the test in this cabinet. The impassioned Prime Minister Joop den Uyl and the intractable Minister of Justice Dries van Agt personified this strained relationship.

At the conference of December 1976, Van Agt was appointed leader of the list of candidates for the first joint candidacy of the KVP, ARP and CHU. In his conference speech, he uttered the famous words that symbolised the future

course of the CDA: 'We bow neither to the left, nor to the right'. Van Agt went into the election arguing for an ethical revival. In contrast to the socio-economic ideals of the PvdA, the CDA put forward immaterial goals like the restoration of Christian values on issues such as abortion.

Following the election result of 1977, a second Den Uyl cabinet seemed inevitable: the PvdA gained 10 seats, achieving a record number of 53 seats, while the CDA ended up with 49 seats. But following the difficult coalition negotiations the PvdA conference placed demands on ministerial appointments, among other things, and the CDA eventually could not, or would not, agree to these. On 4 November 1977, after seven months of negotiations, Den Uyl, who had been charged with forming a government, handed back his failed assignment to the Queen. The CDA then approached Wiegel's VVD that had won 28 seats. During and after the dinner at Le Bistroquet, Wiegel and Van Agt quickly developed a basis for trust. Within a month a coalition agreement was on the table and the unexpected CDA-VVD cabinet was sworn in.

The Van Agt-Wiegel cabinet led to discord within the CDA. Six, later seven, CDA parliamentary party members, including Willem Aantjes, Sytze Faber and Jan Nico Scholten, disagreed with this centre-right coalition but decided to tolerate it anyway. The small majority of 77 seats made the position of these

'loyalists' significant, certainly when it came to sensitive issues like the boycott of the apartheid regime in South Africa and the deployment of nuclear weapons. The policy document Bestek '81 (Plan '81) dated 1978 contained a long-term plan to cut back the increase in government expenditure that had occurred during the Den Uyl cabinet. Parliamentary opposition to this plan from the loyalists and others hindered its implementation. In addition, there was disagreement between the ministers Andriessen (Finance) and Albeda (Social Affairs) about the effects of the plan. Andriessen felt he was not supported by the cabinet and resigned in 1980; a serious setback that reflected the unstable position of the cabinet.

No significant reforms were carried out during the Van Agt cabinet and the budget deficit actually reached an all-time high. But looking back Van Agt did see some good in this first cabinet: 'We actually paved the way for Lubbers. We created the impetus for change in the social climate, though the results were not obvious during our term in office. We just created the right conditions. When Lubbers took office the seeds had already been sown which could be harvested in the years that followed.'

Remy Luyten

1978 Grondslag en politiek handelen report

Can a non-Christian join the CDA? This was a key question for the three founding parties KVP, ARP and CHU in the run up to the merger that formed a single Christian Democratic party. Emotions ran so high, particularly after Aantjes' 'Sermon on the Mount', that the merger was in jeopardy. The report Grondslag en politiek handelen (Principles and political action) settled the issue in 1978.

It became clear in the 1970s that the new party would be a Christian Democratic one. But how Christian is Christian Democratic? They did not want to become a religious party nor be associated with a particular denomination. But what did they want? The discussions on the party principles that went on between 1972 and 1978 had two separate phases. Up until 1975 it was mainly KVP party chairman Dick de Zeeuw who argued for a CDA that was as open as possible, thus to non-Christians as well. The question was whether humanism could also count as a 'source of inspiration' besides Christianity? This met with resistance within the ARP and CHU and many members within the KVP also felt this 'generalisation' went too far. The matter was settled in the spring of 1975 at a conference in Woudschoten: the new party

would accept the Gospel only as its guide for political action.

Quite unexpectedly, this agreement seemed to prompt a second round of discussions on the party principles. The key question being: can delegates of the new CDA also be held to that one common Christian principle? The first CDA conference in 1975 was dominated by this new discussion. Aantjes' 'Sermon on the Mount' certainly reduced the issue to a matter of principle: '[The Gospel] is our guideline. Whoever is privileged to be called to represent the CDA, should reflect this in their political actions. The Christian Democratic Appeal must adopt this principle if it is to be truly Christian Democratic.' The discussion about the course of the CDA simmered in the background: how progressive should it be? The 'new threshold', as it was termed by KVP leader Frans Andriessen, met with resistance from the KVP and CHU, and even from Aantjes' own ARP party.

The 'bomb' was defused by a broad committee

After the parliamentary elections, the 'bomb' was defused by a broad committee led by CHU chairman Otto van Verschuer, assisted by Arie Oostlander, director of the Kuypersichting. The ultimate report, entitled Grondslag en politiek handelen, referred mainly to the 'response

philosophy' formulated by Steenkamp in the Nota van de Contactraad (Policy Document of the Liaison Council) in 1972. It introduced the term 'political conviction' into Christian Democratic thinking as the basis for the party's political action. The 'Holy Scripture' is at the heart of the CDA's political activities, but its political conviction shows how this is reflected in practice. What united the party was not the Gospel itself, but the political conviction that was formulated in response to the call of the Gospel. Oostlander later wrote that the CDA is 'a political organisation that draws its conclusions as conscientiously as possible from the evangelical calling' and 'unites those who together try to understand the call...and put this call into thoughts and deeds.' It is for this – the political consequences, the political response – that a CDA member of parliament or councillor can be held accountable.

It was nothing short of a fundamental breakthrough and as a result, the CDA, as a new Christian Democratic party – more so than the three founding parties – could direct itself towards the entire Dutch population without discriminating on the basis of either religious conviction or social position. It opened the door to anyone who defended the political convictions of the CDA, even if they didn't call themselves a Christian.

Jan Schinkelshoek

1981 Foundation of the CDA

When Piet Steenkamp, the man who had brought the KVP, ARP and CHU together was asked by the speaker if he would like to close the meeting in 1972 'appropriately', he clearly felt uncomfortable. A prayer of thanks to close a political meeting, in accordance with good reformed tradition? Even for Steenkamp that was going too far. Not knowing what to do, he turned to the chairman. Being a Protestant, the chairman looked back at him, equally blank.

On 11 October 1980 the Christian Democratic Appeal Party was officially founded. It represented not only a merger of three Christian parties, but also the merger of three different cultures. These different 'clans' continued to be visible in the party's day-to-day affairs even after the foundation. The differences went beyond the contrast between Rome and the Reformation. Anyone in the know could tell at a glance whether they were dealing with a Dutch Reformed politician or a Christian Reformed politician. If you wanted to see the difference, you only had to come on a Tuesday morning to the old building of the Lower House where the parliamentary parties prepared their week's business. The KVP party gathered on the second floor ('closest to heaven'), the ARP on the ground floor ('representing God's Kingdom on earth') with the CHU party on the floor in between. Around

noon the waiters would set off from the Foyer to serve the members. You could see where they were heading from the drinks on the tray: beer for the KVP, Dutch gin for the ARP and sherry and wine for the CHU.

To the outside world, the differences were a caricature: the relaxed Catholics, relying on the power of numbers, the principled anti-revolutionary 'brothers' and, in the middle, the amiable peace-keeping Christian-Historians. But there were indeed clear differences that stemmed from ancient traditions. It makes quite a difference if you view man as a 'social being, made to cooperate with others' or as a 'fallen sinner'. Are you in politics to 'show mercy' or to 'suppress the dissoluteness of humanity'? Is it about 'The Glory of God' or can you be satisfied with less?

**Each 'clan'
could be distinguished
by its drinks**

The KVP was a typical emancipation party. Removing inequalities required a huge, united effort cutting right across internal social and regional differences. The CHU was long renowned for the 'upper class gentlemen with double-barrelled names' who moved easily within Dutch society. At CHU conferences, the party – devoted to Queen and country – voted using little orange flags. The anti-revolutionaries, originally the party for the

Christian Reformed 'ordinary man', always began their meetings with Bible reading and prayer before continuing with heated discussions; sometimes so heated that the leaders spoke of 'strident ordinary men'. Everything seemed to boil down to principles.

Partly under the influence of Christian unity in the 1960s and '70s, the Christian Democrats did grow closer to each other. But it took a huge effort after the merger in 1980 for the CDA to reconcile these differences. This was made very clear by how the 'clans' vied for position in the single party. What was first a means of standing out to the grassroots (Catholic, Christian Reformed or Dutch Reformed), soon became a method to gain ground: 'Another CHU member is needed', 'the Catholic south is under-represented'. It was obvious that opposite a Catholic Prime Minister (Lubbers) there would be a Protestant party chairman (De Vries and Brinkman), or vice versa (Verhagen and Van Geel opposite Balkenende). Even today, the issue of Catholic or Protestant supremacy in the Christian Democratic representation in the Lower House or cabinet is still a thorny one.

Jan Schinkelshoek

1982 Wassenaar Agreement

The Wassenaar Agreement, concluded between the two sides of industry on 19 November 1982 at the home of Chris van Veen, chairman for the employers, was little more than an A4 sheet. Short enough to be read three days later in its entirety by Prime Minister Lubbers during the government statement.

In the Agreement, officially named 'Main recommendations on employment', the trade unions accepted wage restraint in exchange for a reduction in working hours and redistribution of employment, so that (often flexible) jobs would be created and employers could invest more due to lower costs. Work was put before income. The compromise was the result of negotiations between Wim Kok, chairman of the trade union federation FNV, and Chris van Veen, chairman of the Confederation of Netherlands Employers VNO, who had been Minister of Education for the CHU in the Biesheuvel cabinet, and two adjutants. The agreement was then signed by all employer and employee organisations affiliated to the Dutch Labour Organisation.

The economy had been going downhill since the mid 1970s: government spending was out of control and the performance of the commercial sector was in decline. More than eight thousand businesses went bankrupt in

1982, unemployment was rising by fifteen thousand a month, particularly among young people. For a long time, the greatly polarized political and labour relations had stood in way of decisive action to combat the problems. During the final stages of the cabinet formation of the first Lubbers cabinet, Ruud Lubbers and the proposed Minister of Social Affairs, Jan de Koning, (both CDA members) had already threatened to intervene in wages, putting the social partners under pressure. They were given until 1 January to come to an agreement. Kok and Van Veen eventually opted to sort out the issue themselves, without government intervention. The urgent social and economic necessity, coupled with the government pressure, forced them to find a compromise.

Employer and employee organisations eventually opted to sort out the issue themselves

From now on the social partners would work together. The Agreement thus served as the impetus for the so-called 'polder model' which, under the 'purple'* cabinets (with the CDA in opposition), was admired abroad. The notion was fully in line with the 'harmonious' philosophy of the Christian Democrats and the typical CDA notions of shared responsibility and a responsible society. The Agreement also provided a flying start to the Lubbers cabinet (CDA-VVD), that had been sworn in two weeks before on 4 November. It was soon clear that

the cabinet was not afraid of taking difficult measures. Civil servants' wages and social security benefits were cut, under great public protest. This contributed to the 'no-nonsense' air of the new cabinet and its Prime Minister. Lubbers reaffirmed his image as a Macher, even though he had only taken over the CDA leadership from Van Agt in the latter half of October. He had previously actually frustrated spending cuts proposed by the first Van Agt cabinet when he was leader of the parliamentary party.

Lubbers ended his government statement on 22 November by saying: 'Our society is in the depths of winter. We cannot ignore this; the question is how do we deal with it? Each of us in his or her own way: to the best of our ability, not opposing each other but alongside one another.' A prime example of Christian Democratic politics.

* combination of red (labour) and blue (liberal) parties

Peter van Griensven

1986 CDA wins 54 seats

3,170,081: that was how many people voted for the CDA on 21 May 1986. Until then, no other political party had drawn so many people to vote for party leader Ruud Lubbers, or any another candidate. Nor had a political party ever had such a large majority of the 150 seats in the Lower House.

The result in May 1986 could be described as historic. The number of seats won by the CDA broke all records. Although in 1989 the CDA received an even larger percentage of the votes, the number of seats remained 54.

As with every election and campaign with a unique, unexpected result, legends were born on the evening of the election result. A persistent tale among opinion makers was that party leader Ruud Lubbers was able to gain so many seats with his CDA party due to the secular voters. Apparently, they appreciated the 'no nonsense' business-like manner of the Prime Minister and did not much care about the deeper vision or party philosophy. Lubbers was also very popular among Catholic voters who had always admired this young, dynamic kindred spirit. In addition, the economic climate was favourable to Lubbers. After the difficult decade of the 1970s, by the mid '80s the reforms in spending were paying off.

The CDA had gained 750,000 voters compared to 1982 when the turnout was disappointing, especially in traditional CDA areas. These newly- won votes were mainly from young people with an increasingly non-religious background. Four percent of secular voters chose the CDA compared to two percent in 1982. A substantial increase, but still relatively small in relation to the total electorate.

The large electoral gains were in the commuter belt and better neighbourhoods: the Netherlands' western conurbation had rediscovered the CDA

A large part of this increase was, of course, due to the strong 'mobilisation' of CDA voters, particularly those under the age of 40. The number of votes for the CDA among all young people aged between 18 and 25 increased from 16 to 25 percent. The number of votes from orthodox Protestants was also high which was remarkable in view of Lubbers' Catholic background. The media played an increasingly important role. On the Sunday before the election a party leaders' debate was broadcast in which Joop den Uyl and Ed Nijpels were at each other's throats. Lubbers, the statesman, did not get involved which prompted viewers to choose him as the winner of the debate.

The CDA won in all regions. Although the increase in Limburg was very small, as it was

among the more orthodox Catholic voters. The major electoral gains were achieved elsewhere in the Netherlands – in the commuter belt and the 'better neighbourhoods' where D66 and the VVD had their supporters. The Netherlands' western conurbation had apparently 'rediscovered' the CDA.

Party leader Ruud Lubbers tried to slip in unnoticed at the CDA celebrations at the Pulchri Studio in The Hague. He would have liked a moment of peace to gather his thoughts before plunging victoriously into the crowd of jubilant CDA supporters, perhaps even to have a quick shave as he was known to do. But the Prime Minister, the man of the moment, didn't get his own way in all things that evening. A lady in a polka dot dress saw him sneaking in and ran excitedly towards him. Molly de Koning, the wife of the Minister of Social Affairs and Employment, was followed by the press in hot pursuit.

Pieter-Gerrit Kroeger

1994 Operation Heerma

In the third Lubbers cabinet CDA State Secretary Enneüs Heerma introduced sweeping reforms in public housing. Instead of centrally-organised mass production, he made way for demand-driven players on the local housing market. The housing associations were made independent and were given a prominent role, which they filled not to everyone's satisfaction.

Heerma will go down in history not just as a struggling opposition leader during the 'purple' coalition, but also as the pragmatic administrator he proved to be as State Secretary for Public Housing, Spatial Planning and the Environment between 1986 and 1994. He was raised in a Reformed, Frisian farming family and after graduating in Political Science, he became an alderman for the CDA. He became State Secretary after Gerrit Brokx had to resign prematurely due to a construction subsidies fraud affair during the Lubbers II cabinet. The centre-right coalition wanted to be rid of the overgrown welfare state through a policy of decentralization and restructuring of expenditure. Heerma's portfolio was well suited for this.

No interfering with kitchen units

Public housing costs had risen in the past fifteen years from two to fourteen billion

guilders. Moreover, several predecessors had tried in vain to break open the national construction industry. Heerma said for a long time that he was 'reading up' on the complicated subject matter. But in fact, he had mastered it almost straightaway. In the 1989 policy document *Volkshuisvesting in de jaren negentig* (Public housing in the 1990s) he presented a comprehensive plan and used his authority to implement this new policy. The CDA cabinet member put a stop to government interference at the level of kitchen units and privatized municipal house building and rental. The government was to be concerned with policy and inspection. In his opinion, commercial rental agencies and housing associations had a much better understanding of supply and demand.

The State Secretary gave the associations, that had previously been closely controlled by government, all possible freedom. They now had to focus particularly on vulnerable groups, but were also to be judged on their performance. They had to be independent, find their own funding on the capital market and build up their own emergency funds. This financial privatization culminated in a number of independent advisors devising the idea of 'grossing up'. All outstanding loans for housing association properties could be offset against the subsidy obligations that the government had entered into: around thirty billion guilders. This relieved the state budget considerably

which was very welcome in view of the requirements for the new monetary union in Europe.

Heerma's grossing up operation illustrates his management style. Using his political allies, he made it clear to the housing associations that if they rejected the deal they would be made redundant due to cutbacks. The sector gave in. The agreement was signed on a Friday night at Hotel Château Marquette, on the outskirts of Heemskerk, on the back of Heerma's cigar box.

The Christian Democratic principle of subsidiarity was at the basis of operation Heerma. The independence of the housing associations was reinforced. Furthermore, Heerma confirmed the position of tenants' associations. He gave them the right to appoint one of the housing association's board members and encouraged residents to work together in one national tenants' association. This move however did not have the desired effect in all areas. Heerma also allowed for volunteer administrators to be replaced by well-paid directors whose policy in the following years frequently attracted public criticism. In this light, Heerma's work also embodies the CDA's struggle to revitalise civil society.

Wouter Beekers

1994 Election defeat

The election defeat of the CDA in 1994 signified a watershed in the political history of the Netherlands. The loss of twenty seats brought to an end the Christian Democrats' pivotal position in the political arena and the certitude of their right to govern. For the first time since 1918, they found themselves in opposition.

In the post-war period the key position of the KVP, ARP and CHU had been so certain that it did not matter to the parties whether they governed with the socialists on the left or with the liberals on the right. This complacent attitude was illustrated by the anti-revolutionary Bauke Roolvink who in the 1960s uttered the wellknown saying: 'het is lood om oud ijzer' (it's six of one and half a dozen of the other). This key position was held not merely due to the efforts of the three Christian parties, but also because the PvdA and VVD refused to work together after Liberal leader P.J. Oud stated in 1959 that 'governing with the PvdA would precipitate the downfall of the Dutch nation'.

In the 1994 election campaign, D66 leader Van Mierlo again attempted to put an end to this animosity. His politics were aimed at displacing the CDA from the centre of power, and bringing the PvdA and VVD together under the slogan: 'this is the moment'. His strategy was helped by

the fact that this was the first election since the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989. The collapse of communism meant that a large impediment to a coalition between socialists and liberals had been removed. To the Christian Democrats the end of the ideological struggle between capitalism and communism meant that its role as mediator between capital and labour had lost its relevance. For the Catholics, this bridging role had been an important justification for their political existence since the papal encyclical *Quadragesimo Anno* in 1931 had pointed to this 'third road'.

No predictable power base

The authority of the Christian Democrats was based mainly on its mediation role, which was firmly rooted in the social and economic order of Dutch society reflected in the consultation model between government, employers and the unions. Rapid post-war reconstruction had been possible due to this model; it had ensured reasonably harmonious social relationships, controlled wage trends and, in particular, stable labour relations. In the early 1990s, the explosive growth in the number of people on work disability benefits highlighted the downside of the close relationships between these three parties. Lubbers' quote 'the Netherlands is sick' dates from this period. One of the reasons for the defeat in 1994 was a difference of opinion between himself and Elco Brinkman, the successor he had appointed, on

the issue of how and especially at what pace the patient should be cured. The closer the election came, the clearer this difference became to the outside world. Brinkman wanted drastic measures and to 'freeze' all benefits for four years. This meant deviating from the policy of the Lubbers' cabinets which allowed for an annual review to check whether the link between benefits and wages should be removed. But, rather than arrogance, it was more the assurance of power that had crept in during the 1980s as a result of Lubbers' successes that misled his impetuous successor. When member of parliament Van Iersel was quoted as saying 'we run this country', his words took on a life of their own and became the symbol of this certitude.

The election defeat of 1994 made clear to the CDA that it could no longer count on its electoral power base. From now on, the party would have to fight for the trust of the electorate. The second lesson was that the centre of the Dutch political arena was no longer the exclusive domain of the CDA. It would now have to present itself with a clearer ideology..

Hans Goslinga

1995 *Nieuwe wegen, vaste waarden*

***Nieuwe wegen, vaste waarden* (New roads, firm values) (1995) is the title of a CDA report written by the Advisory Board set up in 1994 and chaired by Frans Andriessen. After the election defeat of 1994 this report provided the basis for a reorientation process. It was also an important document in Jan Peter Balkenende's 'political arsenal'.**

Immediately following the election defeat of 1994, the CDA set up two committees. One investigated the election defeat, the other, an Advisory Board, looked to the future with a long term vision for the party. The CDA was not part of the new cabinet and so it was free to reposition itself with support from the CDA Research Institute. How could the apparent crisis of confidence between the voter and the CDA be repaired? Was it possible to modernize the traditional philosophy inspired by religious faith and to make it fit for an increasingly secular society? The Advisory Board put forward a longterm plan for the next fifteen years, setting out the strategic choices for Christian Democratic politics.

The 'no nonsense' policy was abandoned. The party distanced itself from policy decisions that were strongly driven by the economy and debates on spending cuts. Social values come

under pressure when the focus is on only the economy, competition and the market. Creativity and competition create a more dynamic society, but cooperation and solidarity are just as important. Sustainability ensures that the qualities of current society continue into future generations. Without direction prosperity can turn into poverty where commercial considerations are geared to the widest possible target group. Greater flexibility at work can turn into less time for friends and family. 'We don't want a future where children come home from school and are greeted by just the fridge and the TV', states *Nieuwe wegen, vaste waarden*.

The Advisory Board called for people in the community to take more initiative and responsibility. Government should play a more supportive role. The reform of the welfare state became a spearhead. International developments had led to greater freedom and competition. The government could rely less on its own detailed regulations, steering and control. People want to be responsible, to experiment and be enterprising. The free market system was not a goal in itself, but a means to achieve a goal. The government would act when fundamental values were at stake. Besides the free market system, security was also needed but more as a stepping stone than an escape. The Rijnland model needed to be adjusted, but not done away with completely. The ideas of Ab Klink (director of

the Research Institute) and Jan Peter Balkenende (secretary of the Advisory Board) can be heard here. In his PhD thesis in 1992 Balkenende had warned about the influence of the state in civil society. In the call for a safe society, some recognized the voice of Piet Hein Donner (chairman of the Scientific Council for Government Policy (WRR)). The government had to become tougher in the areas of policing and the judiciary particularly with regard to drugs and illegal immigrants. International crime was a threat and the world was not a village. Tolerance was no longer an option.

The report called for democratic reform in the context of a society in which everyone participated. By choosing Balkenende as party leader for the election in 2002, the CDA personified these new roads and firm values. At a time of unrest at home and abroad, Balkenende was able to win elections by calling for a society with values.

Jan Willem Sap

2001 Leadership crisis

The conflict surrounding the CDA leadership at the end of September 2001, was more than just personal. It concerned a fundamental difference of opinion on the campaign strategy and a struggle between politicians in parliament and the national party headed by the executive board. The crisis did however produce the leader that put the CDA centre stage again: Jan Peter Balkenende.

In the summer of 2001 a return to the centre of power by the CDA was not on the cards. The 'purple' coalition of PvdA, VVD and D66 had been in government for seven years. The economy was flourishing. Political commentators were predicting a third term for this coalition.

This belief was reinforced by the unrest within the CDA. Since its historic defeat in 1994, the party now had its third chairman and third political leader. And then in the week of 27 September to 2 October 2001 came the battle between the two most important figures in the party: Marnix van Rij and Jaap de Hoop Scheffer.

The chairman found the campaign strategy too defensive, too much like 'catenaccio football'

Van Rij had been party chairman since 1999 and was determined to give the CDA a more contemporary image and to rid it of its 'stuffy' image. The closer the general election came, the less faith the executive board had in De Hoop Scheffer as election party leader. It became clear to Van Rij during visits to the grassroots that De Hoop Scheffer did not have the full support of the party membership. In addition, he felt that De Hoop Scheffer's campaign strategy was too defensive, too much like 'catenaccio football'.

For his part, De Hoop Scheffer, an experienced parliamentarian, felt obstructed by the personal ambitions of Van Rij. He had already been asked if he would be prepared to let Van Rij become leader for the election. Initially, De Hoop Scheffer appeared to be willing to do so, but he later changed his mind. He also protested against Van Rij's suggestion that he take the third place on the list of election candidates.

In that pivotal week at the end of September, Van Rij decided to withdraw as a parliamentary candidate and resign as party chairman due to a 'fundamental difference of opinion on the organisation of the next election'. Then a war broke out in the media about the image of the party. Newspaper De Telegraaf talked of a coup staged by Van Rij against De Hoop Scheffer. De Hoop Scheffer said on radio and television that he was aware that: 'Marnix van Rij was always

after my job.' The next day, after a long and bewildering meeting with the party executive, he decided that he would no longer be standing as party leader for the election and resigned as chairman of the parliamentary party. He felt he did not have enough support from the party executive. 'Exit. There was no alternative route', he told the throng of journalists waiting outside.

What now? Who would become party leader? Suddenly Jan Peter Balkenende arrived on the scene: mid forties, from Zeeland and Reformed, trained at the CDA Research Institute and for the past three years financial spokesman in parliament. The party executive were quick to act: Balkenende should be the next chairman of the CDA parliamentary group. And shortly afterwards, he became the new party leader for the election. Eight months later the CDA became the largest party at the general election, which was overshadowed by the murder of Pim Fortuyn. Election victory in 2002 was possible for three reasons: the leadership crisis and the choice of Balkenende, the intrinsic reforms introduced by people like Balkenende and Klink, and the political and social unrest which caused the 'purple' coalition parties to lose and the CDA to come out on top as the largest party once again.

Pieter Jan Dijkman

2006 The Balkenende II cabinet and the new healthcare system

One of the most important reforms of the second Balkenende cabinet was the implementation in 2006 of the new healthcare insurance system. Waiting lists that were a feature of the healthcare sector in the 1990s became a thing of the past. For decades, discussions had been held on the organisation of this system. Reports from both the Research Institute and the CDA parliamentary group in the Lower House played an important role.

On 1 January 2006 a system of basic healthcare insurance became effective that was aimed at therapeutic care. This marked the end of a long debate on fundamental changes to the healthcare system which began with the report of the Dekker Committee in 1987. After first reaching a stalemate on the set up of a new healthcare system, the discussion was resurrected in the coalition agreement of the Balkenende I cabinet and the Balkenende II cabinet put the new Healthcare Insurance Act on the statute book.

In the course of the 1980s, it became clear that the old supply-oriented therapeutic healthcare system was failing. Government interference, a complicated finance structure and regulations got in the way of providing effective healthcare.

The Dutch healthcare system was hampered by a limited choice for patients, insufficient innovation and long waiting lists for certain treatments. The new system brought an end to the distinction between public health insurance funds and private health insurance that had existed for more than 65 years. As Hannie van Leeuwen, Upper House member, said in the TV programme Buitenhof: 'This new system puts an end to the dichotomy in healthcare that we have had up till now. People with private health insurance on the one hand, and those covered by the national health insurance funds on the other.'

To guarantee solidarity and accessibility, insurance companies were obliged to give everyone basic cover. The policyholder was entitled every year to switch to a different insurance company, irrespective of their state of health. According to the Research Institute, market competition would encourage insurers to enter into contracts with healthcare providers to ensure the best quality at the best price. To promote price competition, a fixed healthcare contribution per person was introduced. Patient demand would steer the volume and type of healthcare on offer.

The cost of insurance could now vary between companies, but the introduction of a nominal health insurance contribution was not permitted to lead to unacceptably high costs for families. With the new healthcare system, an

income-related healthcare tax credit was introduced for those on low incomes. As a result, minimum-income households spent a fixed amount of their income on healthcare. No contribution was required for children up to the age of 18. By introducing this healthcare benefit into the tax system, the policy on income and insurance was separated. Following the party memorandum De moeite waard (Worth the effort) a similar system was introduced for housing association tenants on low incomes and families with children.

An important reason for introducing the system was a better focus on the wishes of patients. International comparisons in 2011 showed that the Netherlands scores well on patient satisfaction, waiting times and access to basic healthcare facilities. Documents from the new Advisory Board in 2012 show that the system for long-term healthcare requires some adjustment. As experience with the therapeutic healthcare system has shown, if we want a sustainable healthcare system in the long-term, then it must be tailored to the person requiring care and not the care provider. By allowing users to be in control they will buy the care they consider important, where not only the physical aspects of care but also personal welfare will be better considered.

Raymond Gradus

2010 Formation conference

One third of the CDA members present on 2 October 2010 voted against the agreement for a coalition with the VVD with backbench support from the PVV. An open conflict about participating in the coalition had split the party. With 68 percent of members' votes Verhagen had been given the green light to proceed, but the party conference was unable to unite the members.

Though the party had suffered a dramatic defeat at the election on 9 June 2010, by the end of July after the failure of negotiations for a 'purple plus' coalition, the CDA was contemplating forming a coalition with the VVD with backbench support from the PVV (Freedom Party). The alienation of party leaders from the party grassroots appeared to be one of the main reasons for the election defeat. This was why interim party chairman Henk Bleker wanted to involve the members more in the procedure – especially now there was a possibility of working with the PVV – and decided that joining the coalition had to be approved by the party conference. This sensational decision – CDA members had never before been allowed to vote on a coalition agreement – led to some concern among members who feared that this would cause divisions or indecisiveness in the party. But the CDA party leaders had faith in a good result.

**The media attention was overwhelming.
The NOS broadcast live to a record number of viewers**

At the end of August, an open conflict arose between the negotiators Maxime Verhagen and Ab Klink. Ultimately Ab Klink resigned as a member of the parliamentary party. This dispute made the result of the conference even more significant than it already was.

On 28 September, the leaders of the three parties announced that they had reached an agreement. The conference was planned for 2 October in the Rijnhal in Arnhem. The party executive wanted to hold the conference quickly. Despite the lack of time to prepare, around 4,700 members turned up, almost five times as many as at an ordinary conference. From half past nine members were queuing to enter the Rijnhal. The media attention was overwhelming. The NOS broadcast live a marathon programme that, at one point, had 1.4 million viewers glued to their TV sets. This was a record in audience ratings: never before had so many people watched a live broadcast of a party conference. Members were given exactly one minute speaking time, though some prominent party members were allowed or claimed slightly longer. Many former politicians spoke out against the agreement. Ernst Hirsch Ballin pleaded, 'Don't do this to our country'.

Hannie van Leeuwen called for unity, 'Whether you are in favour or against, we need each other'. Opponents pointed towards the inadequate protection of religious freedom and the rule of law in the PVV and felt that the CDA should not become a polarized party on the centre-right. Supporters pointed towards the content of the coalition agreement; they felt that the party should accept the responsibility of government, that it was the best option from a strategic and political perspective (to take the wind out of the sails of the VVD and the PVV), they were loyal to the party leadership or feared that rejection would increase internal divisions. Eventually it appeared that the agreement was supported by two thirds of the members present, while one third – more than expected by political analysts – rejected it.

This conference, described by Verhagen as a 'celebration of democracy', removed the final obstacle to the formation of the Rutte cabinet. But the discussion about this political collaboration was by no means over.

James Kennedy

Authors

Dr. P. (Peter) Bak is a freelance historian and writer

Dr. W.P. (Wouter) Beekers works for the Historical Documentation Centre for Dutch Protestantism at VU University Amsterdam

Prof. dr. J. (Jac) Bosmans is Professor emeritus of History at Radboud University Nijmegen

Dr. R. (Roelof) Bouwman is a journalist with HP/De Tijd

Dr. Th.B.F.M. (Theo) Brinkel is head of fundamental communication at the Nederlandse Defensie Academie

Dr. W. (Willem) Camphuis is transition manager at Hogeschool Inholland

Ms. dr. M.E.B. (Marjet) Derks is a university lecturer in Cultural History at Radboud University Nijmegen

Drs. P.H.J. (Pieter Jan) Dijkman is editor-in-chief of Christen Democratische Verkenningen

Mr. J.J.A.M. (Jos) van Gennip is chairman of Socires

H. (Hans) Goslinga is a political columnist for Trouw

Prof. dr. R.H.J.M. (Raymond) Gradus is director of the CDA Research Institute

Drs. P.G.T.W. (Peter) van Griensven is a researcher at the Centre for Parliamentary History at Radboud University Nijmegen

Prof. dr. G. (George) Harinck is Professor of History at the VU University Amsterdam

Dr. S. (Steven) Van Hecke is a post-graduate researcher at the department of Political Science at Antwerp University

Dr. P. (Peter) van der Heiden is a researcher at the Centre for Parliamentary History at Radboud University Nijmegen

Dr. R. (Rienk) Janssens is general secretary of the Raad voor Maatschappelijke Ontwikkeling

Prof. dr. E. (Eelke) de Jong is Professor of International Economics at Radboud University Nijmegen

Dr. R. (Ron) de Jong is a researcher at the Electoral Council

Prof. dr. J.C. (James) Kennedy is Professor of Dutch History at the University of Amsterdam

Dr. A. (Alexander) van Kessel is a researcher at the Centre for Parliamentary History at Radboud University Nijmegen

P.G. (Pieter-Gerrit) Kroeger is editor-in-chief of ScienceGuide

R.M.C. (Remy) Luyten is a masters student in Political History at Utrecht University

Mr. dr. H.M.Th.D. (Hans-Martien) ten Napel is a university lecturer in Constitutional and Administrative Law at Leiden University

Prof. mr. dr. A. (Andries) Postma is a Professor emeritus of Education Law at the University of Groningen

Drs. J.J.M. (Jan) Ramakers is a researcher at the Centre for Parliamentary History at Radboud University Nijmegen

Prof. dr. J.W. (Jan Willem) Sap is Professor of European Law at the Open University in Heerlen

J. (Jan) Schinkelshoek is a self-employed Communication Consultant

Dr. W.F. (Wilfred) Scholten is a journalist at the NCRV

Dr. H. (Herman) Smit is former mayor of Zwartsluis, Dalfsen and Hardenberg

Drs. I.D. (Dik) Verkuil is a historian

Dr. P.E. (Paul) Werkman is senior researcher at the Historical Documentation Centre for Dutch Protestantism at VU University Amsterdam

Dr. L.G.M. (Lodewijk) Winkeler is
director of the Catholic
Documentation Centre

Dr. R.E. (Rolf) van der Woude is
a researcher at the Historical
Documentation Centre for Dutch
Protestantism at the Vrije
Universiteit Amsterdam

Dr. J. (Jonn) van Zuthem is a
historian

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