

# Innovating Social Democracy – Houdini-style A Perspective from the Dutch Labor Party (PvdA)\*

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DUTCH LABOR PARTY (PARTIJ VAN DE ARBEID, PVDA)	
Official website:	www.pvda.nl
Party leader:	Job Cohen
History at a glance:	Founded in 1946, it was the successor of the pre-war Social Democratic Labour Party (SDAP), originally formed in 1894.
SI and PES membership:	SI member; PES: since 1992
Party membership:	2000: 58,426 2005: 61,111 2010: 54,504
Electoral resonance parliamentary elections:	2010: 19.6 % of the votes (30/150 seats) 2006: 21.2 % of the votes (33/150 seats) 2003: 28.0 % of the votes (42/150 seats)
Electoral resonance European elections:	2009: 12.5 % of the votes (3/25 seats) 2004: 23.6 % of the votes (7/25 seats)
Government participation:	2006–2010: in government 1994–2002: in government; head of government: Wim Kok

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## Paradigm Shift

Third Way renewal has reached its limits. This is, among other things, the result of a broader paradigm shift in society at large. In the first place, we are confronted with a crisis of financial capitalism, paying the price for the deregulated, unfettered economy of the past two decades. We have now reached the stage of collateral damage and aftershocks, in the form of the euro crisis and public finance crises. In programmatic terms, there is an urgent need to develop a new political economy for social democracy, a new concept of *economic growth and governance*, and a new *public spirit* of responsibility in the private and public sectors.

Furthermore, the historical compromise or alliance between the labor movement and the cultural elites, as well as between the working class and the professional middle classes around the project of the welfare state has been put under strain because of changes in lifestyle, value orientations, labor market patterns, social mobility, and ill-understood austerity policies which many believe constitute a »betrayal.« This is partly one of the unintended consequences of the success of social democratic meritocracy. In programmatic terms, however, there is a fresh need to rethink the concept of *solidarity*.

Society is also being challenged by a host of cultural trends and changes. Individualization (»bowling alone«), cultural diversification and pluralism (»multiculturalism« and the proliferation of lifestyles and identities), and growing fragmentation (»broken society«) demand a new social democratic approach to bridging and bonding in order to develop contemporary forms of *social cohesion* and *community*.

Society has also lost its »*sense de la politique*« (Rosanvallon). One might say that the essential progressive idea of »positive freedom« (to borrow Isaiah Berlin's term) is in crisis: the belief in a better society or a better personal life to be attained through politics, the state or collective action has eroded in many segments in society, including parts of the younger generation. The participatory republic of citizens has turned into a »spectator's democracy.« This »audience democracy« (Bernard Manin and Jos de Beus) consists of consumers with weak party affiliation and a deep distrust of politics and political representatives. The »logic« of the media and of political campaigning is marginalizing the politics of deliberation, open discourse, and compromise. The national parties of the political center are under pressure; on the political flanks, right- and left-wing populism is on the rise. To re-establish trust in (social

democratic) politics we need quality investment in *citizenship and democracy*. Also needed are an unprejudiced discussion about new progressive alliances (the Greens, churches, trade unions), better recruitment and R&D (Research and Development), and restoration of dialogue and other links with social democratic constituencies.

Needless to say, many of the changes we have mentioned are part of long-term trends. Nevertheless, the current financial and economic crisis can act as a catalyst. Just as the Great Depression in the 1920s and 1930s gave rise to the New Deal and the construction of the European welfare state; and just as the crisis of the welfare state in the 1970s and 1980s gave rise to Reaganite and Thatcherite neoliberalism; the contemporary systemic crisis is calling out for a new design and formula for our political economy and democracy.

What is at stake? Is a new period of growing social unrest, dangerous new inequalities, multicultural conflict, economic decline, demographic stress, and the implosion of democracy looming? Or is this picture far too gloomy and are we, instead, entering an era characterized by a prosperous, sustainable knowledge-based economy for all, and witnessing the rise of truly cosmopolitan citizenship in a global age?

## **A Neo-Idealist Project**

Come what may, social democracy and our democratic system will be tested in unprecedented circumstances: can they come up with answers and solutions to the new challenges?

After the era of collectivization and state intervention (New Deal) and that of markets and individuals (neoliberalism), a new paradigm is required. The politics of nostalgia is not an option. What we need instead is a strategy of »innovating social democracy,« profiting from the rich tradition of the socialist movement and applying basic social democratic values, with nonconformist bravery, to our changing society. This innovation, in our opinion, should amount to much more than a new and unreflective round of adaptation to a simplified notion of the Globalized World, or an ill-defined project of change and reform. Instead, it should be a »neo-idealist« project, including the restoration of checks and balances to counter the mainstream economic and political thinking of policy elites. In any event, we must not allow ourselves once more to fall victim to a »*pensée unique*« (cited by Judt 2010) which crowds out

all others. This is the hard lesson we must learn from the capitulation to neoliberal hegemony, in recent decades, by far too many academics (chiefly economists), politicians, and commentators.

All traditional center or »governing« parties have been hit by the changes mentioned above, but social democracy has been at the forefront. One indication of this is its unprecedented electoral vulnerability: diminishing party loyalty, smaller ups and bigger downs. In particular, the sociological and cultural cleavages between the higher and lower educated, and the pressure on national welfare states due to internationalization, Europeanization, and immigration call for innovation, which will necessarily entail a number of strategic dilemmas and choices. That's the state we're in.

## **Innovation: We've Done It Before**

The history of Social Democracy is also a history of innovation – of ideas, organization, and practices. Revisionism is in Social Democracy's DNA. The origin of the concept of revisionism may be found in the struggle between the reformist and evolutionary wings of the German socialist movement, the reformers versus the dogmatists. Revisionism at the present time, however, is a project in a completely different context. Now, what is called for is the redefinition of the basics of social democracy after a period of hyper-pragmatism and ultra-realism, which some have even described as a period of collaboration with neoliberalism or of ideological »treason.«

Revisionism nowadays should once again entail the (re-)introduction of analysis and critique of our societies (»Gesellschaftskritik« in German), a craft that was once characteristic of the progressive movement. Social democracy has always been about more than economic functionalism (»education is indispensable for our knowledge economy«) or a moral appeal (»education is good for the individual«). It has also focused on the analysis of structural barriers to social improvement and positive freedom (»education is the backbone of social equality«) and the institutional arrangements needed to overcome these barriers. It has analyzed the structures and relations of power, aiming at democratic control and accountability and opening up power structures for democratic participation (Crosland).

How urgently the need for innovation manifests itself depends on both internal and external (to political parties) factors, but will usually

involve both. An internal drive for innovation may originate in bad electoral results, loss of government power, differences of opinion about the ideological course of the party, or groups feeling left out. An external drive for innovation may come from a systemic change in the party's social or political support base; an inability to deal with new social and political questions; shifts in social structures and cultural patterns in society; or generational pressures. When both internal and external drives converge, a major paradigm shift may be in the offing. This might affect the general ideological outlook, party leadership and party elites, the organizational structure, electoral and political coalitions, alliances with organized groups in society, and the themes and issues to be put on the agenda. In contemporary politics political campaigns have become the ultimate focal point. Here all these elements come together and are put to the most severe reality test.

The history of Social Democracy can be described as a long learning process, involving a succession of paradigms and the development of new insights, ranging from the notion of a radical rupture with capitalism, via models of socialist planning of the economy and society, to the institutionalization of a mixed economy. While basic principles such as social justice, equality, and emancipation are the *hardware* of the social democratic movement, these ideas, institutional frames, and notions about embedding capitalism can be considered the *software*.

In the history of the Dutch Labor Party, such profound innovation processes took place in the 1930s, the late 1960s, and the early 1990s. In the late 1930s, the social democratic movement underwent a paradigm shift from the classical Marxist ideas of class struggle as the engine of history and a revolutionary perspective to a perspective of ethical socialism, involving the organization of capitalism within a democratic framework and according to criteria of social justice. This included a program for social security, economic recovery out of the crisis, and a claim to be treated as a serious partner in Dutch society and politics. A new electoral alliance between the working and middle classes was to replace the exclusive focus on the working class. The conceptual, political, and electoral changes were set in motion by a new generation, a group of idealistic »engineers« and intellectuals who were able to create a breakthrough for the isolated socialist movement in a pillarized society.

In the early 1960s, after more than a decade of social democratic participation in government, the Dutch Labor Party went through a period of deep stagnation, in terms of ideas, organization, and electoral

support. The later party leader Joop den Uyl took the lead in a process of renewal, with the Galbraith-inspired concept of »quality of life« and an ambitious public sector program. But the real shift came when a new generation, united in the so-called New Left movement, stood up against the sclerosis in political culture with radical ideas to democratize society, to polarize Dutch politics, and to modernize the style and culture of the party, with radical proposals for both domestic and foreign policy. They opened up the Labor Party to new social movements, including feminists, environmentalists, and gays. The radicalization of the program and basic principles was matched by new political and electoral strategies. The post-war corporatist, consensual class compromise was replaced by a politics of polarization, with the new social movements as partners and a coalition of the parties on the left, bringing together the working class, the post-materialistic middle classes, and representatives of the creative class in an electoral alliance.

A new revisionism emerged around 1990, when the Dutch Labor Party waved goodbye to its recent radical past and embraced a more pragmatic approach to welfare state reform, giving center stage to policies of labor market activation, retrenchment in social security, and participation. In effect, the Dutch Labor Party became the social-liberal forerunner of the Third Way, but without the label (Bill Clinton: »You were first, Wim«). Electorally, the party hoped to gain ground among young professionals and the middle classes, taking over the Christian Democratic position in the political center. In terms of government coalitions, Dutch Labor formed the »purple coalition« with the conservative and progressive liberals, without losing touch with the neo-corporatist network (the »Polder model«).

Since the 2002 wave of populism in the Netherlands, new attempts have been made to get back in touch with the (presumably) lost electorate. Former party leader Wouter Bos, in his Den Uyl lecture, critically evaluated the Third Way accommodation-type politics of the PvdA (2010). Earlier, the PvdA had published a new party document on immigration and integration, proposing a much stricter approach. This document, however, proved to be divisive within the constituency of the Dutch Labor party.

The party has been left in limbo: neither the social-liberal Third Way adaptation to the economy, nor the integrationist adaptation to anti-immigrant populism have united and inspired the party with a new self-confidence or a new common sense of direction.

## Strategic Choices Today

Are we trying to re-animate a comatose political movement, or does social democracy still contain hidden potential capable of reuniting fragmenting and polarizing societies? Although trends may be compelling, we think that there is enough room to maneuver to allow innovation and the redefinition of the social democratic project under new circumstances. Basically, three options are open for social democracy.

The first would be to make a clear-cut choice in favor of the »enlightened« professional middle classes as our most important constituency. They represent the future of the knowledge economy and are a growing segment of society, concentrated in the metropolitan areas. They are the carriers of optimistic, liberal, and cosmopolitan views on internationalization, multicultural integration, and European unification. Such a choice would facilitate a coalition or even close cooperation with the other two liberal left parties, D66 and GreenLeft, around a common project of further flexibilization of the labor market, European political integration, green innovation, individual autonomy, and stimulating talents. It would represent a cultural follow-up to the – primarily social and economic – Third Way, Dutch-style. As a side-effect this option might attract specific support from the new career and »power« feminists and migrant groups.

The second option would be to choose what, against all the laws of marketing and PR, has been labeled a »social democracy of fear« (Tony Judt 2010). This would be aimed at regaining the support of the traditional as well as the new, flexible working classes and the lower middle class, and those dependent on public services, social security and welfare. It would defend the protection and security which the classical welfare state used to offer. It would be extremely critical of market forces, especially in the public sector, and of the European Union – at least of the market fundamentalist way in which it currently functions. It would be more activist, with strong local roots. This choice would entail closer cooperation with the Socialist Party (in the Dutch case) or Die Linke (in the German case). It would also restore a close coalition with the trade unions.

Then there is a third option – but not a new Third Way! This option would involve freeing ourselves – Houdini-like – from the limiting conditions in which we currently find ourselves and restoring the broad coalition of working class and middle class, flexible workers in the personal

services sector and professionals in the new knowledge sectors, enlightened entrepreneurs and unionized industrial workers. This option would unite the aims of protection and emancipation with the aspirations and commitments of those who are succeeding in contemporary society. It would address the responsibility, commitment, participation, and citizenship of both, those who have a lot to gain and those who have already gained a lot. It would entail a broad coalition of the left, bridging the gap between the conservative and liberal left, and new alliances with the third sector and civic initiatives. Since we are true Houdini enthusiasts,<sup>1</sup> we definitely prefer this third option, which we will present briefly.

As the 2010 Dutch national elections have shown once again,<sup>2</sup> social democracy is losing electoral support to the conservative left (SP) and the progressive-liberal left (Greens and social-liberal D66). It is even losing votes to the Wilders party, not directly at these elections, but certainly – in the long term – indirectly, being bypassed by abstentions or a vote shift to the SP, illustrating the farewell of the leftist working class. The Dutch Labor Party is still the main force on the left (with 30 seats, compared to 10 for GL and D66 and 15 for the SP), but it is having trouble defining an authentic position vis-à-vis its progressive competitors. It can survive, whether as an independent force of the left or as part of a larger progressive alliance, only if it comes up with a project of its own.

In order to restore a coalition of the different constituencies of social democracy, a program is needed that connects the materialist perspective of fair pay, decent work, opportunities to move forward, and social and physical security with a post-materialistic or cultural perspective involving a sustainable environment, an open outlook on the world around us and, up to a point, an acceptance of cultural diversity. Such a program would counterbalance the strong centrifugal forces in the economic, cultural, and political realms: growing inequality, ossifying cultural cleavages, and division lines of distrust and abstention in our democracies. Moreover, it would halt the commercialization of public goods, instead, strengthening »res publica« by introducing a public ethic and orientation, also in the private and third sectors. It would also produce an agenda characterized

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1. Harry Houdini (1874–1926) was a Hungarian-American magician and escapologist who became famous for his daring stunts. He was also a famous debunker of self-proclaimed psychics and mystics.

2. See also Frans Becker/René Cuperus (2010): *Politics in a fragmented society. The 2010 elections in the Netherlands*. Available at: <http://library.fes.de/pdf-files/id/ipa/07318.pdf>.



by modesty, self-restraint, and moderation, built around notions of ecological, social, and cultural »sustainability,« counteracting the hyper-consumerist rat race. This could be seen as a restoration of the concept of quality of life, but in an unprecedented fashion.

## **Houdini-style Innovation in Social Democracy: A Conceptual Framework**

Our Houdini-option needs new ideas, concepts, and orientations. We would propose a conceptual framework along the following lines.

### **A People-based Economy**

If financial forces and freedoms are not corrected and regulated, nothing will change. Social democracy should be one of the forces of correction, picking up the tradition of the »Fabian Essays in Socialism,« with their criticism of the non-productive rich.

What we need is a political economy in which innovation and entrepreneurship are key, not markets, still less greed. A political economy that pays tribute to the central role of human capital in both the private and public sectors. A social democratic agenda should represent more than a critique of capitalism and should focus, among other things, on:

- ▶ quality of work (the return of craftsmanship, à la Sennett, in the private and public sectors, rebalancing the position of professionals vis-à-vis management, and including new possibilities of social mobility, offering ample opportunities for on-the-job training and education;
- ▶ a better balance between work, family, and care in the course of life;
- ▶ stimulating innovation, sustainability, and entrepreneurship, also regionally, in industry as well as in the public services, including a fresh view of employment conditions in the public sector;
- ▶ rebalancing the power relations within corporations, limiting the short-term shareholder perspective and strengthening the position of the other stakeholders;
- ▶ strengthening the position of young starter-entrepreneurs who go it alone, the entrepreneurs without employees who simply do not fit in to our old-fashioned welfare state schemes.

## A Fair Deal in Income, Wealth, and Security

The idea of fairness in the welfare state has been undermined, on the one hand, by easy access to and abuse of its provisions and, on the other, by the disproportionate increase in the wealth and income of investment bankers, corporate CEOs, and managers in the semi-public sector. Being »intensely relaxed about people getting filthy rich« (British New Labour's Peter Mandelson) is no longer merely an option, but almost a moral default. The idea of fairness is also being undermined by the shadow side of meritocracy. Meritocracy – a social democratic ideal since the 1950s – has two faces: the just idea that not family background should determine social success, but talent, skills and effort, but also the unjust effect that those with less talent are increasingly considered as a burden on our knowledge society. They do not feel treated with respect and dignity, and have a real fear of social degradation (see Franz Walter 2010, who has carefully analyzed the erosion of the sociology underpinning traditional German social democracy: the total alienation of »die Neue Mitte« with regard to »das neue Unten«).

Education is clearly one of the roads to improving one's chances in society, although education can also have negative meritocratic effects. For that reason, not only the education of engineers should be »excellent,« but also that of mechanics and plumbers.

A social democratic agenda should restore fairness as a central concept in our societies, addressing not only the responsibility of the unemployed to try to get back into the labor market, but also the responsibility of the better off and the rich for the common good. It must rebalance and diminish the inequalities in income and wealth, life chances and prospects for personal development. The activating welfare society of the Third Way was a step forward compared to the income transfer welfare state we were used to, but activation has its limits (Vandenbroucke). The old risks of unemployment, sickness, and loss of income have not vanished.

## Belonging in a Pluralist Society

One of the most divisive issues in the political laboratory that is the Netherlands in recent decades is immigration and integration. It is a big-city problem that has spread fear, anger, and dissent far beyond the cities' boundaries. It is a complex problem caused, among other things,

by badly managed immigration and integration processes, the speed and concentration of change, and the shock mutual encounter of conservative and liberal cultures under conditions of globalization, European integration, and individualization, which has already had a corrosive effect on the lives and prospects of lower class citizens in particular. It has led to disruptive extremism and populism. A social democratic agenda should start from the socio-economic basics – education, work, participation, social mobility – but should extend to a much wider agenda, including:

- ▶ security and freedom from fear in the streets: »smart« law and order (disproportionate levels of crime are eroding trust between different ethnic and social groups and threatening to turn high-trust societies into low-trust ones);
- ▶ the rule of law;
- ▶ active support for »family education« to combat the parental education crisis;
- ▶ turning bad schools into good schools by urgently creating the conditions they need to perform better;
- ▶ deliberative processes of bonding and bridging in the cities.

A sense of belonging – around the concept of responsible citizenship – must be restored in the face of powerful countervailing forces of division and distrust. Local politics in particular is where this should be put into practice. It is the metropolitan areas where the contrasts between rich and poor, old working class and new immigrant workers arise and clash (Sassen), but also where new identities might be forged.

## The Return of Positive Freedom

Contemporary European societies are still characterized by certain patterns of collective behavior, but a strong sense of individuality has been emerging. We are living in an unleashed society in which – in the wake of the cultural revolution of the 1970s and the commercial revolution of the 1990s – negative freedom in some ways seems to have become generalized. A social democratic agenda should focus on rebalancing individual freedom and community – on the concepts of positive freedom and social cohesion (Job Cohen's »keeping society together«).

Part of this agenda is directed towards moderation as a virtue – the development of checks and balances to curb the strong influence of commercial and economic forces in our societies (including crucial cultural institutions, such as broadcasting and the universities). It aims at

creating a new balance between the public and private sectors, redefining the role of the public sphere (Anthony Giddens), instilling the private sector with public ethics and the public sector with high quality standards and a new professionalism.

## What We Want to Cherish

The social democracy of the Third Way embraced and propagated change. In the Netherlands, we have gone through 30 years of change and reform of the welfare state, and still more change is desired. Unfortunately, this program of change has been sloppy and lacking in arguments; has generated inequality; and has been disruptive in a number of sectors, undermining professional ethics and standards. Social democracy has followed fashion and the mainstream economic consensus, which failed dramatically to warn of the oncoming financial crisis. It has botched its role as countervailing power, so much needed to provide checks and balances at the time when capitalism was being unleashed. This was disastrous timing, to say the least.

A society cannot live by change alone. It also needs continuity. Social democracy must therefore ask itself what it wants to cherish: what is worth keeping? Lampedusa's dictum that if we don't want anything to change, *everything* has to *change* («Bisogna cambiare tutto per non cambiare niente») no longer applies in a world in flux, in which the uncertainty of the elites in a global age is transferred to the »pornography of change« (René Cuperus) with the aim of reducing insecurity. Continuity and stability, however, require a change of mentality and of the agenda of social democracy itself.

## Risks and Pitfalls: Are We Still in Touch?

Reinventing social democracy is necessary if it is to stage a comeback and win the war of ideas, not to mention campaigns and elections. But there are a number of risks and pitfalls. The first is that, at present, we face a period of 10 years of severe austerity policies, involving cutbacks in public spending to balance the public finances. Is there no substantially different, progressive way of tackling the crisis, beginning with a European Keynesian push to restore growth? Why not continue with a program of moderate cutbacks, combined with innovation and public commitment

to an improved public sector? Is there a way of engaging and appealing to citizens and public sector professionals, instead of letting them become mere passive victims of cuts and negative policy measures?

The second pitfall is our fatal addiction to governing, the sadomasochistic relationship of social democrats to government. We might recall the familiar advice of an old Dutch socialist who was extremely adept in coalition politics: social democrats should only participate in government »if there is something for us to govern.«

Unlike their predecessors, contemporary social democrats too often think in terms of technocratic ministerial dossiers instead of alliances and coalitions with social institutions or groups in civil society. Social democrats consider themselves to be managers of public policy systems, bringing about top-down change. In contrast to more populist political groups, they have become disconnected from the aspirations and anxieties of their voters.

This brings us to the third pitfall, which we will put in the form of a question: Are we still in touch? Are we able to innovate in a climate of lack of trust in politics, in our parties, and in the carriers of our ideas, our politicians? Are we in touch with our constituencies, able to bridge the gap between lower and higher educated voters? Are we as parties living according to our professed ideals? Are we in touch with labor: or do we believe that the conservative left – embodied, according to many reformers, in the anachronistic trade unions – is the enemy within? Are we in touch with the »Zeitgeist,« within the framework of which, like a judoka, we will prevail by turning the strength of adverse forces against themselves? Are our parties in touch with standards of professionalism when they are needed: recruitment of the best and most representative politicians, effective campaigns, and timely changes of leadership? Are social democratic parties still in touch in terms of élan, energy, curiosity, openness, and countervailing ideas? Or have we become too isolated and can we only survive with a new effort to break open our own institutions? What we need are new progressive party formations and alliances, new contacts with the social organizations of the younger generation, and mobilization around new issues (climate change, the quality of higher education and the media, precarious jobs).

## By Way of a Conclusion

The problems of Europe's center parties reflect what is happening in society. Potential splits within catch-all parties («Volksparteien») may foreshadow splits in society as a whole. We urgently need a »social New Deal«, a new pact between the privileged and the less privileged, forging a new idea of progress. Such a pact would be characterized by socio-economic security (based on a stable welfare state) and cultural openness (a tolerant, international outlook, while retaining national democracy).

Social democrats need to develop a program that addresses the socio-economic insecurities and options of the broader social democratic constituency, as well as their cultural anxieties. Such a program must appeal to both traditional working class voters and the middle classes. It should also dare to promote continuity and tradition (Tony Judt), instead of obsessing about modernity and innovation. It would present a new narrative that can encompass the daily experiences and stories of our voters. Re-establishing social democratic parties as what Johannes Rau called »the caring party« («Kümmererpartei»), not merely second-guessing the voters in a populist manner, but reconnecting with them to restore trust and promote democratic deliberation, both learning from and educating, while showing moral leadership in a responsible and authoritative way, is also vital. The catch-all party («Volkspartei») must be rescued and renewed as a bridge between the winners and losers of new global trends. This new catch-all party will emerge from progressive coalition-building, encompassing other left-wing political parties, as well as progressive individuals, regardless of party affiliation, and »progressive« organizations, such as trade unions, churches, and NGOs.

European welfare societies – under conditions of mass migration and globalization – must be renewed, but also maintained in the face of American and Asian competition. Europe must compete on the basis of human well-being and welfare, beyond the narrow neoliberal concept of economic growth. Let European social democracy remain the pillar of a modernized European social market model, but also develop a keen sense of cultural and identity politics. The large-scale discontent and unhappiness characteristic of affluent welfare democracies are to a considerable extent the products of concerns about community, social cohesion, and security: post-materialist problems of social psychology.

European societies and parties are at a crossroads. We have to make up our minds: what kind of society do we want to live in? Will we choose

a society in which inequality is growing, immigrants are considered as permanent intruders, markets dominate the public interest, financial interests are considered more important than entrepreneurship, and people regard one another as strangers? Or will we choose the European model that we constructed with so much care and effort after the War: an inclusive society with more moderate differences of income and wealth; a public sector that acts as countervailing power to the market, with responsible citizenship at the top and the bottom; an education system that cherishes mechanics as well as engineers; and with a green and innovative economy, the rule of law, and relaxed diversity?

The divide between left and right in politics must be re-established, not least to combat the dangerous populist cleavage between »the establishment« and what populists falsely identify as »the people.« We must be tough on populism and tough on the causes of populism.

The European social democratic movement today is far too fixated on the blues. Instead, it should revitalize itself by regaining its soul. It simply has to change the record.

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