

The Dutch snap election 2025: A mirror of Europe's stalemate parliamentary politics

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The Netherlands went to the polls on October 29, 2025 in a snap parliamentary election that lays bare the deep crisis of bourgeois democracy and the political stalemate produced by capitalist rule across Europe. Far from expressing the urgent interests of the masses, the vote represents a further stage in the reshuffling of power among factions of the ruling elite as they grapple with mounting social, economic and geopolitical turmoil.

Two fundamental truths emerged in the recent Dutch elections: the ruling class in the Netherlands has nothing progressive to offer but war and social misery, and the Dutch working class remains leaderless without its own political vanguard party rooted in its interests and in the history of the international socialist movement.

What is unfolding in the election outcome is not “a renewal of liberal democracy” but a managed reconfiguration of a ruling elite desperate to stabilise a collapsing bourgeois order. The election results underscore the inability of capitalist rule to secure legitimacy through parliamentary means, resorting instead to authoritarian mechanisms. Beneath the rhetoric of “governability,” the ruling class is galvanising behind an aggressive programme of militarisation, austerity, authoritarianism and war—policies shaped by EU diktats, NATO rearmament and the deepening social crisis confronting the working class.

The caretaker regime—remaining in place until the new government is formed—led by Dick Schoof, a former intelligence and counterterrorism chief, stands as a clear expression of this turn. Sustained with royal sanction after Geert Wilders’ far-right Party for Freedom (PVV) withdrew from the governing coalition in June, Schoof’s dwindling caretaker government held just 32 of 150 parliamentary seats by August, making it unprecedentedly undemocratic even by the standards of bourgeois parliamentarism. His appointment as unelected prime minister of the heretofore most far-right government in post-war Dutch history represents the direct rule of the security state, with power consolidated in the hands of unelected intelligence officials, EU and NATO strategists, bankers and affiliated think tanks.

This arrangement exposes the rot of the entire political establishment. The traditional workers’ parties and the nominal left, long integrated into the machinery of capitalist rule, are utterly discredited and incapable of offering any alternative. Their complicity in decades of austerity, NATO militarism in the war against Russia, and tacit support for Israel’s genocide in Gaza has further alienated their social base, leaving a political vacuum exploited by the far right.

The Netherlands mirrors a broader international and European crisis: the hollowing out of democratic forms, the fusion of state and security apparatuses, and the ruling class’s desperate efforts to maintain control amid a deepening breakdown of bourgeois democracy.

In this political backdrop, internationally, the Dutch election was widely portrayed as a “litmus test” for “European coalition stability and the populist surge.” The *Guardian* framed it as a choice between a “populist breakthrough” or a return to “centrist coalition governance,”

while Reuters stressed that the PVV’s initial lead did not guarantee control due to the “cordon sanitaire” imposed by other established parties following the government’s collapse in June. Media pundits and think tanks noted that the Dutch outcome could shape both “European populist momentum” and “EU/NATO alignment.”

Polls in fact revealed extraordinary volatility, with public trust in official politics at an all-time historical low. Up to half the electorate remained undecided in the final days, reflecting the absence of any party advancing an anti-capitalist, anti-profit, anti-nationalist and anti-war programme.

The results in return were considered a last-minute “surprise” outcome, underscoring the extraordinary fragility and volatility of Dutch bourgeois politics: a tie between the so-called “centrist-liberal” Democrats 66 (D66), led by 38-year-old Rob Jetten, and the far-right PVV, led by Geert Wilders. D66 surged unexpectedly and to its own surprise from nine to 26 seats. The PVV lost roughly a third of its votes and won 26 seats, or 17 percent of the vote.

Behind them, the Christian Democratic Appeal (CDA) rebounded to 18 from five seats, profiting from the collapse of its split-off New Social Contract (NSC) that went to zero from 20 seats. The merged “progressive” GroenLinks–Labour Party (GL–PvdA) dropped to 20 from 25; the ex-Maoist Socialist Party (SP) was reduced to three from five; the right-wing liberal People’s Party for Freedom and Democracy (VVD) to 22 from 24; the agrarian populist Farmer–Citizen Movement (BBB) to four from seven. The far-right splinters JA21 and Forum for Democracy (FvD) gained nine and seven seats, respectively.

All former coalition parties lost votes and seats compared to 2023. With 76 seats required for a majority, months of backroom coalition talks are expected, though trade unions have appealed for swift cabinet formation to address mounting social discontent. The initial outcomes reveal Dutch politics shifting sharply further to the right, though the unexpected D66 surge among youth and urban workers reflects a counter-vote against fascism.

International commentary stressed that the real test lies not in vote counts but in coalition formation. The negotiations are confined to parties committed to war budgets, austerity, and authoritarian rule, demonstrating that Dutch parliamentary elections, three in five years, function as a management tool for big capital and pandemic-to-war profiteering.

Though an exact demographic breakdown of voting patterns is not yet available, early exit poll data indicates that young workers and first-time voters have primarily driven D66’s unexpected ascent. It is believed that the Generation Z’s (born 1997–2012) vote offset the far right’s earlier anticipated advantage, reducing the PVV’s seats by a third from 37 in 2023. D66 polled strongest in industrial urban centres such as in Amsterdam, Rotterdam and Utrecht, while the PVV’s base remained mostly older and rural. The pattern reflects a broader European and international trend: youth voting for “progressive” but essentially right-wing parties—political jackals in sheepskin—in the absence of any genuine alternative.

All party manifestos revealed a fundamental consensus toward authoritarian and militarist priorities, albeit with differences in technicalities and semantics. D66, while styling itself as “liberal-progressive,” mirrors the PVV’s policies shorn of ethno-supremacist “Dutch-first” rhetoric. On immigration, D66 proposes stricter asylum procedures, offshore pre-screening, and prioritisation of “vulnerable cases,” an echo of the PVV’s mass-deportation agenda. On defence and security, D66 backs the 2 percent GDP military spending, cyber-capability expansion and enhanced domestic surveillance—NATO-aligned militarism under liberal packaging. On social policy, its housing and welfare proposals remain bound by “fiscal discipline,” echoing the PVV’s austerity line. What was once far-right policy has been normalised across the parliamentary playing field, differing only in tone and presentation.

Dutch media and international commentary noted that the triad of housing, healthcare and immigration dominated voter priorities. In the weeks leading up to the elections, over 56 percent of voters ranked housing as their top concern, above immigration at 42 percent—the latter a campaign primarily stoked by the far right in recent years, scapegoating immigrant workers and refugees for the unravelling social crisis.

Ballooning rents, chronic shortages in affordable housing and the link between exaggerated claims of migrant inflows and housing pressure were emphasised by the media, with scant reports from investigative journalists attempting to negate the anti-immigrant narrative—proving that immigrant workers, especially from Eastern Europe, who are chronically underpaid and lack rudimentary labour protection, are in fact disproportionately burdened by higher rents and exploitation by private landlords and businesses alike, while paying millions in taxes in return for meagre incomes.

Healthcare continues to face budget cuts, understaffing, and the lingering pandemic strain shaping voter sentiment across the spectrum. Dutch complicity in the genocide in Gaza through crucial logistics and arms exports also entered the election debate, revealing growing awareness of how Dutch foreign policy connects to domestic policy.

The Netherlands also remains a chief frontline state in NATO’s military build-up against Russia and in support of Israel’s war and occupation in Gaza. The outgoing cabinet increased defence spending beyond 2 percent of GDP and expanded arms exports despite mass anti-war “Red Line” protests. D66 and GroenLinks–PvdA fully embrace NATO’s European security agenda, demonstrating that rhetoric aside, militarism and alignment with European imperialist strategic priorities are bipartisan.

The coalition arithmetic, in whichever constellation, guarantees that no major shift in political orientation will occur. Whether a “centrist” D66–CDA–GL–PvdA–VVD “big tent” government, or a far-right coalition led by a PVV–BBB–CDA–JA21 bloc, both would deepen migration crackdowns, militarism, and severe austerity. Whatever emerges in the coming months will mean tighter borders, restricted social spending, and stepped-up militarisation. D66’s “progressive” sheen, rooted largely in an affluent, “queer-friendly” and “alternative-lifestyle” upper-middle-class milieu, offers no serious opposition to the far-right agenda; it merely repackages and softens it.

The far right’s continued presence is therefore not an aberration but a symptom of the decay of the entire political order. The ruling class, confronted by growing discontent among workers and youth, increasingly relies on authoritarian and fascistic forces to contain political radicalisation. The PVV functions both as battering ram and safety valve. Its possible exclusion from government would not mean its defeat but its continued role in pushing all parties rightward. Meanwhile, though the youth and urban vote has demonstrated a counter-force, it is one contained within the parliamentary system and tied to fragile coalition arithmetic.

In a telling demonstration, Frans Timmermans wasted no time in announcing his resignation as leader of the recently formed GL–PvdA alliance, within hours of the first exit polls showing his bloc falling short

of projections and slipping behind Rob Jetten’s D66. His swift departure epitomised the political bankruptcy of the so-called “progressive left” alliance, which had spent years backing NATO militarism and austerity while posturing as the moral counterweight to the rising far right. The vacuum left by its electoral defeat was seized upon by Geert Wilders, who, despite his party’s electoral setback, defiantly told reporters that he is to stay and to “buckle up— we are only getting started.” His words summed up both the emboldenment of the far right at the political treachery of the media-baptised Dutch “centre-left” paving the way for the fascists.

The Dutch working class and youth should not spend a wink of confidence on parties and satellites tied up in myriad strings to a rotten nation system. It must build its own independent organs of political organisation and struggle: rank-and-file committees in workplaces, schools and urban neighbourhoods with immigrant communities, linking the fight against austerity, housing, healthcare and education cuts to the broader struggle against imperialist war and racism. Immigrants and refugees must be defended, not scapegoated; the unity of Dutch and immigrant workers and youth is the fundamental precondition for genuine social transformation.

Whatever its final configuration, the October 29 election will not restore “stability.” Rather, it marks another stage in the disintegration of a political order that no longer commands legitimacy and will claim any expression of social, cultural and human dignity. As seen in France, Germany and Britain, as the ruling establishment is decomposing, the vacuum is being filled by political reaction. The answer cannot be a return to the old or new “progressive” parties of capitalism, but the building of a politically independent socialist movement rooted in internationalism, with the working class as its driving revolutionary force.

The Dutch election thus stands as a mirror for the continent: a Europe trapped between imperialist war, authoritarian drift, and social collapse. No appeal to its henchmen, illusions on coalition arithmetic, or “pragmatic” management will halt the descent into a political abyss playing into the hands of the fascists. Only an independent movement of workers, breaking decisively from the capitalist nation-state and its political instruments of profit making, can open a way forward. **Build a Dutch section of the International Committee of the Fourth International (ICFI)—it is urgent!**



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