**2.4**After World War I the Netherlands was doing well. Society was split up into groups based on philosophy of life. After 1929, the economic crisis hit the Netherlands as well, but democracy survived.

Thanks to its neutrality the Netherlands was able to pick up normal life quickly after World War I. The economy was doing excellently.
During the interbellum the Netherlands was ruled by the confessional parties. Since the introduction of universal suffrage (the right to vote) they had held an **absolute majority** in the Second Chamber. The confessional leaders were worried about modern society. Because of industrialisation more and more people lived in cities, where the temptations of modern life were available. But most Dutch people remained pious Christians who attended church at least once a week.
The piety of many Dutch people had to do with **pillarization** (*verzuiling*).The Netherlands was split up into four groups or ‘pillars’:

* Protestant-Christian 🡪 Nederlandse Christelijke Radio Vereniging (NCRV)
* Catholic 🡪 Katholieke Radio Omroep (KRO)
* Socialist 🡪 Vereniging Arbeiders Radio Amateurs (VARA)
* Liberal (general/neutral) 🡪 Algemene Vereniging Radio Omroep (AVRO)

People lived their entire lives within the pillar. They almost only dealt with likeminded people. The crown jewel of pillarization was the way radio broadcasting developed. Soon Protestants, Catholics and socialists founded their own radio networks (see enumeration). The AVRO had the most members.

Agriculture was hit first by the stock market crash, but industry quickly followed. The unemployed had to go to the dole office twice a day at irregular times. There, they had a card stamped to prevent them from working under the table 🡪 **being on the dole**.
At the deepest point of the crisis in 1933, ARP leader Hendrik Colijn became prime minister. The **adjustment policy** led to budgetary cuts. Colijn had restored order with harsh measures. But while economy revived in other countries, it continued to go downhill in the Netherlands. In 1936 Colijn decided to leave the **gold standard**. After leaving the gold standard, the economy revived almost immediately. Colijn was praised for this. He had steered ‘the ship of state safely through the storm’.
During the crisis the Netherlands also had to deal with the extreme right:
The Nationaalsocialistische Beweging (NSB) founded by Anton Mussert. His supporters called him ‘leader’. Mussert admired Mussolini. The NSB founded a party army, the WA.
The extreme left was there too:
The Communistische Partij van Nederland (CPN).
But those totalitarian parties did badly here. This was because Netherlands had barely suffered during WWI. There was no anger over the outcome. Pillarization provided a feeling of safety. The charisma and actions of prime minister Colijn gave the Dutch people the idea that there was a strong man at the helm.