

Notes on Dutch Constitutional History

R. D. Congleton

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Date	Constitutional or Political Event	Reference
	Roman empire reaches southern edge of the rhine in what came to be called the Netherlands--populated by batavarians/celts/etc A series of fortress cities and trading posts established--many of which remain today	
100?	Myth of the batavarian uprising against the Romans <i>End of Roman Empire / Medieval Governments</i>	
1300-1477	Much of the Rhinish lowlands become properties of the House of Burgundy, mostly through marriages and inheritance, although enhanced occasionally through coercive threats.	<i>Catholic Encyclopedia</i>
1450	Estates General Created for most of the Netherlands by the Burgandy provinces	
1477	Mary's letter of preference, the Great Privelege, restores some local autonomy and grants estates general the right to meet as they wish--that is, without being called by the king or queen. Through her marriage with Maximillian, the Netherlands become Hapsburg territories.	
1500-1600	The Reformation and Counter reformation engulf much of Europe, including the Netherlands. The Protestant Dutch revolt against the Catholic Spanish (Hapsburgs) lead by the House of Orange	
1579	Union of Utrecht formalizes the alliance of protestant provincial governments	J. Sap p. 15
1581	Federation of Seven United Provinces, "Dutch Declaration of Independence"	Michelin, p. 50
1650-1672	Statholderless Period in Holland: local elections for town councils (vroedschap)	
1672-1702	Statholdership reestablished to repulse French, William III.	
1689	William III, aided by the Dutch Army and British Parliament becomes King of England. His wife becomes Queen.	(The only dual sovereignty in English History.)
1702-1747	Statdholderless period	Michelin, p.50

- 1797 French intervene in favor of "patriots" against an increasingly imperial House of Orange.
- 1798 Batavian Constitution: Liberal Precursor to Constitutional Period: calls for freedom of press and association, freedom of religion, independence of judges, Separation of Church and State, had a unicameral parliament, broader suffrage than in 1848, only lasted 3 years J. Sap, p. 39, 42, 43
- 1806 Kingdom of Netherlands established. King Louis Napoleon Bonaparte centralizes currency, penal codes, and reduces local autonomy
- 1810 Netherlands becomes part of France
- 1813 Kingdom of the Netherlands created by Vienna Conference, sovereignty granted William of Orange, in honor of his work in the British and Prussian campaigns against the French (who wanted the Netherlands to remain a republic) 2/3 both chambers for amendment J. Sap, p. 39
J. Sap, p. 98
van der Meer
- 1814/15 Modern Constitutional Period Begins: William IV the last Statdholder becomes King William J. Sap, p. 32, 36
Michelin, p. 50
- Bicameral Parliament with Nobels and Commoners represented, Constitutional Monarchy with most power in hands of king, constitution as a contract J. Sap, p.
Actually first chamber regional based, it just turned out that the nobels controlled local councils and so were elected Fritz Van der Meer
(public admin. historian)
(Institutional conservatism: continuity of institutions very important part of Dutch political outlook.)
- Second national constitution, Belgians wanted bicameralism so that thier aristocracy would have seats in the first chamber, pariliament reborn in 1814, a handful of me wrote it with little consultation, constitutional convention for ammendment parliament requires two readings separated by an election then grand chamber including special members decided with 3/4 vote. Ineke Secker, historian of parliament,
w.p.secker@law.leidenu
niv.nl
071 527 7720 office
- Provincial powers more real during this period , now have little power. Social dems now oppose bicameralism , but members of first chamber feel important. Not professionals, know people better, less political, so can judge more independently--but really Inke Seeker

are picked by parties. Modern first chamber does not often directly use its veto power. In period prior to 1918 first chamber was elected for 9 years (1/3 voted every 3 years) and dominated by CDems, but second chamber elected for 4 years dominated by Libs.

In 1917, first chamber went to six-year terms, elected every 3 years, and then in 1980 went to four-year terms. In 1922, composition of first chamber changes a bit, woman's suffrage granted. Religion-based voting continued. check with Inke Secker for actual date, could be 1922

- 1830 Belgium Secedes, secure independence in 1931 with its own constitution, finalized in 1939, which causes constitutional issues to be revisited J. Sap, p. 109
- 1840 Constitution Revised (at William's Death)
- 1844 Thorbecke (a Lutherin, Professor in Leyden) proposes 9 revisions shortly after coronation of William II, but they fail to receive a majority in the lower house. J. Sap. p. 110
- 1848 A new round of proposals, King William II fears revolution allows consideration of more extensive constitutional revisions to go forward, cabinet resigns, a constitutional commission (of 5 headed by Thorebeck) is created on March 17. J. Sap, p.2, 110
- King appointed new members in the first chamber who would support the new constitution (Had been riots in Amsterdam but no real threat of revolution. Man in street not interested in constitutional reform. Mostly upper middle class and liberals) Inke Secker
- 1848 Johan Rudolph Thorbecke writes new Dutch Constitution: a great compromise between patriots and house of orange, between king and parliamentary advocates (not based on popular sovereignty) J. Sap, p.4
J. Sap, p. 33, 80
- second chamber is to be directly elected with only about 10 percent of the male voters enfranchised
- lower chamber controls the budget J. Sap, p.
- freedom of education J. Sap, p. 35
- 1848 The constitution provides for (1) introduction of direct elections for the lower chamber (by richest 10.3% of male pop > 23), provincial states and local councils J. Sap, p. 112-3

(2) inviolability of the monarch and ministerial responsibility
 (3) right of amendment
 (4) right of parliamentary enquiry
 (5) ability of Crown to dissolve parliament
 (6) annual scrutiny of all budgets
 (7) abolition of all privileges deriving from rank and status
 (8) the end of government by Royal Decree
 (9) important questions to be regulated by law
 Legislative power rests with the King and the Estates General, implementation by the king. Every act by the King required the cooperation of ministers
 Amendment process requires 2/3 majorities in both houses.

J. Sap, p. 32
 Inke Secker

Majority rule on first reading, then second reading with 2/3 vote.

Second chamber has right of amendment
 First chamber can only take or leave
 First chamber now more directly elected still a "chamber of reflection" so nobility becomes less important

Van der Meer

1848 Freedom of press and right of petition

J. Sap, p. 113

1848 Recommendations similar to those of 1944 accepted by the king November 3, and then by a majority in the lower house.

J. Sap, p. 112

1849 King William II dies, followed by William III, Thorbecke becomes a minister and implements the reforms, organically, but has poor relations with the new King threatens Thorbecke with the gallows

J. Sap, p. 114, 115

1853 Liberal party loses election, and Thorbecke is again an ordinary citizen
 Catholic bishops come back to the Netherlands for the first time in 200 years under new freedom of religious organizations to have own leaders allowed under 1848 constitution, and religious parties gain seats

Van der Meer

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1868 Parliamentary power becomes more extensive
 Foundation of Parliamentary Democracy, ministers

J. Sap, p. 36

	answerable to parliament as well as the king	Van der Meer
1870	Liberal Party founded	J. Sap, p. 36
1869-1879	Anti Revolutionary Party (conservative) founded by Kuyper	J. Sap, p. 35
1880	controversy over public education content/by gov/liberal confessional	
1884	Constitution Revised --	J. Sap, p. 32
1887	Constitutional Reform: Expansion of suffrage, by Liberals--suffrage expansion to 27% --followed by new bill in 1994 to to about 50% of male voters.	Inke Secker
	Socialist Parties started in the 1880s although did not have any power / firmly linked to labor / social democratic movement intended to get better labor conditions.	Inke Secker
	First national unions began around 1900, big strike in 1903. Afterward gov tried to reduce power of unions but failed. Closely related to the Christian Democratic and social dem parties.	
1891	Catholic parties were forced to pay more attention to labor by Pope enciclique 1891 (Rerum Novarum, new things) because otherwise the socialists (atheist) would get their votes. (40% catholic)	
	Many Religious Parties organized re education	Van der Meer
1890	DSAP Elites for Social Democrats Gradual Extensive	Van der Meer
1891	Special meeting of Antirevolutionary Party to address labor issues. Kuyper (ARP) (ARP is now part of the Christian Democratic party Christian Democratic Apel along with catholic and other Christian party)	
1893	Womans Suffrage Alliance founded: Vereeniging Voor Vrouwenkiesrecht (VVVK)	
1910	roughly 30-40 male suffrage	van der meer
1917,1922	Major Constitutional Reform Universal Male Suffrage, Proportional Representation for second chamber First chamber still indirectly elected by provincial councils no minimum threshold for chamber seat	J. Sap, p. 32 van der meer

liberal cabinet put in place, election law change
 educational passification with confessional party who
 (benefited from the changes/middle class - labor)

Why PR? First priority was universal male suffrage
 (liberal and socialist aim), *Liberals used PR to save
 seats for liberals* (3-liberal parties, left: VDB liberal
 democratic union 1891-1946 then joined SDs, middle:
 Liberal Union, the main party 1884-1946, right: Union
 of Free Liberals, leave 1894 then rejoin join the LU in
 1921, stressed individual responsibility: VDB worked
 with SDs for universal suffrage,)

Liberals did lose seats after 1917 expansion of suffrage.
 (Other parties as well feared loses, catholic, 2 protestant
 parties, and social democrats expected to gain seats.)
 (About 60% of males had votes prior to 1917, liberal
 share declined with each expansion of suffrage.
 Liberals went from 40 to 15 seats. "Christian
 democrats" dominate until the sixties--merger of three
 religious parties in 1980, had shared government prior
 to that. Social Democrats become largest party after
 1960, but only after the second war--previously religion
 decidd voting pattern of the poor. Social dems alternate
 with CDA as "first" party. Currently, 2002, CDA first
 by far, best finish since 50s.)

1922, Woman Suffrage van der meer

1938, 1946, 1948, 1953, 1963, 1972 Minor Constitutional Reforms J. Sap, p. 32

1940-1946 Occupation, government flees, no election until 1946

first social dems in government after ww11 Van der Meer
 distance between party elites and ave voters more
 libertarian/left post 1970

Provinces become more important with urbanization Van der Meer
 20k work for provinces vs 110k for fed

Cities mostly funded centrally, municipal funds Van der Meer
 (earmarking, distributed by formula, few requirements
 on how they are spent)

1983, 1995 Major Constitutional Reform J. Sap, p. 32, 118

Still no judicial review Article 120
Terms of first chamber reduced

J. Sap, p. 124

First chamber 75 (part-timers, senior statesmen and professors, party elites) second chamber 150

Van der Meer

Confessional Party
Purple Coalition Liberals and Social Dem coalition
Liberal Conservative Coalition at present

10 parties at present
4 years cycles
Elections for first chamber in different years
(first chamber rarely use veto power, feel a bit less legitamite, although more independent minded and experienced.)

Coalitions fairly stable, only 1 gov in 25 years fell before its time

new populous party 26
soc dem and libs halved
greens have 10 but shrunk in last round

King had until 1883 commander in chief,
Asks person to form government, substantial influence

Formally President, Council of States, an advisory body regarding policy, have say on all major policy reforms that are published, senior people legal experts and politicians, lifetime appointments (70)
Highest legal body in the NL
(more support for queen having more power than the parliament)