

Far Left in WE

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CDS 441 Far Right and Left Parties

FAR LEFT (Luke March)

- »Far left« parties are those that define themselves as to the left of, and not merely on the left of social democracy, which they see as insufficiently left-wing or even as not left-wing at all. There are two main subtypes.
- Radical left parties
- Extreme left parties

Radical left parties

- want »root and branch« **systemic change of capitalism.**
- **accept democracy** (verbally at least), although they often combine this with (often vaguely defined) aspirations towards political reform and/or **direct democracy and local participatory democracy**, including incorporating the rights of the excluded and marginalised (for example, the unemployed and migrant workers) in the political system.
- Their anti-capitalism involves opposition to »neo-liberal« globalised capitalism, broadly associated with the so-called »Washington consensus« - trade liberalisation, marketisation, privatisation, and so on, although these parties no longer support a planned economy but a mixed market economy with private enterprise confined to services and small and medium-sized enterprises.

Extreme left parties

- »Extreme left« parties, in contrast, have far **greater hostility to liberal democracy**, usually denounce all compromise with »bourgeois« political forces, including social democracy, emphasise extraparliamentary struggle and define »anti-capitalism« far more strictly, usually regarding most market enterprise as anathema.

Far Left in Europe

- de-radicalisation.
- The extreme left is marginal in most places - except France, Portugal and Greece

Far left subgroups (Luke March)

- Communists
- Democratic socialist parties
- Populist socialist parties
- Social populist parties

Communists

- »conservative« communists certainly tend to define themselves as **Marxist-Leninist**,
- uncritical stance towards the Soviet heritage
- see the world through the Cold-War prism of »imperialism«
- »Reform« communists, on the other hand, are increasingly **divergent and eclectic**. They have discarded aspects of the Soviet model (for example, Leninism and democratic centralism in the case of Italy, France and the Czech Republic, significant opposition to the market economy in the case of France and Cyprus), and have adopted, or at least have paid lip service to, elements of the post-1968 »new left« agenda (feminism, environmentalism, grass-roots democracy...)

Democratic socialist parties

- both in opposition to »totalitarian« communism and »neo-liberal« social democracy
- »new left« themes such as **feminism, environmentalism and self-management**
- **local participation and substantive democracy, and support for alternative lifestyles and ethnic minorities.**
- The chief advocates of this position are the »Nordic Green Left« parties in Iceland, Norway, Sweden, Denmark and Finland, who have most clearly articulated an »eco-socialist« position that synthesises economic and environmental critiques of capitalism

Populist socialist parties

- with a stronger anti-elite, anti-establishment appeal, greater ideological eclecticism and emphasis on identity rather than class concerns (especially regionalism, nationalism or law-and-order issues).
- Typical of this populist slant were the election slogans of the Dutch Socialist Party in the 1990s: »Vote Against!« (Stem Tegen!) and the German PDS (in 1994), arguing that »Election Day is Protest Day« (Wahltag ist Protesttag).

Social populist parties

- classical populist movements (for example in Latin America), with a dominant personalist leadership, relatively weak organisation and essentially incoherent ideology, fusing left-wing and right-wing themes behind an anti-establishment appeal.
- defunct Association of Slovak Workers, the Serbian Socialist Party under Milošević, Slovakia's Smer (Direction), the Lithuanian Labour Party and the Russian »Just Russia« party.

Main European far left subtypes (Luke March)

	Radical left	Extreme left
Reform communist	KSČM, Communist party of Spain, Italian communists, french communist party, progressive party of working people in cyprus	
Conservative communist	Left Alliance (Finland) (VAS), Left Party (Sweden) (V), Socialist People's Party (Denmark) (SF), Socialist Left Party (Norway) (SV), Left-Green Movement (Iceland) (VG), Left Bloc (Portugal) (BE), Coalition of the Left, of Movements and Ecology (Greece) (Synaspismós)	Communist party of greece, communist party of Slovakia, portuguese communist party, communist party of latvia
Democratic socialist		Red-green alliance denmark
Populist socialist	Socialist party netherlands, scottish socialist party, Die Linke, Sinn Fein	New anti-capitalist party france
Social populist	Association of Slovak workers, Socialist Party of Slovenia	

Responses to collapse of communism

1. **renounce the »communist« label** For some - the Swedish Left Party-Communists, which became the Left Party, or the German SED - this was largely a question of renaming themselves and redefining themselves as non-communist radical left parties.
- 2. **transformed into fully-fledged social democratic parties**
- 3. took on an increasingly **nationalist-populist** tinge
- 4. **ceased to exist independently** and reemerged as parts of semi-permanent coalitions either of a democratic socialist orientation - such as the Spanish Communist Party which became the United Left
- 5. **dissolved themselves more completely** into post-communist coalitions of various ideologies. For example, the Communist Party of the Netherlands
- 6. **Many parties maintained their former names and identity but sought to adapt** slowly - for example, the communist parties of Greece, Portugal, France and Cyprus -

Causes of electoral success

- Socio-political environment (a far left predecessor, high unemployment and protest sentiment, the absence of competitor protest parties and a convergent party system)
- Exploiting transformation of social democracy
- Internal party adaptation

Who supports far left

- Far left subculture
- Protest voters
- Disaffected centre voters

Competitors strategies towards far left

- Exclusion
- Aggressive marginalisation
- Pragmatic cooperation
- Aggressive cooptation

Die Linke



DIE LINKE.

- Successor party to SED (Socialist Party of Unity of GDR)
- Anti-capitalism and democratic socialism as a goal
- Observed by the Constitutional Court
- Global disarmament
- Replacement of NATO with collective security including Russia
- Bundestag: 69 out of 709 MPs, on local level somewhere in the local governments

Greece Communist Party



- 1946-49 civil war, loss of communists
- 1967 Regime of the colonels and Georgios Papadopoulos
- Junta régime and supresion of civil liberties
- KKE outlawed till 1974
- 2017: 15 out of 300 MPs
- Against LGBT rights
- Opposing the macedonia -greece name negotiation deal
- <https://inter.kke.gr/en/articles/D-Koutsoumpas-the-interest-of-the-USA-NATO-EU-in-the-Balkans-is-dangerous-for-th-peoples/>

Sinn Fein

- Left-wing nationalism
- Both in Northern Ireland as well as Ireland
- United Ireland
- From anti-EU to for-EU
- Same sex marriage to NI
- Abortions - the decisions must stay with women (rape, incest, foetal abnormalities)
- Building an Ireland of equals
- Mary Lou Mc Donald since 2018 (after Gerry Addams in office 1983-2018)



Socialist Party Netherlands



- 14 out of 150 MPs
- Set up in 1971 as Communist Party of the Netherlands/Marxist-Leninist

Syriza



- Launched in 2004
- Merger of many leftist parties : social democrats, democratic socialists, left-wing patriots, feminists, anti-capitalists, centrists, and environmentalist groups; as well as Marxist-Leninists, Maoists, Trotskyists, Eurocommunists, Luxemburgists, and Eurosceptics.
- Anti-establishment party
- Declares no space for euroscepticism, though seen as mildly eurosceptic
- In coalition government since 2015

Podemos

- Set up 2014 as protest party
- Against inequality and corruption
- Ending of traditional two party system in Spain
- 47 out of 350 MPs in opposition
- Pablo Iglesias



PODEMOS

Left Bloc (BE)



- 1999 as a merger of trotskyists, marxists,
- For same sex marriage
- Rights of workers
- 19 out of 230 MPs in 2017

Progressive Party of Working People in Cyprus - AKEL

- Independent, demilitarized, federal Cyprus
- Major political player - 2001 - 22 out of 56 MPs, coming first or second in the elections
- (1960 Cyprus granted independence, 1974-1983 Turkish invasion and Northern Cyprus, de iure sovereignty over the whole island, de facto partitioned 59:36 plus UN buffer zone, 2004 in the EU, 2008 eurozone)



Seminar

- Animal Farm
- 1984
- One day in the life of Ivan Denisovitch
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tdkvpopu0kY>
- Katyň <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Q2ZYdiEE20Y>
- Good Bye Lenin!
- Comparing totalitarian systems - hand out
- Capitalism vs. Communism simulation - hand out
- Choose your own adventure - hand out

Seminar : Find the communist!

- 1) There are communists in this class, and your job is to find them. You will all receive a card saying whether you are a communist or not.
- 2) You can win the game two ways:
 - a) Form the largest group of students without a single communist in your group
 - b) If you are a communist, you can win by infiltrating a group of non-communists
- 3) You may not show your card to anyone. If you show your card to anyone, you will lose the game.
- 4) The winning group or individual will receive a prize (candy!)

Wrap-up and Discussion

- 1) What was your identity? Communist/not a communist
- 2) Were you accused of being a communist? How did it make you feel?
- 3) How did you convince people you were not a communist? Were you successful?
- 4) Did you accuse anyone else of being a communist? Why did you think they were a communist? Were they really one?
- 5) How did the behavior of people in our class change?